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Political Argumentation in Ronald Reagan's "Bear" Commercial

Abstract: This article examines the manifestation of persuasion in political campaign advertising and the role of persuasion in the public's consciousness. It is set in the context of the Reagan administration's approach towards the Soviet Union and based on and clarified with illustrations drawn from the "Bear" commercial. The article applies Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's concepts of presence and communion to identify the means by which the public was provoked to give its assent to the president's ideas and decide to act, and interprets the mechanisms behind the commercial in the light of Eric M. Eisenberg's notion of strategic ambiguity.

Keywords: political argumentation, campaign commercial, Ronald Reagan, presence and communion, strategic ambiguity

Politicians employ argumentation to argue their cases to either win others' acceptance or persuade them to change their thinking, behavior or decision. Argumentation helps to specify political goals and identify the means available to achieve these goals. Seen as an essential part of political communication, it creates a political reality and allows structuring, controlling, and manipulating its interpretation. It defines situations, communicates information, and evaluates events. In politics, arguments link politicians with the public, expressing their political positions, conveying their identifications, and revealing their commitments. As elements of political discourse, arguments function as stimuli for action. Appropriate arguments result in the acceptance of proposed policies, support for specific issues, and obedience to laws, while inadequate arguments bring about rejection, objection, and disregard. Political argumentation most often includes persuasion—a tool used to influence others and shape their ways of thinking and behavior. This is especially evident in presidential campaign rhetoric in the United States. American electoral discourse demonstrates that political argumentation primarily aims to influence public cognitions and impressions. While it does not coerce voters to make specific choices, it does involve a deliberate attempt to influence their decisions and actions.

A review of literature devoted to the study of argumentation has revealed that prior to 1958, when Stephen Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* and Chaim Perelman and Lucie

Olbrechts-Tyteca's *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation* were published, research on argumentation followed the tradition of formal logic (Lunsford, Wilson, and Eberly 109–124). In an attempt to provide an alternative, Toulmin, Perelman, and Olbrechts-Tyteca decoupled argumentation from formal logic and offered to deal with everyday arguments in ordinary language. Toulmin identified the elements constituting a persuasive argument and the categories by which the argument could be analyzed and Perelman with Olbrechts-Tyteca defined the discursive techniques used to induce or increase the audience's adherences to the issues presented for approval and support. The two approaches dominated the study of argumentation until the 1980s when a series of scholars offered a variety of new perspectives.[1] J. Anthony Blair and Ralph H. Johnson proposed the informal logic approach, which drew on non-formal standards, criteria, and procedures to analyze, interpret, evaluate, criticize, and construct arguments.[2] John Woods and Douglas Walton's formal theory of fallacies concentrated on how fallacies fit into a logical system and analyzed them as features of arguments in actual contexts and frameworks.[3] Else M. Barth and Erik C. W. Krabbe created the formal dialectics framework within which conflict resolution was seen as a discussion governed by formally regulated rules.[4] Linked to the formal dialectics was the pragma-dialectics approach best represented by Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst who viewed argumentation as a communicative and interactionwal discourse while studying it from both normative and descriptive perspectives.[5] The linguistically-oriented approach developed by Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot was based on the assumption that every piece of discourse is argumentative in its meaning and provided a description of the syntactic and semantic elements that affect argument

1 Frans H. van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst and Tjark Kruiger, *Handbook of Argumentation Theory. A Critical Survey of Classical Backgrounds and Modern Studies* (Providence: Foris Publications, 1987); Frans H. van Eemeren, Rob Grootendorst, Francisca Snoeck Henkemans, J. Anthony Blair, Ralph H. Johnson, Erik C. W. Krabbe, Christian Plantin, Douglas N. Walton, Charles A. Willard, John Woods and David Zarefsky, *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory: A Handbook of Historical Backgrounds and Contemporary Developments* (London: Routledge, 1996).

2 J. Anthony Blair and Ralph H. Johnson, "Argumentation as dialectical," *Argumentation* 1.1 (1987): 41–56; Ralph H. Johnson, *Manifest rationality: A pragmatic theory of argument* (London: Routledge, 2000).

3 John Woods and Douglas Walton, *Argument: The logic of the fallacies* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1982).

4 Else M. Barth and Erik C. Krabbe, *From axiom to dialogue: a philosophical study of logics and argumentation* (Berlin: Walter deGruyter, 1982).

5 Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

understanding and interpretation.[6] Finally, the rhetorically-oriented approach within which some scholars viewed argumentation from the perspective of classical rhetoric, e.g. Joseph W. Wenzel, Josef Kopperschmid, Oliver Reboul, Edward Schiappa, and Michael Leff, while others approached argumentation as a practice, e.g. Scott Jacobs, Sally Jackson, Thomas Goodnight, Charles A. Willard, and David Zarefsky.

The variety of approaches to the study of argumentation has grown, as has the number of perspectives on the definition and scope of arguments, their categorization and components (Gilbert 29–32). Four perspectives have been offered to approach the question of the definition and scope of argumentation: (1) the perspective which holds that arguments are well-structured sets of premises and conclusions governed by fixed rules and procedures; (2) the perspective which maintains that argumentation is a form of interaction involving conflicting opinions; (3) the perspective which states that argumentation refers to both the process of arguing and its product; (4) and the perspective which rests on the assumption that arguments are speech events that disrupt communication. The questions posed by argumentation theorists have also concerned the structure of the relationship between arguments and reasoning, concept mapping, and the goal of argumentation. Some scholars have separated arguments from individual reasoning, while others have found the norms of reasoning and argumentation to be related.[7] Some have viewed arguments as structures, while others have seen arguments as processes.[8] Some have emphasized that the role of argumentation is to inform, while others have stressed that argumentation serves to persuade.[9] Finally, argumentation theorists have differed in their perspectives on argument categorization and components. They have grouped arguments based on the method of arriving at the

6 Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot, "Argumentativity and informativity," *From metaphysics to rhetoric*, ed. M. Meyer (Dordercht: Kluwer, 1989) 71–87.

7 Frank Zenker, "Logic, reasoning, argumentation—insights from the wild," International Conference on Logic and Cognition, May 2012, Poznań, unpublished conference paper.

8 Johnson, 2000; Harald Wohlrapp, "A new light on non-deductive argumentation schemes," *Argumentation* 12.3 (1998): 341–350.

9 Trudy Govier, *A Practical Study of Argument* (California: Cengage Learning, 2013); Douglas Walton, "Argumentation theory: A very short introduction," *Argumentation in Artificial Intelligence*, eds. Iyad Rahwan and Guillermo R. Simari (New York: Springer, 2009) 1–22; Eemeren and Grootendorst, *Systematic Theory*; Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *Speech acts in argumentative discussions. A theoretical model for the analysis of discussions directed towards solving conflicts of opinion* (Berlin/Dordercht: De Gruyter/Foris Publications, 1984).

conclusion,[10] general context, the goal of the dialogue,[11] the structure,[12] and the content of arguments;[13] and described argument components according to argument structure,[14] the process of the argument,[15] and context.[16]

As Martin J. Medhurst writes, research into presidential rhetoric is not new either (3–21). Early studies in presidential rhetoric were concerned with speech[17] and presidential style and method.[18] The most common method of analyzing presidential rhetorical discourse was historical-rhetorical method which stressed argumentation, source, style, delivery, and background over the speech, the speaker, and the speaking event.[19] Interest was shown in presidential speechwriting, media impact on election campaigns, and different types of presidential discourse, including interviews, conventions, debates, and election campaigns.[20]

When scholars moved away from historical studies towards critical studies, a variety of theories and methods of criticism were used to interpret and analyze data.

10 Walton, "Argumentation theory."

11 Douglas Walton and Erik C. W. Krabbe, *Commitment in Dialogue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

12 Walton, "Argumentation theory."

13 Douglas Walton, Chris Reed and Fabrizio Macagno, *Argumentation Schemes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

14 Toulmin, *Uses*.

15 Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, *Systematic Theory*.

16 Ray Lynn Anderson and C. David Mortensen, "Logic and marketplace argumentation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53.2 (1967): 143–151.

17 See Marvin G. Bauer, "The Influence of Lincoln's Audience on His Speeches," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 11 (1925): 225–229.

18 See Gladys Murphy Graham, "Concerning the Speech Power of Woodrow Wilson," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 13 (1927): 412–424; Edwin Paget, "Woodrow Wilson: International Rhetorician," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 15 (1929): 15–24.

19 A. Craig Baird and Lester Thonssen, "Methodology in the Criticism of Public Address," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 33 (1947): 134–138; Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, *Speech Criticism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948).

20 Laura Crowell, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Audience Persuasion in the 1936 Campaign," *Speech Monographs* 17 (1950): 48–64; Cole S. Brembeck, "Harry Truman at the Whistle Stops," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38 (1952): 42–50; Carl Allen Pitt, "An Analysis and Criticism of the 1940 Campaign Speeches of Wendell L. Willkie," S*peech Monographs* 21 (1954): 64–72.

Attention was given to textual analysis,[21] campaign strategies,[22] and presidential campaigns and initiatives.[23] Common lines of research focused on generic,[24] linguistic, and stylistic[25] dimensions of presidential discourse. Scholars examined the elements of drama and narration in presidential rhetoric,[26]

21 Robert W. Smith, "The 'Second' Inaugural Address of Lyndon Baines Johnson: A Definition Text," *Speech Monographs* 34 (1967): 102–108; Robert N. Bostrom, "'I Give You a Man'—Kennedy's Speech for Adlai Stevenson," *Speech Monographs* 35 (1968): 129–136; Robert P. Newman, "Under the Veneer: Nixon's Vietnam Speech of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970): 169–78; Hermann G. Stelzner, "The Quest Story and Nixon's November 3, 1969 Address," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57 (1971): 163–72; Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58.4 (1972): 373–386.

22 Robert J. Brake, "The Porch and the Stump: Campaign Strategies in the 1920 Presidential Election," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 55 (1969): 256–257; W. Lance Bennett, "Assessing Presidential Character: Degradation Rituals in Political Campaigns," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67 (1981): 310–321; Lester C. Olson, "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'Four Freedoms' Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 15–24.

23 Herbert W. Simons, James W. Chesebro and C. Jack Orr, "A Movement Perspective on the 1972 Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973): 168–179; David Zarefsky, "Presidential Johnson's War on Poverty: The Rhetoric of Three 'Establishment' Movements," *Communication Monographs* 44 (1977): 352–373.

24 Jackson Harrell, B. L. Ware and Wil A. Linkugel, "Failure of Apology in American Politics: Nixon on Watergate," *Speech Monographs* 42 (1975): 245–261; Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justification for War," *Communication Monographs* 47 (1980): 279–294; Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Rhetorical Hybrids: Fusions of Generic Elements," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 146–157.

25 Roderick P. Hart, "Absolutism and Situation: Prolegomenon to a Rhetorical Biography of Richard M. Nixon," *Communication Monographs* 43 (1976): 204–228; Hermann G. Stelzner, "Ford's War on Inflation: A Metaphor That Did Not Cross," *Communication Monographs* 24 (1977): 284–297; Martha Solomon, "Jimmy Carter and *Playboy*: A Sociolinguistic Perspective on Style," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 64 (1978): 173–182.

26 John F. Cragan and Donlad C. Shields, "Foreign Policy Communication Dramas: How Mediated Rhetoric Played in Peoria in Campaign '76," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (1977): 274–289; Ernest G. Bormann, Jolene Koester and Janet Bennett, "Political Cartoons and Salient Rhetorical Fantasies: An Empirical Analysis of the '76 Presidential Campaign," *Communication Monographs* 45 (1978): 317–329; Ernest G. Bormann, "A Fantasy Theme Analysis of the Television Coverage of the Hostage Release and Reagan Inaugural," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68 (1982): 133–145.

the role of image and ethos,[27] and the relationship between the news media and presidential rhetoric.[28]

Recent scholarship in presidential rhetoric has become an effort of analysts coming from humanistic and social-scientific backgrounds bringing with them different perspectives and methods of study. Work has concentrated on the construct of the rhetorical presidency[29] and the strategies of presidential leadership.[30] Much has been written about the genres of presidential discourse,[31] presidential crisis rhetoric,[32]

27 Richard E. Crable, "Ike: Identification, Argument, and Paradoxical Appeal," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (1977): 188–196.

28 William R. Brown, "Television and the Democratic National Convention of 1968," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 55 (1969): 237–246; David L. Swanson, "And That's the Way It Was? Television Covers the 1976 Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (1977): 239–248; Robert K. Tiemens, "Television Portrayal of the 1976 Presidential Debates: An Analysis of Visual Content," *Communication Monographs* 45 (1978): 362–370; Paul H. Arntson and Craig R. Smith, "News Distortion as a Function of Organizational Communication," *Communication Monographs* 45 (1978): 371–381.

29 James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey K. Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 11 (1981): 158–171; Glen Thurow and Jeffrey D. Wallin, eds., *Rhetoric and American Statesmanship* (Durhan: Carolina Academic Press, 1984); Jeffrey K. Tulis, *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Richard J. Ellis, ed., Speak*ing to the People: The Rhetorical Presidency in Historical Perspective* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1998); Mel Laracey, *Presidents and the People: The Partisan Story of Going Public* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002); David Crockett, "George W. Bush and the Unrhetorical Rhetorical Presidency," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 6 (2003): 465–486.

30 Samuel Kernell, *Going Public: New Strategies of Presidential Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1986); Karen S. Hoffman, "'Going Public' in the 19th Century: Grover' Cleveland's Repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 57–77; George C. Edwards III, *On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Reed L. Welch, "War Reagan Really a Great Communicator? The Influence of Televised Addresses on Public Opinion," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33 (2003): 853–876.

31 Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

32 Amos Kiewe, ed., *The Modern Presidency and Crisis Rhetoric* (Westport: Praeger, 1994).

presidential civil right rhetoric,[33] presidential relations with Congress,[34] with the American public,[35] and with the media.[36]

Substantial literature has been published on presidential campaign rhetoric. These studies investigate specific areas of political-campaign communication, including debates, conventions, vote analysis, media, candidate strategies, and political advertising. Research in the area of presidential debates concentrates on the impact of debates on the voter[37] and the influence debate rhetoric has on the

33 Garth E. Pauley, *The Modern Presidency and Civil Rights* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001); James Artn Aune and Enrique Rigsby, *The White House and Civil Rights Policy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005).

34 George C. Edwards III, *At the Margins: Presidential Leadership of Congress* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Mary E. Stuckey, Michael A. Genovese, Sharon E. Jarvis, Craig Allen Smith, Craig R. Smith, Robert Spitzer and Susan M. Zaeske, "Report of the National Task Force on Presidential Communication to Congress," *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric*, eds. James Arnt Aune and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008) 272–292; Jose D. Villalobos, Justin S. Vaughn and Julia R. Azari, "Politics or Policy? How Rhetoric Matters to Presidential Leadership of Congress," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 42.3 (2012): 549–576.

35 George C. Edwards III and Alex M. Gallup, *Presidential Approval: A Sourcebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Theodore Otto Windt, Jr., *Presidents and protesters*: *Political rhetoric in the 1960s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Susan Herbst, *Numbered Voices: How Opinion Polling has Shaped America's Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Michael J. Hogan, "George Gallup and the Rhetoric of Scientific Discovery," *Communication Monographs* 64.2 (1997): 161–179; Vanessa Beasley, Robert B. Asen, Diane M. Blair, Stephen J. Hartnett, Karla K. Leeper and Jennifer R. Mercieca, "Report of the National Task Force on the Presidency and Deliberative Democracy," *The Prospect of Presidential Rhetoric,* eds. James Arnt Aune and Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008) 251–271.

36 Kathleen J. Turner, *Lyndon Johnson's Dual War: Vietnam and the Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

37 James B. Lemert, "Do televised presidential debates help inform voters?" *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 37 (1993): 83–94; Mitchell S. McKinney and Diana B. Carlin, "Political Campaign Debates," *Handbook of political communication research*, ed. Lynda Lee Kaid (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004) 203–234; John G. Geer, "The effects of presidential debates on the electorate's preferences for candidates," *American Politics Research* 16 (1998): 486–501; Michael Pfau, J. Brian Houston and Shane M. Semmler, "Presidential election campaigns and American democracy: The relationship between communication use and normative outcomes," *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (2005): 48–62; Yariv Tsfati, "Debating the Debate The Impact of Exposure to Debate News Coverage and Its Interaction with Exposure to the Actual Debate," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 8.3 (2003): 70–86.

voter.[38] Debate studies also examine the role of the media in debates,[39] the format of debates,[40] and the character and role of debates in presidential campaigns.[41] In research on conventions, case studies of individual convention speeches dominate.[42] Vote analysis studies focus on the role of issues[43] and the correlation between citizen vote choice and party identification, demographics, and education.[44]

38 Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News that matters: Television and American opinion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Larry M. Bartels, "Priming and persuasion in presidential campaigns," *Capturing campaign effects*, eds. Henry E. Brady and Richard Johnston (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006) 78–112; Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk, *How voters decide: Information processing during election campaigns* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Maxwell McCombs, *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004); Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The rational public: Fifty years of trends in Americans' policy preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, *Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

39 Denis McQuail, *Media Performance. Mass Communication and the Public Interest* (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

40 Sidney Kraus, *Televised Presidential Debates and Public Policy* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000).

41 William L. Benoit, Glenn J. Hansen and Rebecca M. Verser, "A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Viewing U.S. Presidential Debates," *Communication Monographs* 70.4 (2003): 335–350.

42 Walter R. Fisher, "Reaffirmation and Subversion of the American Dream," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (1973): 160–167; William F. Lewis, "Telling America's Story: Narrative Form and the Reagan Presidency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 280–302; Byron E. Shafer, *Bifurcated Politics: Evolution and Reform in the National Party Convention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); Stephen J. Wayne, *Road to the White House: the Politics of Presidential Elections* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Joshua H. Sandman, "Winning the Presidency: The Vision and Values Approach," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 19 (1989): 259–266; Larry David Smith and Dan Nimmo, *Cordial Concurrence: Orchestrating National Party Conventions in the Telepolitical Age* (New York: Praeger, 1991); Joanne Morreale, *The Presidential Campaign Film: A Critical History* (Westport: Praeger, 1993).

43 Scott Ashworth and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Elections with platform and valance competition," *Games and Economic Behavior* 67 (2009): 191–216.

44 Jean-Francois Godbout, Richard Nadeau, Richard G. Niemi and Harold W. Stanley, "Class, party, and south/non-south differences," *American Politics Research* 32 (2004): 52–67; Danny Hayes, "Candidate qualities through a partisan lens: A theory of trait ownership," *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2005): 908–923.

Research on the media captures the use of new media in campaigns, including such tools as email and websites[45] and social media.[46] The literature on how candidates strategize during campaigns deals with presidential campaign tactics.[47] Finally, the studies of political advertising include analyses of the types of ads,[48] the relationship between ads and the candidate,[49] the role of ads in

45 Anne Campbell, Andrew Harrop and Bill Thompson, "Towards the virtual Parliament—what computers can do for MPs," *Parliamentary Affairs* 52.3 (1999): 388–403; Maureen Taylor and Michael L. Kent, "Congressional Websites and their potential for public dialogues," *Atlantic Journal of Communication* 12.2 (2004): 59–76; Steven Schneider and Kirsten Foot, "Online Structure for Political Action: Exploring Presidential Web Sites from the 2000 American Election," *Javnost (The Public)* 9.2 (2002): 43–60.

46 Christine B. Williams and Girish J. Gulati, "What is a Social Network Worth? Facebook and Vote Share in the 2008 Presidential Primaries," The American Political Science Association, 2008, Boston, unpublished conference paper; Christine B. Williams and Girish J. Gulati, "Your Money or Your Network: Indicators of Presidential Candidate Viability in the 2008 Nomination Contest," The Midwest Political Science Association, 2008, Chicago, unpublished conference paper.

47 Ronald B. Rapoport, Kelly L. Metcalf and Jon A. Hartman, "Candidate Traits and Voter Inferences: An Experimental Study," *The Journal of Politics* 51.4 (1989): 917–932; Lawrence R. Jacobs and Robert Y. Shapiro, *Politicians Don't Pander* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Shanto Iyengar and Adam F. Simon, "New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication and Campaign Effects," *Annual Review of Psychology* 51 (2000): 149–169; Richard R. Lau and David P. Redlawsk, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making," *American Journal of Political Science* 45 (2001): 951–971; James N. Druckman, Lawrence R. Jacobs and Eric Ostermeier, "Candidate Strategies of Prime Issues and Image," *Journal of Politics* 66.4 (2004): 1180–1202.

48 Patrick Devlin, *Political Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns* (New Brunswick: Transaction Inc., 1987); Montague Kern, *30-Second Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Lynda L. Kaid and Anna Johnston, *Videostyle in presidential campaigns. Style and content of televised political advertising* (Westport: Praeger, 2001); Judith S. Trent, Robert V. Friedenberg and Robert E. Denton, Jr., *Political Campaign Communication Principles and Practices* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2011).

49 Lynda L. Kaid and Mike Chanslor, "The Effects of Political Advertising on Candidate Images," *Presidential Candidate Images,* ed. Kenneth L. Hacker (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004) 133–150.

candidate image shaping,[50] and the impact ads have on the electorate[51] and election outcomes.[52]

To gain a fuller understanding of the argumentation used by Ronald Reagan in the 1984 presidential elections, the specific circumstances which shaped the form and content of his campaign discourse should be outlined briefly. A considerable literature has grown up around the theme of Reagan's foreign policy. There are detailed discussions of the president's specific foreign policy initiatives next to general surveys of his foreign affairs policy. The largest volume of published works has developed on U.S.-Soviet relations.[53] A considerable amount of studies have focused on U.S. relations with Central America[54]

50 Lynda L. Kaid and Jane Garner, "The Portrayal of Older Adults in Political Advertising," *Handbook of Communication and Aging Research*, eds. Jon F. Nussbaum and Justine Coupland (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004) 407–421.

51 Eleanor Shaw, "A guide to the qualitative research process: evidence from a small firm study," *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal* 2.2 (1999): 59–70; Kenneth Goldstein and Travis N. Ridout, "Measuring the Effects of Televised Political Advertising in the United States," *Annual Review of Political Science* 7 (2004): 205–226; Richard Johnston, Michael G. Hagen and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, T*he 2000 Presidential Election and the Foundations of Party Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Scott Ashworth and Joshua D. Clinton, "Does Advertising Exposure Affect Turnout?" *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 2.1 (2007): 27–41; Jonathan S. Krasno and Donald P. Green, "Do Televised Presidential Ads Increase Voter Turnout? Evidence from a Natural Experiment," *The Journal of Politics* 70.1 (2008): 245–261; Alan S. Gerber, James G. Gimpel, Donald P. Green and Daron R. Shaw, "How large and long-lasting are the persuasive effects of televised campaign ads? Results from a randomized field experiment," *American Political Science Review* 105 (2011): 135–150.

52 Andrea Prat, "Campaign Advertising and Voter Welfare," *Review of Economic Studies* 69.4 (2002): 999–1018.

53 Michael Mandelbaum and Strobe Talbott, *Reagan and Gorbachev* (New York: Vintage Books, 1987); Strobe Talbott, *Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984); Strobe Talbott, *The Master of the Game: Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988). Keith L. Shimko, *Images and Arms Control: Perceptions of the Soviet Union in the Reagan Administration* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991); Kenneth L. Adelman, *The Great Universal Embrace: Arms Summitry—A Skeptic's Account* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998).

54 Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions. The United States in Central America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983); Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (New York: Times Books, 1984); Tom Buckley, *Violent Neighbors: El Salvador, Central America, and the United States* (New York: New York Times Book Company, 1984); Robert O. Pastor, *Condemned to Repetition: The United States and Nicaragua* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

and the Middle East.[55] A growing body of literature has examined Reagan and his Soviet policy from a rhetorical perspective. Much has been written about Reagan's crisis rhetoric and its implications for U.S. foreign affairs policy,[56] the president's rhetoric used to market the SDI initiative to the American public,[57] and Reagan's major Cold War speeches.[58] The president's Soviet policy and rhetoric have also been covered in works that seek to understand the interplay between Reagan's foreign affairs policy, campaign rhetoric, and voter behavior. Scholars have analyzed the impact of voter attitudes and preferences regarding foreign affairs on Reagan's election,[59] the influence of the public's opinion on the president's foreign policy and election results,[60] and the effects of public opinion on the development of Reagan's foreign policy in a comparative perspective contrasting the president's positions, decisions, and rhetoric from his two successful presidential campaigns.[61]

55 Jane Hunter, *The Iran-Contra Connection* (Boston: South End Press, 1987); Steven Emerson, *Secret Warriors: Inside the Covert Military Operations of the Reagan Era* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1988); Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York: Anchor/Doubleday, 1989); Robert C. McFarlane and Zofia Smardz, *Special Trust: Pride, Principle, and Politics Inside the White House* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1994); Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, *Landslide: The Unmaking of the President, 1984–1988* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

56 Denise M. Bostdorff, *The Presidency and the Rhetoric of Foreign Crisis* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994).

57 Rebecca S. Bjork, *The Strategic Defense Initiative: Symbolic Containment of the Nuclear Threat* (Albany: State University of New York, 1992).

58 G. Thomas Goodnight, "Ronald Reagan's Re-formulation of the Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the 'Zero Option,' 'Evil Empire,' and 'Star Wars' Addresses," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 4 (1986): 390–414; Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, "Reagan at the Brandenburg Gate: Moral Clarity Tempered by Pragmatism," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 21–50; Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, *Reagan at Westminster: Foreshadowing the End of the Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010).

59 Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, "The means and ends of foreign policy as determinants of presidential support," *American Journal of Political Science* 31 (1986): 236–258.

60 Stephen Hess and Michael Nelson, "Foreign policy: Dominance and decisiveness in presidential elections," *The Elections of 1984,* ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1985) 141–152.

61 Miroslav Nincic, "U.S. Soviet Policy and the Electoral Connection," *World Politics* 42.3 (1990): 370–396.

Attention has been given to Reagan's debate discourse,[62] campaign statements,[63] and campaign spots.[64]

Studies analyzing the Reagan administration's approach towards the Soviet Union offer two major competing interpretations of the shift in U.S.-Soviet relations. The conventional view is that Mikhail Gorbachev brought about the change in American-Soviet relations. U.S. strategic superiority, nuclear arsenal, and alliance network made Moscow seek rapprochement with Washington. From this perspective, the Reagan administration only reacted to Gorbachev's transformations in Soviet foreign affairs policy.[65] This view competes with the interpretation that Washington initiated the change before Moscow started to reform. Encouraged by U.S. superior military and nuclear arsenal, strong economy and alliances with Western countries, Reagan switched to a more conciliatory policy and less confrontational rhetoric towards Moscow before Gorbachev was elected General Secretary and introduced policies which reoriented Soviet strategic aims.

As Beth A. Fisher observes, the president's first three years in office, from 1981 to 1983, were marked by the understanding that Moscow's expansionist and interventionist policies as well as its military strength were the primary threat to U.S. security and therefore had to be restricted and checked (17–32). Reagan's comments from his first press conference as president, held on January 29, 1981, later reiterated in an interview with Walter Cronkite of CBS News on March 3, 1981, and at a news conference on March 31, 1982, suggesting that the Soviet leaders "hold their determination that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state" and that "the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that" reflect the president's image of the U.S-Soviet relationship and the perceived danger to American security. At its center was the conviction

62 Susan A Hellweg, Michael Pfau and Steven R. Brydon, *Televised Presidential Debates: Advocacy in Contemporary America* (New York: Praeger, 1992).

63 Robert V. Friedenberg, *Notable Speeches in Contemporary Presidential Campaigns* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

64 William L. Benoit, *Seeing Spots: A Functional Analysis of Presidential Television Advertisements, 1952–1996* (New York: Praeger, 2007).

65 Alexander L. George, "The Transition in U.S.-Soviet Relations, 1985–1990: An Interpretation from the Perspective of International Relations Theory and Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 12.3 (1991): 469–486; Robert G. Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened: His Triumph, His Failure, and His Fall* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Michael R. Beschloss and Strobe Talbott, *At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993); Steven W. Hook and John W. Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2007).

that in dealing with the Soviet threat "the West won't contain communism," but "it will transcend communism," as Reagan announced in a commencement address at the University of Notre Dame, delivered on May 17, 1981. The West "won't bother to dismiss or denounce [Communism]," the president stated, "it will dismiss it as some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written." Raymond L. Garthoff writes that underlying the mission statement was the president's call for a global campaign for democracy and freedom (11). Made in an address before the British Parliament on June 8, 1982, the call was for "a plan and a hope for the long term—the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the [ash-heap] of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people." An important element of the president's declaration was also the need to confront the Soviet rather than negotiate with them (Garthoff 127). "While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change," Reagan asserted, "we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them.... Our military strength is a prerequisite to peace." He restated his opinion in his remarks before the National Association of Evangelicals on March 8, 1983, when he commented: "if history teaches anything, it teaches that simple-minded appeasement or wishful thinking about our adversaries is folly." He affirmed that, in reality, "we must find peace through strength." The last fundamental assumption of the president's thinking concerned the arms race. In remarks he made to some editors, Reagan reasoned that while "we've been making unilateral concessions on our side... [the Soviets have] been building the greatest military machine the world has ever seen. But now they're going to be faced with that we could go forward with an arms race and they can't keep up." Reagan was confident that the Soviets "cannot vastly increase their military productivity because they've already got their people on a starvation diet" and because "they know [U.S.] potential capacity industrially, and they can't match it." He argued that "if we show them the will and determination to go forward with a military buildup in our own defense and the defense of our allies, they then have to weigh, do they want to meet us realistically on a program of disarmament or do they want to face a legitimate arms race in which we're racing."

What came out of the president's thinking were the administration's goals to restrain the Soviet international behavior and make the Soviet leaders respect international norms and agreements. The policy of linkage in the areas of trade, summit meetings, and arms control, issue reprioritization, and a massive buildup of U.S. military strength were the means to achieve the objective (B. A. Fisher 18). As Reagan put it in the January 29, 1981 conference, "I happen to believe, also, that you can't sit down at a table and just negotiate that unless you take into account, in consideration at that table all the other things that are going on. In other words, I believe in linkage." In what followed, the president linked East-West economic relations to Soviet activities abroad. When martial law was imposed in Poland, he issued sanctions, which prohibited American

companies, subsidiaries, and foreign companies using U.S. licenses the sale to the Soviet Union of equipment or technology for the transmission or refining of oil and natural gas. Reagan also tied summit meetings to the Soviet actions. As he explained it in the March 3, 1981 interview, summit meetings could be held if there was "some evidence on the part of the Soviet Union that they are willing to discuss" strategic nuclear weapons reduction and if the Soviet Union revealed that "it is willing to moderate its imperialism, its aggression.... We could talk a lot better if there was some indication that they truly wanted to be a member of the peace-loving nations of the world, the free world." The president also made it clear that U.S. allies would be consulted before any steps could be made towards a meeting.

On the issue of arms control, Reagan spoke during the January 29, 1981 press conference when he charged that "a treaty—SALT means strategic arms limitation—that actually permits a buildup, on both sides, of strategic nuclear weapons" and "authorizes an immediate increase in large numbers of Soviet warheads" could not "properly be called that." The "real strategic arms limitation," he argued, would be if we could "start negotiating on the basis of trying to effect an actual reduction in the numbers of nuclear weapons." In line with the president's anti-SALT rhetoric was his decision to reschedule the first U.S.-USSR Standing Consultation Commission meeting from March to May 1981 and appointments of Eugene Rostow as head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Richard Burt as head of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, and Richard Perle as Assistant Defense Secretary for International Security Affairs, who set the administration's foreign policy against U.S.-Soviet arms talks. Reagan sent mixed signals on arms limitations when in his remarks to the National Press Club on November 18, 1981, he proposed an arms reduction plan, the so-called "zero-option" to reduce "conventional intermediate-range nuclear and strategic forces." Since only the Soviets had such weapons at that time, it was clear in advance that the offer could not be accepted. Similarly, in a commencement address at Eureka College on May 9, 1982, the president put forward a plan to "reduce significantly the most destabilizing systems, the ballistic missiles, the number of warheads they carry, and their overall destructive potential" because, however, the proposal required only the Soviets to reduce their land-warheads, which was unequivocal with weakening their deterrence capabilities, it was not approved.

The third important instrument for putting pressure on the Soviet Union's imperialist behavior was Reagan's massive military build-up. As the president explained in a radio address on February 19, 1983: "If we continue our past pattern of only rebuilding our defenses in fits and starts, we will never convince the Soviets that it's in their interests to behave with restraint and negotiate genuine arms reductions." Reagan proposed the largest peacetime military budget in history, advocating spending on the American military $254.2 billion in 1982, $289.2 billion in 1983, $326.5 billion in 1984, and $367.5 in 1985. He called for a seven-percent increase in defense spending between 1981 and

1985 which would be allocated for new weapons systems, research and development, and improvements in combat readiness and troop mobility. Moreover, in a March 23, 1983 address to the nation on national security, the president announced that he was undertaking "a comprehensive and intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program to begin to achieve our ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by strategic nuclear missiles." The purpose of the Strategic Defense Initiative was to develop an anti-ballistic missile system that would prevent nuclear missile attacks from the Soviet Union. Two other important aspects of Reagan's plan to revitalize the nation's nuclear deterrent included the president's decisions to revive and expand the B-1 bomber program, the MX nuclear missile program, and the Trident program as well as to deploy intermediate-range Pershing II and cruise missiles in Europe.

In 1984, Reagan's anti-Soviet rhetoric and approach softened. The president revised his understanding of the threats to U.S. security, the goals of U.S.-Soviet policy, and the strategies to achieve the objectives set. He no longer considered Soviet expansionist and interventionist policies or its military strength to be the most direct dangers to American security. Instead, war and misunderstandings were his main concerns (B. A. Fisher 18). In a January 16, 1984 address on United States-Soviet Relations, Reagan explained that his priority was "to reduce nuclear arsenals" and "to reduce the chances for dangerous misunderstanding and miscalculations," which increased the likelihood of a military conflict. He restated the theme in remarks at University College, Galway, Ireland, on June 1, 1984, when he said that the U.S. "policy is aimed at... doing everything... to reduce the risks of war" and again in an address before the Irish National Parliament delivered two days later when he expressed his strong belief that "[a] nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought" and stressed U.S. commitment to enter into discussions "to guard against miscalculation or misunderstanding" that could precipitate it. The president shifted the focus of attention away from Soviet restraint and reciprocity towards cooperation and mutual understanding (B. A. Fisher 18). As he put it in the January 16, 1984 address: "Our... task is to establish a better working relationship with each other, one marked by greater cooperation and understanding." His goal was "to build confidence and trust with the Soviets in areas of mutual interest by moving forward in our bilateral relations on a broad front." With the goals changed the strategies. The president replaced the policy of linkage, issue reprioritization, and a massive military buildup with a dialogue, an emphasized need for arms reduction, and confidence-building measures (B. A. Fisher 18). As he assured during a June 14, 1984 press conference, he had "been in... written communication with the Soviet leadership" and that he was "going to continue [talking to the Soviets] in the area of quiet diplomacy." In the January 16, 1984 address Reagan stated that he saw effective communication as the means to get the Soviets "[comply] with agreements," "[respect] the rights of individual citizens," "[expand] contacts across borders," "[permit] a free exchange or interchange of information," "ideas," and "trade." Mutual understanding

was especially important to achieve arms control. The president maintained that the U.S. "must and will engage... in a dialog that will serve to... reduce the level of arms." Cooperation in the area of arms control was further enhanced by confidence-building measures, broadly defined as "practical, meaningful ways to reduce the uncertainty and potential for misinterpretation surrounding military activities and to diminish the risk of surprise attack." While arms control continued to be an important area of American-Soviet relations, the desire to achieve "a durable peace" became the main concern. As Reagan put it in the address at the Irish Parliament: "This is my deepest commitment: to achieve stable peace."

From January through November, the president demonstrated that his administration was pursuing the objectives and that it was making progress. During the conference on United States-Soviet exchanges on June 27, 1984, he stressed that "For many months," he "encouraged the Soviet Union to join... in a major effort to see if we could make progress in these broad problem areas" and listed "comprehensive and sensible proposals" that his administration put forward "to improve the U.S.-Soviet dialog and our working relationship." Reagan restated his policy line before the United Nations General Assembly in New York on September 24, 1984, speaking on what the two superpowers could accomplish together, the concrete steps that needed to be taken, and the status of the efforts that had already been undertaken. On the question of the threat and use of force in solving international dispute, Reagan assured that "We will be prepared, if the Soviets agree, to make senior experts available at regular intervals for in-depth exchanges of views." Similarly, he declared that he was "committed to redoubling [U.S.] negotiating efforts to achieve real result" as far as the reduction of armaments were concerned. As for a better working relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States, he noticed that "some modest progress" was made in the area of direct communication, economic cooperation, consular cooperation, and cooperation at sea.

Considering Reagan's intentions to revise his approach towards the Soviets, this essay asks how the president's re-election campaign commercials argued, on the one hand, leading many Americans to believe that he defended and protected the nation's interest effectively, while, on the other, evoking the fear of war and making Americans threatened by the possibility of confrontation with the Soviet Union. The analysis is based on and clarified with illustrations drawn from "Bear" or "Bear in the Woods" commercial, considered to be one of the most representative of Reagan's 1984 campaign TV ads. It features a grizzly bear wandering through the woods as the narrator, with a suspenseful music combined with the sound of a heartbeat in the background, says: "There is a bear in the woods. For some people, the bear is easy to see. Others don't see it at all. Some people say the bear is tame. Others say it's vicious and dangerous. Since no one can really be sure who's right, isn't it smart to be as strong as the bear? If there is a bear." The final shot shows a figure of a hunter standing up straight with a

rifle on his shoulder and the bear coming face to face with the man and taking a step back. The commercial ends with a picture of Reagan and a line: "President Reagan: Prepared for Peace." The ad was created, produced, and narrated by Hal Riney, the author of the "Morning Again in America" commercial, with an aim to promote Reagan's policy towards the Soviet Union, justifying his attitude and criticizing the approach of his opponent, Walter Mondale. The ad was aired in October 1984, prior to the second presidential debate devoted to defense and foreign policy issues.

The imagery and wording of the ad are viewed in light of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concepts of presence and communion, where presence means bringing certain elements of argumentation into the public's consciousness, and communion denotes seeking points of agreement and identifying with the audience. A speaker creates presence when he makes "present, by verbal magic alone, what is actually absent but what he considers important to his argument or, by making them more present, to enhance the value of some of the elements of which one has actually been made conscious" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 117). He then "tries to establish a sense of communion centered around particular values recognized by the audience... for purposes of amplification and enhancement" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 51). Winning the audience's adherence to and agreement on a specific value allows the speaker to effectively persuade and convince the public, predispose it to make a decision or a commitment to act, and provoke it to take immediate action (Perelman 286).

Language is the means to reach the goal. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, both presence and communion are closely connected to the rhetor's choice of rhetorical devices. Presence can be created through linguistic devices and argumentative schemes. The authors list a number of linguistic tools which stylistically amplify certain elements and two techniques of argumentation: associative, which links separate phenomena together so that the audience can see a unity among them, and dissociative, which separates concepts originally interconnected in order to restructure the audience's idea about them. Furthermore, within the associative scheme, the authors classify arguments into quasi-logical and real where the former are based in formal reasoning and the latter appeal to reality and establish the real. To enter into communion with the audience, the authors explain, the rhetor uses appeals to abstract or concrete values, which dispose the audience to a certain course of action, and rhetorical techniques, which turn the audience's disposition into action.

The proposed analysis offers an approach to identify the mechanisms behind political campaign advertising: it starts with the points of departure that the audience needs to adhere to and traces the use of devices and schemes which predispose it to take the desired action. The approach exposes the manifestation of persuasion in political ads and the role of persuasion in the public's consciousness. It is concerned primarily with the means by which the rhetor wins assent to his ideas and provokes the public to decide to act.

Applying Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concepts of presence and communion to the study of political persuasion, some observations about the president's campaign discourse can be offer. In terms of focus, its argumentation emphasizes three aspects of American-Soviet relations: threat, rivalry, and strategic advantage. The speaker isolates the ideas from the public's mentality through the visual, showing shots of a lone bear walking through a forest and a slender figure of a lone man standing at a top of a hill. He magnifies the presence of danger, competition, and advantage in the audience's mind with the scene featuring the massive bear confronting the hunter with the rifle. The shot also serves to select from voters' understanding the perception of U.S.-Soviet relations as confrontation, keeping the periods of peaceful co-existence, negotiation, or cooperation hidden. Exposition of the significance of menace, contest, and advantage is increased through the verbal. The speaker conveys the feeling of presence through the use of the present tense and the singular. Repetition of words, phrases, and clauses, and accumulation of contradictory expressions also help to maintain presence.

Linguistic projections of the concepts into the public's consciousness are strengthened with associative argumentative schemes. The speaker brings the concepts of threat, rivalry, and strategic advantage into the audience's mind through associations. He intensifies presence by incompatibility, which he creates by opening his argumentation with an assertion that "There is a bear in the woods" and ending it with an expression of doubt "If there is a bear." He draws on causality when he connects the phenomena of threat and strategic advantage by a sequence in time in a question: "Since no one can really be sure who's right, isn't it smart to be as strong as the bear?" Using a pragmatic argument allows the speaker to persuade on the grounds that taking the proposed action will lead to good consequences. The claim that "no one can really be sure who's right" is supported with an argument from example, which builds the general statement on two particular cases: "For some people, the bear is easy to see. Others don't see it at all. Some people say the bear is tame. Others say it's vicious and dangerous." Examples of opinions serve to establish a generalization. The speaker integrates individual lines of argumentation with the bear as a metaphor for a security threat and the hunter to identify the United States or Ronald Reagan. Although the Cold War is not mentioned, the use of the bear—a common symbol for the Soviet Union—makes the context clear. The ad functions enthymemically. It commits the audience to the unspoken claim that the United States needs a leader that will stand up to the Soviets and adequately prepare the nation for a potential confrontation with the enemy. Without making any explicit claims against its target—Mondale—the ad argues that Reagan is more capable of handling relations with Moscow and maintaining American military strength relative to Soviet.

To strengthen the adherence from the audience and provoke the action wished for, the ad centers the public around conflicting abstract values of universalism and power, security and self-direction. The shot of the bear standing face to face with the

hunter promotes the ideal of a world free of conflicts and tolerant of different ideas and beliefs, while, on the other, it advocates the role of the United States as a leader of the free world guarding against threats to its liberties. The scene advocates the stability of societies, safety of families, and protection from enemies, while at the same time fostering the ideas of the freedom of action, freedom of thought, and freedom of choice. The image of the bear taking a step back when it sees the hunter is another telling point. It manifests that only an attitude of fearlessness, firmness, and confidence supported with strategic and military advantage can effectively stop and break an advancing enemy. The ad creates conditions for communion attaching abstract concepts to tangible objects. It establishes communion between the candidate and the public identifying and expressing the audiences' emotions through symbols which, as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca note, are "generally more concrete, more manageable, than the thing symbolized." They allow the audiences to "exhibit in concentrated form toward the symbol an attitude toward the thing symbolized" (334). It asks questions, which the audience will answer affirmatively to both decrease opposition and translate its agreement concerning one thing to its approval regarding another.

Existing research recognizes "Bear" as one of "the few memorable episodes of the 1984 presidential campaign" (Oberdorfer 94). Its message linking the president with the policy of dealing with the Soviets from the position of strength and its idea to use symbols towards which viewers held specific feelings and associate the emotions with the candidate and his policy remain strong (Medvic, *Campaigns* 265; Dover 32; Oberdorfer 94). Opinions vary on the effectiveness of the ad, however. Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates argue that "Tests showed the spot achieved an extraordinarily high recall rate. Many viewers missed the Soviet allegory but got the message of peace through strength" (26). By contrast, Darrell M. West holds that the "commercial had no significant effect on either of the concerns noted: peace and arms control or restoring pride in the United States." The author explains that "Part of the problem may have been the abstractness of the ad.... Its complexity may have limited its effect on the agenda" (105). Stephen K. Medvic agrees that many viewers watching "Bear" missed "the mark because the producer had one thing in mind while the voters saw something else" (*Political Consultants*, 59). Views on the tone of the ad also differ. Some scholars consider it to be "the most effective Reagan attack ad" (Dover 32) ran in one of "the most inspired negative political campaigns" (Nava et al. 144), while others find the ad "neither positive nor negative" (Medvic, *Campaigns* 265).

Opinion polls show that in 1984 the majority of Americans agreed with the president's assertion that "the Soviet Union is... an evil empire trying to take over the world" and endorsed the view that the Soviets "will do anything to advance the cause of communism." Most Americans believed that "the Soviets are constantly testing us, probing for weaknesses and they're quick to take advantage whenever they find any" and that they "treat our friendly gestures as weaknesses." There was a general

feeling that the Soviets could not be "trusted" and that "wherever there is trouble in the world—in the Middle East, Central America or anywhere else—chances are the Soviets are behind it" (B. A. Fisher 63–64; Oberdorfer 95; Shiraev, Carroll, and Shlapentokh 92). Among the survey respondents, the two most common reasons why the Soviet Union was considered to be an enemy nation were "The Soviets have thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at the United States" and "They continually try to spread communist revolution to other countries" (Shiraev, Carroll, and Shlapentokh 93). The data also indicates that throughout 1984, the support for Reagan's hardline approach to U.S. foreign policy was steadily increasing. Although approval ratings produced by different polling organizations vary, it seems that there was a general public approbation of the way in which Washington conducted relations and negotiated agreements with Moscow (Holsti 85; B. A. Fisher 63). At the same time, a majority of Americans believed that a deliberate provocation of the Soviets was too dangerous and wanted mutual differences to be resolved peacefully (Oberdorfer 95). While most Americans were convinced that the president should contain Soviet influence by military force if necessary, most also shared the belief that he should increase his efforts to limit the superpowers' nuclear weapons buildup (B. A. Fisher 64; Oberdorfer 95).

The ambivalence of attitudes about Reagan's foreign policy allows for an interpretation that links the substance of the campaign commercial with the concept of strategic ambiguity. Eric M. Eisenberg defines strategic ambiguity as "those instances where individuals use ambiguity purposefully to accomplish their goals" (7). Ambiguity is used strategically to "promote unified diversity" (10) and "foster the existence of multiple viewpoints" (8). One way to address divergent and multiple views is "through the creative use of symbols" which allow "multiple interpretations to exist among people who contend that they are attending to the same message" (8). In Eisenberg's view, strategic ambiguity does not mean to move people towards the same view, but facilitate different interpretations in an atmosphere of agreement. Accordingly, the role of a leader is "less one of consensus-making and more one of using language strategically to express values at a level of abstraction at which agreement can occur" (9). The leader's strategic ambiguity also provides a mechanism to maintain "one's self-image" (5), reducing the risks of negative reevaluation of one's character and performance, and to "preserve future options" (14), allowing a greater degree of implicitness in discussion of issues and flexibility of decision-making.

The perspective of strategic ambiguity offers an interesting read on the wording, images, and symbolism of the ad. The obvious messaging that comes out of the ad favors Reagan's agenda of high defense spending and provocative approach towards the Soviet Union over Mondale's moderate growth of military expenditure and a vigilant but conciliatory attitude toward the Soviets. Implicitly, it conveys the push and pull between the policy of confrontation and the policy of appeasement to deal with the Soviets effectively. In promoting the hardline approach, however, the ad omits a direct

correspondence between the communicator's intentions and the receivers' interpretations of the message. It avoids statements that are overly clear, goals that are concretely stated, or symbols that are specifically interpreted. Instead, it uses phrases, images, and symbols that encourage creative thinking, flexible interpretation and adaptability to the contextual change. While it unifies the public around the ideas of the Soviet threat and the U.S. strategic advantage—ideas that are more likely to be embraced than questioned or challenged by a general audience—it gives individual members of the public the opportunity to maintain different interpretations. Moreover, employing imprecise language, deliberate vagueness, and hidden sense, the ad gives room for maneuver to shape the candidate image and set the Soviet policy course. It preserves the impression of the president as a politician who is tough on the Soviets and pursues staunch anti-Soviet policies—an image that appeals to the supporters of a U.S. uncompromising stance—and keeps open the possibility of softening his stand depending on the circumstances—a prospect which reaches the proponents of a cautious but appeasing approach. In other words, on the one hand, it ensures of a sense of continuity, while, on the other, it opens up the possibility of change over time. Covering the interplay between the concepts of the Soviet menace and national security, the ad manages the challenges of the campaign race, the competing demands of multiple audiences, and the constraints of political realities. It draws on shared understanding of abstractions to integrate constituencies into a meaningful whole while at the same time stimulating different responses in voter communities. To paraphrase Kaja Silverman, the ad allows viewers to participate in a continuing "manufacture of meaning, an activity without a final goal or resting point" (247), serving its critical function and fulfilling its original intention.

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