

How the Administration Framed the Event

The Bush administration's framings and reframings and its search for metaphors should be noted. The initial framing was as a crime with victims, and perpetrators to be "brought to justice" and "punished." The crime frame entails law, courts, lawyers, trials, sentencing, appeals, and so on. It was hours before crime changed to war, with casualties, enemies, military action, war powers, and so on.

Donald Rumsfeld and other Bush administration officials pointed out that this situation did not fit our understanding of a war. There were enemies and casualties all right, but no enemy army, no regiments, no tanks, no ships, no air force, no battlefields, no strategic targets, and no clear victory. The war frame just didn't fit. Colin Powell had always argued that no troops should be committed without specific objectives, a clear and achievable definition of victory, and a clear exit strategy, and that open-ended commitments should not be used. But he also pointed out that none of these was present in this "war."

Because the concept of war didn't fit, there was a frantic search for metaphors. First, Bush called the terrorists cowards—but this didn't seem to work too well for martyrs who willingly sacrificed their lives for their moral and religious ideals. Then he spoke of "smoking them out of their holes," as if they were rodents, and Rumsfeld spoke of "drying up the swamp they live in," as if they were snakes or lowly swamp creatures. The conceptual metaphors here were moral is up, immoral is down (they are lowly), and immoral people are animals (that live close to, or in, the ground).

Bush speechwriter David Frum created the phrase *Axis of Evil* which was used in Bush's 2002 State of the Union address to refer to Iran, Iraq, and North Korea and was used over and over by the Bush administration in justifying the war in Iraq. *Axis* was a reference to the enemy Axis powers of World War II—Germany, Italy, and Japan—which spanned the Western and Eastern hemispheres and represented the global distribution of America's deadly enemies. Lumping Iraq with Iran and North Korea suggested that Iraq was developing nuclear weapons (the nonexistent "weapons of mass