3-2005

Do we stand on common ground? A threat appraisal model for terror alerts issued by the Department of Homeland Security

Augustine PANG
Singapore Management University, augustine@smu.edu.sg

Yan JIN
University of Missouri

Glen T. CAMERON
University of Missouri

Do We Stand on Common Ground?
A Threat Appraisal Model for Terror Alerts Issued by the Department of Homeland Security

Augustine Pang
Yan Jin
Glen T. Cameron
Missouri School of Journalism
University of Missouri
ap5xd@mizzou.edu
yj82c@mizzou.edu
camerong@missouri.edu

Having developed a threat appraisal model to examine the fabric and faces of threat, and how it can be communicated, the authors empirically test the model on an ongoing issue, the issuance of terror alerts by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), on how threat is appraised by DHS, and the conservative and liberal audiences. Findings showed a shared view by the DHS and the conservative audiences while the liberal audiences thought otherwise. Though there appear to be consensus in threat communication, more internal consistency within DHS is needed to optimize its effectiveness.

Introduction

Since September 11, 2001, Americans, wary of another terrorist attack on home soil, have lived perilously under the pervasive umbrella of alert warning systems. Until a nationwide coordinated color-coded alert system was implemented in March 2002, alerts were issued, albeit haphazardly, from either the federal and/or state offices (Nieves & Winter, 2001). Between September 11, 2001 and February, 2002, there were four occasions (Pincus & Miller, 2002) where terror alerts were issued by various security officials and/or agencies: Attorney General John Ashcroft issued the first two alerts in October 2001 (Pianin & Eggen, 2001); then White House director of homeland security Tom Ridge issued the third in December 2001 ("White House issues a new terror alert," 2001); and the Federal Investigation Bureau (FBI) issued the next in February 2002 (Johnson, 2002; Miller, 2002). Disagreements over what constituted to threats led to calls for a more comprehensive alert system to assess and communicate them (Nieves & Winter, 2001).

The situation did not appear to improve even after the newly formed Department of Homeland Security (DHS) introduced its five-level coded system in March 2002: Green for low risks, blue for general risks, yellow for significant risks, orange for high risks, and red for severe risks (Miller, 2002). With the country's security level set at a perpetual, default state of significant risks (yellow), there were five occasions, between March 2002 and November 2004, where the risks were elevated to "high" (code orange): Once in 2002, in September ("9/11/02; America enduring," 2002); four times in 2003, with three over four-month span, from February to May (Mintz & Schmidt, 2002), and the fourth straddling from December 2003 to January 2004 (Mintz, 2003; Weiss, 2004). In August 2004, for the first time, code orange was alerted for specific sites in specific geographic locations, primarily the financial institutions in New York City, Washington, and Newark (Block, 2004).

However, the color-coded system, touted to enhance the ethical and expeditious appraisal and communication of threats, soon begin to lose its luster, urgency, and credibility (Fahrenthold, 2003). Accused of being unnecessarily worrisome and wearisome to a wary but "jaded" public, Secretary Tom Ridge admitted that its desired impact on its target audiences appeared diffused (Mintz, 2003), and there are increasingly divergent views between DHS and its publics of what constitutes threats, and how threats should be appraised, as well as how threats can be communicated.

Indeed, the underlying inability by all parties concerned to fully grasp and communicate the nature, extent, and composition of the threats posed appears to be the fundamental problem faced by DHS throughout the implementation of the color-coded system. It is a central, yet ironically elusive, concept in the fight against terror.

Even in the public relations and crisis literature, though threat has been alluded to, most of the current works have focused on how it can be communicated, and countered (Grunig and Gruing, 1992; Cancel,

Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997; Coombs, 1998; Ray, 1999; Wrigley, Salmon, & Park, 2003; Richards, 2004; Benoit, 2004). Ray (1999), for instance, argued that threat could be controlled with effective crisis management. Richards (2004) called for greater understanding on how public relations can be utilized to counter terrorism-based threats. Coombs (1998) argued that an appropriate organizational response to threats should take into account two key variables: First, whether the organization has strong or weak control over the crisis; second, whether the organization is perceived to be strongly or mildly responsible for the crisis.

Threat was alluded to in Grunig and Grunig's (1992) excellence theory. Based on the two-way symmetrical model in the theory, which has been positioned as normative theory (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997), threat could be "smoothed over," if you will, if both the organization and its publics can engage in meaningful dialogue to achieve a win-win solution.

Cameron's contingency theory of conflict management, which takes an alternative perspective that two-way symmetrical communication may not always be possible, but instead argued that public relations and conflict management ought to be viewed along a continuum rather than by positing ideal models of excellence, provides a comparatively deeper glimpse into the concept of threat: Threat is a "potentially negative situation involving publics," Cancel, Mitrook and Cameron (1999) argued. The "greater threat a public presents to an organization, the faster the organization will respond to the public and the more accommodating the organization will be to the public" (p. 184), the authors argued. The contingency theory separates threat into two components, external and internal. While it has attempted to organize the different types of threats, a full explication of just what threat means remains to be seen.

While current theories and research have provided the vital footprints to understand threat, few have attempted to analyze threat communication based on appraisal. By appraisal, we mean understanding the faces and fabrics of threat so that one can develop appropriate strategies and messages to address and communicate the nature, composition, extent, and implication of the threat. Drawing on a rich tapestry of literature from cross-disciplinary perspectives involving behavioral, business, and the communication sciences, the authors have developed a threat appraisal model (2005) to examine the fabric and faces of threat, and how these can be translated into communication thrusts.

This model proposes to appraise threat at two levels:

- ❑ A primary appraisal (<u>situational demands</u>) based on degrees of (a) perceived Danger, (b) Uncertainty (lack of prediction and control increase difficulty of threat) of the issue, (c) Required Effort to address the threat; and
- ❑ A secondary appraisal (<u>resources</u>) based on the following as required to deal with the threat: (a) Knowledge; (b) Skill; (c) Time; (d) Finance; and (e) Support from the Dominant Coalition.

Employing the proposed threat appraisal model, threat communication is examined along three distinct dimensions:

- ❑ Threat level,
- ❑ Threat duration, and
- ❑ Threat type.

Given the increasingly divergent views between DHS and its publics of what constitutes threats, this present study attempts, using our appraisal model, to understand firstly, how threat is appraised, and communicated by DHS; secondly, how the same threat message is appraised, and communicated by news publications with ostensibly differing political and ideological persuasions, as enactments of differing communication strategies and reflections of public opinions; thirdly, what are the similarities and differences among the DHS and the stance and opinions expressed in and through the media outlets; and lastly, to examine the schism, if any, among multiple players, and then understand why, despite all good intentions and purposes, there may not, after all, be a common understanding of threat among DHS and its publics.

Data to examine how threat is appraised, and communicated, by DHS comes from content analyses of all its terror-alert news releases. To examine how terror alerts are appraised, and regarded by conservative and liberal masses, two media outlets, *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times*, are chosen for

their purported differences and as evidence of enactments of their persuasive and informational strategies to both their respective conservative and liberal audiences while serving the same geographical location (Song, 2004; Viguerie & Franke, 2004). The population of news stories and commentaries from March 2002 to November 2004, the duration of the implementation of the color-coded system, are content analyzed.

This study is important for two reasons. First, we believe our threat appraisal model adds a deeper and richer conceptual understanding of threat, particularly providing a firmer understanding in diagnosing threats. Second, by studying the threat alerts, we hope to explicate our threat appraisal model by empirically testing an ongoing issue. In doing so, we hope that this study will provide a useful test to link threat appraisal and communication, and in so doing, illuminate practical insights for practitioners on how the appraisal of threats affects a contingent approach to communication strategies and tactics in an effort to manage conflict and when appropriate, find common grounds with various audiences.

Literature Review

Threat has been commonly used to describe the state of seizure a nation, organization, or individual, is in during a crisis. Even though it is such a heavily used word, the concept of threat has not been fully explicated, particularly in public relations literature. Yet, threat, which is often used interchangeably with "risk," "fear," and "conflict," is both the cause, and effect, of crisis. To assess the effects of threat, a clearer explication and appraisal of threat is critical. Drawing on cross-disciplinary perspectives involving behavioral, business, and the communication sciences, the authors have developed a threat appraisal model to examine the fabric and faces of threat to understand how these can provide critical insights for communication.

Threats, Fear and Risks

Threat appeals have been widely used by communication practitioners in designing effective threat messages and communication campaigns (Strong, Anderson & Dubas, 1993). In their definition, a threat is a warning to recognize danger and accept the recommendation to avoid the negative consequences. They advocated that it is important to differentiate between threat as a stimulus and the recipient's cognitive and emotional responses to that stimulus. Threat appeals sometimes are used interchangeably as fear appeal or fear arousal. However, based on the distinction between threat as a stimulus and the outcome of threat, we can see that fear is only an outcome of perceived threat. Different levels of threat may lead to different emotional responses.

Risk is another concept sometimes used as a synonym for danger or threat. However they are different concepts from each other. Risk is usually defined statistically to provide a relative measure of safety, which should be more precisely regarded as a synonym for expected loss as defined in decision theory (Oppe, 1988). Unlike threats, risk is the "expected loss" of an alternative to be chosen, thereby emphasizing the process of decision making and not solely on the result: Risk is not loss but expected loss, which strongly connects with the decision-maker's behavior. By collecting and processing information about the situation, one can reduce the uncertainty about the expected outcome of each possible action (Oppe, 1988). From the public relations' point of view, risk is the expected loss if a particular strategy is chosen, given the information available. The real loss is uncertain and is only known afterwards. A hallmark of risk communication, argue Wilcox and Cameron (2005, forthcoming), thus, is to reduce the danger and threat posed. As Oppe (1988) mentioned, the relation between the information and the choice of an action is called a strategy, and a strategy will be chosen such that, given the information, the expected loss is minimal. In this sense, the uncertainty attached to risk can be a component of threats.

Threats in Power Relations

Power is essentially a structural concept, referring to certain aspects of the functional arrangements of any social system, and at the same time deals with the motivations of individuals (Cohen, 1959). The exercise of power requires some acceptance by those who are part of the social system, and because reward and punishment are inherently involved, it has repercussions upon the adjustment and reactions in the power relations between parties. With regard to threats, studies have been done to determine the amount of threat experienced by a low-power person in one's relations with someone of higher power

(Cohen, 1959). It was found that a person's reactions to being under the power of another depend, to a considerable degree, upon one's view of the self (self-esteem).

Cohen defined "power" as "the ability of one party of a relationship to determine whether or not the other party is carried toward his goals or away from them, over and above the second party's own efforts" (p. 36). In public relations context, power can be taken as the ability of one party of a relationship to influence the behavior of the other party. In many situations, one party's power consists of the ability to determine whether or not another party reaches its goal, which amounts to the ability to control the means by which the other approaches to the goal.

As Cohen (1959) further theorized, threat may have many sources. One possibility is to put the perception of the adequacy of oneself to deal with the situation and to satisfy one's needs on a continuum. In this sense, threat can be defined as "the state of the individual in which he feels inadequate to deal with a given situation and to satisfy his needs" (p. 36). Combing the definition of power and threat, it seems that anyone under the power of another would experience threat. However, the possession of power consists of the potential to withhold or to permit the gratification of a need. Therefore the degree of threat one may potentially experience in a social setting is related to the degree of power which is exercised over him.

Closely related to the concept of power, "structure" refers to the degree to which a social situation provided the individual with clear and accessible cues so that he may behave in a goal-directed and need-satisfying manner. Indeed, such a structure is deemed to be essential, as evident in public relations literature, to address the imbalance caused by threat. Since communication is conceived as a "goal-directed activity" (Benoit, 1995, p. 63), the individual must, given the chance, work within the social "structure" and context to regain one's reputation when it is threatened, either by accusations, or an offensive act. This is because accusations affect one's face, image and reputation, and when one's face, image and reputation are rendered in question, it limits one's ability to influence the other (Benoit, 1997). "When face is threatened, face works must be done" (p. 75), argued Benoit and Brinson (1994). This happens when one is held responsible for a reprehensible act, and when the act is considered offensive (Benoit, 1997). In understanding the impact of threat to one's reputation, the key questions, argued Benoit (2004), then, are firstly, "not whether the act was in fact offensive, but whether the act was believed to be offensive by its salient audiences" (p. 264); and secondly, "not whether the accused is in fact responsible for the offensive act, but whether the accused is thought to be responsible by its salient audience" (p. 264). When image and reputation are threatened, as Benoit (2004) argued, one must be motivated to offer explanations, defenses, justifications, rationalizations, apologies, and excuses for one's behavior.

Threats and Conflicts

How to deal with threats and the threatening situation has been an intriguing and important facet of conflict management and crisis communication research. Maslow (1943) broached the attempt of studying conflict, frustration and the theory of threat in his early work, in which the outcomes of threat were categorized into cognitive outcomes and affective outcomes manifested by fear and frustration. The understanding of these key concepts was highlighted to be very important especially in terms of coping strategies in a conflict situation.

According to Maslow (1943), there are two kinds of conflict: Threatening vs. non-threatening. Four types of conflicts were proposed according the nature of choice in the given situation and the importance of the given goal: First, sheer choice, which involves a choice between two paths to the same goal, which is relatively unimportant for the organism or the organization in a public relations setting, therefore not threatening at all; Second, choice between two paths to the same (vital and important) goal, in which even though the goal itself is important for the organization, there are alternative ways of teaching the goal. In this sense, the goal itself is not endangered. Third, threatening conflicts are still a choice situation but now it is a choice between two different goals (both vitally necessary). In this situation, a choice reaction usually does not settle the conflict since the decision means giving up something that is almost as necessary as what is chosen. Giving up a necessary goal or need-satisfaction is threatening, and even after the choice has been made, the effects of threat persist. Fourth, more extremel are the catastrophic conflicts, which are also called pure threats with no alternative or possibilities of choice. All the choices

are equally catastrophic or threatening in their effects or else there is only one possibility and there is a catastrophic threat.

In explaining of the occurrence of threats, Maslow (1943) took the view of psychopathology: The most nuclear aspects of threat are the direct deprivation, or thwarting, or danger to the basic needs. Tightened with his motivation theories, Maslow (1943) advocated that we must ultimately define a situation of threat in terms of the individual organism (in our case, organization) facing its particular problem. It was also emphasized that the feeling of threat to be inherently considered a dynamic stimulation to other reactions. By the same token, to better understand threats in a conflict or crisis situation we have to examine not only their antecedents, but also their nature or dimensionality as well as the consequence on how an organization will react to deal with the situation.

Analyzing Threats: A Threat appraisal model

Studies argued that the perception of threat is not strictly a function of an environmental stimulus itself, but involves an interpretation of the stimulus (Carver, 1977), which corresponds to Jin and Cameron's appraisal model of emotions in public relations (2003).

Jin and Cameron (2003) integrated cognitive appraisal in emotion theories with public relations models, with appraisal referring to the evaluation of the significance of what is going on in the public-organization relationship for each party's benefit; One of the key stages in the appraisal process is called action tendency, which means to link between emotions from both parties and their observable responses; regarding the coping process, the public and the organization may choose crisis management strategies to either alter the relations or to revise the emotional status by different encounter interpretation. In terms of the short-term outcome may include immediate emotional response to a campaign and hence further change in emotional states; long-term outcome may deal with a continuum of emotion inhered within each party toward the other with an aim to maintain a mutually positive affect. More specifically, in the emotion process in public relations, primary appraisal may refer to whether something of relevance to the public or organization's well being has occurred. Its components include corporate goal relevance, corporate goal congruence or incongruence, and the involvement of the party. There is another layer of appraisal at stake, the secondary appraisal, which may refer to whether any given action that might prevent harm, for instance, how the corporation can manage the demands of the relational encounter, and whether the strategy is feasible and what result is expected.

Additionally, in a public-organization encounter, there is the coping mechanism at work. Coping refers to what the public and the organization think and do to try to manage the relational encounter so as to alter a troubled relationship or to sustain a desirable one. It consists of cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external or internal demands (and conflicts between them) that are appraised as exceeding the resources of the public or the organization. There may be two types of coping: First, problem-focused coping – change the actual relationship between the public and the organization via actual measures and steps; and second, emotion or cognitive-focused coping, which changes only the way in which the relationship is interpreted by practitioners.

Threats as a result of Skewed Relationship between Demands and Resources

The threat appraisal has been proposed by Blascovich and Mendes (2000) as a cognitive appraisal process consisting of "primary" appraisals (of situational demands) and "secondary" appraisals (of the individual's resources). Threat appraisal consists of the interplay between demand and resource appraisals. More specifically, demand appraisals involve the perception or assessment of danger, uncertainty (situational versus task uncertainty), and required effort inherent in the situation. On one hand, perceptions of high demand on any one of these dimensions may trigger high overall demand appraisals. On the other hand, resource appraisals involve the perception or assessment of knowledge and skills relevant to situational performance.

Psychological research demonstrated that affective cues influence the experience of threat. Blascovich and Mendes (2000) attempted to integrate purely affective and cognitive processes into their biopsychosocial model of threat. By definition, threat represents person/situation-evoked motivational states that includes affective, cognitive, and physiological components. According to Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, and Salomon (1999), as motivational states, threat is related to approach-avoidance or

appetitive-aversive states. On the affective level, this involves positive and negative feelings and emotions, and on the cognitive level, it involves attention and appraisal.

Thus, threats occur when the decision maker in the organization experiences insufficient resources to meet situational demands (demands > resources; Otherwise it would be challenge). Threat appraisal begins in a situation in which a decision maker expects to perform. In that sense, the person must perceive the situation as goal-relevant and evaluative, and believe that adequate performance is necessary to his or her continued well-being or growth as well as that he or she will undergo evaluation in this situation either by others or by oneself on some important self-relevant domain. In a crisis, we propose the following model to understand the elements that compose a given threat (see Figure 1):
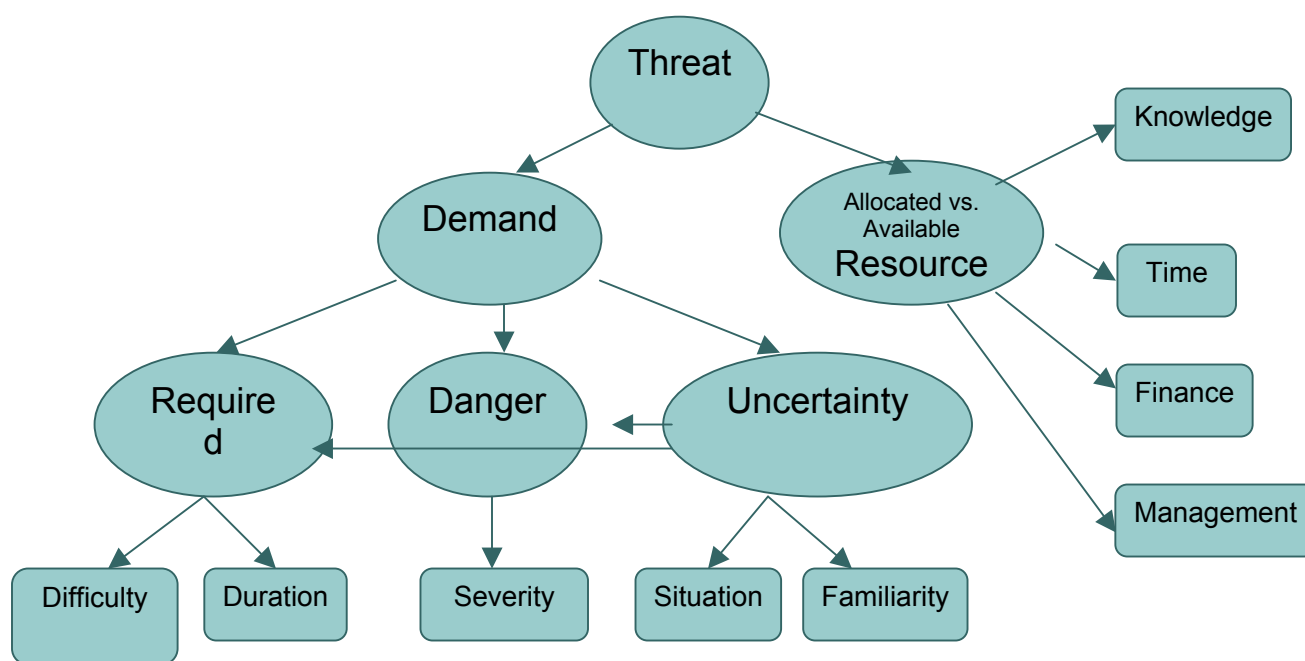

Therefore, for a threat to occur to a practitioner or for an organization, there has to be some insufficiency of resources to meet situational demands. Here the resources need to be specified as resources that can be allocated at the moment; otherwise the crisis might be an unsolvable disaster. The threat appraisal process in a crisis is composed by firstly, a primary appraisal (situational demands) including *Danger, Uncertainty* (lack of prediction and control make it difficult for meeting adequately), *Required Effort*; and secondly, a secondary appraisal (resources) which includes *Knowledge and Skill, Time, Finance*, and the *Support from the Dominant Coalition*. Noticeably, the perceived uncertainty may influence the way a practitioner or an organization's assessment of the required effort and danger in the crisis situation.

Dimensionality of Threats

Lanzetta, Haefner, Langham and Axelrod (1954) broached the question of variation in threat and its influence on group behavior. They operationalized the variation in threat along several dimensions: Nature and/or intensity, locus in time, locus in "psychological" space, and target. The latter two are peculiar to a concern with group processes and have no counterpart if the focus were the individual acting alone. In their experiments, the authors manipulated the threat condition as external and internal. Similarly, Carver (1977) mentioned threats may come from external agents or they may be self-imposed.

Management literature discussed three types of threats (Strong, Anderson & Dubas, 1993): 1) physical/social threats; 2) immediate/delayed threats; and 3) second/third party threats (depending on the target of the threat, e.g. whether the threats lead to primary or secondary recipients). If we look at this categorization from a public relations perspective, we should focus on the social threats in the communication management process with different publics; secondly, immediate/delayed threats can be

further developed into durations of threats and the perceived levels or intensity of threats; and thirdly, it would be better to understand the target of threats in terms of their being external or internal. Therefore, we propose the following dimensionality of threats in public relations, especially during a crisis situation (see Figure 2):
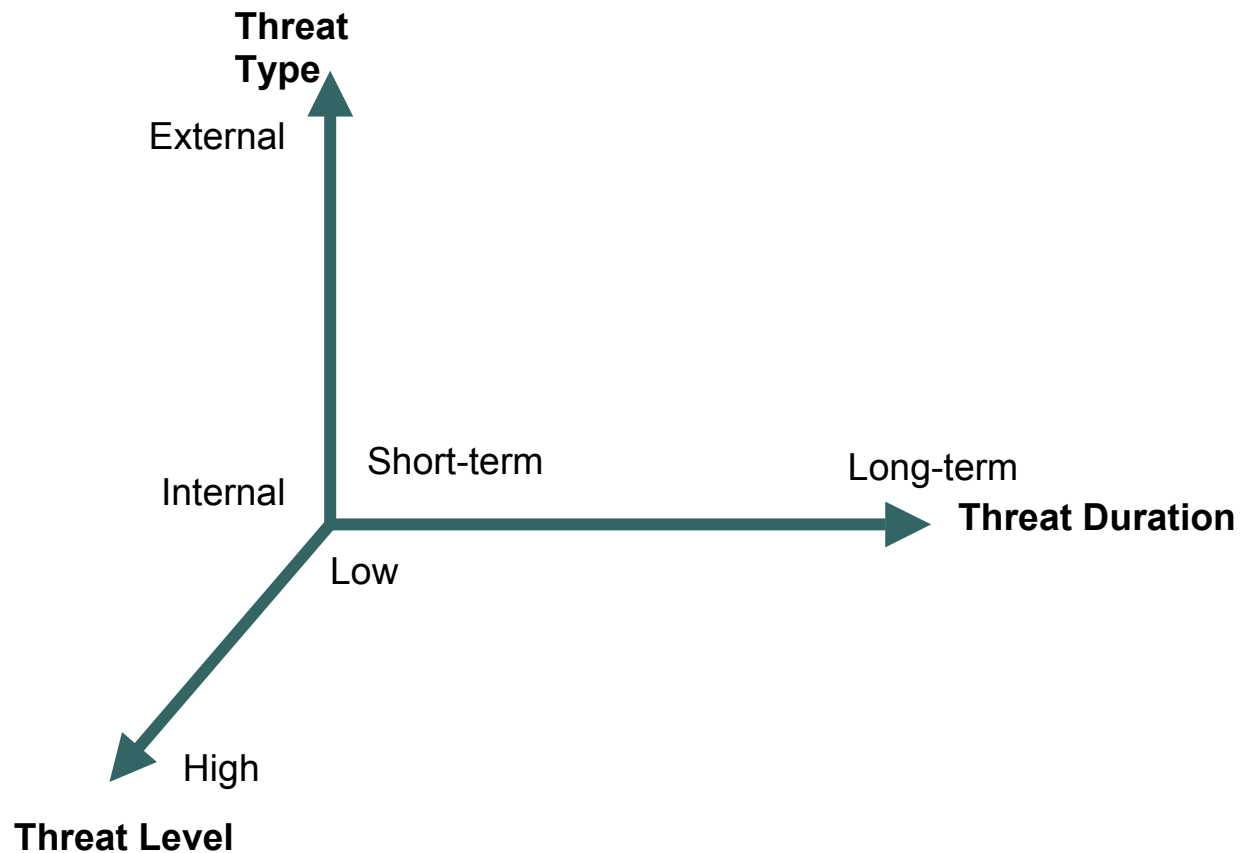
Operationalizations:

Dimension 1: Types of Threats. Cameron and his colleagues (1997) identified two types of threats in public relations context: external threats and internal threats. External threats include: *Litigation, Government regulation, potentially damaging publicity, Scarring of organization's reputation in community,* and *legitimizing activists claims*. Internal threats include: *Economic loss or gain from implementing various stances, Marring of employees' or stockholders' perception of the company*, and *Marring of the personal reputations of the company decision makers (Image in employees' perceptions and general public's perception)*.

Dimension 2: Levels of Threats. Levels of threat have been operationalized as low, medium and high in previous studies (Corneille, Yzerbyt, Rogier & Buidin, 2001).

Dimension 3: Duration of Threats. This dimension refers to the longitudinal facet of a threat, which means whether the threat is perceived as a short-term one or long-term one.

Research Questions

Based on our threat appraisal model analyzing threats on (1) primary appraisal (i.e., situational demands), and (2) secondary appraisal (i.e., resources), and our examination of threat communication along the dimensions of threat level, threat duration, and threat type, we propose to apply this model to understand how the ongoing terror alerts are understood, appraised, assessed and communicated by DHS, and by *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*, two news publications with purportedly differing political and ideological persuasions as exemplars of enactments of differing communication strategies and reflections of public opinions of the conservative and liberal masses, respectively.

RQ 1: Primary appraisal (Situational demands):
RQ 1.1: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational difficulty of the threat?
RQ 1.2: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational duration of the threat?
RQ 1.3: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational severity of threat?
RQ 1.4: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of certainty of DHS to deal with threat?
RQ 1.5: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the DHS' situational familiarity with the threat?
RQ 1.6: What are the similarities and differences in the appraisal of the situational demands expressed by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*?
RQ 2: Secondary appraisal (resource):
RQ 2.1: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise DHS' level of knowledge to deal with the threat?
RQ 2.2: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the response time DHS takes to deal with the threat?
RQ 2.3: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of financial support available to DHS to deal with the threat?
RQ 2.4: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of support given to DHS from the country's top officials to deal with the threat?
RQ 2.5: What are the similarities and differences in the appraisal of resources available to DHS expressed by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*?
RQ 3: Threat communication:
RQ 3.1: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* communicate the threat type?
RQ 3.2: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* communicate the threat duration?
RQ 3.3: How do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* communicate the threat level?
RQ 3.4: How is threat level described by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* correlated to the color code in terror alerts?
RQ 3.5: Where do DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*, cohere and differ in threat communication?
RQ 4: Based on the model, how can DHS and its publics build a common understanding on how threat is appraised and communicated during the terror alerts?

Method

Using the proposed theoretical model, content analysis was employed to understand firstly, how threat is appraised, and communicated by DHS; secondly, how the same threat message is appraised, and communicated by news publications with purportedly differing political and ideological persuasions to both their respective conservative and liberal audiences, as enactments of differing communication strategies and reflections of public opinions; thirdly, what are the similarities and differences among the DHS and media outlets; and lastly, to examine the schism, if any, among multiple audiences, and then why, despite all good intentions and purposes, there may not, after all, be a common understanding of threat among the different audiences. ANOVAs, Scheffe's post-hoc analyses, chi-squares, and correlations were employed for data analyses.

Sample

Data to examine how threat is appraised, and communicated by DHS comes from content analyses of all its terror-alert news releases. To examine how terror alerts are appraised, and communicated by media outlets as evidence of enactments of their persuasive and informational strategies, *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times* are screened and chosen for their purported differences as reflections of

conservative and liberal interests while serving the same geographical location (Song, 2004; Viguerie & Franke, 2004).

The population of DHS releases and news stories and commentaries published on the two newspapers from March 2002 to November 2004, the duration of the implementation of the color-coded system, are content analyzed. News releases were uploaded from DHS' website at www.dhs.gov. This yielded 240 news releases. The authors screened them based on relevance to communication of terror or threat alerts. The number of news releases analyzed was filtered to 52. Stories and commentaries in *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* were uploaded from Lexis-Nexis by typing in the key words, threat alert, terror alert, color coded, and homeland security. This yielded 188 stories. Stories that were relevant to the terror alerts were eventually filtered to 91. These are stories that revolve around four general themes: (1) The activation of terror alerts and its repercussions; (2) Why and what DHS considered threats; (3) How people responded to activation of the alerts; (4) Official views on the color coded system and questioning by lawmakers on the veracity of the system and the alerts.

Coders and Training

Two coders, both graduate students and familiar with the content analysis method, conducted the analysis. With the help of a codebook, the coders were given detailed instruction and description of the various categories used. Practice sessions were held using copies of the newspaper not included in the sample. The coders worked independently and were not allowed to consult with each other about the coding. Using Holsti's formula, the coders achieved a 95 percent agreement.

Coding Instrument

The unit of analysis is defined as a DHS press release or a news story. This includes stories by the staff of the newspaper and wire stories and commentary from the editors or readers. The content analysis instrument is designed to evaluate the difference and similarity among the DHS and the two newspapers regarding their threat appraisal and communication. The 143 stories were coded for 16 variables. They were:

1) General Information: case source, news story number, date.

2) Threat Appraisal: a. Demand: situational difficulty, situational duration, situational severity, DHS' uncertainty about how to deal with the situation, and DHS' unfamiliarity with the situation (measured on a 5 point Likert scale, where 1 was "strongly disagree," and 5 was "strongly agree"); b. Resource: requirement of DHS to have the knowledge of dealing with the situation, requirement of DHS to have time to respond to the situation, requirement of DHS to have financial support to deal with the situation, and requirement of DHS to have top management/official support to its decision on how to deal with the situation (measured on a 5 point Likert scale, where 1 was "strongly disagree," and 5 was "strongly agree").

3) Threat Communication: a. Threat type (1 was "external threat" which originates from abroad but has direct impact on the US. E.g., discovery of document in Iraq that has threatening implications on the US; 2 was "internal threat" that discovered in the US. E.g., Ominous anonymous letter sent to a government office; or discoveries by US intelligence sources of imminent attacks; and 3 was "both"); b. Threat duration (1 was "short term: 1-2 weeks," 2 was "short term: 3-4 weeks," 3 was "medium term: 5-6 weeks," 4 was "medium term: 7-8 weeks," and 5 was "long-term: 3-6 months"); c. Threat level (1 was "not serious" to the security of the country and not threatening to normal life. E.g., Discovery of terrorist chatter only impacts the country where it was discovered and has little or no impact on the US; 2 was "mildly serious" that has some security implications on the US, but its effects are not great. E.g., a temporary setback in war against terrorism in Iraq, like failure to capture certain terrorists; 3 was "serious" that has sufficient implications on the US to cause security officials to sit up and take note of precautionary measures. E.g., Terrorist chatter talking about possible attacks on US soil; 4 was "extremely serious" which means Firm measures are taken to deal with the threat by US officials. E.g., Raising of threat alert; or closure of certain sensitive facilities; or increase security personnel as preventive measures; and 5 was "dangerous level": In view of danger, public life comes to a halt. E.g., school closings.).

4) Color-code System or the threat level portrayed by the threat level advisory system used by DHS (1 was "low risk -- green," 2 was "general risk – blue," 3 was "significant risk – yellow," 4 was "high risk – orange," 5 was "severe risk – red").

Results

Differences in Threat Appraisal

Primary Appraisal (Situational Demand). RQ 1.1 is about how DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational difficulty of the threat.
There was no difference found among the DHS, WP and WT regarding their appraisal of situational difficulty. For RQ 1.2 on how DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational duration of the threat, significant difference occurs in terms of the duration of the influence of the threat (F = 11.01, p < .001): WP (M = 3.11, SD = 1.20) perceived the threat would have shorter-term duration than DHS (M = 4.04, SD = .53) (p < .001) and WT (M = 3.96, SD = .99) (p < .01) both did, while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT. Regarding RQ 1.3 about how DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of situational severity of threat, we found significant difference among the three (F = 3.717, p < .05): WP (M = 4.56, SD = .57) perceived the threat as more severe than DHS (M = 4.29, SD = .50) (p < .05) did, while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT or between WP and WT.

As for the DHS-specific situational demand, there is no significant difference about the appraisal of the certainty of how DHS might handle the threat (as RQ 1.4 stated), as all of them conveyed very low uncertainty along this dimension (DHS: M = 1.67, SD = .59; WP: M = 1.87, SD = .94; and WT: M = 1.72, SD = .75). RQ 1.5 was about how DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of the DHS' situational familiarity with the threat. Result showed that DHS, WP and WT did not reach consensus regarding how familiar DHS might be with dealing with this kind of threat situation (F = 4.93, p < .01): WP (M = 2.36, SD = 1.25) perceived that DHS was more unfamiliar (or less familiar) with the situation than DHS perceived itself to be (M = 1.69, SD = .67) (p < .05) according to the scale, while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT or between WP and WT.

Therefore, in response to RQ 1.6 on the similarities and differences in the appraisal of the situational demands expressed by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*, the above statistical analyses revealed that similar primary threat appraisal patterns prevailed between DHS and WT while the primary threat appraisal differed between WP and DHS.

Secondary Appraisal (Organizational Resource). Except for RQ 2.3 on how DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* appraise the level of financial support available to DHS to deal with the threat (DHS: M = 4.37, SD = .49; WP: M = 4.83, SD = .39; and WT: M = 4.57, SD = .51), significant differences were found in terms of RQ 2.1 on the perceived resource requirement of knowledge (F = 6.18, p < .01), RQ 2.2 on requirement of time (F = 6.96, p < .01), and RQ 2.4 on the requirement of management/official support (F = 9.92, p < .001) of DHS in dealing with the threat. Specifically, first, WP (M = 4.93, SD = .26) perceived higher requirement of knowledge of DHS than DHS (M = 4.60, SD = .50) itself perceived (p < .01), while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT or between WP and WT; Second, WP (M = 4.83, SD = .39) perceived higher requirement of time for DHS to respond to the threat than DHS (M = 4.37, SD = .49) itself perceived (p < .01), while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT or between WP and WT; Third, WP (M = 5.00, SD = .00) perceived higher requirement of top management or official support for DHS to deal with the threat than DHS (M = 4.58, SD = .50) itself perceived (p < .01), while there was no significant difference between DHS and WT or between WP and WT.

To address RQ 2.5 on the similarities and differences in the appraisal of resources available to DHS expressed by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*, again we found that similar secondary threat appraisal patterns prevailed between DHS and WT while the secondary threat appraisal differed between WP and DHS.

Similarities in Threat Communication

Threat Type. *For RQ 3.1 on how DHS,* The Washington Post*, and* The Washington Times *communicate the threat type, the result showed that the majority of DHS press releases (69.2%), WP*

news stories and commentaries (50.9%) and WT stories and commentaries (71.0%) are given to both internal and external threats (Chi-square = 23.917, p < .01).

Threat Duration. *For RQ 3.2 on how DHS,* The Washington Post*, and* The Washington Times *communicate the threat duration, no significant difference was found regarding how long the threat was likely to last based on either the DHS press releases (M = 2.50, SD = 2.38) or the newspaper stories of WP (M = 1.50, SD = 1.30) and WT (M = 3.20, SD = 1.79), given the large number of missing values in this variable.*

Threat Level. *For RQ 3.3 on how DHS,* The Washington Post*, and* The Washington Times *communicate the threat level, no significant difference was found regarding how long the threat was likely to last based on either the DHS press releases (M = 3.67, SD = .52) or the newspaper stories of WP (M = 3.78, SD = 50) and WT (M = 3.70, SD = .54).*

Schism between Threat Level and Color-Coded Advisory System

RQ 3.4 looked at how the threat level described by DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* correlated to the color codes in terror alerts. Correlation analyses revealed that there was no correlation between the threat level portrayed by DHS in their press releases and that portrayed in DHS' Color-coded Threat Advisory System (r = .19, n.s.). However, the threat level portrayed in the news stories or commentaries in WP and WT were significantly correlated with the threat level portrayed in DHS' Color-code Threat Advisory System (WP: r = 73, p < .01; WT: r = .54, p < .01).

RQ 3.5 was to further examine where DHS, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times*, cohered and differed in threat communication. Our result showed that they communicated the three dimensions of the proposed threat model in a similar way, while the correlations between the media-portrayed threat level and the government-issued terror alerts consisted among the newspapers but not in the DHS's own press releases.

Therefore, for RQ 4, based on the model, we found that DHS and its media publics did not built a common understanding on how threat was appraised (neither at the primary level nor the secondary level), but they seemed to communicate the threat type, threat duration, and threat level on a common ground even though the DHS' own press releases did not correlate with the terror alerts it issued.

Discussion

Threat Appraisal & Communication Model under Initial Test

With the belief that our threat appraisal model will add a deeper and richer conceptual understanding as well as more robust tool for diagnosing threats, we tested it on an ongoing issue in this study. Our findings provide a useful test to link threat appraisal and communication, and illuminate practical insights for practitioners on how the appraisal model of threats can be used to facilitate communication strategies and tactics in an effort to manage the relationship with various audiences.

First, by conducting this content analysis, we empirically tested both the Primary Appraisal Level, which is based on degrees of perceived Danger, Uncertainty of the issue, Required Effort to address the threat, and the Secondary Appraisal based on the resources as required for dealing with threat: Knowledge, Skill, Time, Finance; and Support from the Dominant Coalition. Our findings indicate that different organizations or publics may appraise the same threat in different ways, varying in degrees of agreement along each dimension under the two levels of appraisals. For example, *The Washington Post* appraised the terrorism threat as more enduring and severe than DHS did, while DHS perceived itself as more familiar with similar situations. In terms of the requirement of various resources to deal with the threat, *The Washington Post* took a more critical view and assessed the resource requirement in a higher level than DHS did. Further, possibly due to the characteristics of the dominant coalition, DHS and *The Washington Times* seemed to share a similar appraisal pattern.

Further, the threat communication model provides a practical way of addressing threats. Prior to or functioning as an alternative strategy of problem-focused coping as changing the actual relationship between the public and the organization via actual measures and steps, public relations practitioners can prioritize emotion or cognitive-focused coping, which changes only the way in which the relationship is or will be interpreted (Jin & Cameron, 2003). Our test of the model found, however, a discrepancy between how threat is appraised and how threat is communicated. It may call for future study of threat

appraisal and communication on what leads to this kind of discrepancy, whether or how to close the gap, and what kind of media strategies or communication management strategies might be needed.

Appraisal a reflection of governmental conservatism

Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997) argued that governmental intervention occurs in either of the conditions: (1) When a serious threat exists in the socio-political system; (2) When there is a necessity to respond to the threat; (3) When there is a necessity for government decisions; and (4) When promptness is required of governmental decisions, and when the government needs to engage the publics in its decision-making. DHS' implementation of the color-coded system is clearly in response to the threats America is facing: It is serious; it demands quick response; the government needs to take the lead; and it needs to engage the public.

While there is little doubt that DHS, as a governmental agency, has been assiduous in carrying out these functions, it appears that its engagement of the masses in the appraisal of the threats were not convincing to some of its audiences.

DHS' appraisal of threats, as reflected through its press releases, appeared generally conservative, perhaps a reflection of the conservatism of the current Republican government: It regarded the threat situation as a long-term problem; it muted the possible and potential alarmism of the situation by playing down the severity of the situation; it portrayed itself as being certain in dealing with situation; it described itself as possessing the requisite knowledge, ability to respond to the threat, and having the required support from the country's officials, including the President, to counter the threats. In short, what it tried to convey is that even though the threats are here for the long haul, they are under control, and DHS has the necessary expertise and resources to counter them.

Not unexpectedly, The Washington Times, reflecting a conservative perspective shared the exact sentiments and perspective as DHS. By contrast, The Washington Post, reflecting a more liberal perspective, appeared less sanguine in its appraisal of the threat and DHS' ability to deal with it: It considered a threat to be a short-term problem; the situation was alarmingly severe; DHS was not certain in dealing with the problem; DHS required a much higher level of knowledge, time, and support from the country's top officials, including the President, to successfully counter the threats. In short, even though the threats may not drag on for too long, they are enormously severe, and more needs to be done to counter them.

Several explanations can be conjectured to account for these differences in opinion: First,

If DHS and The Washington Times had seemed to speak with the same voice, it could be because it appealed to the same base, the conservative base, which explained for the similarities in appraisal. The Washington Post, however, appeared to have heightened the fervor and appraisal of the threat, plausibly in line with its purported appeal to a different audience, its liberal base, and in the process, provide a constant counterview to the conservative view. In his study of the editorial orientations of these two newspapers, Song (2004) found that the differences of ideological convergence stemmed largely from their leanings and the audience they serve. The Washington Times was more explicit in aligning its pieces to a conservative perspective and The Washington Post was to a liberal perspective. Having said that, just because The Washington Times' views align closely with DHS, we do not think that is the consequence of its slavish adoption of DHS views. We would argue that this stems more from their shared views, to a shared audience, using a common platform, the media.

Second, purportedly conservative, the government, as represented by DHS, either (1) firmly believes that it has resources and abilities to deal the threats, and as President Bush frequently says in his various addresses, "to win the war against terror"; or (2) if it has any shadow of doubt involving its abilities to deal the threats, it cannot reveal any hint of them to prevent mass pandemonium and hysteria. Nathan (2000) described this strategy as "threat rigidity," a situation in which the government either refuses to, or for whatever reasons known to itself, cannot change from a "chosen course of action, even if it is a failing one" (p. 13). In many respects, whichever of the two diametrically opposite views DHS may truly believe, they are, from the philosophical point of view, really similar to the "half-empty, half-full" glass syndrome. The Chinese characters for the terms "threat" and "opportunity" are identical: When under threat (i.e., mulling over a half-empty glass), there is the opportunity to prove oneself (i.e., filling up the

half-full glass). Sanguine though it may be, DHS appeared to have chosen to see opportunities, hope, and success in countering the threat.

Third, since the DHS is a brainchild of the White House, it is plausible that DHS' appraisal of the threats was in tandem with the White House's appraisal of threats. Cancel, Mitrook and Cameron (1999) attributed this as the predisposing stance of the dominant coalition and its decision-making power over its subordinate bodies when confronted with "a potential or obvious threat" (p. 189). The predominance of the dominant coalition in deciding how threats should be dealt with was evident in their studies of how different governments managed the subordinate public agencies when confronted with the threat of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that swept Asia and North America in 2003 (Jin, Pang, & Cameron, 2004a. 2004b; Pang, Jin, & Cameron, 2004).

Fourth, if the previous argument holds true, a natural consequence would be that public officials in charge of appraising the threat tend to echo and adopt the views of their political masters (Horsley & Barker, 2002). In so doing, as Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997) argued, these officials explicate their "formal contributions" through their "normative conceptions" (p. 295) of what they regard their roles ought to be in such a situation. The attitude of the public officials could plausibly be: If top officials at the White House and DHS share the same assessment of the threats, my meaningful contributions would be to carry out what has been decided.

A common language: Common understanding from uncommon appraisal

Even though there were discrepancies in threat appraisals, as far as threat communication is concerned, there did not appear to be differences among DHS, The Washington Post, and The Washington Times, in communicating the threats on all proposed dimensions of threat: threat type, threat duration, and threat level. Additionally, for The Washington Post, and The Washington Times, their communication of threat correlated with the prevailing color code that DHS had issued, i.e., their portrayals of the severity of the threats corresponded evenly with the prevailing color code of the time. On the contrary, DHS' communication of threat did not correlate with its color code. More often than not, DHS portrayed the threats less seriously than the color code it had set.

There appears to be a hint of irony: Even though DHS had been much maligned for the implementation of the color-coded system, interestingly, it was through the color-coded system that it appeared to have successfully built a "common language" in the communication of threat. That over time, it appeared that both the conservative and liberal audiences, as represented in news publications, had come to understand the kinds of threats facing them through the color of the day. Yet, in its vigorous attempts to promote this common language as threat advisories, it appeared to be unaware of its own infringements. It was its own culprit in not aligning its portrayal of threat, through its press releases, to what it wanted others to follow, understand, and believe.

Our diagnosis thus: Even as there have been calls to reform the color coded system (Eggen, 2003); and even as the Secretary of Homeland Security promised to re-examine the system ("Ridge: Re-examine terror alert system," 2004); and even though code orange was activated only to be discovered to be a hoax as occurred in January 2005 (Lavoie, 2005), DHS has done a good job in building a common language to understand threats. What it did not do, as far as communication is concerned, is the act of communicating. It is our contention that DHS could do more to enhance their communication efforts, as long as this does not inadvertently infringe on national security concerns. By the nature of their set-up and orientation, Kauffman (1997) found that the public relations efforts of the public agency was not equipped with communicating crisis, like impending threats. Recognizing that public agencies are often lacking in communication of crisis and/or threat because of insufficient manpower, budgetary constraints, and shifting departmental priorities with changes in political masters, Horsley and Barker (2002) still called for constant evaluation and review of communication efforts as one of the key communication functions. Perhaps even as DHS begins to review its color-coded system, it would also be an opportune time for it to review its communication efforts.

Implication

Overall, this study suggests both practical and theoretical implications for public relations practitioners by proposing and empirically testing a threat appraisal and communication model in dealing

with crisis or conflict situations. Public relations practitioners, particularly those on the governmental levels, can understand the opportunities and challenges of crisis management practice by identifying and examining the threats in different aspects. A key strength of the threat model is that it allows us to understand the multi-layer nature of threat and its organic components as well as how to utilize the knowledge in making communication decisions. As the first empirical study testing the theoretical model, content analysis unveiled the underlying patterns of appraisal and the more sensible communication strategies in an ongoing threat case. It is the authors' hope that this initial effort can provide better conceptual understanding of threat and the possibility of using this model in other public relations research, especially in crisis and conflict management.

Future studies can further revise and test the threat model cross-case and cross-culturally. Additional research can also be conducted to understand the role of the news media in interpreting and disseminating the intended messages as provided in the press releases of the organization, by examining how the media systems function in different circumstances as well as situational contexts of the threat communication process.

References

9/11/02; America enduring (2002, Sept 11). *New York Times*, p. 32.

Benoit, W. L. (1995). A theory of image restoration. *Accounts, excuses, and apologies: A theory of image restoration discourse* (pp. 63-98). Albany: State University of New York.

Benoit, W. L. (1997). Image repair discourse and crisis communication. *Public Relations Review, 23* (2), 177-186.

Benoit, W. L., & Brinson, S. L. (1994). AT & T: "Apologies are not enough." *Communication Quarterly, 42* (1), 75-88.

Benoit, W. L. (2004). Image restoration discourse and crisis communication. In Dan P. Millar & Robert L. Heath (Eds.), *Responding to crisis: A rhetorical approach to crisis communication* (pp. 263-280). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Blascovich, J. & Mendes W. B. (2000). Challenge and threat appraisals: The role of affective cues. In *Feeling and Thinking* (Ed. J. P. Forgas). Cambridge University Press.

Blascovivh, J., Mendes, W. B., Hunter, S. B., & Salomon, K. (1999). Social "facilitation" as challenge and threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77* (1), 68-77.

Block, R. (2004, August 2). Officials issue first terror alerts for specific sites. *Wall Street Journal*, p. 1.

Cancel, A. E., Cameron, G. T., Sallot, L. M., & Mitrook, M. A. (1997). It depends: A contingency theory of accommodation in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 9* (1), 31-63.

Cancel, A. E., Mitrook, M. A., & Cameron, G. T. (1999). *Testing the contingency theory of accommodation in public relations, 25* (2), 171-197.

Carver, C. S. (1977). Self-awareness, perception of threat, and the expression of reactance through attitude change. 501-512.

Cohen, A. R. (1959). Situational structure, self-esteem, and threat-oriented reactions to power. *Studies in Social Power*, 35-52.

Coombs, W. T. (1998). An analytic framework for crisis situations: Better responses from a better understanding of the situation. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 10* (3), 177-191.

Corneille, O., Yzerbyt, V. Y., Rogier, A., & Buidin, G. (2001). Threat and the group attribution error: When threat elicits judgments of extremity and homogeneity. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin, 27 (4), 437-446.*

Cushman, J. H. Jr. (2003, December 22). Terror alert is raised to "high." *The New York Times*, p. 1.

Eggen, D. (2003, December 29). GOP lawmaker urges reform of terror alert system. *The Washington Post,* p. A07.

Fahrenthold, D. A. (May 22, 2003). Orange alert appears less so. *The Washington Post*, p. B01.

Grunig, J. E., & Grunig, L. A. (1992). Models of public relations and communications. In J. E. Grunig (Ed.), Excellence in public relations and communication management (pp. 285 326). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Horsley, J. S., & Barker, R. T. (2002). Toward a synthesis model for crisis communication in the public sector. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 16* (4), 406-441.

Hsu, S. S., & Lengel, A. (2003, February 23). A Delicate Dance Step In Reacting To Danger; *Building Threats Bring Dilemma.* The Washington Post, *Pg. C01.*

Jin, Y., & Cameron, G. T. (2003). Rediscovering emotion in public relations: An adapted appraisal model and an emotion-laden contingency plane. Unpublished manuscript.

Jin, Y., Pang, A., & Cameron, G. T. (2004). "SARS-free, now to fine-tune crisis handling": A Contingency Approach to Analyzing the Singapore Government's Management of the Perception and Emotion of Its Multiple Publics. New Orleans, LO: ICA.

Jin Y., Pang, A., & Cameron, G. T. (2004). Different means to the same end: A comparative Contingency analyses of Singapore and China governments' management of the perceptions and emotions of their multiple publics during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis. Toronto, Canada: AEJMC.

Jin, Y, Pang, A., & Cameron, G. T. (2005). Explicating threats: Towards a conceptual understanding of the faces and fabric of threat in an organizational crisis. New York City, NY: ICA.

Johnson, D. (2002, February 11). The new alert; Attack possible in US or Yemen, the FBI warns. *The New York Times*, p. 1.

Johnson, D. (2002, September 25). Bush Reduces Threat Level After Arrests Of Suspects. *New York Times*, p. 13.

Kauffman, J. (1997). NASA in crisis: the space agency's public relations efforts regarding the Hubble Space Telescope. *Public Relations Review, 23* (1), 1-11.

Lanzetta, Haefner, Langham and Axelrod (1954). Some effects of situational threat on group behavior. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 49,* 445-453.

Lavoie, D. (2005, January 26). Officials Rethinking Public Terror Alerts. Retrieved from http://aolsvc.news.aol.com/news. Retrieval date: 26 January, 2005.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). Conflict, frustration, and the theory of threat. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 38*, 81-86.

Miller, B. (2002, March 9). Ridge close to unveiling new terror alert system; tiered warnings, flexibility sought. *The Washington Post*, p. A13.

Miller, B. (2002, March 13). National alert system defines five shades of terrorist threat. *The Washington Post*, p. A15.

Mintz, J. (2003, June 6). Ridge seeking fewer changes in terror alerts. *The Washington Post*, p. A11.

Mintz, J. (2003, December 22). US threat level rises to orange. *The Washington Post*, p. A01.

Mintz, J, & Schmidt, S. (2003, May 21). Government raises terror alert to orange; officials say intelligence suggests Al Qaeda attacks. *Washington Post,* p. A01.

Nathan, M. (2000). The paradoxical nature of crisis. *Review of Business, 21* (3), 12-26.

Nieves, E. & Winter, G. (2001, November 2). The California alert; California leader warns of threat to state's bridges. *The New York Times*, p. 1.

Oppe, S. (1988). The concept of risk: A decision theoretic approach. *Ergonomics, 31*(4), 435-440.

Pang, A., Jin, Y., & Cameron, G. T. (2004). "If we can learn some lessons in the process": A Contingency Approach to Analyzing the Chinese Government's Management of the Perception and Emotion of Its Multiple Publics during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Crisis. Miami, FL: IPPRC.

Pianin, E., & Eggen, D. (2001, December 15). The fine-tuning of terror alerts; How high, how long is federal dilemma. *The Washington Post*, p. A15.

Pincus, W., & Miller, B. (2002, April 20). Terror alert issued for banks here, in Northeast. *The Washington Post*, p. A01.

Ray, S. J. (1999). *Strategic Communication in Crisis Management*. Westport, Connecticut: Quorum.

Return to Code Orange (2003, May 21). *The Washington Post*, p. C17.

Richards, B. (2004). Terrorism and public relations. *Public Relations Review, 30*, 169-175. Ridge: Re-examine terror alert system (2004, December 15). *USA Today*, p. 3A

Rosenthal, U., & Kouzmin, A. (1997). Crises and crisis management: Toward comprehensive government decision-making. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 7* (2), 277-305.

Song, Y. (2004). Freelance op-ed pieces show newspapers' political slant. *Newspaper Research Journal,* 25 (3), 38-49.

Strong, J. T., Anderson, R. E., & Dubas, K. M. (1993). Marketing threat appeals: A conceptual famework and implications for practitioners. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 5(4), 532-546.

Viguerie, R. A., & Franke, D. (2004). *America's right turn*. Chicago: Bonus Books.

Weiss, J. (January 14, 2004). Orange crunch. *New York Times*, p. 19.

White House Issues A New Terror Alert (2001, December 4). *The New York Times*, p. 1.

Wilcox, D. L., & Cameron, G. T. (2005, forthcoming). Public Relations strategies and tactics. 8th edition. NY: Allyn & Bacon.

Wrigley, B., Salmon, C. T., & Park, H. S. (2003). Crisis management planning and the threat of bioterrorism. *Public Relations Review, 29*, 281-290.