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TO SELL MILITARY CAMPAIGN IN IRAQ STRESSING THE FREEDOM THEME: HOW POLITICALLY CORRECT VOCABULARY WAS USED BY GEORGE W. BUSH

Дану статтю присвячено питанню використання політкоректних висловлювань на тему свободи у промовах Дж. Буша на початку військової кампанії в Іраку в 2003 році. Дослідження було проведено на основі аналізу промов Дж. Буша у розрізі вживання політкоректності з метою переконати американський народ та міжнародну спільноту у необхідності такого кроку як ввід військ на територію Іраку.

The article is devoted to the political correctness usage, which stresses the freedom theme in the speeches delivered by George W. Bush at the beginning of the Iraqi military campaign in 2003. The research has been conducted on the material of George W. Bush's speeches as far as political correctness usage is concerned with the aim to convince both American and International communities to support the U.S. invasion in Iraq.

It is freedom that is far and away the most important value of American society. It has long been a powerful motivator, and various leaders have used freedom rhetoric to motivate populaces to accept policies that they might not otherwise deem necessary under other circumstances. Being the president of the United States, George W. Bush delivered a whole lot of speeches on Iraq military campaign, emphasizing freedom on a regular basis. However, there is a distinct change of freedom theme reference during different periods of the Iraq war as well as there is a distinct change in reasons for stressing the freedom topic in the rhetoric.

Without a doubt, for the time being there has emerged the great interest in the modern linguistics as regards the political discourse. A range of famous scholars be it Galperin, Lakoff, Baranov, Lutz etc. conduct their research in the field of political correctness usage in the speeches delivered by key politicians analyzing stylistical and lexico – semantical peculiarities of such a rhetoric.

In favour of a topicality of the given research is the fact that the start of invasion in Iraq was more than just controversial issue and there had been no international agreement reached concerning the legality of the invasion

[5, p. 11]. That is why for George W. Bush and his administration it was the crucial task to convince American and International communities to support the war. It was the rhetoric and its stylistical components that were used a tool to change people's opinion about the need to invade Iraq.

With the aim to analyse the approach of George W. Bush to political correctness while stressing the freedom theme such tasks as the analysis of freedom related politically correct expressions, the reasons for their use and the outcomes of stressing freedom in the discussions about the need to invade Iraq should have been accomplished.

Thus, year 2003 was the year when U.S. and Coalition Military Forces started military campaign in Iraq with the view to disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to ending Saddam's support of terrorism, and to freeing the Iraqi people [6]. In other words, using political euphemisms, the aim was to liberate the Iraqi people, to bring freedom to Iraqis. Consequently, the speeches of George W. Bush included a lot of politically correct expressions on Freedom and Democracy theme since U.S. troops were announced as **Liberators** who were doing the job of **fighting for the cause of liberty** and **for the peace of the world,** or were **working to promote liberty, secure and spread freedom and democracy in Iraq**, **bringing hope and freedom to the Iraqi people** [6]. However, one should keep in mind that the job was in reality military activity against supporters of Saddam Hussein who oppressed the Iraqi people.

Without a doubt there was a range of political reasons for such a politically correct vocabulary as regards removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power and U.S. military invasion in Iraq. First of all, it was the Bush administration aim to get Americans' support for using force in Iraq that led to political correctness in the rhetoric of George W. Bush. To have the support among Americans meant to have a right to demand money from Congress and it's logically to assume that first task for president Bush speech writers was to gain support for the invasion among common Americans. To prove this assumption we may compare the polls results received at the end of the year 2002 and at the beginning of 2003 as far as public opinion toward invasion in Iraq is concerned.

For example, at the beginning of January 2003 approximately 2 out of 3 respondents wanted the government to wait for the UN inspections to end the search of weapons of mass destructions, and only 31% supported using military force immediately [7]. However, State of the Union delivered by George W. Bush in January increased support for the invasion. For example, NBC's Washington bureau chief Tim Russert, said the bumps in support were "largely" due to president Bush's State of the Union speech in January and to Powell's presentation on February 5, which most viewers felt offered strong evidence for action against Iraq; Bush's approval ratings jumped 7 points, and support for the invasion jumped 4 points. Only 27% opposed military action, the smallest percentage since

the polls began in April of 2002 [7].

Definitely, the reason for such an increase was the vocabulary used by George W. Bush. Never had President Bush used direct expressions about U.S. military possible actions in Iraq that were connected with killing terrorists or destroying terrorist network in Iraq and high possibility for U.S. soldiers to be wounded or killed. Vice versa, the future military force usage was described with the help of political correctness and the focus was put on the need **to liberate Iraqis**, **to bring liberation to Iraq**, etc.

What is more, it was stressed at the very beginning of the State of the Union that unless "America answer every danger and every enemy that threatens the American people" it will cause a detrimental effect on security, freedom and democracy inside the United States [6]. Such rhetoric of fear according to William Lutz convinced the American people that there was a need in "Taking unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland" and Americans understood that one possible unprecedented step was to go to Iraq [2, p. 44]. With the help of well elaborated vocabulary one might have thought that this is the only possible step to keep Americans free and secure at home.

To prove the necessity to remove Hussein's regime from power George W. Bush stressed the fact that "the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons" [6]. Such regimes are called a new "threat" for America. Once again it is stated the U.S. responsibility to destroy this regime ("threat"): "we are called to defend the safety of our people, and the hopes of all mankind". "We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended", – another example of imminent invasion in Iraq [6].

All the evidence provided by President Bush in his State of the Union about unwillingness of Saddam Hussein to disarm be it intelligence data, for instance, that thousands of Iraqi security personnel are at work hiding documents and materials from the U.N. inspectors convinced Americans that there was no other way but to invade Iraq ("**to lead troops to Iraq**").

Concluding the State of the Union with the statement that "Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation" George W. Bush made it clear the only reason to invade Iraq is **make its people free from oppression** [6]. However, other possible reasons for such an invasion are not mentioned in the speech. Why? Maybe, they are not that noble to be stated in front of Americans who hesitate whether to support the launching of military operations in Iraq or not…

The upshot of State of the Union was positive for George W. Bush and having gained the support of Americans in invasion in Iraq, he continued on a regular basis to use components of political correctness to pay public's attention to the only "purpose" of U.S. troops in Iraq

that is "**the cause of freedom**", "**liberation of Iraq**", "**the advance of freedom**", "**commitment to the global expansion of democracy**", or "**commitment to peace and freedom**". Thus, the change of public attitude was the outcome of politically correct built speeches that stressed there was no better way for America to be secure and free than lead troops into Iraq and "**bring freedom**" to that country. At the same time, to repeat, there was no direct expressions about the way U.S. military and Coalition forces would conduct military operations in Iraq as well as other possible motives for using force were omitted.

Next successful politically correct step made by Bush Administration was the name for the initial military operation in Iraq. "Operation Iraqi Freedom" vividly outlined the repeatedly stated by George W. Bush "bottom line" of the invasion. Interesting fact was mentioned by some political experts that "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was not the initial name for that operation, again, to be precise, military operation. At first another name was suggested "**O**peration **I**raqi **L**iberation" but first letters of every key word have coined a new word **OIL** that, in fact, according to opponents of Bush administration was more likely reason to invade Iraq than actually **Freedom** [11]. The allegation that the Iraq war was mainly about oil has since been supported by the remarks of Alan Greenspan, the recently retired head of the US Federal Reserve. In media coverage in advance of the publication of his memoirs, Greenspan is reported to have written that: "I am saddened that it is politically inconvenient to acknowledge what everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil".

However, "Operation Iraqi Freedom" was admitted as the official name for military operation in Iraq and the invasion began. At this moment it is important to understand that although the support of military campaign among Americans was high, it was extremely important task of George W. Bush speech makers to continue convincing Americans in necessity of that campaign. Again, as before the invasion, freedom issue was stressed the most. According to George W. Bush, American troops were not eliminating terrorists and risking to be killed in battles but **serving in freedom's cause**, **fighting in the cause of our nation**, **the great cause of liberty**, **bringing freedom to Iraq** and, what was more important for Americans, **defending the freedom of America**, etc. [6]

Consequently, in April 2003 a poll conducted by the Washington Post and ABC News found that 72% of Americans supported the Iraq War, despite finding no evidence of chemical or biological weapons and a poll made by CBS found that 60% of Americans said the Iraq War was worth the blood and cost even if no WMD are ever found. And in May 2003 a Gallup poll made on behalf of CNN and the newspaper USA Today concluded that 79% of Americans thought the Iraq War was justified, with or without conclusive evidence of illegal weapons. 19% thought weapons were needed to justify the war [7].

It is logically to assume that such increase in support was a result of a deliberate and constant message to American people sent by George W. Bush on a regular basis about the need **to promote freedom in Iraq** and **to save freedom in the USA.** According to statistics there were 42 speeches on Iraq issue during year 2003 and 15 speeches were delivered in April. That shows the direct evidence how well structured political speeches with the help of politically correct terminology that hide negative aspects of the invasion and put constant stress on the threat for American freedom claiming that the only way out was to go to Iraq **to promote liberty and democracy** there influenced the opinion of American people about war in Iraq [8].

Having analysed the speeches on military operation in Iraq in 2003, it came to light that another possible reason for politically correct vocabulary with emphasis on freedom and democracy was the need to gain support among U.S. Troops and Coalition Forces ("Coalition of the Willing"). Thus, a whole lot of speeches were delivered in front of military men and women and the rhetoric of George W. Bush remained the same as when he gave his speeches on Iraq in front of civil Americans be it State of the Union, weekly radio addresses, etc.

According to U.S. soldiers' interviews, it was the way their mission in Iraq was described by George W. Bush that made them volunteer to serve overseas [10]. To sum up in one sentence, every single speech with the focus on Iraq described U.S. military men and women as **"Liberators whose mission is to bring freedom to the oppressed people, to promote liberty around the world, to build and secure a democracy in Iraq and what is more – to defend freedom of the United States while serving in Iraq"** [6]. Never had P resident Bush expressed directly possible risks and dangers the soldiers were about to meet as well as never was people's attention paid to diverse horrors of the war such as mass killings of civilian Iraqis. Such a strategy of not mentioning negative sides of the war in the rhetoric brought the necessary upshot for Bush administration: significant increase in support of military invasion in Iraq and continuation of war regardless of the fact that weapons of mass destruction were not found.

However, to repeat, the reality very often was different from the one that was described in George W. Bush's speeches with the help of politically correct vocabulary and many of the veterans returned home deeply disturbed by the disparity between the reality of the war and the way it is portrayed by the US government and American media [7; 9]. The war the vets described is a dark and even depraved enterprise, one that bears a powerful resemblance to other misguided and brutal colonial wars and occupations, from the French occupation of Algeria to the American war in Vietnam and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory [9].

There is an abstract from the interview of Spc. Michael Harmon, 24, a medic from Brooklyn. He served a thirteen-month tour beginning in April 2003 with the 167th Armor Regiment, Fourth Infantry Division, in

Al-Rashidiya, a small town near Baghdad that shows the evidence of that difference: "I'll tell you the point where I really turned, " he said "I go out to the scene and [there was] this little, you know, podgy little 2-year-old child with the cute little podgy legs, and I look and she has a bullet through her leg.... An IED [improvised explosive device] went off, the gun-happy soldiers just started shooting anywhere and the baby got hit. And this baby looked at me, wasn't crying, wasn't anything, it just looked at me like--I know she couldn't speak. It might sound crazy, but she was like asking me why. You know, why do I have a bullet in my leg?... I was just like, This is--this is it. This is ridiculous." [10]. But similar possibility of negative outcomes of the military operation was deliberately omitted in George W. Bush speeches, for in no way would it help president administration get the support to start military activity in Iraq.

Yet "the most important things" go first and support among Americans (civil and military) was one of that important and crucial issues for a team of George W. Bush since it enabled president to send troops in Iraq and demand funds for military campaign from Congress. Having the support inside the American society, George W. Bush was in more favourable position than his opponents in Congress who were against the war in Iraq because now he could have said that his decision to lead troops in Iraq was based on the will of majority of Americans who support him and his decision [5, p. 41].

Speaking about support, one must keep in mind that the international support was equally important for the United States. At first only few European countries and Australia maintained the decision of the White House to invade Iraq. What is more, U.N. Security Council did not officially authorize the U.S. invasion 2003 in Iraq and according to Kofi Annan U.N. Secretary General it violated the U.N. Charter: "I have indicated (the invasion) was not in conformity with the U.N. Charter… From the Charter point of view it was illegal" [11]. Thus, it was more than important to convince U.N. Security Council to support U.S. and George W. Bush tried to show Europe that the aim of invasion was only **to bring freedom to Iraq and secure American and European democracies** but not to get control over the oil fields in the Middle East (which are greater than all the oil in the U.S., the North Sea, China, the Caspian Sea, and West Africa, all combined) or promote interests of the USA in that region [4, p. 23]. Consequently, one may observe that the objective was reached and more and more countries joined U.S. and Coalition of the Willing in the war in Iraq and provided both political and military support although there was no official U.N. Council Authorization [11].

It came to light that before the invasion and during the first months of invasion Freedom and Democracy politically correct theme was widely used in the rhetoric of George W. Bush and the reasons are given above. However, starting from May, 2003 there is a tendency in reducing freedom

and democracy related expressions in speeches of President Bush. It is connected with the 1st of May, 2003, when George W. Bush landed on the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, in a Lockheed S-3 Viking, where he gave a speech announcing the end of major combat operations in the Iraq war. Bush's landing was criticized by opponents as an overly theatrical and expensive stunt. Clearly visible in the background was a banner stating "Mission Accomplished." However, the banner, made by White House staff and supplied by request of the United States Navy was criticized as premature – especially as sectarian violence and American casualties have continued to increase since the official end of hostilities [11]. From that day more and more attention was paid to Coalition military activity theme and the need **to stay on duty** since the troops **had much work to do to make America more secure** etc [4, p. 19].

To sum up the analysis of politically correct vocabulary with the emphasis on freedom and democracy in the rhetoric of George W. Bush we may leap to next conclusions:

a) Bush administration made a focus on eternal American values such as freedom and democracy using them a politically correct change for realities of the war in order to get support among civil Americans and those who served in U.S. Army to launch military campaign in Iraq;

b) Freedom and democracy issue was central topic in the speeches about Iraq in order to get support from the allies of the United States by convincing them that the invasion in Iraq was launched with the aim to make Iraq a democratic country and secure freedom and democracy in the whole world;

c) Freedom for Iraqis was stated as the most important aim of the military operation in Iraq; other possible purposes be it gaining control in the Middle East, having access to oil reserves, etc. were never mentioned and discussed in George W. Bush speeches about Iraq;

d) While listening to George W. Bush comments about Iraq one may possibly have got the impression that the Operation Iraqi Freedom was more about peace than about real war. U.S. troops military activity was covered by political correct vocabulary with the emphasis on freedom and democracy theme that did not represent real picture of the situation in Iraq;

e) On the whole, political correctness with emphasis on Freedom and Democracy values was used as a tool to advance certain agendas of Bush administration and to convince American society and countries – allies to support policy of invasion. It is clear that if it hadn't been for political correctness with the stress on freedom and democracy related expressions, the support of the military campaign in Iraq (inside and outside the United States of America) would not have been enough to launch the invasion.

f) Having gained the support and having invaded the territory of Iraq, the amount of freedom and democracy theme expressions reduced in the rhetoric of George W. Bush since the end of major combat operation was

announced on the 1st of May 2003. From that day more focus was put on other topics be it U.S. and Coalition military activity in Iraq, security, etc.

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