GEORGE H.W. BUSH,
"A WHOLE EUROPE, A FREE EUROPE" (31 MAY 1989)

Andrew P. Hogue
Baylor University

Abstract: As the Cold War's end neared in spring 1989, President George H.W. Bush remained publicly silent for four months in response to Gorbachev's peace overtures. Eventually, Bush unveiled what his administration termed a "bold" and "radical" initiative toward the Soviet Union in his Mainz, Germany address. An examination of the speech, however, reveals that the strategy was neither bold nor radical, espousing instead a Cold War posture that ended the conflict more gradually and "naturally."

Key Words: Cold War, Foreign Policy, U.S. Internationalism, George H.W. Bush, containment, metaphor, nature

"A long time ago,
An enslaved people heading toward freedom
Made up a song:
Keep Your Hand On The Plow! Hold On!"
—Langston Hughes

George H.W. Bush entered the White House in 1989 with impeccable foreign policy credentials. He had served as a congressional representative from Texas, diplomat to China, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. During the 1980s, he served two terms as vice president of the United States and went on to be elected to a single term as president from 1989-1993. One of his crowning achievements as president was his handling of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union, which effectively ended over 40 years of the Cold War. In 1991, Bush conducted a war in the Persian Gulf that was popular at home and abroad, viewed by most as successful and as the correct response to the political exigence of his time. When all was said and done, Bush had been vital in ushering in a "New World Order."[1]

In juxtaposing these tremendous achievements with the failures of his domestic agenda—which have been judged by most to be the primary stimulus of his political downfall—the tendency is to remember the Bush years as driven by a clear and forward-moving foreign policy agenda. Directly or indirectly, much scholarship seems to support this impulse. As Timothy Cole argues, for example: "A sense of mission embraced by Bush rhetoric bridged the Cold War and post-Cold War worlds."[2] Daniel Franklin and Robert Shephard also offer such praise, claiming that Bush exhibited "an

Andrew P. Hogue: Andrew_Hogue@baylor.edu
Last Updated: January 2008
Copyright © 2009 (Andrew P. Hogue).
Voices of Democracy, ISSN #1932-9539. Available at http://www.voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/.

excellent talent for guiding the United States through complex situations" in the international arena.[3] And Catherine L. Langford argues explicitly that while Bush had no domestic vision, he did have a clear international one.[4]

To be sure, others are quick to point out that Bush's foreign policy leadership often lacked the sort of dynamism usually associated with a clear and forward-moving mission. William Forrest Harlow has examined Bush's "rhetoric of silence,"[5] and Mark J. Rozell has astutely reminded us that Bush's style in international relations fell short of demonstrating decisive leadership.[6] Still, Harlow emphasizes that silence and "ceremonial whisper" were the "best choices" aimed toward winning the "last great rhetorical battle of the Cold War."[7] And Rozell insinuates that despite Bush's rejection of strong *rhetorical* leadership in foreign affairs, his policies directed toward a U.S. victory in the Cold War were focused and adept, "emphasizing substance over rhetoric."[8]

The assumption underlying each of these arguments is that Bush possessed a clear mission with regard to his foreign policies. Scholars have presupposed that in light of Bush's attention and success in the international arena, the president's goals were clear—first to move "beyond containment," then to end the Cold War peaceably, next to support democracy and self-determination behind the Iron Curtain, and ultimately to establish a "New World Order." Some presume in the process that Bush intentionally set out to attain these goals promptly and successively, even if through more "prudent" or silent means. In many ways, Bush did focus his attention on foreign affairs and did achieve important accomplishments—no small feat for a one-term president, almost 45 years after the commencement of the Cold War.

However, such assumptions are misleading. It may well be the case, speaking broadly, that Bush's goals from the outset closely resembled the results of his foreign policies. And indeed, the success Bush encountered in the international realm might well be attributable to his own political skill and diplomatic acumen. But it is not the case, as many scholars presuppose, that all along Bush aimed to accomplish his goals promptly, moving with a clear sense of mission toward their completion. Examining his public speeches helps challenge some of the assumptions that prevail about the president's foreign policy blueprint.

George Bush was arguably in no rush to accomplish the most important of his foreign policy goals—ending the Cold War. As the world changed quickly and dramatically in America's favor throughout 1989—Bush's first year as president—the commander-in-chief advanced with caution. In his first four months in office, while Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev proceeded to change the world unilaterally through *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and voluntary arms reductions, Bush virtually bunkered himself with his national security team to assess secretly their foreign policy agenda, responding initially only with silence toward Gorbachev's overtures. Again, this propensity for silence has been documented, but it has been attributed by scholars to Bush's "substance over rhetoric" strategy and his ability to utilize prudence and silence as the "best choices" aimed at ending the Cold War peaceably.[9] Yet, when Bush emerged from this initial four-month silence in May 1989, he delivered a series of five speeches unveiling his administration's broad foreign policy goals, which he labeled "beyond containment." He followed this, at the end of May, with a trip to Europe, where through

NATO agreements he gave substance to the "beyond containment" strategy, pledging to reduce armaments in Western Europe and appearing, by most accounts, to engage Gorbachev's expressed desire to reduce tensions. But when Bush explained these new policies in West Germany on May 31, he did so using a subtle metaphor that merits closer attention and lends an important insight into his political motives in the Cold War.

From the rostrum of Rheingold Auditorium in Mainz on May 31, 1989, President Bush discussed his "vision" of a Europe whole and free and the first steps in his goal to move "beyond containment." He did so steeped in images of nature, the entailments of which suggest that he was working to delay his administration's response in order to accomplish three ends: first, to overcome his skepticism of Soviet motives; second, to ensure that the process by which countries became free in the East was a gradual and natural one; and third, to invent a post-Cold War strategy, one that was not in existence in May 1989.

Before examining this metaphor in further detail, I will first explain more fully its meaning and relate that meaning to Bush's political motives. Such symbolism, I will argue, represented the perpetuation of a Cold War-style of governance more than a bold new initiative, and occurred at precisely the time Gorbachev seemed to be signaling an end to the Cold War. Such a conclusion works to interrogate what are typically perceived as the deliberate and forward-moving assumptions of the Bush administration's foreign policy at the end of the Cold War era.

The Rhetorical Situation

Bush faced in the beginning months of his presidency what was, in effect, the end of the Cold War. Some wondered, in fact, whether the four-decade conflict had already ended before Bush took the oath of office, a supposition not without merit. As early as June 1988, Ronald Reagan asserted that, "Quite possibly, we're beginning to take down the barriers of the postwar era; quite possibly we are entering a new era in history, a time of lasting change in the Soviet Union."[10] Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, ventured a step further, recalling later that by the end of 1988, "to me, it was all over but the shouting."[11]

This turn of events was almost unfathomable for much of the public at the time, for Americans had known only hostile relations with the Soviet Union for more than 40 years; and as Barbara Farnham points out, such central beliefs were to be altered only with great difficulty.[12] But Reagan's chief presidential aim was to win the Cold War. He had entered office in 1981 with a straightforward, if risky, objective to do what no administration prior had so deliberately sought to do: to push the Soviet political and economic system to a breaking point; to deal with mounting structural tensions; and, in John Lewis Gaddis's words, to "exploit those tensions with a view to destabilizing the Kremlin leadership and accelerating the decline of the regime it ran."[13] Few, however, thought such an outcome possible so quickly.

Much of Reagan's rhetoric and activity throughout his eight years in office reflected efforts to bring about the internal demise of the Soviet Union. Reagan's was a plan for freedom and democracy to spread to the whole world, leaving "Marxism-

Leninism on the ash-heap of history."[14] He would see to this with a barrage of tactics, including but not limited to a nuclear and conventional weapons buildup, economic sanctions against the Soviets, aggressive promotion of human rights inside Soviet borders, and visionary, confrontational rhetoric claiming with no hesitation that the Soviet Union was nothing if not evil.[15] He also unveiled, on March 23, 1983, what might have been his most important policy venture—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)—what many in the press called "Star Wars." This was an innovative plan, one with technicalities beyond the average auditor's grasp, but one that claimed—factually or not—to defend the United States against any long-range nuclear missile attack. When Reagan unveiled the plan, the United States held a distinct technological advantage over the Soviets, and in one speech he re-scripted the history of scientific advancement to render technology—the very evil that gave birth to the arms race in the first place—as the sole means by which nuclear holocaust in America might be averted.[16] For all the Soviets knew, the United States might be capable of creating a laser defense shield, thus rendering the USSR's first-strike capabilities null and void. And while the SDI might well have been a bluff, it was more importantly effective, raising the prospect of not just reducing nuclear weapons—a goal that had dominated diplomatic talks for some years—but of eliminating the need for nuclear weapons altogether. By challenging the Soviet Union in an arena where it could not compete, Reagan created the strongest possible incentive for Soviet leaders to abandon a nuclear arms competition.[17]

All the while, Reagan's strategic timing, what the Greeks knew as *kairos*, was uncanny, for domestic strains mounted behind the Iron Curtain. The Soviet economy was stagnant and its environment in shambles; defense spending was high and life expectancy low; years of emphasizing education, moreover, were backfiring, as social unrest spread through many pockets across the region. The Kremlin, in short, had its hands full, and to top it off, Konstantin Chernenko, its leader, died in 1985.

Chernenko's successor was Mikhail Gorbachev, a man who would prove fundamentally unlike any of his Kremlin predecessors, all of whom had been so locked into a Marxist vision of the world that they refused any significant changes to Soviet governing structures or diplomatic relations. This simply was not the case with Gorbachev, who was willing to listen to Reagan's keen observations about the country he ran. "The Great Communicator" relished the opportunity to persuade, and his assertions to Gorbachev, as Gaddis points out, could be boiled down to three primary claims: First, that the United States was sincere in wanting to avoid nuclear dangers; second, that a command economy in tandem with an authoritarian governing structure was a recipe for obsolescence in the modern world; and third, that the Soviet Union had become, over time, what it had originally sought to overthrow—an oppressive empire.[18]

Surprisingly, Gorbachev was listening. Moreover, he was unwilling or unable to counter growing dissent in Russia and throughout Eastern Europe. Rhetoric, then, "the art of discovering, in any given case, all the available means of persuasion,"[19] rendered America's traditional containment strategies less necessary, for the Soviet Union, with its maladies exposed and its new open-minded leader at the helm, no longer needed to be contained. It simply needed to be persuaded, and Ronald Reagan proved up to the task.

By the time Reagan left office in January 1989, Gorbachev had already acknowledged many of the failures of the Soviet system both at home and abroad. The same empire that in 1981 used martial law to quash the uprising of the anti-communist Polish labor union *Solidarnosc*, was now virtually disempowered in the Roundtable Talks it held with the group in 1989, leading to the first semi-free elections ever held behind the Iron Curtain. But for all of Gorbachev's gestures indicating that the Soviet Union was unwilling to and increasingly incapable of stopping these uprisings—and that it was more interested in *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and arms reductions—the incoming Bush administration remained unconvinced, or in the words of National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, "suspicious of Gorbachev's motives and skeptical of his prospects."[20]

But if ever a honeymooning president might be immediately trusted with his foreign policy judgments, surely George Bush was that president. Indeed, Bush entered office on the heels of eight years of serving in the Reagan White House, and did so with a nearly unimpeachable foreign policy résumé. In light of these credentials and the situation he inherited, his entrée to the presidency was one his forbears might only have dreamed about. Just a month after Bush's election and five weeks prior to his inauguration, Gorbachev told the United Nations that he was prepared—unprodded and unilaterally—to shrink the Soviet military by half a million, including 50,000 soldiers and 5,000 tanks currently deployed in Eastern Europe.[21] Furthermore, when Bush sent his new secretary of state, James Baker, to meet for the first time with the Soviet leader in Moscow, Gorbachev once again offered a unilateral reduction—this time of short-range nuclear weapons—and once again captured headlines and Western imaginations.

The Bush team wanted time to pore over these developments and was measured in its initial responses, virtually remaining silent in public. When pressed by a reporter in April 1989 on why his administration had not yet, after three months, responded to Gorbachev's advances, Bush quipped: "We're making a prudent review, and I will be ready to discuss it with the Soviets when we are ready."[22] Bush, it turned out, would not be "ready" for the first four months of his term, during which time he and his close advisers deliberated privately about an American response to Soviet overtures. Bush was persistent in his message that calculation was necessary and dramatics were not: "I don't feel the need for some precipitous and dramatic initiative," he said.[23]

Even so, American-Soviet relations appeared to be nearing a breakthrough that seemed unimaginable for nearly four decades. In light of the situation's gravity, Bush simply wanted time to make sure that his response was the correct one. He met with his NSC staff and foreign policy advisers frequently, with no public explanations of what they were thinking or planning. But the tactic wore thin the patience of many, including Gorbachev. Here, after all, was a president virtually being handed the Cold War's final episode, and he refused to respond until he was "ready." Gorbachev complained to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in April that the president's "hesitation" might well derail the momentum of positive U.S.-Soviet relations.[24]

It would be another month before Bush would make public his response, and he would do so with a series of five foreign policy addresses during May 1989 that served to unveil the results of four months of secret deliberations. The common thread linking each of these speeches was the administration's new foreign policy theme of moving "beyond containment" in its policies toward the Soviet Union. Bush first broached this idea in his May 12 Texas A&M University commencement address and repeated it emphatically in subsequent speeches at Boston University on May 21, at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy on May 24, and then again upon departing for and arriving in Europe on May 26.[25] His May 31 address in Mainz would constitute the full realization of this "beyond containment" idea, coming directly on the heels of the May 28-30 NATO Summit, which was the main purpose of Bush's Europe trip.

Bush called the "beyond containment" concept a "bold one," and described it as the overarching goal of his administration's foreign policy. With great ambition, a senior member of his NSC staff also called it, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, "a *radical* conceptual departure for American policy in the postwar period toward the U.S.S.R."[26] But as would become evident in the Mainz speech just a few days later, the concept in practice was anything but radical, and it was hardly a departure from Bush's predecessors.

Scheduled weeks in advance, the May 31 Mainz address was to be an important one, giving substantive clarity to the ambiguity of "beyond containment" as rendered in the weeks between the Texas A&M speech and Bush's European departure. On the whole, the May 26-June 1 trip to Europe would be Bush's first presidential visit to that continent and his first chance to try out his "beyond containment" ideas before those foreign allies most affected by U.S. policies. Drafts of the Mainz speech began to take shape as early as May 17—just five days after the "beyond containment" theme was first introduced—and writers Mark Davis and Christina Martin crafted significant portions of the text before Bush even departed for Europe.[27]

Looming between Bush's May 26 departure date and the scheduled May 31 address at Mainz was the much-anticipated NATO summit of May 28-30 in Brussels, Belgium.[28] Functioning also as a 40th birthday party for the Cold War alliance, the meeting was expected to produce an allied response to Gorbachev's arms reductions proposals and to move the 16-nation NATO community toward more common ground in the changing landscape of East-West relations. The summit was of particular importance to the West Germans, who had borne a unique burden throughout the Cold War era. That country's leaders had spoken loudly in recent months, in the wake of Gorbachev's positive steps, about their distaste for NATO's West German stockpile of battlefield nuclear weapons and short-range nuclear missiles, which NATO had long housed there to deter a Soviet attack on the West. But as Irving Kristol pointed out in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed in early May, NATO countries—especially the United States—failed to appreciate the ramifications from the German point of view; in the event of a Russian military advance, West Germany would be the nuclear battlefield in defense of the NATO alliance, and it was the only country whose self-defense almost inevitably involved its own self-destruction.[29] Understandably, Germans had been excited by Gorbachev's initiatives to disarm and by his sudden warmth toward the West more generally. At stake for them was significant diminishment of the palpable threat of nuclear destruction. The NATO summit was to address these concerns, and it was the venue for Bush to begin implementation of his "bold" and "radical" new foreign policy goals. The Mainz rostrum, then, just one day after the summit, would be the locale where he would elaborate on NATO's response to Gorbachev an d on America's vital role in the emerging post-Cold War world.

George H. W. Bush and "A Europe Whole and Free"

Prominent Texas Democrat Ann Richards once said famously of Bush just prior to his nomination to the 1988 Republican presidential ticket, that the Vice President was born with "a silver foot in his mouth."[30] While his oratorical abilities were not the intended butt of Richards' joke, they might as well have been, for public address had long been a liability to George Bush's political ambition. Martin J. Medhurst and others have noted a glaring hole in Bush's exquisite educational training, for absent among his French lessons, his Latin, and his literature at the East Coast's finest prep schools and universities was a course designed to train him in the art of public speaking.[31] Bush did, however, have eight years to watch the master up close, and while one might expect eight years of Reagan to rub off in a positive manner on his successor, the opposite seems to have taken place. Bush, it has been documented, clearly distinguished the showiness of politics from the important work of governance, and perhaps more importantly, he became convinced along the way that George Bush could never be Ronald Reagan. "Don't ever think I can do that," he once told aides in reference to a great Reagan rhetorical moment. "I am not Ronald Reagan."[32]

The president made clear early on that his administration would avoid "rhetorical overkill" and "lofty" language. He preferred, instead, short speeches that were modest in tone, and his speechwriters have since recalled his tendency to strike from their drafts any grandiose rhetoric that to him felt phony.[33] These sentiments led Bush, unfortunately, to purge Reagan's communications and speechwriting staffs when he ascended to the presidency in 1988.[34] He moreover relegated rhetorical leadership to a position separate from and secondary to governing, which often resulted in a myriad of injurious effects, not the least of which was his failure to be reelected in 1992. Bush also shied away from the sort of visionary rhetorical leadership that the end of the Cold War summoned, deciding instead to explain most policy decisions modestly, if at all.

His Mainz speech was just one such example of modesty, but it was a telling one. Titled officially by its writers, "A Whole Europe, A Free Europe," the speech at first glance reveals nothing unusual, sounding, in fact, much like the communiqué issued at the NATO summit the day before, and reading more like a report or a press release. A closer look, however, reveals a broader picture of Bush's foreign policy goals, which are couched in a subtle and instructive metaphor.

Bush set out to speak primarily to the citizens of Mainz and to the NATO community more broadly "not just of our mutual defense but of our shared values" (4).[35] He did so by making four proposals that moved the United States and the NATO alliance "beyond containment" (10) in their relations with the Soviets and helped to create what Bush called a Europe "whole and free" (15).

After an opening salutation and brief introduction, Bush began the body of his speech by alluding to the young German students he had just met that morning. This "generation coming into its own," was dissatisfied with Bush's "measured" pace and "sadly" seemed "to have forgotten the lessons of our common heritage" (5). These lessons, Bush emphasized, were a commitment to cooperation and strength through NATO, and a long and steadfast commitment to democracy. Bush set out to defend his measured pace and to convince his audience that it was the right path, as he aimed to preserve the sort of strength and cooperation that had proven successful throughout the Cold War.

Bush made the first three of his four policy proposals on the premise that, as "shared values" (11), they were the sorts of "deeper aspirations of the heart" (4) that cultivated and intertwined strong roots with those of the fragile "seeds" that "lay dormant" (11) behind the Iron Curtain. We must work together first, he said, to promote freedom and self-determination in Eastern Europe: "As the forces of freedom and democracy rise in the East, so should our expectations" (29). Next, we must together bring *glasnost* to Berlin, tearing down the "brutal wall" that "cuts neighbor from neighbor, brother from brother" (32). And further, we must agree that "environmental destruction respects no borders," (35) and we should therefore work together on environmental maladies in our own countries and behind the Iron Curtain.

Straightforward as these proposals seem, a close reading of the speech reveals the subtle use of an instructive guiding metaphor that merits attention, for in it is a picture of what I believe to be an important political motive. This use of metaphor is actually not altogether surprising, for as Robert L. Ivie notes about the Cold War rhetor more generally, he often "prescribes a narrow range of choices for managing international relations realistically. Yet, the stuff of which these durable motives are made is mere metaphor."[36]

More specifically, the Mainz address is guided by images of nature. The Cold War was pictured by Bush as being a long, cold winter, but it was soon to be spring in the garden of the world community. In the metaphor, democracies were depicted as fragile plants—mere seeds frozen in the Cold War tundra in the East—which the Soviets had long disrupted with their expansionism and oppression. The United States and its military presence in Europe had served throughout the winter as the groundskeeper, the one who toiled in the garden, who monitored Soviet expansion and oppression and aimed to contain them. Now as spring was nigh, even as the Soviets were weakening their grip and the plants were gaining strength, the gardener should not cease to toil.

The metaphor, to be sure, is discreet, but as Kenneth Burke reminds us, language can be tricky, and people are not always clear about their motives.[37] The cues here are indirect, which is to say that Bush never overtly called the United States a "gardener," for example. Rather, the metaphor is implicit, with "sources" and "targets"—to use the language of Francis A. Beer and Christ'l De Landtsheer—that are subtle and often extrinsic to the text. We must, therefore, rely on a more holistic pattern recognition in interpreting the indirect metaphor and its meaning.[38]

In doing this, several cues point us to the nature narrative. Bush, for example, spoke in his opening of the "*heartland*" (3) where his immediate audience resided, calling the local "*vineyards*" (3) the very soul of Germany. He spoke of a "*flowering* human spirit" (13) that had been "*withered* from the *chill* of conflict" (13). Bush conjured the "*dormant*" "*seeds* of democracy" (11) and the European lands "*spoiled*" and "*poisoned*" (34) by environmental oversight. He spoke, too, of pervasive "Soviet *expansionism*" (6), of ideas that "*spread*" (20), and of a communist world that was "in *ferment*" (22). He called for "*open skies*" (49), for bans on *chemical* weapons, and for working "together on . . . *environmental* problems" (36).[39] Through such images, one's mind is turned to horticulture, to the processes of planting and tending, where one gardener took great care to toil the ground properly while another poisoned the environment deliberately with its practices.

So, too, does one's mind turn to the seasons through Bush's imagery. He spoke of the "*frozen* tundra" (11) of the *Cold* War, the "*chill* of conflict" (13), and the darkness of "*shadows* of coercion" (25)—all images that pictured the Cold War era as a long winter. He then spoke of "*colors and hues*" returning to the East's "*gray* societies" (55), in addition to the "the time [being] right" for "dormant" "seeds of democracy" to germinate— signs of an imminent spring.

It is, however, in the blending of these two sets of images—horticulture and seasons—that we can begin to see Bush's political motives, for the language that ties them together is telling. The goal, it seems, was a world garden of strong, beautiful, and even "unleashed" (21) flora—"colors and hues" (55) returning to a "gray" (55) world. And one can intuit, based in no small part on universal knowledge of the seasons, that these sorts of plants commence their growth in the spring—which Bush indicated was imminent—for following "decade after decade" of "the flowering human spirit [being] withered from the chill of conflict and oppression . . . the world has waited long enough. The time is right" (13, 15).

In his seminal work on "archetypal metaphors," Michael Osborn writes about seasonal change, regarding it as a metaphor with complex and powerful potential. It can symbolize, he points out, "value judgments rising from hope and despair, fruition and decay." Seasonal succession is an inescapable rhythm, providing a symbol for all stipulations of a present reality or an assured future. As such, the cycle of seasons is immensely significant in poetry and fictional prose, which makes curious the fact that it is a metaphor often ignored by rhetoricians. The reason, Osborn argues, is simple: The succession of seasons is a slow, deliberate process, while the subject matter of rhetoric is often dynamic and immediate. This reality renders a metaphor of prolonged processes "not especially gratifying" for audiences, for it is by its very nature undramatic.[40]

Bush wanted to argue for slow and natural change. "The *chill* of conflict" (13) and the *Cold* War winter might indeed make way for new "colors and hues" (55), but only as a natural process, which renders Bush's selection of the seasonal metaphor fitting. In the first place, it is a nearly universal metaphor, inasmuch as most people have some concept of the changing seasons. This aligns well with Beer and de Landtsheer's argument that to be effective politically, metaphors must engage the audiences to which they are directed, since audiences are not simply "inert receptacles waiting for metaphorical deposits." Rather, they are active participants in constructing political discourse. It is important, therefore, that political rhetors "cement the connection of speaker and audience" through their metaphors, in order to trigger the desired audience response.[41]

Indeed, a particular audience response—namely that Bush wanted support for his effort to slow down the end of the Cold War—is arguably the second and most important reason he chose the seasonal metaphor. There is sufficient evidence, including the use of the nature metaphors, that Bush wanted to wait for the inevitable spring and let nature take its course—hardly the "radical" idea or "bold conceptual departure" that Bush and his NSC team made the policy out to be.

But what about the Soviets, who for more than 40 years had hindered the progress of nature? Their "expansionism" (6) has been cause for angst in the West, Bush said. They had been oppressive (13). They had been restrictive (27) and divisive (33), and had "prevented" free elections—"so long promised, so long deferred" (23). They have created a "shadow of coercion" (25) and a "barrier" (25). And "repression still menaces too many peoples of Eastern Europe" (25), where the "seeds of democracy . . . lay dormant" (11) because of the Soviet grip. What is more, Bush argued, it is Soviet brutality that "cuts neighbor from neighbor" (32). The Soviet Union has, in turn, been a "burden" (6), Bush said, making ours a culture "tempered by challenge" (7). They were responsible, as well, for environmental destruction, that "insidious danger" (34) that "respects no borders" (35).

Bush's critique of past Soviet behavior was undoubtedly harsh, but, to be sure, he was measured in his criticism of the contemporary Soviet Union. While he insisted on certain Soviet reforms, he acknowledged certain "positive steps" (27). He made note, for instance, of possible free elections in Hugary, more liberalized emigration, and the new legal status of *Solidarnosc* and the Catholic Church in Poland. These, in turn, represented all of the markers that "Soviet expansionism" was no longer *expanding*, meaning it was possible for American strategy to move beyond mere containment. But the question lingered: could they be trusted so soon? Could we so soon "[forget] the lessons of . . . how the world we know came to be" (5)? Through the nature metaphors, Bush's answer, it seems, was "not yet."

There are three reasons why Bush might well have opted to slow down the process. First, it seems to be the case, as Scowcroft mentioned, that there remained some degree of skepticism among the Bush team about Gorbachev's "motives" and "prospects."[42] As Barbara Farnham argues, drawing on a vast body of psychology literature, this should be unsurprising, since people tend to interpret new information in light of what they already believe, meaning they are likely to be slow to change their views—especially when these views are central.[43] Bush, a veteran cold warrior and foreign intelligence gourmand, had every reason to harbor deeply rooted skepticism toward the Soviet Union, since during his last quarter century of public service he had known the Soviets only as an untrustworthy enemy. Hence, continued skepticism about Gorbachev's motives was understandable and was a likely cause for Bush wanting to proceed slowly.

But surely it was not the only cause. It seems likely as well, if we allow the metaphor to instruct us, that Bush did not want the "dormant" "seeds of democracy" (11) to sprout *too* quickly, lest they die. Soviet oppression, as he mentioned, seemed to be weakening, but quickly sprouting plants with wills of their own might very well cause the Soviets to clamp down once again. Furthermore, roots are strongest when they are woven together with others. This process does not occur immediately but instead happens gradually and naturally. What is more, plants that grow before spring has fully arrived face great peril, and any country sprouting as a new democracy will no doubt be fragile in its early stages. When plants are fragile and sprout too early, the gardener, inexorably, bears a tremendous burden. And while he might indeed be in position to care for Hungary and Poland at present, he will doubtless be unable to manage dozens of fragile plants if they sprout all at once before spring arrives; the danger of a deep freeze also still existed. The environment was still too harsh, for "environmental destruction respects no borders" (35). So, the dormant seeds could not sprout too quickly.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, Bush wanted to wait for spring to arrive naturally because, while he had an abstract vision for a springtime garden full of healthy plants, there were too many volatile factors still at play in May of 1989 to be able to establish a long-term strategy toward such ends. With focus having been so long turned toward lessening tensions and ending the Cold War, there had been, understandably, little attention given to the details of a post-Cold War transition. Hastening toward that abstract vision, therefore, would be risky; but moving slowly would be less so. Buying time would allow Bush to develop more clearly his strategy for a post-Cold War world, and a seasonal metaphor seemed a fitting way to ask for that time. Spring was inevitable, he argued, for freedom "cannot be denied forever." We would be wise, though, to let it come naturally, in its own time.

In the end, under such a vision, the fragile seeds in the East might surely be prepared to "flourish" in an "age of peace" (8); they might be prepared to "inspire the world" (8) with "principles of human rights, democracy, and freedom" (8); we might all see anew "the flowering human spirit withered from the chill of conflict and oppression" (13). Moreover, Bush reasoned, we would be "unleashing a force" that is "difficult to channel or control" (22), for "democracy's journey east" (25) might continue unbounded.

But important questions remained in the short term. The coming of spring and the growth of democracies might happen naturally in due time, but what should the West do in the meantime? The answer to this question came in the longest and most elaborate portion of the speech—the "matters of the mind" (4)—found in Bush's fourth policy proposal. During this section, he called for a less-militarized Europe, for open skies, and for an environment generally more amenable to burgeoning democracies.

Although Bush's proposal was, on its face, a call for a troop reduction, what he called for more subtly was a Europe that was militarized *still* by NATO and American forces. We have seen in examining the rhetorical situation that Gorbachev's liberalizing overtures in the East were a sign to many in the West that the Cold War was ending, if not already finished. Subsequently, many in the West favored a hastening of arms reduction as the best Western response. But Bush, following the basic Cold War rhetorical form that dates all the way back to Truman, suggested "respectfully" (38) that a "strong Western defense" (38) was still the best road to peace, and that the only pace at which one might prudently alter that reality was a "measured" (38) one. The message, in effect, reinforced the long rhetorical tradition of Cold War containment. And the metaphor that guided was instructive.

America functioned as a sort of caretaker or gardener in Bush's configuration of impending spring. Its task during the previous 45 years had been to care for the fragile plants and dormant seeds, to prepare the garden for spring, and to contain the Soviet Union. In the wake of "Soviet expansionism" (6) and "environmental destruction," (35) the role of the NATO alliance—and more specifically, America's military role in Europe through NATO—had been to take on the "burden" (41) of protection. This involved "work" and "determination," (6) "rededication" (33) and "responsibility" (9). The gardener, moreover, had been unable to "relax" (24). America's had been a "needed presence," (40) Bush said, for the Soviets left to their own devices had choked the fragile plants. Implicitly, Bush argued that the Soviets did not take care of the environment throughout the Cold War, and thus could not be fully trusted during the progression toward the post-Cold War spring. This task belonged to a strong Western alliance.

So, while Bush's fourth and most important proposal involved *reductions* in armaments, we should note that immediately upon proposing it—before he explicated even the first detail of what the plan entailed—Bush injected a word to "those who are impatient with our measured pace" (38). His immediate responses to these voices—and there were, to be sure, many of these on the European continent—was that "strength" is the "catalyst and prerequisite to arms control. We've always believed that a strong Western defense is the best road to peace. Forty years of experience have proven us right" (38). Just like Truman and Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, Nixon and early Reagan, the emphasis here—the instant response—was on keeping a strong military presence in Europe to sustain the containment of the Soviet Union by tending to the garden a bit longer. In a line that could have been lifted directly from Truman, Bush retorted, "We've always believed that a strong Western defense is the best road to peace" (38). Therefore, said the commander-in-chief of American forces, "we will not relax, and we must not waver" (24).

Conclusion

Metaphors of the sort found in the Mainz speech are much more than trivial elements of literary style involving simple replacement of verbal elements.[44] They are rather, as Richard B. Gregg explains, "thoroughly rhetorical cognitive process[es]"—processes that culminate in a point of view, encouraging audiences to adopt some particular perspective.[45] In Burke's terms, they are a picture of motive, and the critic is to exploit the resources of their ambiguity, noting that the speaker intentionally uses certain language and styles to create a particular impact on an audience.[46] Thus, as Gregg argues, metaphors are "a powerful analytical key to unlocking rhetorical meanings."[47]

Bush's reliance on nature metaphors, in addition to his policy decisions to keep Europe militarized, lend credence to the argument that in May 1989, as the world changed quickly and the Cold War's end appeared imminent, Bush's aim was to try to maintain an ongoing Cold War posture and to allow the end to evolve more slowly. Several things may have contributed to this motive, namely that Bush remained skeptical of the Soviet Union, that emerging democracies still faced a perilous environment, and that Bush needed more time to finalize a post-Cold War strategy.

The implications of this tactic are significant. First, it is incumbent that we make an important clarification to the historical record. Several scholarly works rest on the underlying assumption that Bush's foreign policy agenda was clear and forward-moving—that since he aimed to move beyond containment, to end the Cold War peaceably, to establish democracy in the East, and to usher in a "New World Order," then surely he was emboldened all along to meet each of his foreign policy goals promptly, especially given his early foreign policy successes. But by examining Bush's Mainz speech—its use of the nature metaphor as well as the articulated policy decision to keep Europe militarized—we see that, at least for a time in May 1989, Bush was not inclined to move forward boldly, opting instead to uphold a Cold War posture and allow what he perceived as nature to take its course.

Second, we are once again reminded of the importance of attending to presidential speeches generally and to the insightfulness of metaphorical criticism more specifically. Bush unveiled "beyond containment" and proclaimed it a bold new venture. His NSC official declared more vigorously that it was a "radical departure" in America's international relations. But was it? A close reading of the Mainz speech certainly suggests otherwise, and we would do well to take note of his rhetorical ambivalance. Bush and the team he charged with marketing his strategy offered a public interpretation that warrants further interrogation. Rhetorical criticism—in this case, metaphorical criticism—provides us with the requisite tools for sifting through a president's own interpretations. Closely examining speech texts and metaphors often reveals something quite different from the arguments associated with policy debates. In an era when foreign affairs are of vital importance and when foreign policy rhetoric often dominates political discourse, it is imperative to remember that messages are not always what they appear to be on the surface. Metaphors may be subtle, but they are always instructive. In light of what they tell us, the critic will do well to interrogate them, and the public should be encouraged to understand their subtleties.

What is more, the Mainz speech is also instructive on other diplomatic matters, namely the fact that it gives expression to a relatively cautious foreign policy approach, which we might hold in sharp distinction to the approach employed by Bush's son, George W. Bush. In short, the elder Bush, as we have seen here, proceeded cautiously and pragmatically, while the younger Bush has been guided by a clear sense of "mission" in foreign affairs. The "shock and awe" component of the (George W.) Bush Doctrine held that moving quickly to invade Iraq would be beneficial in helping to continue the momentum toward constructing a democratic Middle East.[48] The cost of this approach in human lives has been great, and a significant (and increasing) portion of the American public views the Iraq war as a mistake. In light of this, leaders and citizens alike would do well to remember that the sort of cautiousness and gradualism employed by George H.W. Bush has its merits, namely that cautiousness is more likely to prevent mistakes. In other words, having a clear sense of "mission" might not always yield the most wise actions. Both father and son, it seems, present us with different alternatives for how, in future instances, Americans might proceed when engaging hostile nations.

Andrew P. Hogue is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Political Science Department at Baylor University and a Dawson Fellow at the J.M. Dawson Institute of Church-State Studies. He wishes to thank Martin J. Medhurst and Shawn J. Parry-Giles for their guidance and editorial suggestions in the completion of this unit.

Notes

1 See Roy Joseph, "The New World Order: President Bush and the Post-Cold War Era," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 81-101.

2 Timothy M. Cole, "When Intentions Go Awry: The Bush Administration's Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Political Communication* 13 (1996): 94.

3 Daniel P. Franklin and Robert Shepard, "Is Prudence a Policy? George Bush and the World," in *Leadership and the Bush Presidency: Prudence or Drift in an Era of Change,?* ed., Ryan J. Barilleaux and Mary E. Stuckey (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992), 166.

4 Catherine L. Langford, "George Bush's Struggle with the 'Vision Thing,'" in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, 19-36.

5 William Forrest Harlow, "And the Wall Came Tumbling Down: Bush's Rhetoric of Silence during German Reunification," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, 39-40.

6 See Mark J. Rozell, "In Reagan's Shadow: Bush's Anti-rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28 (1998): 127-138.

7 Harlow, "And the Wall Came Tumbling Down," 39-40.

8 Rozell, "In Reagan's Shadow," 134.

9 See Harlow, "And the Wall Came Tumbling Down;" and Cole, "When Intentions Go Awry."

10 Ronald Reagan, "Remarks to Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, United Kingdom," June 3, 1988, quoted in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16894).

11 George Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 131.

12 Barbara Farnham, "Reagan and the Gorbachev Revolution: Perceiving the End of Threat," *Political Science Quarterly* 116 (2001): 225.

13 John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of American National Security Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 354.

14 Ronald Reagan, "Address to Members of the British Parliament," June 2, 1982, quoted in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16894).

15 Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida," March 8, 1983, quoted in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=41023).

16 See Janice Hocker Rushing, "Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' Address: Mythic Containment of Technical Reasoning," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72 (1986): 415-433.

17 For a more detailed discussion, see Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 358-359.

18 See Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 364-372.

19 Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

20 George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 13.

21 See Michael Dobbs, "Gorbachev Announces Troop Cut of 500,000," *Washington Post*, December 8, 1988, p. A1.

22 George Bush, "The President's News Conference, 7 April 1989," quoted in John Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16894).

23 Quoted in Bush, "The President's News Conference."

24 Quoted in David Remnick and Jonathan C. Randal, "Gorbachev Criticizes Lack of U.S. Policy; Soviet Leader, in London, Voices Impatience With Bush's 'Prolonged' Review of Options," *Washington Post*, April 7, 1989, p. A14.

25 See George Bush, "Remarks at the Texas A&M University Commencement Ceremony in College Station, 12 May 1989," "Remarks at the Boston University Commencement Ceremony in Massachusetts, 21 May 1989," "Remarks at the United States Coast Guard Academy Commencement Ceremony in New London, Connecticut," "Remarks Upon Departure for Europe, 26 May 1989," each available from John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, *The American Presidency Project* [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu).

26 See Dan Oberdorfer, "Bush Finds Theme of Foreign Policy: 'Beyond Containment,'" *Washington Post*, May 28, 1989, p. A30. Emphasis added.

27 See Mark Davis Files, Subject File, 1989-1991, Mainz, 5/31/89 [1] [OA/ID 08747], George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX. The Mainz speech went through eight drafts, the first of which began to take shape May 17. That day it was outlined based partly on a briefing by the Department of State, which, unfortunately, remains classified as of December 2007. Christina Martin did most of the preliminary research for the speech, and Mark Davis did most of the writing. Drafts

circulated among several of Bush's high ranking advisors and EOP staff, who issued revisions, some of which Davis accepted and some of which he did not. Bush first read and revised the text at its fifth draft, initialing it on May 27, the day after he arrived in Europe. At this stage, a significant portion of the text—namely, the fourth policy proposal, which was still being negotiated prior to the NATO summit and was therefore classified—had not yet been added. This portion of the draft simply read in brackets, "THIS SEGMENT TO BE REWRITTEN WHEN CLASSIFIED LANGUAGE INSERTED." Bush made some substantive changes, most importantly strengthening some of the language toward the Soviet Union, which Davis apparently was reluctant to do without Bush's go-ahead.

28 At this summit, the heads of state for all 16 member nations convened. While it was a 40th anniversary celebration, there was much to be accomplished in light of the unprecedented changes occurring behind the Iron Curtain. The final communiqué broached many of the important issues addressed at the summit and sounded in many ways similar to Bush's Mainz address. It welcomed publicly the changes occurring in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, noting that if sustained, these changes would "strengthen prospects for fundamental improvements in East-West relations." It also set forth a broad vision not only for a democratic world but for a Europe no longer marked by division. It called for greater cooperation and detailed some measures by which this might occur. Then, at length, it addressed the continued need for military strength in Europe, outlining the very arms measures Bush would explicate the next day at Mainz.

29 Irving Kristol, "A Smug NATO is Letting Germany Secede," *Wall Street Journal*, May 2, 1989, p. A12. This piece actually appears in the Mainz speech file at the Bush library alongside several other items used by Christina Martin for research. It is, however, the only opinion piece in the file, which lends credibility to the idea that the Bush team saw the Mainz speech as responding in large part to this particular sentiment among West Germans. Reading the speech in light of this piece, it becomes clear that Bush is to some degree attempting to accomplish such ends.

30 Ann Richards, "Democratic National Convention Keynote Address," July 19, 1988, Americanrhetoric.com, Available from: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/annrichards1988dnc.htm (accessed September 10, 2007).

31 Martin J. Medhurst, "Why Rhetoric Matters: George H.W. Bush in the White House," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, 12.

32 As quoted in Rozell, "In Reagan's Shadow," 127-138.

33 Rozell, "In Reagan's Shadow," 127-138.

34 See Mark J. Rozell, *The Press and the Bush Presidency* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 11-26.

35 All of the remaining passages from Bush's May 31, 1989, speech are cited with reference to paragraph numbers from the speech that accompanies this essay.

36 Robert L. Ivie, "Cold War Motives and the Rhetorical Metaphor: A Framework of Criticism," in Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott, *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, rev. ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 71.

37 See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

38 See Francis A. Beer and Chirst'l De Landtsheer, "Metaphors, Politics, and World Politics," in *Metaphorical World Politics*, ed. Francis A. Beer and Christ'l De Landtsheer (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2004), 10-11.

39 The emphases are added.

40 Michael Osborn, "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light-Dark Family," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53 (1967): 115-126.

41 See Beer and De Landtsheer, "Metaphors, Politics, and World Politics," 24.

42 See Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 13.

43 See Farnham, "Reagan and the Gorbachev Revolution: Perceiving the End of Threat," 225-226.

44 Beer and De Landtsheer, "Metaphors, Politics, and World Politics," 11.

45 Richard B. Gregg, "Embodied Meaning in American Public Discourse During the Cold War," in *Metaphorical World Politics*, 60.

46 See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action.*

47 Gregg, "Embodied Meaning in American Public Discourse during the Cold War," 60.

48 For a discussion of the "Bush Doctrine," see Lawrence J. Korb, *A New National Security Strategy in an Age of Terrorists, Tyrants, and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Three Options Presented as Presidential Speeches* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2003); and John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).