

**EUPHEMISMS, MISNOMERS AND
OTHER OBSCURITIES:
THE LANGUAGE OF WAR
AND
MODIFICATION POSSIBILITIES FOR PEACE**

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要約

婉曲表現, 誤った表現, その他の曖昧な(ぼかした)表現 戦争の言葉, 平和にむけてのその変容の可能性

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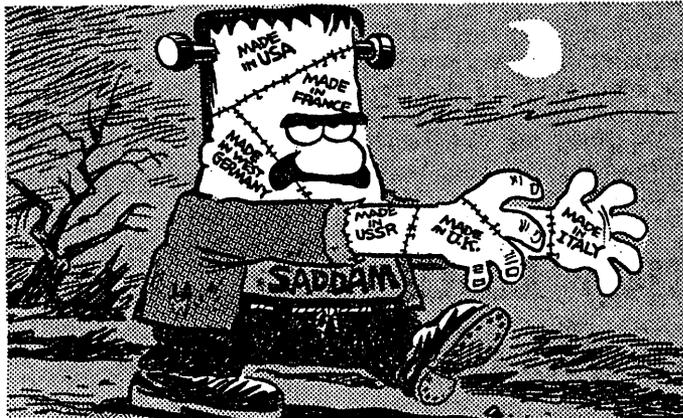
21世紀に向かいつつある人類の緊急の課題は、平和の精神、そして様々な人々、環境、全ての生物との協調の精神をもって生存することである。人類(人間性)はひとつであり、我々の惑星および全宇宙を通して生命はつながっていることを理解するために意識の変革が必要である。我々にとって、唯一の真の敵は実は我々自身であり、「われわれ」対「かれら」という枠組みで思考する狭量な認識であって、これが紛争と対立を招いている。この論文は、言語とコミュニケーションが人類を相も変わらず紛争の中に固定してしまう時に果たす役割を検証し、言語に見いだされる平和への可能性を示す。言葉は受動的に現実を反映するのではなく、積極的に現実を創造しているのだ。

Part I 「戦争の言葉」では、最近の湾岸戦争で戦闘進行中および停戦直後に用いられた具体例を挙げ、戦争の現実を正当化し、さらにはそれをぼかしてしまうために、どのように言語が操作されたのかを検証する。

When the axe comes into the forest
The trees say: Look!
The handle is one of us.

—Lyndon Walker

As a new millennium approaches, the most pressing challenge for humankind is to live in the spirit of peace and cooperation with one another, the environment and all creation. A shift in consciousness is necessary, leading to a realization of the oneness of humanity, the interconnectedness of all creation on our planet and throughout the universe. Our only true enemy is indeed ourselves and our insular perceptions in terms of “us” vs. “them,” resulting in conflict and confrontation. This paper examines the role of language and communication in sustaining humanity’s fixation with conflict and demonstrates possibilities for peace found in language, asserting that the role of language is not passively reflecting reality, but actively creating it.



PART I — THE LANGUAGE OF WAR

A WAYWARD SEARCH FOR PEACE

The term *war* is a common metaphor for human struggle, e. g., *war on poverty*, *war on drugs*, *war on AIDS*, creating the image of a society of enemies (Reardon). A relationship with a member of the opposite gender is often described as engaging in the *battle of the sexes*. Each individual encounters conflict in everyday life. At all levels of human interaction, as individuals, in the classroom, in society in the local, national and international spheres, we must seek means to resolve conflicts and improve the human condition utilizing less violence. The absence of war does not necessarily bring peace, as in recent history when the conclusion of World War II merely fostered a *Cold War* of a horrendous *arms race*, draining the earth’s resources while much of humanity suffered

from a lack of basic necessities. The *Cold War* encompassed a “world disorder,” costing (in 1990 U.S. dollars) \$10.3 trillion—the most preposterous waste of resources in the history of humankind (Willens). Despite the proclaimed conclusion of the *Cold War* and thawing of East–West tensions culminating in the demolition of the Berlin Wall,¹ the loosening of old structures in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union has given rise to even more violent intolerance. Most disheartening, there remain more than 50,000 nuclear weapons extant on our planet. The recent outbreak of war in the Middle East underscores the continuing precarious state of the human condition.

Manipulation of language has played an important role in the justification of violent conflict. During the Vietnam war, the U.S. military contended that “we had to destroy the village in order to save it” (Sternbach). Addressing a business audience, U.S. President George Bush asserted that fighting the recent Persian Gulf war would result in “vastly restored credibility” in American leadership, leading to more “harmonious” economic relations, i. e., *war for harmony* (Barnet). Bush comforted the families of American military personnel by explaining: “They are enduring the hardships of war today so that you might be able to enjoy the benefits of peace tomorrow.” (Horgan) This concept of *war for peace* is a universal oxymoron used throughout the ages to justify violent actions at the present time for a greater tranquility tomorrow. Perusing the history of humankind, there has been no decent span of time when someone somewhere was not asked to bear arms and kill another human as a violent solution to a dispute. Each time humankind reached for weapons, it is reasonable to assume that there was some hope for a future peaceful resolution—but this has never happened. Denis Horgan of the *Hartford Courant* comments:

I try to think back over my own modest time, to count up the conflicts, the confrontations, the battles; I come up with so many that you could believe that the urge to violent solution would have exhausted itself. Instead it seems the most resilient force in the universe.

We cannot disregard the current brutality of human madness surfacing in diverse corners of the planet: Afghanistan, Albania, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Latvia, Liberia, Myanmar (Burma), Northern Ireland, the Occupied Territories (Palestine), Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tiananmen Square, Tibet. These are merely those that come wearily to mind. Again and again we futilely allow violent endeavors, hoping for a peaceful future, extolling *war for peace*.

OBSCURING REALITIES OF WAR THROUGH LANGUAGE

George Orwell acknowledged the role of linguistic manipulation in politics, demonstrating how terminology is routinely distorted to mean the antithesis of what is said. In his totalitarian state in 1984, ubiquitous posters bear the slogan *War is Peace*, as well as the equally nonsensical *Freedom is Slavery* and *Ignorance is Strength*. War exacerbates this tendency, and the war in the Persian Gulf has provided a wealth of

examples of what Orwell referred to as the “criminalization of language” (Jenkins).

We routinely heard updated accounts of *air sorties*, seemingly as tame as an afternoon picnic or a stroll in the park. This term actually refers to bombing raids in which 18,000 tons of TNT—the equivalent of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945—are dropped from planes for ten consecutive hours over vast areas of a country (Jenkins).

Parents pass on the tendency to obfuscate the horrors of war and weapons, and foster acceptance of such horrors, by allowing their children to be the namesakes of war terminology and war heroes. A Kuwaiti woman who escaped to the U.S.A. named her newborn son *Bush*. Women in Turkey were naming their children, even their female children, after CNN’s anchorman in Baghdad, Peter Arnett (“Overheard”). In Algeria hundreds of fervent Muslims named newborn sons *Saddam* or *Saddam Hussein* in support of Iraq’s president and Arab unity, and in defiance of western “imperialism.” However, community registry authorities there rejected an attempt by one family to name their son *Scud* after the Soviet–designed missile Iraq fired at Israel and Saudi Arabia. The adamant father had planned to pursue another attempt through the courts (AP, 5 Feb). The desire for war namesakes goes beyond one’s offspring. British authorities have denied permission to name a horse *Saddam Hussein* (Gronning). President Bush has become a folk hero in Kuwait, as evidenced by signs on Baghdad Street which have been painted over with the President’s name, although misspelled as *Busch Street* (Reuter, 23 Mar). In Japan a new soft drink called *Desert Storm* has appeared on the market, its can emblazoned with a desert camouflage design and the English description, “New carbonated beverage for active people with fighting spirit.” Language creates reality and fosters acceptance and belief, as demonstrated by the language of the Aranda people of central Australia whose word *tnakama* for ‘to call by name’ is a connotation for ‘to trust’ and ‘to believe’ (Chatwin). The creation of namesakes of war is judgmental, perpetuating insular thinking and questionable values. Such namesakes commend violent confrontation as a viable solution to conflict.

Language is used to reflect judgments and influence opinions regarding weapons of war, giving the impression that one weapon is better or more humane than another and is therefore acceptable. When queried on national television, U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney declared the Iraqi *Scud* missile to be basically old–fashioned, incapable of striking targets with precision. Therefore, being of no military value, they should be referred to as *weapons of terror*. A few days later U.S. President Bush began using this term, leading to suspicion that the phrase had probably been very carefully coined to be systematically implanted into the public consciousness. In contrast, America’s missiles are graced with respectable names such as *Patriot*, *Cruise* and, a blatant misnomer, the *Peacemaker*,² and are described as *smart* and *precision surgical devices* (Jenkins; AP, 14 Feb). An unidentified military official commented:

The term *surgical strike* seems to suggest something very clean and rapier–like. That’s hyperbole. It belies an understanding of what war is really all about. (AP, 14 Feb)

There is no regard for the fact that the U.S. missiles are capable of infinitely greater

annihilation than the Iraqi *weapons of terror*.³ If this semantic obscurity were applied to the familiar biblical story of David and Goliath, the slingshot would be the *weapon of terror*, whereas the sword would be *standard defense equipment* (Jenkins).

Another semantic obscurity occurred in referring to the hypothetical Iraqi biological weapons, which are capable of spreading the disease anthrax among the civilian population. These were considered particularly horrendous and inhumane. In contrast, allied⁴ bombs have “inadvertently” crippled the infrastructure of Baghdad and other cities, destroying water systems and causing grave sanitation problems. If this should result in the spread of a typhoid or cholera epidemic among the civilian population, as U. N. experts foresee, this would be called “unintended collateral consequences of raids on military targets” (Jenkins; Reuter, 21 Feb). In the aftermath of allied air-borne raids, in which 900-kilogram bombs have predictably killed people in proximity to the targets they hit, Iraqi leaders decried the “murder of innocent civilians.” The U.S. military called it *collateral damage* and blamed Iraq for locating military facilities in civilian settings. As Marine Brigadier General Richard Neal commented: “War is a dirty business. Unfortunately there will be collateral damage,” using the military euphemism for civilian “casualties”⁵ (AP, 14 Feb). The Japanese expression *shikata-ga nai* comes to mind, connoting an attitude of helplessness, resignation and, ultimately, acceptance.

Regarding military casualties, the reality of human death was obfuscated by media tallies of how many *armored personnel carriers* or *tanks* had been *killed*, reflecting a mode of thinking more technical than human.⁶ An aircraft did not kill people, but only “delivered its ordnance safely and on target.” The suffering of both military and civilian victims was sublimated under the Pentagon’s deodorized veil of technical jargon, e.g., *BDA* for ‘bomb-damage assessment.’ This *sanitized war* has demonstrated how we have become deaf to the violence we create with language, while the outcries of the dying are drowned in a barrage of war terminology (Kischuck; Ewen). Rarely were numbers disclosed—when Saddam Hussein stated that 20,000 Iraqis had been killed, he was not considered a reliable source. It is more palatable to the public to remain ignorant regarding the amount of casualties, even those of the “enemy.” As allied offensive operations came to a close, on 3 March 1991 media critic James Lemoine decried the lack of statistics concerning Iraqi casualties. He asserted that war is not only “unpleasant,” but also “pornographic”.

Another euphemistic military term referring to the “dirty business” of war is *mopping up operation*. This obfuscation is far too friendly a description for a situation involving the death of humankind (Duerson). In this type of military action, isolated or dispersed remnants of a defeated “enemy” are eliminated from a particular area. *Mopping up* exemplifies the criminal abuse of non-technical, common terminology, creating an existence where human lives are as extraneous as household dust.

One of the most offensive criminalizations of language is the terminology *friendly fire*, used to indicate accidental attack on one’s own allies. A weapon is discharged with the intent to kill, but if it inadvertently strikes one’s comrade, it is labelled *friendly*. Regarding a U.S. investigation into Gulf war *friendly fire* mishaps, Army Lieutenant

General Thomas Kelly commented: "When a bullet leaves a gun, it doesn't have any friends." (AP, 3 Feb) Historically, casualties by *friendly fire* have been inevitable due to the difficulty in distinguishing friend from foe while trying to survive a close battle. The most famous U.S. accidental death happened in 1863 in Virginia when a Confederate general rode in the dark, scouting the way for further attack. Upon returning, his troops mistook him for the enemy and opened fire, killing Stonewall Jackson. Numerous deaths by *friendly fire* have occurred in every war, including the infamous Operation Cobra on the Normandy peninsula in 1944 in which the U.S. Air Force dropped 3,400 tons of bombs on the German lines, close ahead of Allied ground troops. Ironically, the German commanding general survived this overwhelming attack, but his American counterpart did not—he was one of 558 U.S. casualties of U.S. Air Force *friendly fire* (Furgurson). Perhaps the American public's recent show of concern for censuring loss of lives by *friendly fire* in the Gulf war is due to a limited tolerance for high U.S. casualties and an urgency to account for each death. The U.S. Senate vote authorizing war had been very close at 52–47, with reluctant voters changing in favor of war only after Representative Les Aspin⁷ read a white paper predicting an easy victory with fewer than 1,000 deaths. In addition, a *Los Angeles Times* poll taken 17 January 1991, the second day of the war, disclosed that less than 40 percent of the respondents would consider the war successful if more than 1,000 U.S. troops were killed (Black). Despite the euphemism, each death by *friendly fire* was tallied and mourned by the American public and found to be difficult to accept or even tolerate.

Unfortunately, these same polls have indicated that Americans would be willing to resort to any means to keep down U.S. casualties, including *weapons of mass destruction*. The U.S. arsenal dispersed in the Middle East included several hundred nuclear weapons, although the general public was not cognizant of this fact. Surveys that dared mention the *N-word* revealed that a disconcertingly significant percentage of the American public would accept the logic of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—*nuking*⁸ Iraqis in order to save Americans. Two prewar surveys indicated 24 percent would favor use of tactical nuclear weapons if "we became bogged down in a stalemate" (Morrow) or "to quickly end any hostilities and save the lives of U.S. forces" (Barry). After two weeks of conflict, the deplorable results of a Gallup poll indicated the approval rate had risen to 45 percent. On Japanese television 21 February 1991, an unidentified American interviewed in Detroit spoke openly in favor of a nuclear attack. Advocates argue that using nuclear weapons in the Gulf would pose no threat of an *exchange* with the Soviet Union—a language obscurity that implies gift-giving rather than disaster. This argument suggests that the only deterrence in recent history has been merely fear of mutual destruction, rather than a ban on all *weapons of mass destruction* as a moral premise. The revelation that the ultimate weapon is not as taboo as we might wish calls for grave contemplation on the nature of humanity's moral condition (Black).

The lexicon used to justify the war in the Persian Gulf has been *the liberation of Kuwait*. Appearing to be ever so noble, this phrase totally obscures a more realistic view of what allied powers were demanding for cessation of this conflict: the return of a

medieval theocratic monarchy which in recent years has ignored its 1962 Constitution prescribing democracy. Moreover, a woman still may not vote and could possibly be beheaded for adultery, whereas a man is free to practice polygamy (Jenkins; AP, 7 Feb). In post-occupied Kuwait there is a saying: "Operation Desert Storm liberated the al-Sabahs but not the people of Kuwait." Despite calls for democratization, the ruling family has made no effort to restore even the limited political freedoms they suspended in 1986. From the safety of a luxury hotel in Saudi Arabia, the Emir proclaimed martial law for a minimum of three months and has sought to destroy the freedom fighters who long for democratization.⁹ Amid the chaos, vigilante bands of Kuwaitis roamed the streets in search of Palestinians and others suspected of collaboration with the Iraqi invaders (Post et al.). In response to the ensuing trials, Amnesty International has proclaimed that Kuwait is torturing prisoners and conducting unfair trials of those accused of collaborating with Iraq (AP, 13 June). On 22 March 1991, the same day President Bush declared: "Now the liberation of Kuwait is complete," stateless Kuwaiti bedoon women angrily awaited the return of their sons and husbands from nearly eight months in Iraqi military prisons. Their anger stemmed from the suffering their families must endure from the usual discriminatory treatment toward bedoon, low class descendants of nomadic Bedouin tribes. They carry separate identity cards, have no passports and cannot attend schools or go to public hospitals. Their only employment option is to join the army. The released bedoon prisoners, who had shared the same prison cells with the Kuwaiti-national soldiers, were being separated as not eligible for the plush welcome celebrations bestowed upon the Kuwaiti prisoners. As the discrimination policy became evident, the awaiting bedoon women were not accurately informed of where to meet their relatives, a reflection of discrimination that marks most aspects of life in Kuwait. A British army chaplain, who trucked military rations to bedoons who were refused food at government cooperatives, claimed the Kuwaiti policies bear a resemblance to the apartheid of South Africa (Drogin; AP, 23 Mar). This we smugly refer to as *liberation*?

Often President Bush's rhetoric was reduced to explaining this *just war* as a conflict between *good* and *evil*, promulgating the American puritanical ethic. Yukio Okamoto, formerly of Japan's Foreign Ministry, concurs with Bush's simplification, insisting "that the Gulf war is a rare instance in which good and evil are clearly delineated"¹⁰ (Blustein). This self-righteous mode of thought is reminiscent of another Orwell concept appearing in his satirical novel *Animal Farm*, in which the animals have rebelled and taken over the farm from their human masters. The animals maintain morale when threatened by impending danger by chanting, "four legs good, two legs bad" (Jenkins).

Further evidence of language abuse censured by George Orwell can be found in America's most controversial conflict, the Vietnam War, which was never officially declared a *war*, although 1.35 million people¹¹ were killed during the decade of its duration. U.S. President John F. Kennedy's initial involvement was in sending more than 10,000 American *military advisers*, and the U.S. became further engrossed in the *effort* with each successive president (Hoberman). In his 1950 essay entitled "Politics

and the English Language,” Orwell wrote:

Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification.

Twenty years later U.S. military leaders referred to the conflict in Vietnam with the same misnomer: *pacification* (Jenkins).

In contrast, the term *war* may not accurately apply to the conflict in the Persian Gulf, as Jeffrey Record of *The Baltimore Sun* retorts:

A real war involves continuous and reciprocal lethal activity on both sides, whereas the most remarkable aspect of Iraq’s military performance was its extraordinary inertia. Desert Storm was a campaign against a zombie-like enemy whose own fire proved less of a threat to our forces than did friendly fire.

At the beginning of May, Greenpeace reported a loss of more than 150,000 lives as a result of the 43-day *war*, and at least 5 million people have lost their homes or jobs. The tally continues to escalate, with as many as 30,000 refugees and Iraqis dying in the month following the report. Of this total, only 343 allied troops died in combat and accidents, among them were 266 Americans, of whom 145 were killed in action. Despite allied efforts to ensure their use of *smart, precision weapons* was perceived as humane and moral, the imbalance of casualties is overwhelming, inhumane and immoral.

In the afterglow of “victory” in the Gulf war, while America basked in patriotic frenzy, welcoming home the conquering heroes and celebrating the *Mother of all Parties*,¹² a disturbing paradox is that the American public appeared to be “pacified” by a *good war*, seemingly immune to concern for domestic tribulations such as the economic recession. The American public appeared to have regained faith in military power—a big war was won, a 100-hour ground war was fought with fewer American deaths by gunfire than occur in U.S. cities on an average weekend. In the midst of celebration, there was little concern for the moral and political failure this war represents (Barnet). Politicians and the media acclaimed the glory of a *bloodless* and *efficient* war, rationalizing the death toll by proclaiming “blame Saddam.” Postwar reports demonstrate the obscurity of these remarks—we must accept responsibility and take into account that in less than six weeks a country has been brutally devastated. The Iraqi populace are the defenseless victims of this outrage that, according to a United Nations report, continues to trigger further death through contaminated water and lack of sanitation due to “near-apocalyptic” damage to the Iraqi infrastructure (Avaton; *Daily Yomiuri*). Upon returning from a post-war investigation, Dr. Jack H. Geiger, president of Physicians for Human Rights, declared the real meaning of high-technology warfare is “bomb now, die later” (Mathews). Manipulation of language during the Gulf war has reaffirmed the belief that resorting to mass violence is a legitimate and desirable means to resolve conflict.

SLANG USAGE AMONG U.S. TROOPS IN THE GULF

While obscure language distorts the reality of war for the public back home, U.S. military personnel participating in the Gulf war spawned their own vocabulary, which is a more accurate description of the realities of war. Their highly inventive, often humorous slang reflects an endurance of the hardships of war. This seemingly non-sensical sentence is in fact authentic language in that it conveys meaning among the U.S. troops:

Bullet-stoppers swelter under *Big Red* in the *Square War* and *get their guts right* on *grease* while they wait to *smoke 'em* to a *target-rich environment*.

The following glossary will assist in decipherment:

Big Red—desert sun

Birth Control Devices (BCD's)—military-issue eye glasses

bullet-stopper—navy slang for a marine

G. I. Joe—U.S. serviceman

get your gut right—to eat

grease—food

ground-pounder—U.S. serviceman

grunt—U.S. serviceman

Hoorah!—anything good

Saudi champagne—mixture of carbonated mineral water & grape juice

smoke 'em—arrive somewhere fast

Square War—the conflict fought from conservative Islamic Saudi Arabia (no alcohol, no sex, no drugs)

squids—marine slang for navy personnel

target-rich environment—Iraq or Kuwait

WMs—women marines

(Reuter, 10 Feb)

PERSIAN GULF WAR OF WORDS

The Gulf war raged via the news media, as vicious language was used as a weapon. Hyperbole, exaggerated accusations and inaccurate elucidations functioned as propaganda, with the Iraqi *Mother of Battles Radio* in the forefront. Compiled by the Associated Press, the following are the choicest selections from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the U.S.:

From the Iraqi Media—

PRESIDENT BUSH: *Criminal Bush, oppressor Bush, Satan, criminal tyrant, racist Bush, loathsome criminal, evil butcher, America's Satan, criminal failure, the grand Satan, Satan of the era*

SAUDI KING FAHD: *Midget agent, traitor Fahd, agent Fahd, the betrayer of the two holy mosques, enemy of God, the one who allied*

himself with forces of evil and shame, Fahd and every ingrate, infidel, blasphemer and ignorant like him

ROYAL SAUDI FAMILY: *Evil Jewish family plaguing the Arab land and holy places*

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT HOSNI MUBARAK: *Midget agent, misfit Hosni, traitor and agent Hosni, frightened coward, lacking in manliness*

SAUDI ARABIA: *The evil kingdom*

ISRAEL: *Hated daughter of the United States*

ISRAELIS: *Criminal Zionist spiders, arrogant Zionists, filthy Zionists*

ALLIED FORCES: *Forces of evil and atheism, crowd of infidels, horde of despised evil ones, despicable alliance, renegade invaders, forces of infidelity, corruption and treason, ravens of savagery (warplanes)*

IRAQI FORCES: *The faithful soldiers, the faithful men, soldiers of righteousness, soldiers of Islam, the valiant men*

From Saudi Radio—

SADDAM HUSSEIN: *The aggressor, tyrant ruler of Baghdad, the dictator of Baghdad, the imbecile, wanton reckless ruler of Baghdad, the person who thinks he is right in everything, the one who lost his way, the tyrant of Iraq, Saddam the ingrate, the shocker of Iraq (the name Saddam in Arabic can mean shocker or one who confronts)*

From American Newspaper Editorials—

SADDAM HUSSEIN: *One of the world's most dangerous men, the Hitler of the 1990s, the Butcher of Baghdad, a madman who wants to rule the Middle East, delusional, doomed, a cat's paw (who) has grown very long claws, godfather of terrorists, keeper of hostages, scourge of the Kurds* (AP, 3 Feb)

During wartime, accusations abound, reeking of hypocrisy and serving as propaganda to manipulate perception of reality. President George Bush called Saddam Hussein *the Dictator* and *the Aggressor*, while he had recently given himself dictatorial powers over the U.S. economy by executive order, and one year prior had aggressively invaded Panama. The U.S. has many "aggressors" as allies, e.g., China invaded Tibet, Turkey seized Cyprus, Syria occupies Lebanon and Israel invaded areas of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. Many countries under dictatorship are also politically amiable, e.g., Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Ethiopia, China, U.S.S.R. Bush's opportunistic analogy between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler pales significantly when it is remembered that a decade of murder and mustard gas in Iran and Iraq never prompted such a comparison (Crow). Bush would habitually mispronounce the Iraqi President's name—/sædəm/ instead of /sadám/—perhaps as a humiliation. The U.N. resolution calling for an area peace conference was deemed "rewarding aggression" and was ignored (Paul).

ORATORY SKILLS OF WARTIME LEADERS

A reasonable amount of oratory skill is required of politicians and heads of state, and particularly those who draw their constituency into conflict should be competent communicators. In his essay entitled "How Lincoln Won the War with Metaphors," historian James McPherson argues that a leader's language can determine the course of history. Confederate President Jefferson Davis "spoke in platitudes," but Abraham Lincoln was inspired by his favorite books, the *Bible*, *Aesop's Fables*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and the works of William Shakespeare. McPherson expounds:

What do these have in common? They are rich in figurative language—in allegory, parable, fable, metaphor—in words and stories that seem to say one thing but mean another, in images that illustrate something more profound than their surface appearance.

Lincoln's manner of communicating inspired and mobilized Americans to service, to endure the hardships of war necessary for victory. McPherson believes the only other U.S. president to employ this skill was Franklin D. Roosevelt.

U.S. President George Bush often speaks figuratively as well, but with a lack of skill in eloquence and elegance. His utterances "kick ass" and "read my lips" (inspiring bumper stickers and T-shirts adorned with "kick their ass, take their gas") are not of the caliber of Lincoln's "If we do not make common cause to save the good old ship of the union on this voyage, nobody will have a chance to pilot her on another voyage." (Lippman) Bush's state of the Union address of 6 February 1991 epitomized his lack of rhetoric, his incompetence as an orator. His speech was neither imaginative nor inspiring, and was rife with cliches, platitudes and banalities such as :

The war is 'a great struggle in the skies and on the seas and sands,' waged against a man who 'violated everything the community of nations holds dear,' its ultimate purpose 'a world worthy of our struggle and worthy of our children's future.' (Yardley)

Bush often spoke in messianic exaggerations in statements such as the "whole world standing against Saddam."

A recurring cliché in Bush's speech was the proposal for a *New World Order*, seemingly an attempt to solicit enthusiasm and sacrifice in support of a dream for a better world. Similarly, former President Kennedy referred to a *New Frontier* and Roosevelt spoke of a *New Deal*. Bush has obfuscated his intentions—his *New World Order* is without description or definition, therefore, exempt from criticism. Meanwhile, most Americans supported and fought for a *New World Order* during the Gulf crisis without understanding what they were supporting. It is a type of mastery manipulation of language obscurity used by leaders to sway masses to do their bidding. Of grave consternation is the fact that Hitler employed this same phrase. There is danger in the possibility of the intent of this *New World Order* being a totalitarian system superseding the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights and promoting a new, greater totalitarian system

throughout the world (Shockley).

In his post-war speech of 6 March 1991, President Bush said the *New World Order* represented the “weak being protected by the strong” and protecting “freedom and respect for human rights.” To avoid confusion, a clear, succinct definition is required. Because language empowers us to actively create reality, we must implement this influence by adding the word *democracy* each time the concept of a *New World Order* is presented. By modifying the term to *New Democratic World Order*, we would be energizing and promoting democracy in any future world government (Shockley). Let us hope Bush’s aspirations of protecting “freedom and respect for human rights” are inclusive of all humankind. Let us hope any world order is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of humanity and all creation, with the realization that the price that must be reckoned for reliance on violent confrontation is our own threatened survival, as well as that of our planet.

NOTES

¹The west side of the Berlin Wall had served as a forum for artistic and literary expression, and Walter Momper, mayor of Berlin, wrote:

It is important for the Wall to be remembered for being a concrete proof of political failure as well as for the way people got used to it and integrated it into everyday life by painting it. Art challenged concrete and art won.

Despite the diverse mediums and modes of expression, a vast majority of the themes depicted a direct relationship to the Wall, conveying the hope of surmounting borders and the wish for the Wall to topple. Images include holes, doors, ladders, zippers; often a better world is depicted on the other side. Fragments of adorned Wall remain (Kuzdas).

²The Peacemaker weapons were not deployed in the Gulf war.

³A most unusual psychological weapon deployed in the Gulf war was ‘heavy metal’ rock music, which was blasted into Iraqi-occupied areas during the wee hours of the night. Undoubtedly, the language of the lyrics was considered disturbing to the Iraqi soldiers, as well as the musical quality. China concluded a similar *loudspeaker war* with Taiwan in April. Instead of music, loudspeakers had blared propaganda across the narrow Taiwan Strait for decades. The official New China News Agency reported:

The move is aimed to further relax tension in the Taiwan Strait, as well as to create a harmonious and happy atmosphere, in which compatriots on both sides of the strait are able to live a normal life (Reuter).

⁴I detected some sensitivity in Japan to use of the term *allied* forces as opposed to *multi-national* or *coalition* forces. The point of contention is the reference to the Allies of World War II. A conjectural conclusion is that this term implied the exclusion of Japan. Considering Japan’s lack of participation, perhaps this was intentional and could be further evidence of language creating reality. Americans found themselves in the awkward position of scolding Japan (and Germany) for not being sufficiently warlike.

⁵Also the term *casualties* could be considered euphemistic in that it seemingly refers to an informal, innocuous chance encounter.

⁶In modern warfare, particularly involving an air force or navy, very often the only experience of participants is technical—firing missiles, dropping bombs—so that military personnel are quite removed from seeing human results. In the early days of the Gulf war, officers aboard the guided

missile frigate U.S.S. Nicholas were shocked after raiding an occupied oil field platform in the Gulf and capturing Iraqi prisoners-of-war. The Iraqis were frightened and trembling, and the sheer fright that is part of war was realized by the U.S. officers as they were seeing the war as altogether real with dire consequences. The five body bags containing Iraqis killed in the skirmish intensified the affect on the Americans. For the first time there were faces to accompany the war, for the first time they were seeing the results of their actions (Ruby).

⁷Mr. Aspin is a Democrat from the state of Wisconsin.

⁸The colloquial term *nuking* could be considered a euphemism in that the current slang usage refers to cooking or heating by a microwave oven, a practice that present technology has deemed relatively safe. Therefore, it is feasible to conclude that this euphemistic term has resulted from usage in a manner that is the antithesis of a euphemism. In other words, the original term was offensively explicit, i.e., meaning to detonate nuclear weapons. As the usage evolved and adopted a seemingly safe (uneuphemistic) meaning, now when used to refer to the original definition, i.e., nuclear weapons, it is euphemistic in that it has become relatively inoffensive.

⁹As allied soldiers were driving out the Iraqis and *liberating* Kuwait, dissident lawyer Hamed al-Jouaan answered a knock at his door. The visitor smiled sadistically and shot him in the chest. A bullet lodged in Jouaan's spine, paralyzing him from the waist down. He claims the attack was "politically motivated" by "some local group that doesn't want to see truth and democracy in Kuwait." Others accuse the ruling al-Sabah family of involvement (Post et al.).

¹⁰Mr. Okamoto found little sympathy for his simplistic views in Japan (Blustein).

¹¹Approximately 900,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, 50,000 Americans and 400,000 South Vietnamese died in the war (Macmillan).

¹²This is one of many satirical references to the Iraqi "Mother of Battles Radio."

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