

Working title: Europe and America in the War on Terror: Transatlantic Security Relations after 9/11

Abstract

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 against targets in the United States, the Bush Administration undertook its 'war on terror,' a global effort to eliminate terrorism. This paper analyzes U.S. foreign policy through the lens of securitization theory. Specifically, I argue the 'war on terror' was a discursive effort to maintain a global structure of security authority, with the United States at the centre of the order. While this structure worked for much of the Cold War, the world in 2001 was a very different place, and states and societies were less willing to cede authority to the United States, in the process introducing a separation between the U.S. and many of its longtime allies. In effect, states and societies have begun to take back the political capability to define threats and responses from the United States, a reality U.S. policymakers must address if they are to maintain long-standing alliances and execute effective foreign and security policy. The paper also begins to explore the relationship between the concepts of authority and power in the context of the multiple international systems.

Introduction

For much of its intellectual history, the study of international relations (IR) has revolved around power. Traditionally defined as the means by which one actor forces another to do something s/he would not have otherwise done, power—through both the direct and indirect application of coercion—stands for much of the literature as the basis of international dynamics. Thus, the central problem of IR has been the control and use of power. Largely, this trend can be traced to the dominance of the varieties of realism as well as the state of continuous security competition that characterized the Twentieth Century. Realism pushed power as the central concern of states either because humans were flawed creatures (Morgenthau, 1949) or because states were trapped in a Hobbesian state of nature in which they could only count on themselves for their continued survival (Waltz, 1979). The state of continuous security competition encouraged scholars to focus on ways to explain and resolve contemporaneous problems, a dynamic Buzan and Little identify as ‘presentism’ (Buzan and Little, 2000).

Power has traditionally been materially oriented, defined in terms of military capabilities or economic capacity (Mearsheimer, 2001, Walt, 1985). Some have expanded the concept into the ideational realm as in Nye’s conceptualization of soft power (Nye, 2004) or in more critical approaches through application of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony (Murphy, 1998). Consistent across these various interpretations is an underlying understanding that target actor receives the effects of power involuntarily. That is, the target actor does not alter their behavior voluntarily, but instead is bent to the will of the external actor through the processes of power.

In recent years, the central role of power has come under question. Some have questioned its role at the very heart of modern military capabilities—nuclear weapons (Santana, 2009). More generally, scholars have begun to question the role of power in the international system as part of a broader effort to challenge the assumption of anarchy at the core of structural theories (neorealism/neoliberal institutionalism/Wendtian constructivism). Perhaps the most high profile and prolific of these scholars is David Lake, who argues that the hierarchy comprises international relations as much, if not more, than anarchy (Lake, 1996, Lake, 2001, Lake, 2007, Lake, 2009, Lake, 2003, Lake, 2009, Lake, 2009). I give
Lake’s work greater attention in the next section, but to summarize he argues that through a transactional process, powerful and weaker states often arrive at an agreement on hierarchy. The powerful states will provide order, including the occasional use of coercion to bring wayward actors back into the fold, and the weaker states agree to abide by the order. Thus power and legitimacy fuse to generate hierarchical relations undergirded by authority.

In this paper, I argue that while Lake and others work on the concept of authority provides a valuable basis for moving away from the common (and often material) view of the international system as anarchic, there remains much work to be done. Specifically, I challenge Lake’s linkage of coercive power with authority as well as the implicit rationalistic and materialistic basis of his conception of authority. Instead, I focus on authority as an ideational and social construct. I do so by examining relations between the United States and Europe in the context of the ‘War on Terror’ (WoT) narrative. This narrative was in effect an international securitizing move, in which the United States attempted to consolidate authority as a speaker of security through a shift from normal to security politics. In the process, the United States and specifically the Bush Administration sought to establish an international social order akin to that established during the Cold War, in which the United States exercised an outsized ability to construct security narratives and thus define security threats and shape security outcomes. Unlike during the Cold War, however, many European societies rejected the social order the United States sought to build, reclaiming much of the security authority vested in the United States. In effect, the system in the West has become more egalitarian, which European societies empowering a greater number of voices to speak security with legitimacy. This outcome does not however mean that the West subsystem has become more anarchic, but instead more democratic. This finding pushes the conceptions of hierarchy and authority to become broader in their understanding of how the international system can be non-anarchic. It also highlights the international lumpiness of social relations, be they based on power or authority. This accords with the work on regionalism, but takes it a step further by focusing on regionally based variations in the ideational basis of interstate relations.

The paper proceeds in four sections. First, I briefly review the literature on authority and propose a modification that forms the theoretical basis of this paper. In the second section, I present a conceptualization of the ‘War on Terror’ as a securitizing move seeking to establish a security-based social order similar to that which existed for much of the Cold War. The third section takes up the empirical support for the central argument, examining the securitizing moves made by the US with respect to Afghanistan and Iraq as part of the broader War on Terror narrative as well as European reactions both at the state level and at the level of European societies. Finally, I conclude with some thoughts on how the argument might alter the study of international relations.

Section 1

The concept of authority sits at the nexus of a range of issues that have emerged since the end of the Cold War, from questions regarding the nature of state sovereignty (Osiander, 2001) to global governance (Hall and Biersteker, 2002). Arguably, however, authority is most central to scholarship on hierarchy in the international system. Discussions of hierarchy in the international system have, due to the predominant conception of the international system as anarchic, largely focused on economic and political relations within a narrow band of relations—specifically colonialism and empire (Frieden, 1994).¹ Recent

¹ Weber’s often-cited book on hierarchy in the international system stands as a notable exception, focusing on the calculations of states as they voluntarily join international institutions (Weber, 2000). Weber does however keep with the predominant (realist) focus on power and the linked calculations by which rational states concerned with power come to form hierarchical
scholarship has sought to expand the concept of hierarchy in the international system and thus the role and importance of authority. Lake’s scholarship in many ways stands at the heart of this new research agenda. Arguing that anarchy—defined as the absence of a formal-legal authority that can enforce laws—is an overly simplistic and inadequate understanding of international structure. In addition to the formal-legal conception of authority, Lake proposes the concept of ‘relational authority.’ In short, relational authority arises as a form of transaction between states. The dominant state, through the comparatively successful acquisition of material or knowledge resources, is in a position to provide public goods (order, peace, development, stability, resolution of collective action problems, etc). In exchange for this provision of public goods, the subordinate state surrenders judgment and submits to the commands of the dominant state. Critical to distinguishing this authority relationship from one of purely coercive domination is legitimacy, which arises through the dominant state’s “ability to get things done,” what Lake calls performance legitimacy (Lake, 2009:332). This is not to say that coercion is absent in Lake’s relational authority. While performance communally legitimates the dominant state’s authority, for any given individual within this system the dominant state operates from a position or power compelling the acceptance of power. An analogy might be democratic governance at the domestic level, whereby the collective legitimates the government but for any single law-breaker (who ostensibly does not agree with the legitimacy of the government) the democratic government has the power to coerce changes in behavior.

From this brief description, it should be clear that Lake sees authority as the product of interactions between largely rational (and thus pre-social) states. Notwithstanding Lake’s critique of mainstream theory’s tendency to reify the state and sovereignty (Lake, 2003), authority relations in Lake’s conceptualization operate exclusively between states-as-unified-actors. While Lake provides as valuable a basis for a much needed conversation regarding the role of authority in the international system, there are some issues with his framework. First, it is not clear that Lake’s conception of legitimacy as arising out of the rational calculations of self-interested actors reflects the ideational depth of the concept. Hurd identifies three means of social control: coercion, self-interest, and legitimacy (Hurd, 1999). Coercion is self-evident; the use (or fear thereof) of asymmetric physical power to change the behavior of the target actor. Self-interest suggests behavior alteration occurs when the instrumental assessment of the benefits of compliance against the benefits of non-compliance comes out in favor of compliance. Weber’s explanation of institutional hierarchy drawing on theories of transaction costs fits squarely within this logic (Weber, 2000). Finally, in the case of legitimacy behavior arises from a belief in the normative legitimacy of the rule or the authority. Compliance then comes through a sense of obligation. Citing organizational sociologist Mark Suchman, Hurd defines legitimacy in terms of its social content: “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Hurd, 1999:387). In this tripartite approach, Lake’s authority clearly contains elements of coercion (with respect to any given individual) and self-interest (cooperation as long as stream of positive benefits remains uninterrupted—that is, performance legitimacy), but the normative or social content of the concept has been stripped out by the underlying rational choice architecture.

The absence of normative or social content in thinking about authority has significant implications of Lake’s approach. It enables him to claim that the subordinate actor or state surrenders judgment to the dominant actor, when as the case study I undertake here shows that judgment is in fact not surrendered, but instead always operative as the subordinate states and their underlying societies continuously assess the
legitimacy of authority. Thus, relations of authority—because the ability to alter behavior is given over willingly by the subordinate state—can enhance rather than diminish sovereignty. Wendt and Friedheim point out the defining difference between authority and domination lies in the relationship between the dominant and subordinate states (Wendt and Friedheim, 1995). In authority relations, the position of the dominant state rests on the consent of the subordinate state (legitimacy). In the case of domination relations, the dominant state’s position rests on coercion of the subordinate state (power). Lake’s fusion of coercion (at the individual level) and legitimacy (at the collective level)—derived from the domestic analogy—contains problems at the international level. In the domestic context, it is plausible to talk about collective legitimacy because the collective consists of individuals numbering in the thousands, even in the smallest states. At these numbers, the magnitude of social interactions is sufficient to support a social structure like legitimacy. Can the same be said about the international system, where the population stands at only about 200 individuals? In this case, is there enough social density to support legitimacy as a collective social structure as envisioned by Lake, one capable of enabling a dominant state to use coercion against individuals to maintain the system? Even more troubling is, despite the juridical equality of all states, that all the individuals in the international systems are not equal. Some would clearly matter more for legitimacy than others, further reducing the number of ‘individuals’ granting legitimacy. This seems problematic. The only way to expand the numbers of actors sufficient to support the social structure of legitimacy is to bring domestic societies into the analytical picture, but then the role of coercion becomes problematic. The dominant state does not coerce individuals within subordinate states, but instead coerces the state. So we are left in a difficult position. The number of states is too small to represent much of a collective if we consider them as ‘individuals’ meaning the there isn’t much collective legitimation and thus authority becomes mostly a matter of coercion. If we take account of the societies within states, the basis of legitimacy exists, but the role of coercion diminishes. Thus, while Lake seeks to provide a conceptualization of authority that fuses the concept with power (coercion) rather than placing them in opposition, doing so creates significant difficulties.

The issue of treating states as unified actors is another problem for Lake’s approach. While Lake recognizes the tendency of reifying the state as potentially problematic (Lake, 2003), his critique only goes so far as to challenge the assumption of states-as-sovereign that often accompanies the reification of states. Ironically, while Lake argues for the relaxation of the sovereignty assumption, he does not recognize that in other ways his approach firmly reifies the state-as-actor. While it is analytically expedient to treat states as unified actors, understanding authority as a social structure imbued with social meaning—Lake concedes that authority is a social construct—undermines the artificial divide between the domestic and the international. Social structures in both realms are interwoven, giving basis and having effects on each other. Given the comparative strength of domestic social structures, it is all the more significant that Lake’s and others approaches to authority bracket these influences. Wendt and Friedheim highlight the importance of going beyond the state to understand the role of authority in the international system: “the analysis of international institutions and governance in international relations scholarship has tended to be state-centric and as such, needs to consider state-society relations as a way of ensuring the legitimation of transnational authority in all the relevant audiences” [Lake, 2003:721].

Given the costs of basing the concept of authority on the fusion of legitimacy and coercion, I propose an alternative approach. In this perspective, we can understand the basis of both concepts as an effort to understand the means by which actors alter their behavior in the presence of external forces. Power relations exist when the dominant actor involuntarily alters the subordinate actor’s behavior. This can take place through both ideational and material pathways. While IR has traditionally focused on the material basis of power (Guzzini, 1993, Schmidt, 2005), alternative approaches have emphasized the ideational or
social basis of power (Barnett and Duvall, 2005). Regardless of form, power relations clearly rest on the
forceful (as in involuntary) acquisition of the ability to alter the behavior of others. Authority relations by
contrast are those in which the subordinate actor voluntary cedes the ability to alter behavior to the
dominant actor. This too can be materially as well as ideationally or socially oriented. A material example
might be a case where one state alters their economic policy to emulate that of another, economically
successful state as part of an effort to achieve greater gains for domestic constituencies. In doing so, the
subordinate state invites in experts from the dominant state, following their policy prescriptions (or
commands) and in general giving the dominant state the ability to alter the behavior of the subordinate
state. The subordinate state retains not only the ability to alter its behavior in contravention to the
instructions of the dominant state, but also the capacity to evaluate the appropriateness of those
instructions. A critic might respond that the subordinate state is not altering its behavior from it would
otherwise do since it invited in the influence of the dominant state. This counterargument neglects that the
subordinate has at least two other options. The first is to maintain the status quo, the internally generated
system and ignoring external influences. The second is to choose an internally generated alternative to
either the model proffered by the external state or the internal status quo. These two options highlight two
issues. The first is that the proper counterfactual is the one where the external state does not exist. In that
case, the subordinate state would have only had the internal options. Thus, though providing an alternative
economic model the dominant state does alter the behavior of the subordinate state over what it would
have otherwise been. The second issue is the difficulty of determining, counterfactually, in cases of
authority relations what the subordinate state would have done otherwise, since the ability to alter behavior
is voluntarily relinquished.

Power and authority defined thus represent ideal types on either end of the external influence spectrum.
Real world relations never meet the ideal type criteria, although some relations may come close. Thus,
international relations are comprised of a mix of power and authority. Thus, we can and should
understand the two concepts as operating at different levels in different contexts, which stands in contrast
to the realist assumption that conceptions of power are universal and are universally operative. Applying
these two concepts to Wendy’s systemic constructivist take on international relations (Wendt, 1992,
Wendt, 1999), we might understand Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures of anarchy as different
mixes of power and authority. The Hobbesian system is one dominated by power relations. The Lockean
system is a mixed system, in which authority and power play more or less equal roles in the system. The
Kantian system is one where authority relations predominate. As Wendt suggests, all three systems can and
do exist simultaneously in the global international system. Sometimes these systems are no larger than a
two state dyad, but some may extend to include multiple states, as implicit in the concept of the ‘West.’

Understanding power and authority as distinctive concepts and phenomena has significant implications for
the study of international relations. As I allude to above, universal simplifying assumptions regarding the
roles of power and authority in the international system must at the very least seriously reexamined, and
more likely conditionally rejected. Lake, drawing on his own work as well as that of Buzan and Wæver on
regional security complexes recognizes that structures of authority take on subsystemic variation (Lake,
2009). The point I make here goes beyond this however. Lake’s approach suggests that authority, where it
exists, will function the same way, in line with similar assumptions made by mainstream approaches
regarding power. Some states may have less power/authority, others may have more, but the phenomenon
itself is the same. If authority, however, flows from social and ideational foundations then what authority
means may vary significantly across different social, temporal, and geographic contexts. The potential of
variation also exists across types of interaction—what Buzan calls sectors (Buzan, 1991). Authority in the
security sector has the potential to look very different from that in the economic sector. Thus, we would
understand Japan as seeking to establish itself as an authority in the economic sector, while largely ignoring the security sector. The ideational and material aspects of both power and authority should also give cause for reconsidering frameworks that seek to extend the concept of power into the ideational or social realm like Nye’s soft power. While they may be indeed referring to power, they may also be referring to authority. In Nye’s case, his definition of soft power as the ability to attract and persuade certainly sounds like authority rather than power. The conceptual and real world implications of this difference are significant. If a state operates with ‘soft power,’ we should expect it to get its way by forcing subordinate states to act in a particular fashion, particularly in crisis situations where the coercive nature of power becomes most evident. If, however, ‘soft power’ is actually social authority then the international dynamics are likely to play out very differently, notably in the sense that the dominant state will have a far more constrained set of policy options since its behavior will be evaluated for its appropriateness by the subordinate states.

Section II

At this point, I’m going to temporarily set aside the issue of authority in order to introduce the framework of securitization theory and how it relates to the WoT. After doing so, I will integrate authority back into the analysis to present a constructivist take on systems of security in the international system. In the introduction, I indicated that the WoT was a securitizing move at the international scale. The term ‘securitizing move’ refers securitization theory, an approach developed by Ole Wæver and a prominent element of the Copenhagen School of security studies (Buzan et al., 1998, Hansen and Nissenbaum, 2009, McDonald, 2008, Wæver, 1995, Williams, 2003). Briefly, the term securitization refers to the socio-political construction of security. Under securitization theory, security threats do not exist as objective ‘facts.’ Instead, they arise out of an intersubjective, socially constructed security process. This process centers on the security speech act—the securitizing move—in which a securitizing actor claims some phenomenon or actor presents an existential threat to an object of value (e.g. physical beings, the state, economic system, identity). Owing to the existential nature of the threat, the invocation of security is a claim that the issue at hand cannot be dealt with using ‘normal’ political processes. Instead, the securitizing move seeks to shift the issue into an authoritarian political framework where deliberation is suspended, power is centralized, and political rights are deemphasized (Aradau, 2004). It is, in effect, an effort to ‘break free’ of the rules that govern normal political behavior.

The securitizing move involves three elements: the securitizing actor, a referent object, and the audience. The securitizing actor executes the securitizing move. To be credible, the actor must possess the credibility within the socio-political context that would give their security claims weight sufficient to warrant consideration by the relevant audience. The threat claim of securitizing actors is integrally tied to the subject of the threat—the referent object. The referent object must be existentially valued, something whose long-term survival needs to be guaranteed. Accordingly, a business in a market economy, while possibly valuable, is not existentially valued and cannot generally be securitized. The audience plays a critical role in the security move. If the audience accepts the security argument, then securitization is successful, and the issue moves out of normal politics into the realm of security. If the audience rejects the security move then securitization fails. To this end, securitizing actors need to use language, images, and framings that the audience can identify with and understand to communicate the threat assessment. Wæver identifies three facilitating conditions that enable successful securitizing moves: the internal logic of the securitizing move (existential threat + referent object + means for resolving the threat), the political ability  

or authority of the securitizing actor to speak security, and the nature of the threat (tanks generally seen as threatening, rabbits are not).

The War on Terror was clearly a securitizing move aimed at a domestic audience in the US. The referent object was the safety and survival of Americans, the existential threat was posed by terrorist organizations and the ‘axis of evil’ that supported them, and the solution was a global intelligence and military campaign against terrorist organizations and their state supporters. In this context, both Afghanistan and Iraq were both elements of the overarching securitizing move. The connection between the WoT securitizing move and Afghanistan in the U.S. domestic context is pretty clear. The connection to Iraq is more tenuous. However, the widespread belief at the time of the 2003 invasion that Hussein had provided material support to al Qeda strongly suggests that the connection was firmly fixed in the minds of Americans. Scholars have examined the securitization of Iraq in the British domestic context and similarly found that Prime Minister Tony Blair heavily emphasized the connection between Iraq and terrorist organizations (Hayes, 2011).

The domestic audience of the US was not the only target of the securitizing move however. I argue that other states, particularly but not exclusively in Europe, were a target audience as well. As in the domestic case, the threat was global terrorism and the states that sponsor it. The referent object was also personal safety, but it was broader as well. In analysis of Bush’s construction of the War on Terror, I suggest that he sought to construct terrorism as a threat to political systems (democracy) as well as the generalized safety of the ‘West.’ I want to be careful here not to unify the state, although I use that shorthand. The audience was not the state per say, but instead the foreign policy elites of the states (which is usually what IR scholars mean, whether they acknowledge it or not, when they refer to a state) as well as the general publics, as most of the European states are democracies in which the public has a critical role in security policy (Hayes, 2012). In the domestic context, the authority of Bush as President to make security claims is deeply embedded in the American social and political structures. I do not mean to preclude inquiry on how this authority can be challenged (indeed, the fact that it is authority means it can be removed, as Bush learned later after the revelations of intelligence failures in the Iraq War), only that the President of the United States is accepted to have credibility on security. In the international context, the authority of the United States to make securitizing moved is less obvious. The density of political and social structures in the international system is far lower than it is at the domestic level, thus the security authority embedded in these structures also carries less weight. Moreover, in the international context the United States-as-securitizing-actor faces a wide range of socio-political contexts (what I call boundary conditions in other work) that drawing on authority difficult.

How to get around this problem? In this draft paper I argue that the Bush Administration relied upon a historical model—the Cold War—for making the War on Terrorism securitizing move. It also relied on this model as a basis for the vision of how international security would function under the War on Terror. Like the Cold War, the War on Terror was envisioned to be an ongoing struggle. Communism and terrorism alike were conceived of as implacable foes that required centralization in the United States of the authority to determine security. During the Cold War, this authority gave Eisenhower the ability to pressure the British and the French over their invasion of the Sinai Peninsula. Institutionally, it was embodied in the position of the Supreme Allied Commander, the military head of NATO and a position always held by an American. Unlike in the Soviet sphere, where control was exerted through coercion as well as legitimacy, the United States during the Cold War established a system in which members voluntarily ceded security authority to the United States. French withdrawal from NATO’s unified military command exemplifies the nature of the American system. The War on Terror is fashioned in a
similar manner. Once again the United States would occupy the high ground of security authority by identifying terrorism as the primary international threat as well as prescribing the means for dealing with it. It would be an American-led effort.

Section III

In this section of the paper, I analyze five speeches by U.S. president George W. Bush made between the September 11, 2001 attacks and the start of the war in Iraq. In all but one of these speeches, Bush primarily addresses a domestic audience, but as I argue below there are significant indications that he also seeks to address an international audience. The speeches clearly lay out a securitizing move with respect to terrorism as well as attempt to discursively position the United States as the security authority within the security institution known as the ‘war on terror.’

The discursive origins of the WoT security institution date to the speech Bush gave on September 20, 2001. This speech provides the base rhetorical template for the securitizing move as well as the effort to position the U.S. as the security authority. When Bush remarks,

> on behalf of the American people, I thank the world for its outpouring of support. America will never forget the sounds of our National Anthem playing at Buckingham Palace, on the streets of Paris, and at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate (Bush, 2001)

he clearly indicates that while his primary focus is a domestic audience, he is also addressing an international audience. In doing so, he launches a securitizing move against terrorism (and the states that support terrorists). The referent object of the move is larger than the physical safety of individuals; instead, Bush focused significant attention on the existential threat posed by terrorism to ‘freedom’:

> Tonight we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom... On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country. Americans have known wars -- but for the past 136 years, they have been wars on foreign soil, except for one Sunday in 1941. Americans have known the casualties of war -- but not at the center of a great city on a peaceful morning. Americans have known surprise attacks -- but never before on thousands of civilians. All of this was brought upon us in a single day -- and night fell on a different world, a world where freedom itself is under attack... This is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. [emphasis added]

Al Qaeda, according to Bush, acted with the goal of “remaking the world -- and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere.” By framing the referent object as freedom and civilization, Bush established the United States as the oldest democracy in the modern world as the center of the security storm. As the guiding light of democracy in the modern age, the discursive move suggests that in the dark times following the September 11 attack that the U.S. would likewise lead the way. Indeed, at one point Bush explicitly compares terrorism to prior conflicts in which ‘freedom’ had been under threat, and in which the United States had saved the free world:

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1 In future drafts, the section will include an analysis of European responses, but time constraints preclude the inclusion of these empirical elements in the current draft.
We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions — by abandoning every value except the will to power — they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism. And they will follow that path all the way, to where it ends: in history’s unmarked grave of discarded lies.

Highlighting the presence of the British Prime Minister, Bush claimed that “(o)nce again, we are joined together in a great cause,” an implicit reference again to the conflicts of the 20th century, specifically World War II and the Cold War.

Throughout the speech, Bush positions the United States as the central actor in the conflict, standing against terrorists in the same way it had stood against the other threats to freedom:

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

What is notable here is the pivotal importance of the United States: terrorists sought to “end a way of life,” by forcing the U.S. to retire from the international stage. Notably, other institutions that might be understood to further the cause of freedom like the United Nations are absent from the speech. The United States, as the central pillar of freedom of the world, was all that stood between the world’s civilized people and the ravages of terrorism. Such a frontline actor enjoys a particular security authority: ‘we stand between you and oblivion, so stand behind us’ is the operative authority logic. This logic echoes in another statement:

> The advance of human freedom -- the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time -- now depends on us. Our nation -- this generation -- will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail.

The Manichean logic of the Cold War and World War II was clearly evident in Bush’s demand that states accept the U.S. securitizing move:

> Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists… We ask every nation to join us. We will ask, and we will need, the help of police forces, intelligence services, and banking systems around the world… The civilized world is rallying to America’s side. They understand that if this terror goes unpunished, their own cities, their own citizens may be next. Terror, unanswered, can not only bring down buildings, it can threaten the stability of legitimate governments. And you know what -- we’re not going to allow it.

Also like the Cold War (but unlike World War II), the conflict with terrorists would be open-ended and often conducted in secret:

> This war will not be like the war against Iraq a decade ago, with a decisive liberation of territory and a swift conclusion. It will not look like the air war above Kosovo two years ago, where no ground troops were used and not a single American was lost in combat. Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have ever seen. It may include dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place, until there is no refuge or no rest. And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism.
The open-ended nature of the conflict suggests a semi-permanent international security infrastructure and the secrecy of much of the response suggests the need of the audience to suspect judgment indefinitely.

Bush's initial construction of the global response puts the United States at the heart of the conflict. In the speech, the United States as the leader of global freedom and democracy plays a critical role in assessing threats to that civilization. In couching terrorism as a civilizational threat, Bush uniquely privileges the United States to identify and address the threat. The temporal indeterminacy of the threat echoes the structures of the Cold War, and suggests that the United States will/should be the primary securitizing actor in a new international security institution for the foreseeable future.

These themes appeared regularly in speeches by Bush with an international audience. In his 2002 State of the Union address, Bush highlighted the 'long struggle' nature of the conflict: “What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terror is only beginning… Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch -- yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch.” (Bush, 2001). Notable is the President’s use of the term 'axis of evil' in the speech (referring to Iran, Iraq, and North Korea and ‘their terrorist allies’), a phrase reminiscent of Reagan’s framing of the Soviet Union as ‘evil’ (Reagan, 1982). Also highly visible in the speech is an appeal to the historical role of the United States in protecting civilization and the central role it would play against terrorism, tying past success in addressing threats to the current in an effort to establish security authority; “History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight.”

As in the September 20 speech, Bush emphasized the referent object as ‘freedom’ and cast the United States as the key actor operating in an international security authority architecture supported by allies:

Thanks to the work of our law enforcement officials and coalition partners, hundreds of terrorists have been arrested. Yet, tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are. (Applause.) So long as training camps operate, so long as nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk. And America and our allies must not, and will not, allow it… My hope is that all nations will heed our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own.

Similarly, in Bush’s September 11, 2002 speech marking the one-year anniversary of the attacks highlighted the role of freedom as the threatened referent object as well as the role of the United States in upholding and protecting freedom, granting it a privileged position in the securitizing move. A “world of liberty and security” would only be possible “by the way America leads” (Bush, 2002). Further reinforcing this point as well as the security authority of the United States through linking it to freedom-as-referent-object, Bush argued

The attack on our nation was also attack on the ideals that make us a nation. Our deepest national conviction is that every life is precious, because every life is the gift of a Creator who intended us to live in liberty and equality…And we seek the freedom and opportunity that give meaning and value to life… And our cause is even larger than our country. Ours is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind. That hope drew millions to this harbor. That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it.
As in other speeches, Bush drew on the image of the United States as the historical defender of liberty to bolster the case for security authority as well as link the effort to establish the United States as the core of a new international security institution to past successes:

This nation has defeated tyrants and liberated death camps, raised this lamp of liberty to every captive land. We have no intention of ignoring or appeasing history's latest gang of fanatics trying to murder their way to power... I believe there is a reason that history has matched this nation with this time. America strives to be tolerant and just. We respect the faith of Islam, even as we fight those whose actions defile that faith. We fight, not to impose our will, but to defend ourselves and extend the blessings of freedom.

The next day, Bush addressed the United Nations General Assembly as part of an effort to securitize Iraq within the broader WoT security institution (Bush, 2002). Like the securitization of terrorism (and indeed, Communism), Iraq was constructed as a threat not just to its neighbors, or to global economic stability or oil supplies, but to the civilization of liberty.

Above all, our principles and our security are challenged today by outlaw groups and regimes that accept no law of morality and have no limit to their violent ambitions. In the attacks on America a year ago, we saw the destructive intentions of our enemies...our greatest fear is that terrorists will find a shortcut to their mad ambitions when an outlaw regime supplies them with the technologies to kill on a massive scale. In one place -- in one regime -- we find all these dangers, in their most lethal and aggressive forms, exactly the kind of aggressive threat the United Nations was born to confront. Twelve years ago, Iraq invaded Kuwait without provocation. And the regime's forces were poised to continue their march to seize other countries and their resources. Had Saddam Hussein been appeased instead of stopped, he would have endangered the peace and stability of the world...To assume this regime's good faith is to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble. And this is a risk we must not take. [emphasis added]

Also strongly present in the speech is the claim of a fundamental linkage between the United States and freedom-as-referent object as part of a discursive effort to establish U.S. security authority:

We must choose between a world of fear and a world of progress. We cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security, and for the permanent rights and the hopes of mankind. By heritage and by choice, the United States of America will make that stand. And, delegates to the United Nations, you have the power to make that stand, as well.

In another speech on Iraq dated October 7, 2002, Bush linked Iraq to terrorism, thus including it within the broader structure of the WoT as well as the central role of the United States as the primary security authority:

Tonight I want to take a few minutes to discuss a grave threat to peace, and America's determination to lead the world in confronting that threat. The threat comes from Iraq. It arises directly from the Iraqi regime's own actions -- its history of aggression, and its drive toward an arsenal of terror...It has given shelter and support to terrorism, and practices terror against its own people...On September the 11th, 2001, America felt its vulnerability -- even to threats that gather on the other side of the earth. We resolved then, and we are resolved today, to confront every threat, from any source, that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America. [emphasis added]

As in other cases, Bush presented the United States as pivotal to addressing the issue, and in doing so linking the U.S. with the threat to freedom.

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We did not ask for this present challenge, but we accept it. Like other generations of Americans, we will meet the responsibility of defending human liberty against violence and aggression. By our resolve, we will give strength to others. By our courage, we will give hope to others. And by our actions, we will secure the peace, and lead the world to a better day.

The European response to U.S. securitizing moves shows a pattern of decreasing U.S. security authority. In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, European fears regarding terrorism were significant, with 86 percent of respondents in a Eurobarometer poll indicating they were personally afraid of terrorism (European Commission, 2001). By the time of the subsequent Eurobarometer poll (fieldwork March-May 2002) personal concern over terrorism had fallen 8 points to 78 percent (European Commission, 2002). Ninety percent of those polled felt that terrorism should be a priority for the EU. In the Fall 2002 Eurobarometer polling, this number climbed back up to 82 percent (European Commission, 2002). In this same poll also introduced a series of questions probing European perceptions of role of the United States in addressing a range of issues. Among these issues is terrorism. In the initial iteration of the question, 54 percent of respondents had a positive view of the U.S. role in the fight against terrorism, while only 28 percent held a negative view. The Spring 2003 Eurobarometer finds the number of people fearful of international terrorism roughly equivalent to the previous poll—about 80 percent (European Commission, 2003). Strikingly, however, is the drop in positive perceptions of the U.S. role in the fight against terrorism. In the poll, which ran from March to April and includes the invasion of Iraq, those holding a positive view of the U.S. contribution to fighting terrorism dropped to 45 percent (a nine point decrease) while the percentage of those holding a negative view increased by seven points to 35 percent. These numbers were steadier in the Autumn 2003 Eurobarometer, in which 37 percent of respondents held a negative view of the U.S. role in fighting terrorism while 43 percent held a positive view, a change of 2 percent for both (European Commission, 2003). Eurobarometer polling next asked the question in the Autumn of 2004, skipping the Spring 2004 poll. Again, public positive perception of the U.S. role in fighting terrorism dropped, this time by 4 points to 39 percent while negative perception rose by 5 points to 42 percent. At the same time, public approval of the EU role in fighting terrorism rose from 54 percent as recorded in the Autumn 2003 polling to 59 percent (European Commission, 2004). Interestingly, the downward trend in approval for the US role in fighting terrorism reversed for the Spring 2005 poll, with the percent of those approving of the U.S. roll increasing to 43 percent while those holding a negative view dropped to 38 percent (European Commission, 2005). Approval of the European role in fighting terrorism rose to 60 percent.

As this cursory data analysis shows, the United States lost ground as a security authority in the eyes of the European public. At the same time, the security authority of the EU increased over time, suggesting that as Europeans divested the U.S. of security authority, they vested in in the EU. Future drafts of this paper will include more finely grained data to comment on national level trends as well as EU level trends.

Section IV
In this paper I argue that IR scholars need to reconceptualize the concept of authority in the international system, particularly in light of the longstanding emphasis within the discipline on the role of power. Authority as understood here results in the voluntary relinquishment of the subordinate party to the

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4 In future drafts this discussion will include a breakdown of how European security priorities shift over time as well as by country.
dominant party the ability to alter the subordinate’s behavior. The voluntary nature of this relationship means that the dominant actor must exercise caution in using that control, because it can be withdrawn.

This is not the case in situations where relationships of dominance are defined by power asymmetries. Understanding power and authority as distinctive concepts and phenomena has significant implications for the study of international relations. Universal simplifying assumptions regarding the roles of power and authority in the international system must at the very least seriously reexamined, and more likely conditionally rejected. Phenomena attributed to power, such as Nye’s concept of soft power, may be more fruitfully rethought as elements of authority. Moreover, as a social construct the meaning of authority will vary significantly across different social, temporal, and geographic contexts, making generalizations about its role difficult. The regional significant or the power/authority relationship has the potential to be quite significant. For example, regions might be analyzed by the authority and power content of their interstate relations. In this context, the distinctive element of the ‘West’ as a region is the predominant role of authority in shaping relations. The potential of variation also exists across sectors of interaction.

Authority in the security sector has the potential to look very different from that in the economic sector. Thus, we would understand Japan as seeking to establish itself as an authority in the economic sector, while largely ignoring the security sector. This concept of authority is then demonstrated the empirical lens of the War on Terror, which I argue was an effort by the Bush Administration to establish an international security institution based on U.S. security authority. Through a series of speeches, I analyze the way the War on Terror securitizing move was constructed. I also analyze public opinion polling in Europe over time to chart the authority of the U.S. as a security actor under the War on Terror. What I find is that while the U.S. initially enjoys significant security credibility, this drops away over time. As U.S. security authority on terrorism drops, the authority of the EU increases, highlighting the voluntary nature of control.


