**Apocalyptic reps**

**Apocalyptic imagery is used to justify endless war and intervention**

**Chernus, no date** [Ira Chernus, Professor of Religious Studies at University of Colorado – Boulder, “Fighting Terror in the National Insecurity State, no date, <https://spot.colorado.edu/~chernus/WaronTerrorismEssays/FightingTerror.htm>] //neth

This circular argument seems to be confirmed by the expressions of fear that have filled the mass media since September 11. They are certainly sincere. Yet it has become almost obligatory to say, "Life will never be the same because now, for the first time, we feel vulnerable." Most who say this can still remember, if they care to, the long cold war years of living on the brink of nuclear annihilation. Many are old enough to recall the Cuban missile crisis. Even more can remember the Reagan administration’s serious plans to fight a nuclear war. Are we really more vulnerable now, or only vulnerable in a different way? Are we really less secure than the days when one push of the button could trigger a thousand September 11’s? True, the September 11 attack was actual rather than merely potential. Yet the scale of the potential attack we feared for so long was so much greater than the actual attack. Why should so many say that the actual attack marked a quantum leap in national anxiety? The notoriously poor historical memory of Americans is only part of the answer. A larger part is the need to contain this new eruption of disorder within a familiar meaning structure. The study of human culture shows, over and over, that anxiety can be held in check, if not banished, by the way people talk about it. People can feel relatively secure amidst the most extraordinary disruption and anxiety, as long as they have familiar words that put the disruption into some larger, dependable, enduring order. The lifeline of security is a language that affirms the enduring truth of the prevailing discourse and worldview. Today, the discourse of the national insecurity state is the nation’s most familiar structure. How natural, then, to reaffirm the fundamental truth of that discourse, especially when its truth seems to be so empirically proven. Certainly, there is a very real danger of more attacks on U.S. soil. But the magnitude of the danger is measured by cultural needs rather than empirical considerations. In the insecurity state, universal cries of alarm, massive preparations for future attack, and protestations that life is fundamentally changed all show how little has really changed. They serve to confirm the basic premise that danger is eternal and unavoidable. The name of the danger changes from time to time; for now, its name is "terrorism." But the underlying reality remains the same. In the face of a massive shock to our cultural assumptions, that promise of continuity is immensely reassuring. This is the paradox that keeps so many millions trapped in the insecurity state. In order to feel culturally and psychologically secure, one must feel physically and politically insecure. Thus the problem¾ the fear of terrorist attack¾ becomes the solution. The film of the towers bursting into flame is shown over and over again. The sheriffs stockpiling gas masks and anthrax vaccine are interviewed over and over again. "Experts" explain "the psychology of the terrorist" over and over again. All of this has a ritualistic quality, for it serves much the same function as every ritual. It acts out the basic worldview of the insecurity state, confirming that it endures in the face of a massive challenge. The dominant response to the tragedy in the U.S. also confirms that our own policies play no role in evoking the danger. This message takes ritual form in prayer meetings, civic gatherings, charity drives, and the Bush administration’s humanitarian gestures for starving Afghans. All enact the essential goodness of Americans. Even the most benign and laudable responses to the tragedy¾ the national pride in heroic rescue efforts, the outpouring of generous contributions, the genuine concern for the welfare of Muslim- and Arab-Americans¾ are seized and twisted in the overpowering cultural grasp of the national insecurity state. As symbols of innocence, all reinforce the basic assumption that the U.S. is powerless to affect the sources of continuing insecurity. Bush has often stated the logical corollary of innocence. if our policies are not relevant to the problem, there is nothing to negotiate. In other words, the U.S. will not contemplate policy changes that might lead to any fundamental change in political or economic power relationships. Therefore the only remaining course is to heighten the nation’s guard and use force to control the behavior of would-be attackers. Much of the response to the tragedy reinforces these interlocked assumptions of powerlessness and innocence. The cries of alarm and defensive preparations create the impression that the nation is circling the wagons and hunkering down for a long siege, because there is nothing else to do. The ubiquitous American flag becomes a symbol, not of abolishing evil, but of banding together to withstand the assault of evil forever. Yet there is almost a palpable eagerness to feel vulnerable. The new sense of national unity comes less from a common commitment to victory than from a common conviction of victimization. Powerful vestiges of the crusading spirit do remain. There is still a longing for unconditional triumph over the foreign foe. The constant allusions to Pearl Harbor, FDR, and World War II express these longings. More importantly, they create the illusion that genuine security is still possible. It is disconcerting to live amidst insecurity and even more disconcerting to acknowledge it openly. So the story of the "good war" is evoked endlessly, because it would be so reassuring to be able to wage another "good war." But the gestures of apocalyptic hope have a peculiarly forced, artificial quality, as if the public is trying to draw the last vestiges of living marrow out of an increasingly dead husk. The symbols, rituals, and mantras of the redeemer nation serve a very different role when public culture no longer really believes in the redemption. The problem is defined in apocalyptic terms. But no apocalyptic solution is available, nor even suggested. Talk of hope for security still elicits powerful images of the peril we hope to be secure from. But talk of peril is simply talk of peril, not a prelude to hope. There are no safe homes we can return to, for we must assume that the enemy, in one form or another, will always be at our gates. Political leaders and pundits offer only an endless horizon of unflagging efforts to maintain relative stability. In an inherently unstable world, made less stable by a superpower pursuing control, this is indeed "a task that does not end." All that once symbolized hope for the Kingdom of God on earth (whether in religious or secular form) now locks us into a future of inconclusive struggle and mounting anxiety. And the more we are convinced that insecurity is perpetual, the more we will resist fundamental change. That, of course, is the ultimate point. The prospect of another long, twilight struggle returns our culture to the certitude of simplistic absolutes. It erases the uncertainties of the ‘90s. It reassures us that nothing has really changed and nothing need ever change. It offers the best reason to go on resisting change. All of the preparations for and acts of war, all the warnings of and protections against future attacks, all the patriotic singing and flag-waving, all the gestures of hope that things will be better in the future, indeed all the dominant cultural responses to the attacks¾ all are now representations of the overriding conviction that security is still an impossible dream, that the future will not be fundamentally different from the present. In a society so fearful of change, where constant change provokes widespread despair, the conviction of unchanging insecurity engenders a strange kind of confidence. Millions now look ahead with more hope precisely because they can now believe that there is nothing really new to hope for. They cling to the insecurity that justifies their resistance to change. They take comfort in knowing that the explosions of September 11, which we are told changed everything, could not shake the foundations of the national insecurity state. The official story of the war on terrorism gives them that perverse comfort.

**Designation of an existential threat is central to security discourse**

**Eiholm Kjær 2020** [Sophie Amalie Eiholm Kjær, student and Bachelor’s Degree recipient in Political Studies at Malmö University, “Securitization and the Power of Language,” Supervisor: Dr. Ane Kirkegaard, Spring 2020, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1482596/FULLTEXT01.pdf>] //neth

According to the Copenhagen School, the existential threat can only be understood in relation to the particular character of the valued referent object in question. The referent object refers to things that are seen to be existentially threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival (Balzacq, 2011:35). Therefore, the analysis will depart from the investigation of the perceived threat in relation to the designated referent object. The referent object in the two speeches is the American population with particular emphasis on Americans who are on diplomatic or military missions outside of US boarders. President Trump identifies the referent object by stating, “we will always protect our diplomates, service members, all Americans [...]” (Trump, 2020a). As the designated existential threat is central to the theory of securitization, it is vital to study the construction of the perceived threat through linguistic strategies in political speech. The existential threat to the referent object is in a broad sense terrorism, however clearly specified as Maj. Gen. Soleimani, who by President Trump is referenced as the “number-one terrorist anywhere in the world” (Trump, 2020a). The threat thus takes human form and possesses features. Humanizing the threat and allowing it an identity causes a space where a notion of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’, or a ‘we’ and ‘they’ emerge. Securitization is to a large extent a discourse of identity, since a relation between identity formation and security discourse can be identified (Köhler, 2019:58). The discourse makes use of labels and adjectives which are categorized into oversimplified binary oppositions. These two categories broadly embrace the moral distinction between ‘good’ and ‘evil’, where the referent object reflects the good while the threat represents the evil (Harle, 2000:12). The referent object is appealed to as a united collective with shared values which revolves around the reference ‘we’. In the mentioned speeches President Trump utilizes words such as ‘we’ and ‘our’ to generate feelings of togetherness, sympathy and attachment among the audience. For instance, phrases like “our nation”, “our diplomats” and “our allies” are being used (Trump, 2020a; Trump, 2020b). This linguistic tactic also supports President Trump’s adaption and connection to the audience in the attempt to establish the speaker as a recognized part of the referent object. Within the speeches, America and its population are described as “pursuing the interests of good people”, “seeking peace, harmony, and friendship with all of the nations of the world”, and are claimed to be in possession of “the best military by far [and] the best intelligence” (Trump, 2020a). Hereby, the speaker claims a predominance. Words such as “peace” and “harmony” are used to describe a value-system which the audience will be more prone to identify with and approve of. The ‘we’ is further strengthened through the description of the evil antagonist as an opposition to “our people” (Trump, 2020b). The ‘we’ and ‘they’ are mutually dependent since the self is that which the other is not (Köhler, 2019:59). Contrarily, Maj. Gen. Soleimani is portrayed as a person who “made the death of innocent people his sick passion” and has been “perpetrating acts of terror to destabilize the Middle East”. President Trump claims that, “under Soleimani’s leadership [the Quds Force] has targeted, injured, and murdered hundreds of American civilians and servicemen” (Trump, 2020a). Maj. Gen. Soleimani is thereby also actorized as a decisive agent through active verbs which linguistically seek to strengthen the threat perception. In essence, he possesses the ability to make decisions, and is therefore not simply a static threat. The words chosen to describe the General supports President Trump’s attempt to portray him as a ruthless threatening actor. By stating that, Maj. Gen. Soleimani was “personally responsible for some of the absolutely worst atrocities” and using the metaphor that his hands “were drenched in [...] American blood” enforces the creation of meaning of the General as possessing the features of an existential threat (Trump, 2020b). The portrayal of Maj. Gen. Soleimani is moreover supported by the facilitating condition, defined by the Copenhagen School, related to the usage of objects that are generally taken to be threatening. He is accused of the “planting of roadside bombs” and “lunching terrorist strikes against civilian targets” (Trump, 2020b). Road side bombs and terrorist strikes are typically associated with guerilla tactics, and therefore support the construction of the perceived threat alluding to the irrationality of the actor as well as indicating severe harm. Linguistically, President Trump uses the word “murdered” when speaking of killings Maj. Gen. Soleimani is accused of orchestrating while words such as “terminated”, “stopped” and “removing” is being utilized when referring to the ordered drone strike that targeted and assassinated the General (Trump, 2020b). Evidently, the language used to describe the President’s own launched strike is less cruel and has an unremarkable or ‘ordinary’ connotation attached compared to the wording ascribed to Maj. Gen. Soleimani. “Murder” is a word that describes the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought, and is associated with irrationality and harm. The events of 9/11 set the stage and defined the terms of conflict that shaped the discourse henceforth. Specifically, this has been the war between the American empire and terrorism (Keen, 1991:v). Along with terrorisms journey up the list of priorities, on especially the Western security agenda, the discourse concerning terrorism has become distinctive. The label ‘terrorist’ possesses historical collective meaning to the American population and broader Western world and is grounded in a common understanding of the expression. Most political concepts, terms and images are grounded in a certain conflict and are related to a concrete situation. ‘Terrorist’ is the word that came to define the threatening enemy post 9/11 and is associated with all evil and immoral (Reyes, 2011). Since security is, according to the Copenhagen School, linked to survival, the portrayal of Maj. Gen. Soleimani as an irrational terrorist who was responsible for the death of many civilians and American personnel supports the transfer of the issue onto the security agenda and likewise grants it foremost importance. Throughout both speeches, President Trump does not mention the word ‘security’ once. Instead the issue becomes a security matter by presenting it as such through the performative functions of words and symbols and thereby, in essence, performing a speech act.

**Policy/escalation**

**Securitization is reciprocal and results in real-world policy actions**

**Wilhelmsen 2021** [Julie Wilhelmsen, senior research fellow at the Norwegian Institute of international Affairs, “Spiraling toward a New Cold War in the North? The Effect of Mutual and Multifaceted Securitization,” September 30, 2021, Journal of Global Security Studies, Volume 6, Issue 3, <https://academic.oup.com/jogss/article/6/3/ogaa044/5916402>] //neth

While some hold that the growing rhetoric of confrontation between Russia and the West can be employed without running the risk of war (Lieven 2018), I take this use of words seriously. Political language serves to make some courses of action legitimate and logical, while precluding others (Hansen 2006, 21; Jackson 2006; Wilhelmsen 2017). According to this fundamental discourse-theoretical insight, securitization—defined as a process where the other is increasingly cast as different and dangerous to the self—will manifest itself in concrete policy practices (Hagmann 2015, 9; Hayes 2009, 985; Wilhelmsen 2017, 28–29). Thus, there is a link between the rhetoric of confrontation that produces the subjectivities of threatened self and threatening other, and the policy responses initiated in the course of such a securitization.6 The more different and dangerous to the self the other is construed as being, perhaps even to the level of “existential threat,” the more reasonable and logical will the use of force against this other appear (Bandura 1990, 7–8; Wilhelmsen 2017, 24–26). Securitization, viewed through a discourse-theoretical lens, emerges through a plethora of utterings and is, therefore, best theorized as a gradual process, not one specific happening (Ciuta 2009; Hagmann 2015, 21–22; Wilhelmsen 2017, 21–24). That is not to say that securitizations cannot end up in a radical black/white juxtaposition, where They represent an existential threat to US and can be related to only through the barrel of a gun. Indeed, the aim of this article is precisely to show how the gradual and increasing securitization of Russia in Norway, and of Norway in Russia, is bringing relations to a point where the threat of hostilities seems imminent. But there is no necessary evolution to this point of possible destruction: it is a contingent process (Guzzini 2011). When securitization is produced through a myriad of statements that together make the other stand out as a threat, there is always a possibility for more and more statements that construe the other as “defensive” or even “potential partner” to feed into the process, bringing the threat image a few levels down and making possible a policy of restraint or even collaboration. Here, however, I seek to identify mechanisms that push securitization upward to the point where the buildup of force seems necessary and hostilities imminent. My first suggestion is to conceptualize and study securitization processes in dyads, that is, as a mutual process. The shift to more radical representations of the other (a higher degree of securitization) often occurs in a reciprocal pattern of identification and interaction between political entities (Wilhelmsen 2020, 30). How political entities such as states identify, talk to (or about) each other, and the policies they launch in accordance with and following such speech, play into and shape the speech and policy courses of other states. There are essential effects of securitization processes where the other party is cast as different and dangerous to the self (Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 1998; Stritzel 2007; McDonald 2008; Hagmann 2015; Wilhelmsen 2016). Within a dyad of political entities that increasingly identify the other as a threat to the self, a self-perpetuating logic sets in, with the two securitizations fueling each other. Under what conditions and how does this happen? As noted by Mitzen (2006) and others, states do seek not only physical security, they also seek security of the self (ontological security), mainly because agency requires a stable cognitive environment.7 Particularly at a time of crisis states strive to create continuous narratives of self (Steely 2008a; Zarakol 2010; Subotic 2016). Routinized security talk and the projection of the other as a threat delivers ontological security. It creates inner cohesion in the referent group and the ability to act (Wilhelmsen 2017, 27–32). This is because representations of self and other are bound together, dependent on each other. Collective identities and the social groups they refer to are constituted in relation to difference and maintained through the continued juxtaposition and drawing up of boundaries between self and other (Barth 1969; Connolly 1991). However, securitizing the other for enteric use also creates a “securitization dilemma”—“a difficult choice where a securitizing move represents a powerful and attractive opportunity for political mobilization, but with the danger of perverse and unintended consequences” (Van Rythoven (2019, 2). The unintended consequences of securitization have been suggested to be of several kinds: contextual, social, and temporal (Van Rythoven 2019, 10). Within the social type of contingency, which concerns how an audience can interpret a security claim in unexpected ways, much attention has been given to situations in which a securitizing move can be rejected by the audiences it is meant to mobilize (Wæver 1989,1; Collins 2014; Van Rythoven 2019). Of particular relevance for relations between political entities, but less investigated, is the unintended consequences that a securitization within one political entity of another political entity may have on that other political entity.

**Securitization is cyclical – it worsens geopolitical tensions and acts as an impact magnifier**

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To maintain ontological security, actors must not only be able to assure themselves of who they are (endogenously)—and protecting a continuous narrative of self becomes particularly pressing in a time of crisis—but they also need to be identified and recognized by others, and on their own preferred terms (exogenously) (Steely 2008b, 51–52; Zarakol 2010, 3; Ringmar 2014). A securitizing actor's firm (but probably unconscious) attention to ontological security and the domestic audience at a time of crisis can communicate non-recognition to the other (foreign) audience. If both parties in a dyad of political entities push securitization of the other upward for enteric use but disregard how the other will interpret it, as well as the non-recognition of the other party that such securitization implies, a negative spiral sets in. For example, a securitization of NATO as different and dangerous to Russia creates both inner cohesion in the Russian polity and makes possible a policy of “military modernization” and a posture of “defensive deterrence,” but it can have unintended consequences. It can be taken as a rejection of NATO's self-constituted identity as a legitimate, reliable, security-seeking actor and elicit a string of representations of Russia as different and dangerous on the NATO side.8 Failure to be recognized by the other on one's own preferred terms might not necessarily result in feelings of inferiority and shame, triggering efforts to reconstruct one's own identity, as Bially Mattern has suggested (2004, 12–13) or “progressive change” of self to become like the other, as Ringmar (2014) holds. As Lupovici (2012, 818) notes a collective actor that experiences ontological threat can “redefine the situation in order to protect identity.” “Avoidance,” he says, building on Giddens (1991, 188) “allows an actor facing an ontological dissonance to revalidate its identity rather than to change it or to change its behaviour.” Lupovici explores the strategy of avoidance in situations where dissonance is created endogenously, between conflicting self-identifications and the responses undertaken to offset threats to these self-identifications within one political entity. Avoidance may play out differently when the ontological dissonance emerges exogenously in a dyad of political entities. To reduce the dissonance between the understanding of self and the explicit identification of one's own political entity by the other as being something different and dangerous, revalidation of own identity can be achieved through externalization, by simply returning the negative identification. This strategy is manifest as a clear pattern in the texts by Norwegian/Western and Russian leaders studied below. It is hardly surprising that a collective actor would respond to the non-recognition implicit in being securitized with externalization in the form of talking and hitting back instead of undertaking some form of internal revision. Responding by mirroring the securitization of your group by the other party can be rewarding in terms of delineating and maintaining self-identity, particularly in a time of crisis. To restate and return to the case in focus: the non-recognition implicit in Russia's securitization of NATO can elicit highly antagonistic representations of Russia from the NATO side, triggering another round of representations and accusations from the Russian side, and so on. Such a negative spiral of mutual representations and accusations can be driven further when the different non-military issue-areas in which collective political entities engage also become subject to securitization. While relations between such entities usually take place on different international arenas addressing different issue-areas and exhibit a mixed pattern of friendly and hostile interaction (Jervis 2001, 37; Bially Mattern 2004), they may become subject to patterned all-encompassing friendly or hostile interaction. The latter, I propose, can happen when security concerns take center-stage in relations, through a spillover from mutual securitization in the military sphere into other arenas of potentially neutral or friendly interaction, such as trade, culture, or even diplomacy. In more scholarly terms, a negative spiral in relations is intensified when the other is securitized, i.e., construed, through speech, as different and dangerous at every encounter, and when every policy move in any issue-area is represented as a tool in the hands of this threatening other. Such multifaceted securitization pushes the representation of the other upward on the scale of difference and danger and can create a situation where positive recognition is not granted in any sphere. In this situation, the collective actor experiences an exogenous rejection of its self-ascribed identity in every policy sphere where it seeks outside confirmation—making the experience acute. In turn, this experience of acute ontological dissonance may be met by a strategy of avoidance and externalization: a counter-securitization that mirrors and matches the near-total rejection to which the political entity itself has been subjected. In the course of the ensuing spat, with hostile representations flung back and forth on every arena of encounter, the other is finally left with no face but that of an enemy. That resolves the dilemma of knowing what the intentions of the other are, as each party is now quite certain that the other has offensive designs.

**This can result in aggressive policy action or violence**

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From this understanding, logically flow policies of positioning and armament in the military sphere, and disengagement and non-communication in non-military issue-areas. In contrast to endogenously generated avoidance noted by Lupovici (2012, 813), the problem is not that a collective actor undertakes contradictory measures to alleviate ontological dissonance, but rather that the same measures of disengagement and confrontation seem logical and legitimate in every sphere of interaction between two political entities. In this situation, the parties have few possibilities of extricating themselves from the spiral that leads to confrontation. If the other is securitized and denied recognition across issue-areas and arenas, that leaves no space for responding with friendship to overcome mistrust—which would be the opening through which to start pushing the spiral downward. A high level of mutual and multifaceted securitization can produce, in Jervis’ terminology (2001, 41), a “deep security dilemma” ... “a situation where mistrust cannot be overcome” and where there are “no missed opportunities for radically improving relations.” But in contrast to Jervis’ conception, the road toward this high level of mutual securitization, with the ensuing minimal trust, is gradual and contingent, and produced through a plethora of representations. Moreover, in this approach, the key “mover” in the security dilemma—the perception of each party that the other has offensive intentions—emerges from their discursive practices, their representations of each other. Mutual and multifaceted securitization answers Mitzen and Schweller's (2011) call to understand how certainty about the other actor's aggressive intentions can contribute to the onset of war.9 But this certainty, with the tragic outcome it can result in, should not be seen as conditioned by structural uncertainty at the outset; nor is the misplaced certainty in the next phase built from “inside” an individual decision-maker with reference to cognitive and affective causes (Mitzen and Schweller's (2011; Jervis 1976, 387–406). I submit that it is built through the multiple and spreading self/other representations that bring the “offensive intent” of the other into being as a social reality, making it reasonable and logical to undertake policy steps to counter this aggressive intent. This alternative approach also has some advantages in terms of validation. Empirical validation of a theory is difficult if misplaced certainty is explained by intentions. Jervis, for example, although admitting that it is difficult to pin down whether the Cold War was a security dilemma (2001, 38) still tries to settle this question by revisiting archive material and establishing the nature of the US and Soviet leaders’ intentions at that time (2001, 53). My reading of the security(zation) dilemma acknowledges that the intentions of collective actors are inaccessible, and works from the tangible empirical fact of words actually issued.10 When such words are understood as having constitutive power, conditioning the paths of action collective actors can take, it is easier to ascertain whether two parties have moved into a situation where the use of force seems logical and legitimate. For Norway and Russia in the North, the tragedy might be that, although they both need a coherent ontological landscape, think of themselves as “security-seekers” and as achieving more security through their multifaceted securitization of the other, they might be creating a relation devoid of any positive engagement, thereby endangering their own physical security.

**Alt – rhetoric – general**

**The alternative is to eliminate securitizing discourse – it shapes IR and an elimination of it solves our impacts**

**Yongtao 2010** [Liu Yongtao, Center for American Studies, Fudan University, China /ITESM. Campus Guadalajara, Mexico, Discourse, Meanings and IR Studies: Taking the Rhetoric of "Axis of Evil" As a Case, February 24, 2010, <http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1870-35692010000100005>] //neth

Discourse and meanings in IR studies In different disciplines of social sciences, discourse has different categories, like discourse of law, religious discourse, discourse of science and technology, medical discourse, and ethical discourse etc. In the discipline of IR, one often takes interest in political (including foreign policy) discourse. By political discourse, it may refer to the use of language pertaining to political topics and issues.10 It can be argued that politics is always closely linked with the use of language, like political talks, speeches, debates, bargaining; laws, proclamations, Statements, treaties and other political documents. Political discourses often appear on newspapers, televisions, radios, and the Internet; they are also seen on various political arenas such as political campaigns, party rallies, popular demonstrations, political pamphlets, diplomatic negotiations and international agreements. Political discourses are usually involved directly with political topics and issues. Yet certain civil discourses indirectly associated with political issues can also be regarded as political discourse.11 In IR, when certain language is in use, it expresses meanings on at least two levels. One is the superficial meaning that a word carries or the explicit meaning that is defined in dictionaries. Another is the deep meaning that a word carries or the implicit meaning behind that word. The superficial and hidden meanings of a word change with "the evolution of history and culture".12 For example, the English word "crusade" originally conveys the meaning of Christian Europeans taking military actions to conquer the Holy land in the Middle Ages from Muslim societies. With the passage of time, the original meaning of this word fades away. After 9/11, however, when the U.S. government announced its "crusade" against Islamic terrorists on a global sphere, the word seemed to regain some religious tinge. The Bush administration expected that the word "crusade" could play a role in recalling American people's sentiments. But, it also helped American enemies, because the leaders of Al-Qaeda could also make use of the word to mobilize their forces to defend their "homes" and avenge the victims of the "crusaders".13 Thus, the understanding of meanings involves the reading of its implicit as well as explicit senses. Discourse is pragmatically used in real life. If it is correct to say that without discourse there is no world politics, and that one can hardly understand world politics without discourse, then it is necessary to do discourse analysis in IR. There are different approaches to understanding IR as a positivist approach that centers on "objective existence" of social world. Discourse analysis as a theory and methodology, in contrast, takes more attention to the issue as to how particular social events in IR are given meanings and (re)constructed and evolved as they are through the function of discourse. (Inter)texts are major objects of discourse analysis. The purpose of textual study is to "explore the facts that are described, recorded or documented by the text".14 Since all texts are produced through certain positions and perspectives, different texts tell different social "realities". Discourse analysis warns that any single text is without meaning, it obtains its meaning only when it interacts with other texts and is put in a broad social and historical context in which those texts are produced, disseminated and consumed. For example, if one wants to understand the meaning of an event in world politics, he needs to put together divergent texts about the event (intertext), identify who is telling the story of the event (identity), recognize what perspectives that the story-teller is taking (world outlook or position), in what places (context) and who are the audiences (receivers). He needs to know not only what the story-teller says about the event (explicit meanings), but also what he does not say about it (implicit meanings). Thus there is more than one form of reality in IR. While an objective existence of what really happens in a real world is out there, many (even most of) understand the reality mainly through different and competing "stories" retold by those who make use of language to represent the original one. The retold reality is no longer an innocent reflection of that original one, rather it is a "reality" that is refined, cut and modified by people, and thus is socially and lexically constructed. For example, a speaker usually chooses proper words and refines them carefully to make them correspond with the speaker's identity, the context in which the speech is made, the formation of targeted audiences and the need of political agenda. In other words, there are differences between the objective reality and the "reality" articulated by the speaker, because the "reality" retold by carefully chosen words is bound to be different from the original which has been "refined", "cut" and even "reshaped" by the function of words, and in this sense, "discourse is replete with ethical factors".15 One major task of discourse analysis in IR is to explore the relationship between language use and social realities, and see how social relations of power work constitutively in it. For instance, people use languages on daily bases, but this does not mean that the languages they use have equal social effects or leverages. According to poststructuralism, whose discourse is more relevant usually depends on how closer the relationship of this discourse is to social power. Put it concretely, politicians usually have more opportunities and resources to get access to discourse, and their political status and social identities make their political discourses look more meaningful and easier to expose to the public. So it can be argued that the process of giving meanings to certain events in IR can be competitive and is one form of social relations of power. Whether launching wars or engaging diplomatic talks or delivering political speeches, they all contain the acts of giving meanings to the events in concern. Debating over meanings (whether to maintain them or subvert them) is a common phenomenon in social life. For example, after the "9.11", U.S. government, in the name of global "war on terror", launched a war in Iraq, and triggered heated debates among people around the world as well as within the United States over the nature of this war. The war makers claimed that it was part of a global war "against terrorism", a war of "liberating Iraq". War opponents called it an "aggressive war" and put it in the analogy to U.S. launching Vietnamese war in the 1960s. To some extent, whether the meaning of a certain thing can be maintained or overthrown, strengthened or destroyed, it depends on how the society categorizes and selects its values. States that are in dominant positions in world politics have more opportunities and accesses to give meanings to certain events than states that are less powerful. But whether the given meanings are accepted by others, and how they may give rise to controversies and even resistances, all these will affect in turn the authority and leverage of the given meanings. The process of accepting a given meaning is a process of willing to subject to power influences; while challenging a given meaning implies the challenge of the power of the meaning-giver. For instance, U.S. decision-makers of war in Iraq have made use of series of "war mobilization" discourse, and persuaded people to believe that the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq had an "evil" and "criminal" nature. In the U.S. and Britain, people began accepted this "war mobilization" discourse, and were subject to the war makers' power exertion. When this discourse confronted questions and critiques against evidences, it implies that the war makers' authority and credibility began to meet greater challenges and turn to be unpopular. So if language and its use are critical in terms of their giving meanings to social "realities", what do all these mean to IR studies? Several claims can be made as follows. First, it has unsettled the roots of hegemonic discourse in IR "knowledge". All the production of IR knowledge is a social, historical and cultural process related to discursive practice. Although there is objective reality in IR, the reality narrated through language is one that is interpreted, modified and refined, and thus can no longer be totally objective. IR theories as a form of knowledge are the products of given social and cultural contexts, and are restrained by the time and space in which theorists live. All IR theorizing is taken from certain perspectives and views, which observe the external world from certain angles at the cost of marginalizing and even ignoring other ones. It is understandable that the world politics approached by one theorist from one perspective will be different from the one by another theorist from another perspective. That is the reason why there are divergent strands of theories and approaches in the discipline of IR. All theories, ethically and normatively conditioned, are served "for certain people and for certain purposes". So the total knowledge about world politics is historical knowledge.16 Now a related question is raised in IR studies. If realities in IR can be socially and linguistically constructed, then what is reliable knowledge in IR? Different theoretical schools may have different views on it. The school of "linguistic turn" would argue that it depends on whether given knowledge could contribute to progress and emancipation of human society, and that the significance of IR theories lies in its providing guidance and direction for social and political improvement. Illuminating the fact that the meaning of reality in IR has features of social and linguistic construction does not mean the denial of relative stability of international orders, nor international orders replete with chaos or lawlessness. Other schools of IR theories, like political realist ideology, take more attention to issues as to how to maintain status quo of power relations in world politics. Through selective accounts of human history, these theories tend to observe with prudence the (re)arrangements and distributions of material capabilities in international systems in order to avoid repetition of tragedies among major powers in the past. It is a process of social learning. Political realists focus on their studies of cruel experiences recorded in human past, taking historical lessons of violence, conflicts and wars as mirrors in dealing with security dilemma in realpolitik, and thus cherish a state' s superb political wisdom, physical priority and military power of containment. Still, other theories take more concerns about promoting transformation of social and political orders, seeking ways of restructuring prevailing global power structures. They stress human equality, social justice and fairness, advocating both construction of security community and tolerance of differences of diversified cultures and political beliefs and values. If world politics aims at reaching consensus and common understandings, international system needs to transform into a system of communications and dialogic communities. Second, in order to get closer to objective reality in IR, one needs to understand different accounts of the same reality. Who is telling the story of that "reality"? Whose discourse and texts? What is the social identity of the narrator? And what is the context in which the narrator speaks, from what perspectives and in what ways the story is unfolding? One needs to study not only what "realities" that the narrator has told, but also discern what "realities" that he/she has not told. In other words, one needs to be aware to what extents the "realities" that have been known in IR are close to truth, and what "realities" have been ignored and even erased intentionally. In this process, one can tell what the narrator's views on the reality and political intentions are, and how he/she engages in social activities through discourses. For instance, one may see how politicians and foreign policymakers make use of, and even manipulate, certain discourse to establish their political agendas and achieve certain foreign policy intentions and goals, including how they construct "threats" to national security and "diplomatic crisis". To some commentators, all insecurity is culturally produced. In other words, all insecurity is the product of social and political construction.17 Of course, as a form of social power, discourse alone does not accomplish a given foreign policy act. It has to perform along with other forms of social practice. Therefore, one needs to observe how discourse functions along with other forms of power (such as the compulsive, the institutional and the structural, etc.) in IR, and discover how they are mutually linked and interwoven. For example, in U.S. foreign policy, the Executive Branch headed by the President as part of the federal government, is often self-regarded as the chief narrator of external threats to U.S. national security. The President of the United States "controls the right of explaining the definition of crisis"; he prefers to take the initiative in the construction of certain crisis, rather than responds to the crisis constructed by others.18 U.S. symbolic power and its military resources are mutually supportive and justifying: to engage a war needs discursive resources to justify the legitimacy and rationale of the war act, while discourse in turn needs military resources to support and prove it. Third, IR is not only an arena in which states compete for distributions of physical capabilities, but also a place where states struggle for dominance of discursive power. Arguably, IR is fundamentally represented through means of language. Although international politics often witnesses wars and physical violence, it is more common that IR is constituted by language related events as such international negotiations, treaties, political statements, resolutions, policy speeches/debate, summit meetings, political pamphlets and public rallies. Besides, language can be used to help produce identity politics of Self and Others in IR, constructing sources of insecurity culture such as national security "threats" and "diplomatic crisis". A state responds to another state's foreign policy rhetoric as well as its deeds, because words themselves are also interpreted as part of the act. The shift of a state's foreign policy discourse may indicate the shift of its actual foreign policy practice. Therefore a due attention to, and analysis of, discourse matters in IR studies. Language, not only an abstract system of signs but also a tool for social practice, should be taken as an independent unit of political analysis. Through empirical observations of language use in IR, one comes to be aware of the process of meaning production in which world politics is (re)constructed.