The Shaping of Threat Through Narration

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Abstract

Threat is a problematic term since it is both objective and subjective in nature. It is in one sense objective, especially in a national security perspective of capability to inflict harm, but it is also highly subjective in how it is discussed and perceived. More often than not, the very interpretation of the threat, influenced by threat narratives, dictates the reality of the threat. Through the iterative process of narration and the inherent subjectivity that narration introduces, a threat perception generally evolves in a direction away from objectivity. The nature of threat narration is based on a two-part process of story-telling by influencers and interpretation by an audience. Simply put, threat comes to life and is molded into a comprehensible construct through threat narratives. This animation of the threat is precisely where it is both simplified into digestible pieces while at the same time careening away from an objective threat truth. Reconciling the impact of threat perception and its detriment to threat truth is the focus of this article.

Introduction

Threat is a problematic term since it is both objective and subjective in nature. It is in one sense objective, especially in a national security perspective of capability to inflict harm, but it is also highly subjective in how people discuss and perceive it. The interpretation of the threat, influenced by threat narratives, dictates the perception of the threat. Through the iterative process of narration and the inherent subjectivity that narration introduces, how threat is understood generally evolves away from objectivity. The nature of threat narration is a two-step process of storytelling by influencers and interpretation by an audience. Simply put, threat comes to life through threat narratives. This animation of the threat is precisely where it is both simplified into manageable pieces while at the same time careening away from its objective base position.

Understanding that an objective notion of threat can exist along with a subjective threat reality is important in how to view domestic threat calculus and the decisions that states make with respect to their security. When meaningful national security decisions are on the line, this distinction between the objective and subjective perspectives of threat becomes even more important. Assessing and debating the closest approximation of threat in an objective sense while constructing barriers to threat narration, rhetoric, and bias are key. Threat perceptions can inflate quickly and identifying those root causes which artificially inflate or deflate the threat picture are crucially important. Policy decisions based on the subjective narratives lead states down false, often costly, and dangerous paths.

Threat Narratives

The study of narratives has grown in recent years and especially around narratives focusing on national security.[1] The research focus on threat inflation has increased with respect to the decisions around military action. Much of the discussion around narrative creation and narrative dominance pertains to knowledge, the sharing of knowledge, and the perception of shared knowledge. President James Madison famously stated,

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the management of foreign relations appears to be the most susceptible of abuse, of all the trusts committed to a Government, because they can be concealed or disclosed, or disclosed in such parts and at such times as will best suit particular views; and because the body of the people are less capable of judging and are more under the influence of prejudices, on that branch of their affairs, than of any other.[2]

Thus, how a government or set of actors controls the dispensing of such knowledge in the form of threat narratives is critically important.

Mona Baker has described narratives as "stories we tell ourselves and others about the world(s) in which we live...[which] provide our main interface with the world."[3] A narrative is a collective statement made up of a series of overt statements and intimations around a topic. These moments align to form a collective discourse that paints a story. Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen noted that the orientation around a topic based on the narrative could affect the various types of policy solutions. For example, if security narratives on Cuba were orientated around disarmament as opposed to the benefits of a market economy, the resulting policy solutions for Cuba would live in the weapon reduction space based on the directional narrative instead of economic and political space.[4]

Christina Rowley and Jutta Weldes also expounded upon the concept of security narratives by highlighting the selective nature of narratives as well as their likeness to metaphors. They noted that a metaphor "invokes a biological framework to account for and make sense of changes in international security studies scholarship...produc[ing] and naturaliz[ing] a narrative that, by privileging some facts while marginalizing others."[5] The intentionality by which narratives can be furthered adds a concerning level of subjectivity.

Understanding how particular parties produce rhetoric and how the resulting narratives achieve dominance is key to the reality of the threat. Ronald Krebs' book *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* explores the importance of understanding narrative creation as part of the larger threat discourse. He explains that while those in the national security field acknowledge the presence of national security narratives, they often underestimate their importance to threat reality. Krebs' notes

"dominant narratives of national security establish the common-sense givens of debate, set the boundaries of the legitimate…[and] thereby shape the national security policies that states pursue."[6] It is precisely through the process of party influence on narrative evolution that dictates the dominance of particular threats.

These theoretical underpinnings help us to address questions about threat narratives pertaining to why people believe front-page threat headlines in reputable papers such as *The Wall Street Journal*. Say, for example, the headline reads, "Russian threat to the United States highest since the Cold War!" Do people run for cover? Probably not, but the impact is significant. Many Americans read newspaper headlines or tune in to radio or TV coverage of national security affairs and then go about their day. For many Americans, the 10 minutes of world news roundup in the morning and at night forms the totality of their worldview. Rodger Payne believes this deference has to do with how Americans *en masse* believe the experts because of their greater access to information.[7] Chaim Kaufman noted, "Government agencies usually have a large authority advantage in debate with anyone else. This is particularly true in realms where they have an information advantage and do not face competing authorities of comparable stature."[8] This is the case for government elites in the national security arena as well as highly informed newscasters, journalists, and academics who speak on topics with a certain level of inherent authority.

News headlines stay top of mind precisely because they fall into the narrative containers that people use to order the many pieces of information that we receive during a day. Truing back to the Russian threat example, visual images in the past of Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama on *CNN* or in *The New York Times* staring each other down supports this narrative. Russia's attempts several years ago to exert control in Syria with its air campaign and sustained military support as well as its increased influence in Crimea with its backing of Russian-sympathizing rebels in the Ukraine adds credence to this narrative. Alleged Russian hacking of American email accounts and 2016 Presidential Election interference are key stories that help to support a narrative. This supporting cast of stories creates a holistic threat narrative around Russia. While Russia could be taking several actions that run contrary to American interests around the world, the great leap to judgement that Russia is now

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the most significant threat to the United States becomes part of an overarching narrative.

Americans, however, make this leap, for several reasons. First, the narrative comes from a reputable source. Second, the human mind prefers things to be neat and organized. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson noted in *Metaphors We Live By* that "linguistic expressions are containers for meaning."[9] If the narrative about Russia's threat primacy did not exist, there would be no neat cubbyhole to store all of these one-off Russian threat stories. The human mind loves mnemonic devices to help categorize information. These *aide-mémoire* narratives help to do just that. Third, people are busy and are generally not willing to refute the larger threat narrative statement. Their lives get in the way and as simpleminded as this paints many people, they are too busy to refuture the threat narratives that are top of mind. If the old adage is you are what you eat, a similar one here with respect to threat could be you believe what you hear. If the TV in the office break room displays *FOX* or *CNN* programming, people getting their morning coffee will passively hear these narratives in an almost subliminal way. While, of course, this broad-brush generalization does not apply to all Americans, it does capture how threat narratives create a subjective threat reality that can run contrary to an objective threat truth.

A cacophony of threat narratives exist in both the public and government spheres when painting a particular country's threat status. Indeed, pundits debate these views in the media canvas of books, television, and the internet, while intelligence analysts conduct a behind the scenes analysis and debate which results in national security assessments. Both perspectives on threat carry their own merits and together present a robust view of perceived threat from a foreign country. Public narrative producers have more diversity and a freer transfer of ideas while government narrative producers may have access to better, or more, information. To say that public threat narratives do not influence government threat narratives would be naïve. In fact, even government assessments cite public, mainstream books in their analysis. However, only on rare occasions of disclosure are government threat narratives fully divulged to the public. More often than not, the DIA, CIA, or White House only present high-level summaries in annual reviews or Congressional testimony.

Since a multitude of actors such as government, media, academia, and think tanks produce threat narratives, the ideological biases of specific threat narratives vary widely. For the threat narrative producers and those who follow their discussions, the debates are rich and the players are well informed. The majority of people who sit on the sidelines, however, routinely accept the storylines at face value. In these situations, the public rarely comments on or challenges the narrative and almost blindly accepts it. These storylines professed by pundits become both the perception and reality for Americans around threat.

Political scientist William Connolly has written extensively about perceptions and understanding reality. He has said that television predigests what people watch and then relays to the audience those perceptions already organized by others. The talking heads of newscasts often pretend to report issues as they are, but more often than not, present material that is colored by their own biases or that of their institution.[10] Similarly, threat narratives that are pitched to the American public by the media, or to government officials by the intelligence community, are predigested interpretations of threat and therefore reflect an inherent bias. Just as television can serve as a forcing mechanism and venue to impart thoughts, threat narratives can similarly shape perceptions around national security reality.

In his book *The Social Construction of What?*, Ian Hacking discussed the notion of social construction which examines how people's surroundings influence their perception. When applying social construction to threat narratives, it can yield new ways to look at national security dilemmas. In many ways, threat narratives help to bring a new, perhaps even wholly unknown, concept to the fore. Hacking offered an example of the *child viewer of television* to demonstrate how two unrelated nouns (child and viewer of television), which previously were not a known entity, moved into the realm of a collective idea through social construction. It became a coherent concept, an object of research, a focal point for world conferences, a marketing audience for products, and even a protected group by which security regulations and devices were created to protect against violent and dangerous TV content.[11] By virtue of social construction, a previously unknown term or idea had built a following through a crescendo of public activity as to engrain itself into everyday usage. The time for this movement from obscurity to household

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consciousness is amazingly brief based on the highly connected nature of people today. National security narratives emerge, solidify, and become a household term in a similar way as in the example of Chinese cyber attacks. Chinese cyber attacks have become a topical security narrative that national security experts assemble around to discuss.
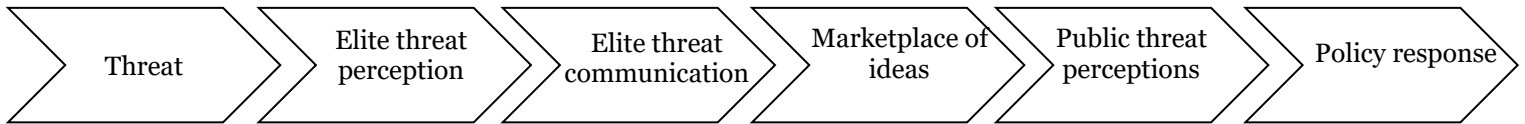
Understanding how threat narratives emerge, gain traction, and either engrain themselves or whither on the vine is important to comprehending this evolution of threat reality. The evolution of threat narratives informs the movement of a foreign country from threat to ally status. This changing threat status informs the important question of why countries shift between friend and foe. The potential explanations for this transition in threat status are manifold: A foreign country's actions or change in its capabilities, perceptions of change, political contestations at home or abroad, or some combination of each. Domestic threat narratives play a significant role in shaping a country's status. While this appears to conflate different epistemological premises of the creation of threat narratives with the objective relationship between those narratives and threat reality, the construction of threat narratives and resulting formation of threat reality appear to coincide. To presume that there is something distinctive between threat discourse and threat itself discounts the constructive nature by which narratives codify reality.

The domestic environment acts as an incubator for new narrative creation on notions of insecurity. Alan Wolf's *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Threat* noted that domestic factors in the United States, more so than Soviet factors during the Cold War, directly led to the rise and fall of the Soviet threat and production of threat narratives. Bureaucratic politics in the Pentagon, rivalries between different branches of government, and foreign policy and economic disagreements between the elites built threat narratives around the Soviet Union that were more subjective in nature than what could be attributable through an objective, scientific method.[12]

Theories of threat inflation also focus on the influence of domestic actors and their narratives to influence national security policy change. Figure 1 below shows a simple model of threat inflation developed by Jane Cramer and Trevor Thrall. In this model, elites perceive and communicate notions of threat, which then compete within a marketplace of other notions of threat.[13]

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Figure 1. Threat Inflation Model

| Threat | Elite threat perception | Elite threat communication | Marketplace of ideas | Public threat perceptions | Policy response |

Whereas the U.S. government threat assessment portion of the narration ends with the influencing of the policy makers, this model continues with influencing of the public and the policy creation. The U.S. government threat assessment influences the *elite threat perception*, which then influences the rest of this model. This model is important for it starts with an objective truth about threat (actual conditions) and then has several layers of perception, narration and communication, influence, and interpretation before creating national security policy. It lays out the multiple touchpoints of subjectivity in the threat calculus prior to policy creation.

The narrative in and of itself is a convention that allows for an inherent interjection of subjectivity. As Lakoff and Johnson stated, there is a constant contradiction between myths of subjectivity and objectivity in how humans see the world. They noted that since the time of the Greeks, "there has been in Western culture a tension between truth, on the one hand, and art, on the other, with art viewed as illusion."[14] In the *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes noted that absurdity in the "use of metaphors, tropes, and other rhetorical figures, instead of words proper."[15] In this sense, narratives are the metaphors and tropes that humans both create and use to understand threat.

This is not to say that all threat narratives are intentionally deceiving in nature and embellish an objective state; however, the creation of a convention to help the understanding of a threat and couch the issue in a contemporary landscape introduces the possibility of subjectivity. Even John Locke, in his work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* noted that empiricist tradition calls figurative speech and rhetoric as an enemy of truth where "all artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else, but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement."[16] It is therefore critically important to use clear and precise language, and even

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this standard is murky as it attempts to remove interpretation. The reality is that even in the pursuit of objectivity, subjectivity is a part of the equation based on how humans "understand the world through our interactions with it."[17]

Threat Perception versus Threat Truth

While the discussion up until this point has examined how the narrative process employs rhetoric to create a wholly new reality of threat, the balance of this article will examine the differences between threat perception (threat reality) and threat truth. With respect to the term of art of threat perception, it is important to note that it is synonymous with threat reality because reality reflects the influence of the environment on threat calculus. The idea that an objective threat truth can exist while forces work to move the perception of threat away from its accurate depiction is at the heart of this discussion. The danger in this loss of accuracy lies in the fact that threat perception and not threat truth dictates national security policy decisions. This error leads to a faulty allocation of scarce resources as well as potential misleading threat escalation.

In an attempt to separate the notions threat truth from threat perception, we need to start at the basics of what threat is and what it is not. The concept of security is derived from the Latin *securitas,* and root *securus,* which means "without a care."[18] Security is the condition of being free from harm or threat in both the physical and psychological perspectives.[19] Traditional national security conceptions have been based largely on the protection of the state against external, physical threats. Today, however, additional notions of security exist at the psychological level from the perspective of the individual, religion, culture, and gender or sexual orientation.[20] Threat in the most general sense is the infliction of harm at any of these levels. However, national security threats generally concern the physical or economic harm inflicted against the state or political unit. This threat involves both the actual homeland as well as interests abroad. The discussion of threat in this article focuses on the national security perspective in order to emphasize the objective and subjective dimensions of threat.

If national security is the state's pursuit of being safe from harm, threat is simply the manifestation of harm that impinges upon this sense of state

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security. With this as the conceptual backdrop for threat, it would appear that a knowable, objective notion of national security threat could exist. After all, the pursuit of knowing the actual threat that foreign powers pose has been the Holy Grail for the professional American intelligence apparatus for the past half century. The field of intelligence analysis is a good place to begin the discussion since no other profession has spent more time trying to understand threat. Illustrating this pursuit of threat objectivity, or threat truth, former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Allen Dulles adopted biblical verse John 8:32, "and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" as the CIA's motto. While intelligence seeks the truth or objective state of the actual threat situation, sources of influence – either at the hands of the enemy to hide the actual conditions or domestic bias through threat narration – often mask this view.[21]

The idea that by employing the scientific method, one can know the exact truth about another country's threat is the basis of an objective notion of threat. Threat in a national security sense is a summation of a foreign nation's capabilities and intent to do harm. For many years, this has been the equation for threat in the U.S. government. In some cases, where material capabilities are the driving factor of the threat, the number of divisions, tanks, planes, or missiles would seem knowable. Either these material capabilities exist or they do not. The problem is that foreign leaders' intent to use these military devices is often difficult to judge objectively. How another human being thinks and feels as well as how they would employ foreign military might is truly the great unknown even though methods exist to approximate this intent.

Regarding this notion of threat truth highlighted in the CIA's motto, one should acknowledge that truth lives on shaky ground in political science. Truth with respect to political science is not something provable in an empirical sense. Truth has normative underpinnings and is value-laden. In this discussion, the word truth denotes the actual conditions on the ground when considering another country's threat to the US. The term is based on Sherman Kent's attribution that a truth can exist for threat analysis. Known as the father of modern American Intelligence, Kent was the first head of the CIA's assessment division known as the Office of National Estimates. What Kent believed was that the actual conditions or

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accurate portrayal of another country's strategic stature (capabilities) was knowable.

In this discussion, parallels exist between the notion of a knowable threat truth and truth as defined in scientific realism, which adopts a scientific approach to the real.[22] In the vein of scientific realism, truth is explained in the world by noting, "physics aims at the truth, and if it succeeds, it tells the truth."[23] As Kent believed that intelligence analysis employs the scientific method, his search for threat truth aligned closely with scientific realism in the acknowledgement that a truth could exist to be found or proven. Kent said that intelligence research is "capable of giving us the truth, or a closer approximation to truth…like the method of physical science."[24]

Kent noted that a country's strategic stature and views of itself and towards others dictated how it would act in the international arena. This was another way of saying the threat that a country poses represents a calculation of its capabilities and intent. He said,

I have urged that if we have knowledge of Great Frusina's [Kent's hypothetical great power] strategic stature [Kent's term for the totality of a nation's capabilities – military, political and economic—to act on the international scene], knowledge of her specific vulnerabilities, and how she may view these, and knowledge of the stature and vulnerabilities of other states part to the situation, you are in a fair way able to predict her probable courses of action.[25]

In other words, if you can determine a country's capabilities and intentions, you can make an accurate assessment of that country's threat. Moreover, Kent believed that knowing what Great Frusina has done in the past and what its current situation is would help you better understand its intent.[26] Thus, understanding capabilities and intent would get you closer to the truth about a country's actual threat. The truth about threat was not an abstract term to Kent or the CIA nor was it a guess; it was an objective, scientifically derived depiction of actual harm. Subjectivity had little place in this conception of threat. Kent limited the playing field of threats to the external, state centric kinds.

As previously noted, Kent likened the study of intelligence to scientific methods in social sciences. Kent stated, "research is the only process which we of the liberal tradition are willing to admit is capable of giving us the truth."[27] While Kent viewed intelligence analysis as an objective pursuit resulting in truth, subjectivity generally creeps into the equation in the form of interpretations and perceptions used to fill the knowledge gaps. The intelligence community found it easier to assess threat against those actors who displayed intent and capability than more expanded views of threat that included inanimate sources of threat such as earthquakes and other non-actor based threats.

While the case is made for the existence of a threat truth, uncertainty still exists in how one can actually arrive at an accurate depiction of this notion. Several factors serve to cloud attempts at threat truth such as knowledge gaps in another country's intent and capabilities as well as the speed with which intent can change. The intent of a country with respect to the United States can change relatively rapidly based on changes to both its domestic environment and political leadership. The United States tasks its intelligence apparatus with trying to understand the intent of decision-makers in other countries; however, this intent may not be fully decided and could be fleeting. A friendly intent could in fact give way to a more hostile intent and this transitory nature makes the ascertaining of the threat truth a short-lived endeavor that requires frequent revisits.

Now that we have discussed how an objective notion of threat can exist, let us turn our attention to how subjectivity influences reality. If threat truth is the objective conception of threat, threat perception is what occurs when you add the influencers and narration about threat. This is precisely where the distinction between threat truth and threat perception comes into view.

The difference between threat perception and threat truth can best be described as threat perception being the threat as we know it to be or the as is, while threat truth on the other hand is the objective position of threat or the accurate location of threat. In other words, threat truth is the normative construction of threat—what should or ought to be in a philosophical sense. This distinction between reality and truth is similar to how Hacking discussed the distinction between that which is socially constructed and that which is real.[28] Hacking's socially constructed notion

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would mirror threat perception while the conception of real would represent truth. Hacking notes that social constructivists constantly debate adjectives such as objective and real. Those in the constructivist camp often believe the use of truth and real to be free-floating constructions in nature.[29] However, even constructivists do acknowledge the presence of this scientific realism or scientific truth. This real, actual situation or truth often differs from the socially constructed reality where the latter is reflective of the subjectivity and influences of the world around us.

An example from history, which helps to illustrate this distinction between threat perception and threat truth, is the American-Soviet missile gap during the Cold War. American intelligence professed a significant missile gap in the 1950s with the Soviets possessing 1000-1500 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) compared to only 100 ICBMs for the United States. The prevailing thought was that the United States was on the wrong end of a missile gap of greater than 10 times. This was American threat perception and was what American force planners used in military armament and policy decisions. The gap produced threat narratives and an entire generation of Americans grew up hiding under school desks during air-raid drills fearing Soviet nuclear-tipped missiles. It was the threat perception based on threat assessments, threat narratives, and the perspective of Americans in an anxiety-laden environment. In retrospect, however, the actual conditions (or threat truth) showed that the Soviets only had four ICBMs—less than one half of one percent that which American intelligence assessors believed to be true.[30] The threat truth was that the U.S. missile capability was greater than 20 times the Soviet missile capability and no actual missile gap threat existed for Americans. Threat perception always trumps threat truth because threat perception drives force planning, military budget decisions, and policy execution. Threat truth often exists on the other side of the curtain and is often only fully ascertained in retrospect.

One of the most significant causes for this disparity between threat truth and threat perception are threat narratives and the narrative process by which influencers discuss threats. Influencers exert vast power in how they talk about threat and encourage others to think about it. Special interests, pundits, and even well intentioned newscasters place their bias on a threat by how they talk about it and elevate its exposure. These influencers

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dictate threat discussion in public by way of steering the discourse on the topic. Threat narratives are essentially the byproducts of influencers. The iterative process of influencers building threat narratives plays a large part in creating the divergence between a single, objective threat truth and various, competing threat realities.

Influencers

The idea that threat is malleable supports the notion that influence, interpretation, and social construction play a large role in creating a threat reality. Those who possess the power to influence can define threat in many ways. Leaders, pundits, and generally anyone with influencing access (authors, newscasters, academics, politicians, movie stars, and athletes) label threat and steer its understanding. Even today, politicians shape threats along a spectrum from existential to limited or confined.

For example, some pundits have labeled the threat from terrorism against the United States as existential when viewed as a large, capable army of radical Islamists attempting to end the American way of life. This view of threat paints an absolute vulnerability to American existence. Alternatively, some pundits define the domestic threat from terrorism as more limited in nature in the sense that only a relatively few, generally inept lone wolves set off inert bombs or fall into FBI sting operations. Political administrations, cable news networks, and think tanks often latch on to one of these terrorism threat narratives and profess the narrative to the public. As with most sets of extremes, the objective threat truth or actual threat situation usually lives somewhere between the two poles of where the influencers are trying to take the populace.

The battle lines appear to be hardening with respect to influencers and their indifference to positions of neutrality. Many mainstream publications are perfectly content to declare themselves of a particular opinion. Online publications will even acknowledge their political persuasions on their homepage. They will overtly acknowledge their generally left leaning liberal or conservative tendencies. Television networks and newspapers make similar declarations. With the influencing strength of these forums, it is obvious how the narratives that these organizations further often lean a particular direction and intend to influence their audiences.

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A critical danger of influencers moving the populace in any particular direction is that it by definition moves the perception of reality away from the threat truth. Special interests exert considerable resources to help Americans think a certain way. Public relations groups and large marketing agencies also make significant fortunes telling a certain story that someone would like them to tell. Often this story is part of a larger agenda and unfortunately does not always reconcile with the truth about threat. A preponderance of resources could result in a group's narrative becoming the dominant narrative of the day

Doomed Endeavor?

Since threat narration implicitly introduces bias, is the study and understanding of threat a doomed endeavor? The answer lies in the level of effort applied to the correct usage of language and identification of bias. It will be critical to promote transparency around threat as well as the sources that create bias in the system. While perhaps hard to come by, neutral actors who can help to dispel the veil of bias and subjectivity should be elevated. We should identify and vilify rhetoric not only for its political lean, but also for how it influences away from any semblance of truth. As Hobbes noted, words proper should be the goal instead of rhetoric. Faulty reality is a result of bias in the system and appears at the cost of truth. An objective truth around threat is the Holy Grail of national security assessment and discussion and should be the aspiration for those engaged in and sincerely interested in understanding harm at the international level.

We should make a conscious effort to acknowledge the dichotomy of threat truth and threat perception. Understanding that an objective notion of threat could exist as well as a subjective notion is a powerful starting point. This base acknowledgment will actually undercut the level of impact of influencers who are increasingly selling their bias to the American populace. Flagging those more egregious influencers who steer the American people away from objective notions of threat is also an interesting idea. Imagine a world where we could apply a rating system to threat narrative producers. In this model, the lower the score would approximate neutrality and the pursuit of objectivity. This rating system around bias would highlight the more egregious influencers of threat

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narrative subjectivity and encourage debate about their ideas. Watchdog groups could have a true impact by identifying those sources of bias in the national security conversation. While a point system is an interesting concept to apply to news outlets as a way to gauge bias or lack thereof, identifying who or what would hold the power of objectivity to judge another's neutrality would be the challenge.

The answer, however, to whether the pursuit of threat truth is a doomed endeavor is a simple one. The answer is no, if we are willing to take the time to promote correct usage of language with respect to threat and to publicly identify sources of threat bias. This advocacy will take the wind out of the sails of bias threat narration and the threat truth will become more apparent. Constantly challenging the conceptions of truth is also a powerful antidote to the passive acceptance of threat narration. To simply sit back and take in the evening news without challenging the narratives or scrolling through social media stories without questioning the author's intentions helps to further the bias in narrative creation. Challenging conventions with the excitement of youth is powerful in the quest for threat truth and the casting away of blind acceptance of false threat narratives.

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