

Nina Gannes: The Critical Geopolitics of the Post-9/11 United States Foreign Policy Discourse: a case study using the phrases the “War on Terror,” the “Axis of Evil,” and the “Sunni Triangle”

ABSTRACT

I argue that the Bush Administration’s post-9/11 foreign policy discourse politicized space to advance a *realpolitik* ideological agenda. Underlying foreign policy discourse were power structures that created subjective knowledges about the intersection of space, terrorism, and U.S. policy. The government post-9/11 geopolitical discourse contained frames that reflected the political ideology of the Bush Administration. Using three case study phrases (the “War on Terror,” the “Axis of Evil,” and the “Sunni Triangle”), I argue that the *realpolitik* motivations of these phrases were that they, 1) allowed for meaning ambiguity and a limitless capacity within which the U.S. could respond to 9/11, 2) facilitated a territorial strategy for foreign policy, and 3) suggested the containment of violence. The prevalence of these phrases in both conservative and liberal newspaper articles suggests that the Bush Administration successfully shaped the overarching frames of the media discourse.