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Articles

The Political Geography of Presidential Speeches, 1946-87

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Abstract. A central theme of political geography and international relations is the changing foreign policy of the United States, the global leader since 1945. Speech-making is a major geopolitical activity. A political communication-based view of the American presidency combined with a spatial-temporal framework of global politics provided the methodology for the analysis of presidential speeches. The State of the Union addresses offer a consistent source of documentation of the priorities of American policy, and the geography of the speeches indicates the regional emphases of American strategy over time. A content analysis of the forty-two messages from 1946-87 yielded two key indicators, foreign policy ratio and specific regional ratio. In addition, six global regions were defined. Yearly variations in the key indices are randomly distributed in a temporal sense but are strongly related to regional conflicts with U.S. involvement. The maps for each president recorded dramatic differences from detailed (Presidents Carter and Reagan) to nearly blank (Presidents Nixon and Ford). The Soviet Union dominated all maps except that of President Johnson. An environmental model, relating presidential behavior as a function of the domestic, political and international conditions, explained more than half of the variation in the foreign policy proportion, but none of its variables related significantly to the regional index. A geographic shift in regional emphasis over four decades does not represent a reduction of the superpower competition, but represents in-

stead its relocation from the Eurasian littoral to the newly independent states of the Third World and to Central America. East-West political and strategic issues dominated all maps even when Third World countries were discussed, as happened increasingly in the 1970s and 1980s. Negative images were consistently associated with the Soviet Union and its allies while shared interests were typical of American allies. Most states were not specifically stereotyped.

Key Words: geopolitics, cognitive maps, American presidents, environmental model, globalism, regionalism, superpower competition.

RESearch in political geography and international relations has increasingly been concerned with the study of global structures. Research on issues such as long cycles, the world economy, North-South and East-West relations, and the strategies of the superpowers has shifted the balance in the direction of aggregate studies, while detailed examination of regional issues and of individual places has ebbed (Light and Groom 1985). In order to redress the imbalance that currently exists in the political geography of international relations, we focus on the actions of a "key agent" in the world-system. This is in the spirit of the "environmental" approach to international relations (Sprout and Sprout 1965), that examination of the perceptions, belief systems and behavior of policy makers should be attempted. In this study, we analyze the political

geography of the State of the Union addresses given by postwar American presidents. To our knowledge, this study is the first attempt to examine American geopolitics through the rhetorical styles and the geographic distribution of speech-content of the most important opinion-leaders. We consider each speech as a sample of the president's views and, by looking at the changing regional attention in foreign policy for the years 1946-87, we map the world from the White House and examine the world-views that the presidents wish to portray and interpret for the American public.

The Sprouts' (1965) consideration of the role of individual policy-makers in the conduct of international affairs motivated our work, since their pioneering work on environmental political images has never generated adequate empirical study. The basis for the environmental approach rests on the assumption that "the decisions of statesmen and peoples' attitudes are based upon conceptions of geographic reality" (Sprout and Sprout 1965, 126-27). The Sprouts, in turn, looked to the British geographer, Sir Halford J. Mackinder, as the inspiration for their work, because "the influence of geographical conditions upon human activities has depended not merely on the realities as we now know them to be and to have been, but in even greater degree on what men imagined in regard to them" (Mackinder, cited in Sprout and Sprout 1965, 129). The Sprouts emphasized that the external setting (foreign areas) is constantly changing and the reactions of a state to the changing global environment will be composed of what the decision makers decide is important, based on their perception of interstate relations.

We base this study on three related conditions. First, foreign policy is made by individuals; second, these individuals can manipulate and redirect long-standing procedures and practices; and third, it is important to understand how these individuals view the world (Russett and Starr 1985). One of the key individuals in world politics is the President of the United States. His agenda to a large extent becomes the world's agenda by virtue of his leadership of the global power. Regardless of the relative acceptance of his views and his political popularity at home and abroad, the importance of the office dictates that his opinions, speeches and writings will be dissected and analyzed in all parts of the world. It seems self-evident that

the American president, frequently described as the most powerful person on earth, qualifies as a key agent in international affairs.

Access to adequate material on individual's views and opinions has plagued research on the formation of foreign policy (Starr 1980). We selected State of the Union messages as our data source. This address sets the domestic and foreign policy agendas at the beginning of each year, in line with the requirement that the president report to the Congress and the public "from time to time" on the state of the union. Graber (1981) claims that this agenda setting and the "halo effect" increase the importance of this particular presidential speech. The addresses are attractive to researchers because they represent highly visible and important messages to the American public by each Administration (Fitch 1985). There is no doubt that each message represents a conscious choice about what to include and exclude from the agenda. With due allowance for stylistic variations from speech to speech and between presidents, the State of the Union message is perhaps the best single indicator of what is the focus of attention of the American political elite and, at the same time, what that elite wants to be the focus of attention of the American public (Fitch 1985).

There are three caveats to the use of one annual speech to portray presidential world views. First, the speech represents only a count at one specific time and, though the presidents typically review events of the previous year, the speeches highlight topics that are at the top of the political agenda in the month of the address. Second, presidents have their own geopolitical agendas they promote beyond the range of public notice. While Presidents Johnson and Carter openly discussed their causes and actions, Presidents Nixon and Eisenhower were more secretive about their policies. Third, U.S. foreign policy is produced by dozens of individuals and is reflected in hundreds of important speeches by government officials each year. Therefore, the State of the Union address may not be the best barometer of the central concerns of the U.S. government. Moreover, since the speech is specifically designed for domestic political consumption, presidents wish to highlight their successes and hide their failures as much as possible.¹ Nevertheless, the messages offer a visible demonstration of presidential global views and the interplay of U.S.

strategic interests and regional developments over time.

Cognitive Maps and Political Geography

In forming political geographic images, the quantity, type, and quality of information become key elements (Burgess and Gold 1985). Two main information sources have been identified, primary (direct experience) and secondary information, of which the mass media is the most significant source. A "cognitive map," defined as an ordered but continually adapting structure of the mind, is conceivable as a process, by reference to which a person acquires, codes, stores, recalls, reorganizes and applies in thought or in action, information about his/her geographical environment (Henrikson 1980). Cognitive maps should be viewed as temporal as well as spatial cross-sections. At any moment, an individual's cognitive map is composed of past experiences, present observations and future expectations and projections. Memory, life-paths and imagination inform it as well as current subjective reality. Barber (1972) and Gaddis (1982) argue that the character, style and belief-systems (including global strategic views) of American presidents are firmly established early in their political careers.

Cognitive mapping at the local scale, following Lynch (1960), has a rich tradition in geography. With the exception of the work of Saarinen (1976, 1988) on global knowledge surfaces and student perceptions of foreign places, we lack studies of the formation of cognitive maps of distant places. For our work and for similar studies of place images, the message is clear that the formation and interpretation of place (foreign) images must be made in light of both the political spirit of the times, the perception of that place as portrayed in the media (consider the changed view of Iran in the American media after the fall of the Shah in 1979) and the development of communication technology, especially satellite television. The "mass mind" (the attitudes and world views of the non-elite) is susceptible to and can be manipulated by the commercial media. Schudson (1982) demonstrates that, after the 1920s, the media no longer reported just what the U.S. President said. They compared speeches, and analyzed and

interpreted the message in relation to contemporary events. Since the broadcasting of the speeches (from the 1930s), the media have "given political news a larger play than might be dictated by strict consideration of market research" (Riesman et al. 1950, 198). The media recognize the President as a "national trustee," speaking for and to the national audience (Schudson 1982, 103). By stereotyping countries, by describing challenges to and triumphs of American leadership and by interpreting events, the President and the media reporting the speech define the national agenda for foreign affairs and help to maintain specific geopolitical images in the public mind.

For our study, the most relevant cognitive mapping research has been Alan Henrikson's. He analyzed the cognitive images of U.S. foreign-policy makers in terms of articulated geographical concepts and their geographical travel arenas. He examined the image-plans of National Security Adviser Brzezinski's "arc of crisis" and he mapped political "behavior spaces," such as that developed by Secretary of State Vance through diplomatic travel. Henrikson (1980, 505) states that the major strength of this approach is "that it enables us immediately to recognize the vague and shifting character of the environment within which statesmen act." Eaton (1984), cited in Gould and White (1986, 140-44), has explored images of friendship and threat held by army officers from different Third World countries. His analysis concentrated on perceptions of area, placements, relative population size, and a state's strategic importance to the officer's home country. This is a useful device for developing "threat perception maps" and parallels research in international relations which shows that adversarial states frequently hold "mirror images" of each other as an enemy (White 1970).

The literature on perception in foreign-policy making reveals that (1) individuals' perceptions frequently differ from reality; (2) individuals have cognitive images of places which they use to order and simplify reality; and (3) perception is important in foreign-policy decisionmaking (Holsti 1962; White 1965; Jervis 1976; Starr 1984; and Russett and Starr 1985). The global or regional political environment constitutes the stimulus that is perceived and interpreted on the basis of a long-held belief system. Each policymaker's images of "what is"

and "what should be" may often conflict with reality, but nevertheless strongly influence the interpretation of events.

To date researchers have not attempted to relate cognitive maps and political images. This correlation is necessary in order to examine the variable nature and importance of political images of specific places over time. Presidents attempt to define the "vague and shifting environment" in their speeches and, through the use of adjectives, graphs, maps, historical analogies and future scenarios, try to indicate why support for their policy is indicated by the facts as they see and present them. By doing so in the context of the State of the Union address and using the power and prestige of the office (combined with all the tools of modern mass-media presentation), they are able to generate specific place images in the public mind. While it is not clear how these geographic images are formed, it is our contention that the messages that the public receives from the President are powerful forces in helping to create, change and reformulate political cognitive maps of the world. A study of the place-emphases in presidential speeches is therefore an important element of political-geographic study.

The Geopolitical Environment of American Foreign Policy

Global images of core-periphery formed the basis of the geopolitical visions of Mahan, Mackinder, Haushofer, and Spykman and, in the last decade, these images have been revived as strategic policy guidelines (Brunn and Mingst 1985; Hepple 1986; Sloan 1988). Geopolitical images are important not because they accurately portray reality but because they interpret or express the intentions of certain powerful policymakers. The "spheres," "dominos," "arcs," and "chains" that crop up as geographic images in international relations must be understood against the background of political images of individual states (O'Sullivan 1986). The recent revival of interest in geopolitics, including the review of the classic texts for their utility in promoting a specific global strategy (Brzezinski 1986; Gray 1987), is related to the weakening of the bipolar world divisions that were created in the late 1940s. Many states sit uneasily astride the division, and the superpowers wish to de-

velop strategic models that can help in adjusting to the new global realities (Agnew and Corbridge 1989).

Agnew and O'Tuathail (1987, 1) noted that "as geographers, we wish to understand how certain geographies of world politics become constructed, geographies which are the backdrop, the setting and actively part of the drama of world politics." Geopolitics, as argued by all its proponents, is about strategic practice, but policy speeches, such as the State of the Union addresses, are also practice. "In fact, it is through speeches and policy articulation by statepersons that people understand and make meaningful such behavior as the buildup of a Navy or the decision to invade a foreign country" (Agnew and O'Tuathail 1987, 1). These authors analyze five key texts of American foreign policy to develop a critical historiography of American geopolitics. Our task is somewhat different, viz., to understand how global regions have been portrayed by the most important opinion leaders of American foreign policy since World War II.

Domestic conditions and the external milieu both influence American foreign policy; changes in the international environment stimulate changes in American behavior and vice versa. Political-geographical conditions affect the behavior of a nation only as leaders perceive and interpret these conditions and respond. Events not directly involving the U.S. can generate an American foreign policy response through the network of superpower alliances and competition. Despite what some see as a haphazard foreign policy, Kegley and Wittkopf (1986) point to the consistency of American foreign policy since World War II, based on the U.S. view of its global responsibilities. They cite five tenets of American policy: globalism, interventionism, containment, anti-communism and military strength. U.S. policymakers, including all postwar presidents, believe that (1) the U.S. must reject isolationism and order international events; (2) that Communism constitutes the principal danger to the world order and must be combated by the U.S., and (3) that the Soviet Union is the principal force behind Communism and therefore must be contained (Ostrom and Job 1986, 544). Hallday (1986) summarizes bilateral superpower relations by discerning four periods in postwar Soviet-American relations: the first cold war

1946–53, oscillatory antagonism 1953–69, détente 1969–79, and the second cold war 1979 to 1986.

We use the concepts from Kegley and Wittkopf and from Halliday to account for the annual variations in attention to foreign policy and to specific places in the State of the Union messages. By cross-classifying ratios according to president, party, strength of public feelings about foreign policy, and the state of U.S./Soviet relations, we can test whether the State of the Union messages reflect the idiosyncratic views of each president (pattern random) or whether the consistent themes, identified by Kegley and Wittkopf, emerge. Global economic and military power is decentralizing, and U.S. leadership is being challenged in economic, political, cultural and military terms. As measured by economic indicators (GNP, total percentage of global trade, industrial strength, etc.) and military indexes (number and type of nuclear weapons, military expenditure, etc.), U.S. dominance, clearly evident until the 1960s, is slipping (Keohane 1984; Russett 1985; Kennedy 1987). The theme of American global leadership and challenges to it appears persistently in State of the Union addresses.

A proper examination of the annual ebb and flow of foreign places in the speeches requires a careful consideration of their setting in American global relationships and especially of the changing course of U.S.-Soviet relations. The main anchor of American foreign policy since 1945 has been the Soviet Union, and American leaders have consistently portrayed the U.S. as the "reactor" to Soviet initiatives, generally perceived in Washington as the attempt to expand Soviet influence to the Eurasian littoral (Brzezinski 1986). The concept of the aggressive, antagonistic "Other" has been instrumental in defining the image of the Soviet competitor for the American public (Dalby 1988). U.S. foreign policy is strongly influenced by the perception of U.S. decisionmakers of Soviet intentions and capabilities (Kegley and McGowan 1982).

Our explanatory model, hereafter termed the environmental model following Ostrom and Job (1986), assumes that American presidents, faced with a large array of unknown outcomes of their decisions, adopt a relatively simple decision rule based on three sets of hypothesized influences, from the domestic, international and political environments. The model further assumes that

(1) presidents share the same tenets and beliefs that have dominated postwar American foreign policy; (2) that idiosyncratic factors of timing and foreign developments intervene to vary the amount of attention to foreign policy in the presidential speeches; and (3) that major public addresses reflect accurately the major decisions, questions, debates and issues of U.S. foreign policy. Ostrom and Job (1986), using ten individual predictors, were able to predict accurately the decision to use force (or not to). We decided to replicate this model since both the decision to use force and the decision to devote a certain amount of time and attention to a specific place in the major speech of the year are geopolitical practices. One difference exists: while the decision to use force is a binary choice (yes-no), the decision to discuss foreign affairs can be measured on a ratio scale, percentage of words in the speech.

The dependent variable (foreign policy or specific place ratio) is related to explanatory variables measuring the attributes of (1) the international environment; (2) the domestic environment and (3) the American political calendar. The variables of the environmental model are:

(1) International Environment: (a) extent of U.S. military involvement in previous year (USMINV), the number of times U.S. military forces were used to achieve political aims (sources: Blechman and Kaplan 1978 and Zelikov 1984); (b) U.S.-Soviet competition, measured by the ratio of U.S. to Soviet military expenditures (US-SUME) for the year before (source: SIPRI year-books); (c) extent of Soviet military involvement in previous year (SUMINV) (source: Kaplan 1981). (2) Domestic Environment: (a) condition of domestic economy, measured by Gross National Product change in the previous year (GNP) (source: *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*); (b) level of public support for the president on foreign policy (FPAPP) (source: Gallup Polls for the month of the speech); (c) salience of foreign policy (FPSAL) measured by the most important issue in the Gallup Polls (1 = foreign policy issue most important, 0 = domestic issue most important). (3) Political Environment: (a) position on the electoral calendar (ELECT), indicated by 0 same year as presidential election, +1 after presidential election, -1 otherwise; (b) overall political success of the President (POLSUC), shown by the change in public approval since first elected (source: Gallup Polls); (c) level of

public support overall (TOTAPP) for month of speech indicated in the Gallup Poll. The variables were used as independent predictors in two analyses, foreign policy proportion and specific place proportion.

Data and Methodology

We assume that the amount of attention, as measured by the number of speeches, paragraphs, words, etc., is an accurate reflection of the concern and importance that leaders in the Western world attach to places and events. Since the State of the Union speech is short (usually between thirty minutes and one hour), the relative number of words on each topic is a good indicator of the president's emphases. Each word must be carefully evaluated as reflecting the president's message and juggling of priorities. The frequency of attention devoted to foreign places is, therefore, a measure of the importance of these places at the time of the speech, in January or February. These place-specific words constitute the basic data for this study.

Content analysis has been widely used in studies examining various aspects of the presidency, such as verbal style, rhetoric, personality, images, etc. (Prothro 1956; Toolin 1983; Hart 1984; and Kessel 1974). An important result from a previous content-analytic study is that "the temporal pattern suggests that greater attention to international affairs results from the experience of being president and attention to this policy area grows over time, not evenly but in a pattern that can be reflected in the election cycle" (Kessel 1974, 10). The number of presidential speeches is increasing (Hart 1984) though Ragsdale (1984, 971) has shown that "visible national events increase the likelihood that a president will deliver a speech, while conversely, worsening economic conditions as well as expanding military situations decrease speech-making effort." We combine a political communication-based history of the presidency with a spatial and temporal framework of global politics.

In our study, the total number of words for each State of the Union message from 1946 to 1987 was counted. Three recording units were established—countries, regions (e.g., Africa) and political places (e.g., free world, communist world, etc.). The smaller the recording unit, the

more reliable and precise the measurement or observation is likely to be, so our preference is reflected in small recording units. The counting started at the first word of a sentence and continued until the reference to this place had ended. Foreign policy was defined in its broadest sense to include information on the external economy and trade. Any specific mention of a non-U.S. place was considered as relating to foreign policy.²

A number of key ratios were calculated. The first was foreign policy words as a percentage of total words (Foreign Policy ratio). A second was specific place words as a percentage of total foreign policy words (Specific Place ratio). A third key ratio was political region words as a percentage of total foreign policy words (Americas, Africa, Middle East, etc.). There were many examples of direct place images, for example, "Soviet Union—Iron Curtain," "Africa—civil strife," "Vietnam—communist aggression," "Korea—death" and "Europe—allies." We counted words as references to "Allies" or "Adversaries" when there was no specific mention of a place, though it was clear that the presidents wished to make the distinction. Finally, we also classified countries as friends, neutral or opponents when the adjectival classification was clear.

Geography of Postwar American Foreign Policy

The year-to-year variations in the ratio of words allocated to foreign policy and to specific regions in the State of the Union addresses are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The foreign policy proportion is from 25 to 35 percent in most years, but it ranges from 77 percent in 1951 by President Truman (Korean War) to zero by President Nixon in 1971. Two peaks are evident, corresponding to the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Smaller peaks are the years of turmoil in Iran/Afghanistan in 1980–82, Central America/Middle East 1982–84 and Cuba (Missile Crisis and the Bay of Pigs) 1962–63. In a "normal year," with no international crises or the use of American troops abroad, we can expect the President to devote about one-quarter of the speech to foreign policy. The temporal trend (straight-line) is slightly negative (Table 1) but this trend is an artifact of the huge peak in the early years of the Korean War.³

Table 1. Temporal Trends and Presidential Emphases in State of the Union Messages, 1946-87

	Presidents								
	Truman	Eisen- hower	Kennedy	John- son	Nixon	Ford	Carter	Reagan	
Number of speeches	7	8	3	5	6	3	4	6	
Party (R = Republican D = Democrat)	D	R	D	D	R	R	D	R	
Mean no. foreign policy words	462	415	814	857	251	465	1845	845	
	Trend ^a	Percentages							
Ratios									
Foreign policy	-.33	36	19	30	28	15	23	25	21
Specific region	.83	40	46	72	52	28	42	71	73
Regions									
Americas	.46	0	3	12	4	4	2	10	24
W. Europe	-.18	12	7	14	8	5	6	4	4
USSR + E. Europe	.39	11	8	4	5	3	7	21	30
Africa	.13	0	1	3	1	1	8	6	3
Middle East	.32	1	4	1	3	0	3	19	12
E. Asia	-.09	9	5	7	5	9	10	4	2
Rest Asia + Aust.	.15	2	4	8	32	8	13	3	5
Unspecified states									
Allies	-.07	2	9	5	2	0	1	3	2
Adversaries	-.02	0	3	5	0	1	2	0	1

^a b-value in regression of year with ratio.

The attention to regions of conflict in which American troops are involved is evident by the four prominent peaks in the specific region proportions (Fig. 2 and Table 1). The years of strife in Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and Iran/Afghanistan, with a slightly smaller peak for Central America recently, contrast sharply with the lack of regional detail in the speeches of Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon and Ford. To a certain extent, these differences reflect the contrast between regionalist versus globalist perspectives in American foreign policy and correspond to political party affiliation (Table 1). In this paper we use the terms "regionalist" and "globalist" in a narrow sense, whether the speeches contained a large proportion of words devoted to events in specific places (regionalist) or whether the foreign policy discussion remained at a general level, usually focusing on bilateral U.S./USSR relations (globalist). In our terms, a president could be a regionalist because events in particular regions demanded specific attention (e.g., Vietnam for President Johnson) or because he believed world politics, and especially the Soviet-American competition, had particular regional underpinnings (e.g., President Reagan) or both. The regression of specific regional detail over time is positive

(nearly 1 percent per year). In addresses with large regional detail, Presidents justify their commitment of troops, explain the "threat" posed to America's interests and allies, and generally relate a specific regional conflict to the superpower confrontation.

Like the foreign policy proportion, time-series analysis indicated a random temporal pattern in the yearly specific-place ratios. When we examined the regional breakdown, the pattern is more complicated. For three of the regions (Americas, Middle East and Rest Asia/Australasia), a random shock ARIMA model is not appropriate.⁴ It is of interest that the temporal trend since 1946 is down for Western Europe, flat for East Asia and positive for every other region, a confirmation of the shifting locus of America's postwar foreign policy concerns from the sites of the first Cold War to a more dispersed global pattern (Halliday 1986). Developments in the Pacific Rim, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America have demanded increasing presidential attention.

By intercorrelating the values for the seven different global regions, we can obtain insights into which regions are grouped together in the addresses. Only the correlations between the Americas and the USSR/East Europe, between

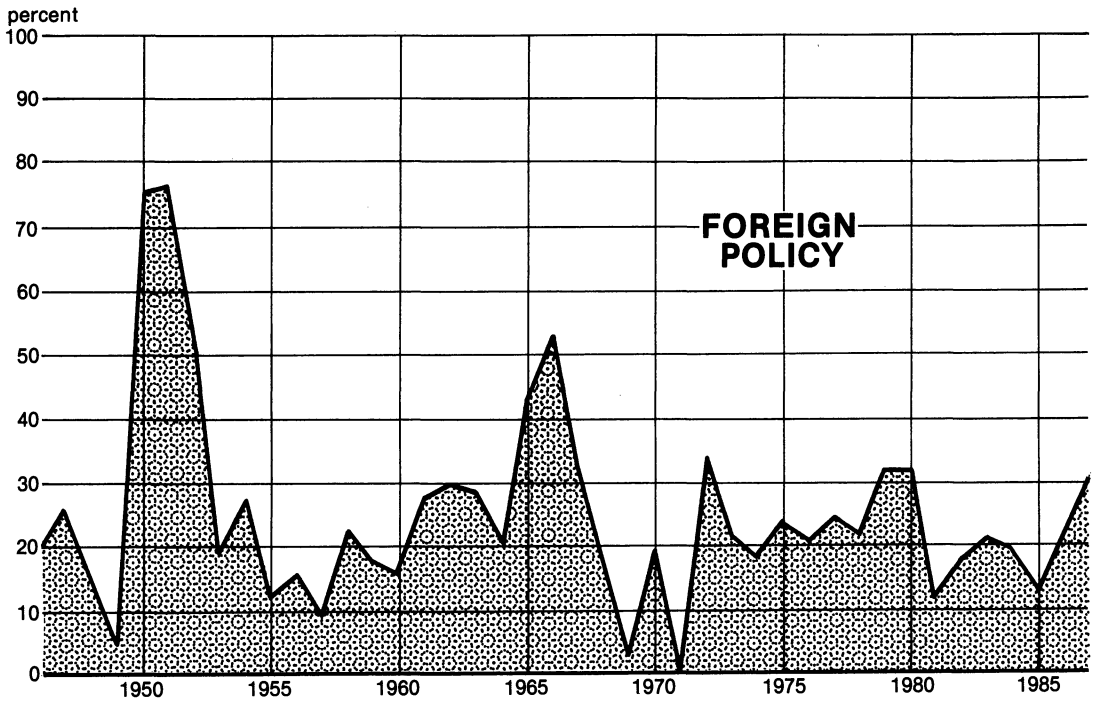


Figure 1. Foreign policy ratio in State of the Union addresses 1946–87 (foreign policy words/total words).

West Europe and East Asia, and between the Middle East and USSR/East Europe are greater than +0.30. The presidents tend to focus on only one region in each address, and the only place that is related consistently to other regions is the Soviet Union. The postwar tenets of anti-communism and containment explain the intercorrelation between our foreign policy and place-specific emphases and the ebb and flow of superpower relations, as graphed by Kegley and Wittkopf (1986, 57) from Soviet/American interaction data. In the late 1940s/early 1950s, (the "era of belligerence," according to Kegley and Wittkopf), superpower relations reached a postwar low as the U.S. opposed perceived Soviet expansion to the Eurasian Rimland, in Europe and East Asia. In the addresses, the Soviet link was established by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower as they justified American commitments overseas. During the next fifteen years of "competitive coexistence," Soviet-American relations oscillated widely from year to year, and attention to foreign policy varied in response. The "detente" years of the 1970s saw a relative absence of foreign policy discussion

in State of the Union addresses while the deteriorating superpower relations after 1978 (the "Second Cold War") was characterized by a marked increase in regional detail by Presidents Carter and Reagan.

Large variation in the amount of foreign policy detail given by each president is the most prominent feature of post-war State of the Union addresses (Table 1). In terms of the foreign policy proportion, Presidents Truman and Kennedy lead but, with the exception of President Nixon (15 percent), the range is relatively narrow, around 20 to 30 percent. Using the specific place proportion, we can gauge the position of each president on a globalist-regionalist scale as the ratio ranges from a high of 71–73 percent for Presidents Kennedy, Carter and Reagan to lows of 42 percent for Ford and 28 percent for Nixon. Classified by party, the values for Democrats are higher for both foreign policy percentage and specific regional detail (Table 1).

The regional breakdown is what one would expect from postwar American foreign policy actions (Table 1 and Figs. 3–10). The values on

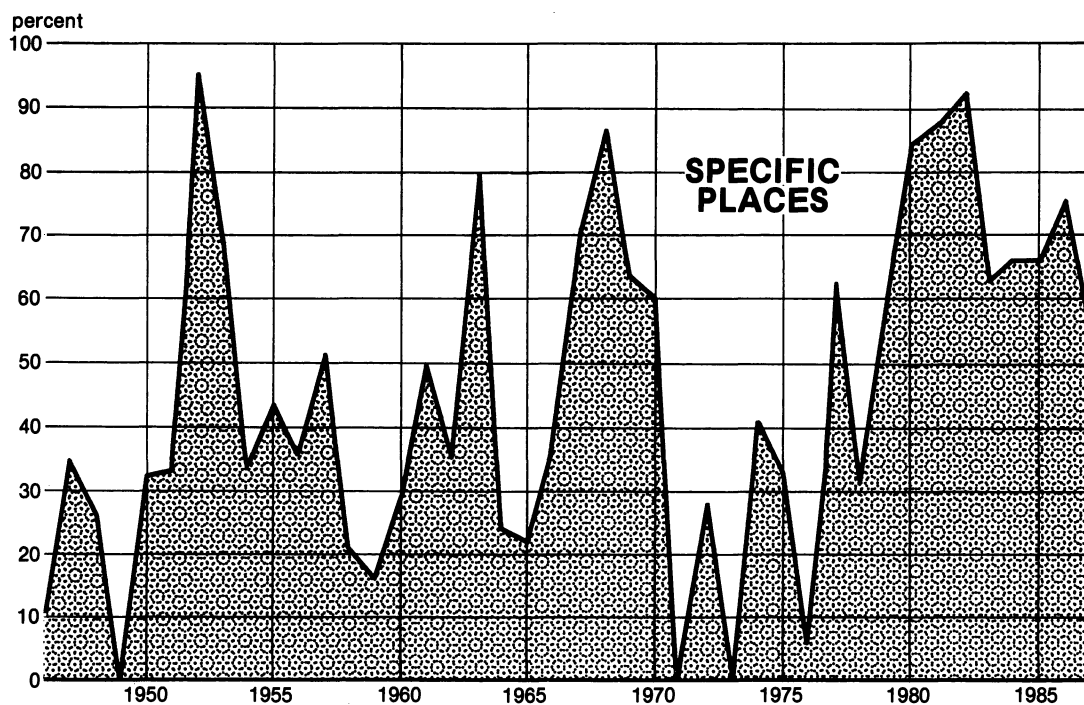


Figure 2. Specific places ratio in State of the Union addresses, 1946–87 (specific place words/foreign policy words).

the maps for each country represent the total number of words devoted to that country in the State of the Union addresses of each president. (The composite map, Fig. 11, shows the totals for all presidents.) For the early presidents (Truman and Eisenhower), Western Europe, East Asia and the USSR/East Europe gained most regional attention. For Kennedy, Latin America was of specific interest in addition to a continued emphasis on Western Europe. For President Johnson, Southeast Asia (Vietnam) was all-consuming in his speeches. Presidents Nixon and Ford provided little detail, with Vietnam the only region receiving attention. Presidents Carter and Reagan are regionalists par excellence but from different ideological perspectives. For Carter, American foreign policy should reflect a regional interdependent approach, although his 1980 address differed sharply from earlier speeches after events in 1979 in Iran and Afghanistan. His speeches examined each global region in turn as he engaged the public in a systematic tour of world politics from the American perspective. President Reagan ar-

gued that the postwar tenets of American foreign policy must be strenuously pursued and that the USSR and its allies must be vigorously opposed in all regions. Events in Central America, Southern Africa, the Middle East and Southwest Asia, and in East Asia were interpreted in the light of the superpower global efforts to maintain and protect their spheres of influence. In his 1989 address, President Bush harked back to the style and substance of the later Eisenhower years, devoting little attention to foreign affairs and treating the Soviet Union very cautiously.

The detailed maps of Presidents Carter and Reagan (Figs. 9, 10) stand in sharp contrast to the nearly empty maps of Presidents Ford and Nixon (Figs. 7, 8). Over time, the spatial shifts in the loci of American foreign policy, from the zone of containment on the borders of the USSR after World War II to Southeast Asia and later to Latin America and Africa, are evident. In all maps, except for the presidents involved in the Korean and Vietnam wars, the USSR received the largest amount of attention. Given

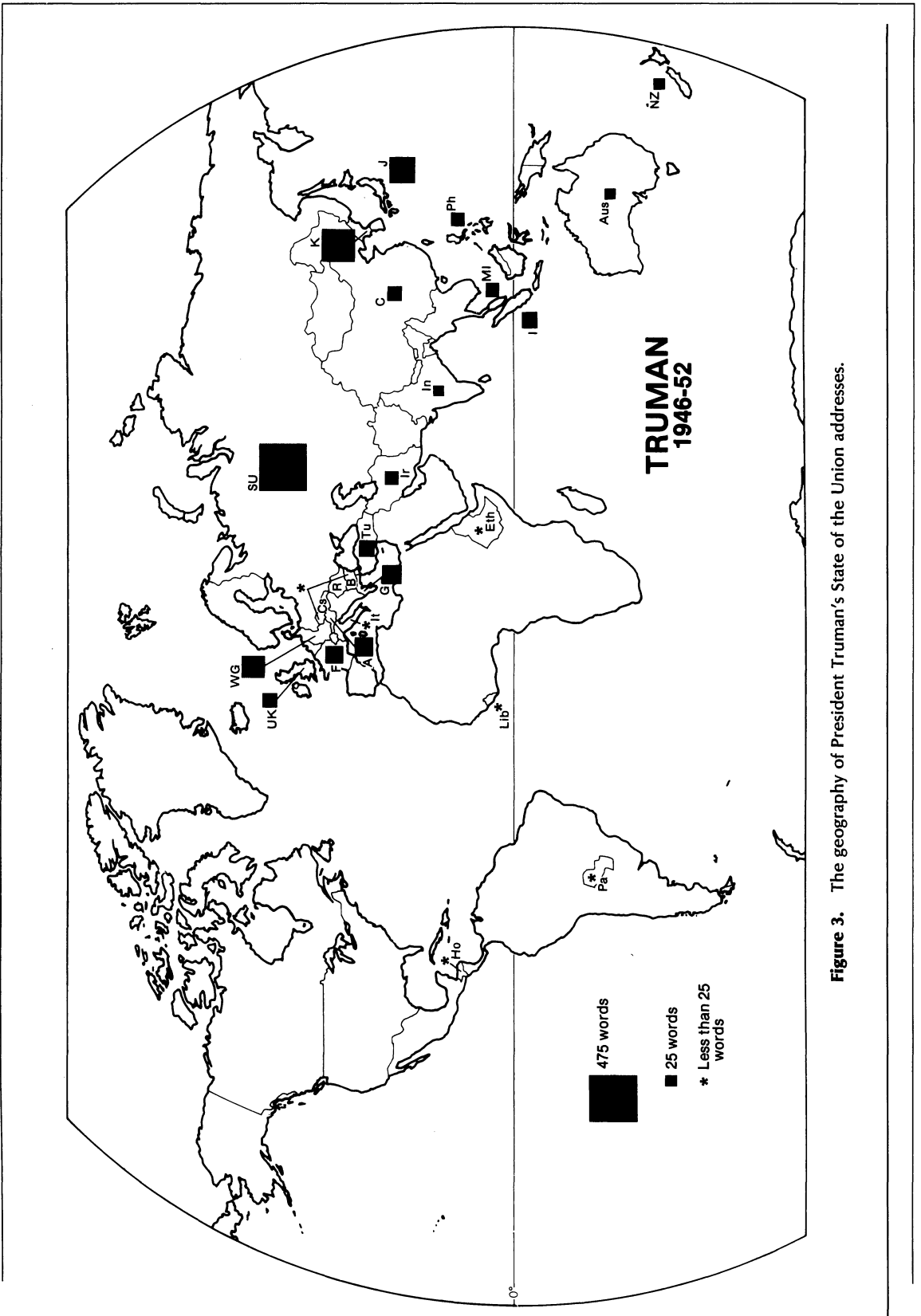


Figure 3. The geography of President Truman's State of the Union addresses.

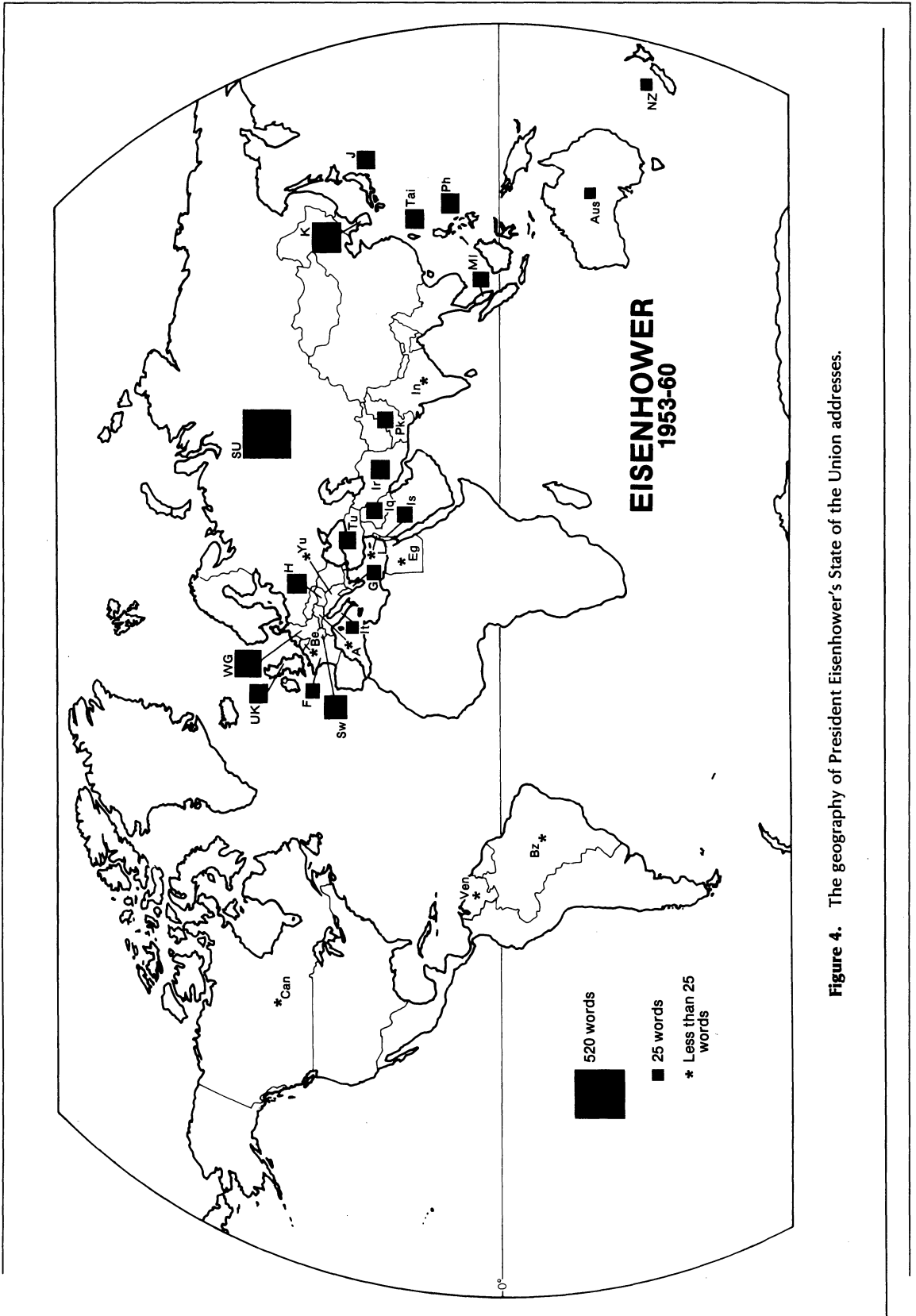


Figure 4. The geography of President Eisenhower's State of the Union addresses.

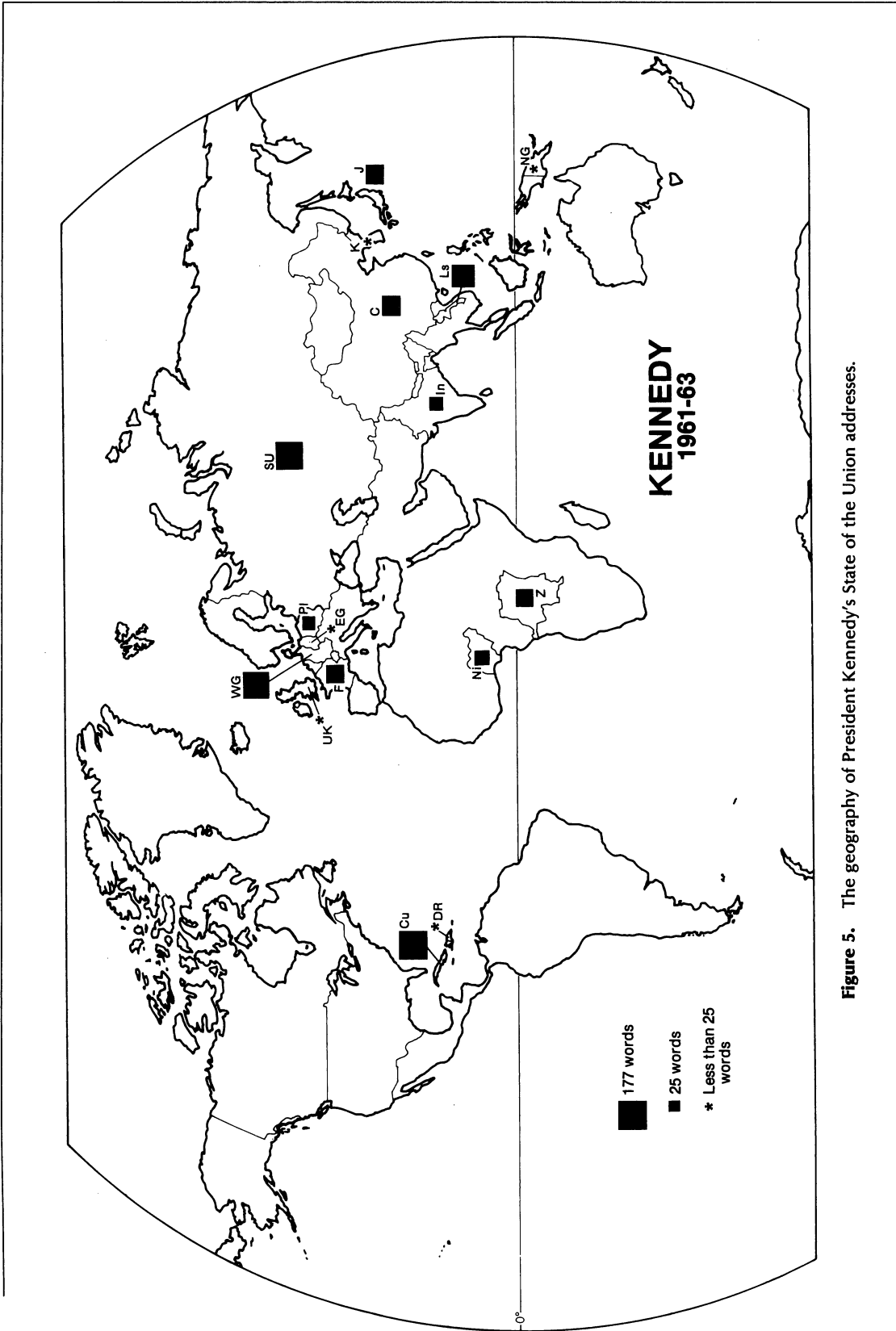


Figure 5. The geography of President Kennedy's State of the Union addresses.

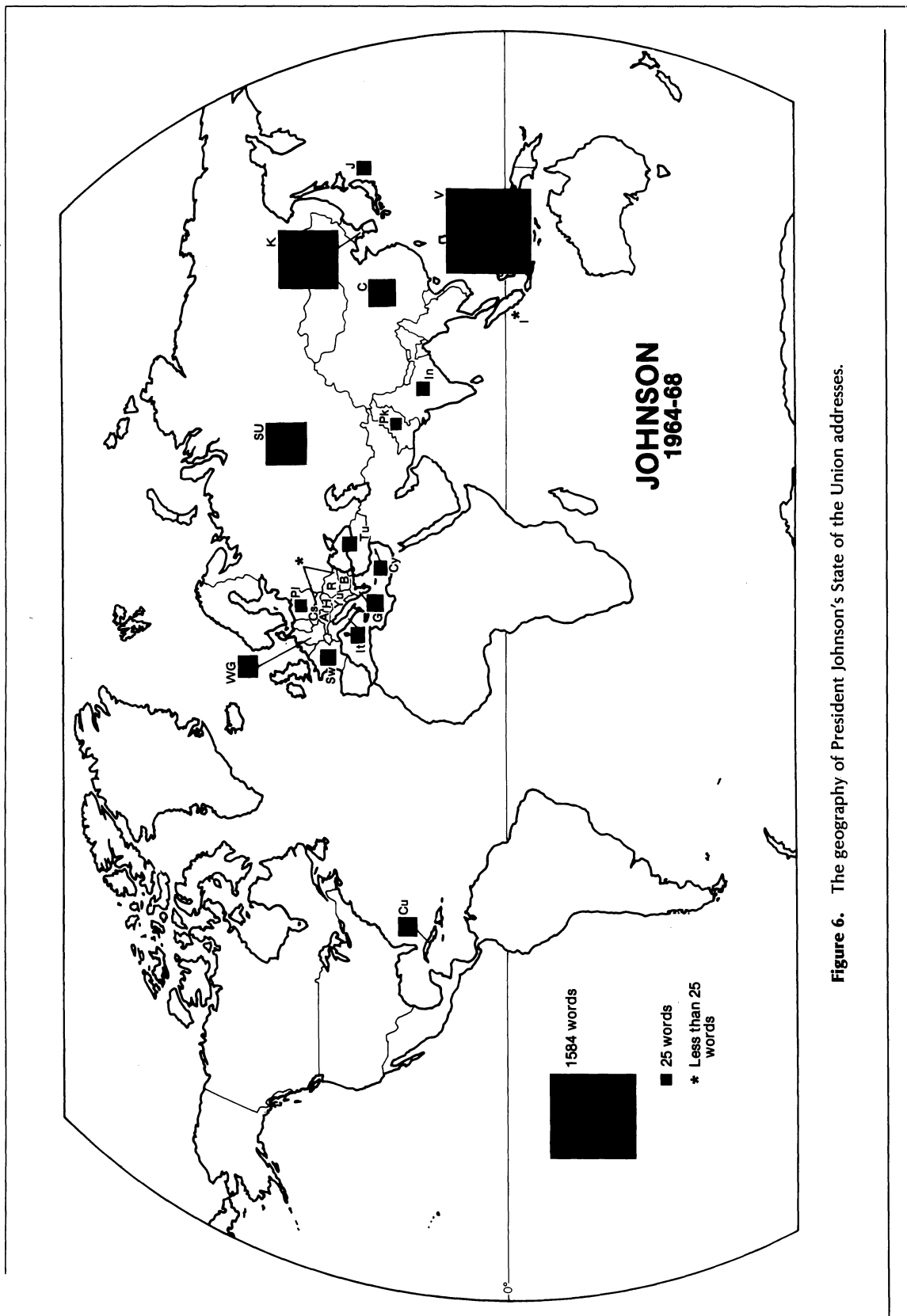


Figure 6. The geography of President Johnson's State of the Union addresses.

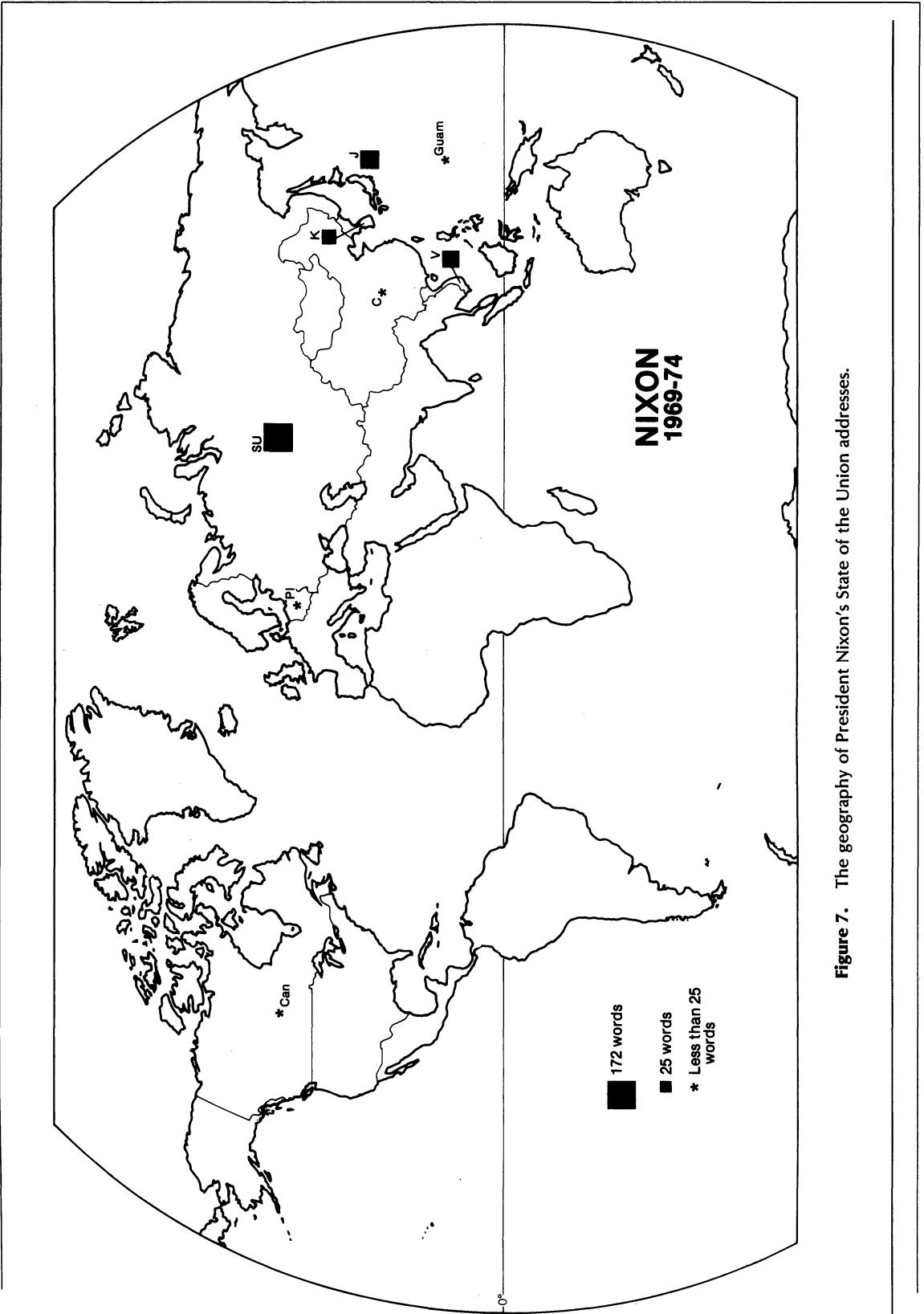


Figure 7. The geography of President Nixon's State of the Union addresses.

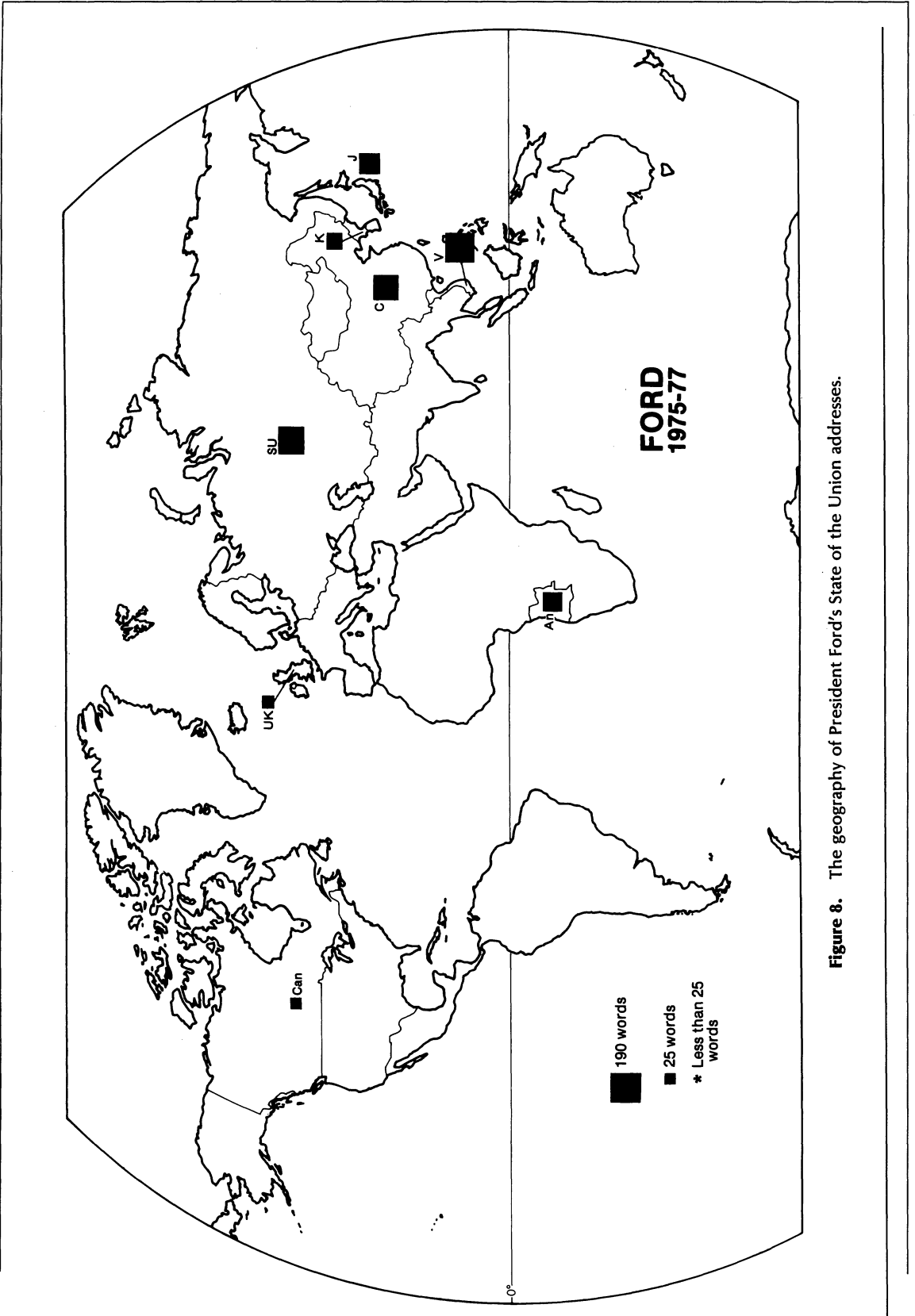


Figure 8. The geography of President Ford's State of the Union addresses.

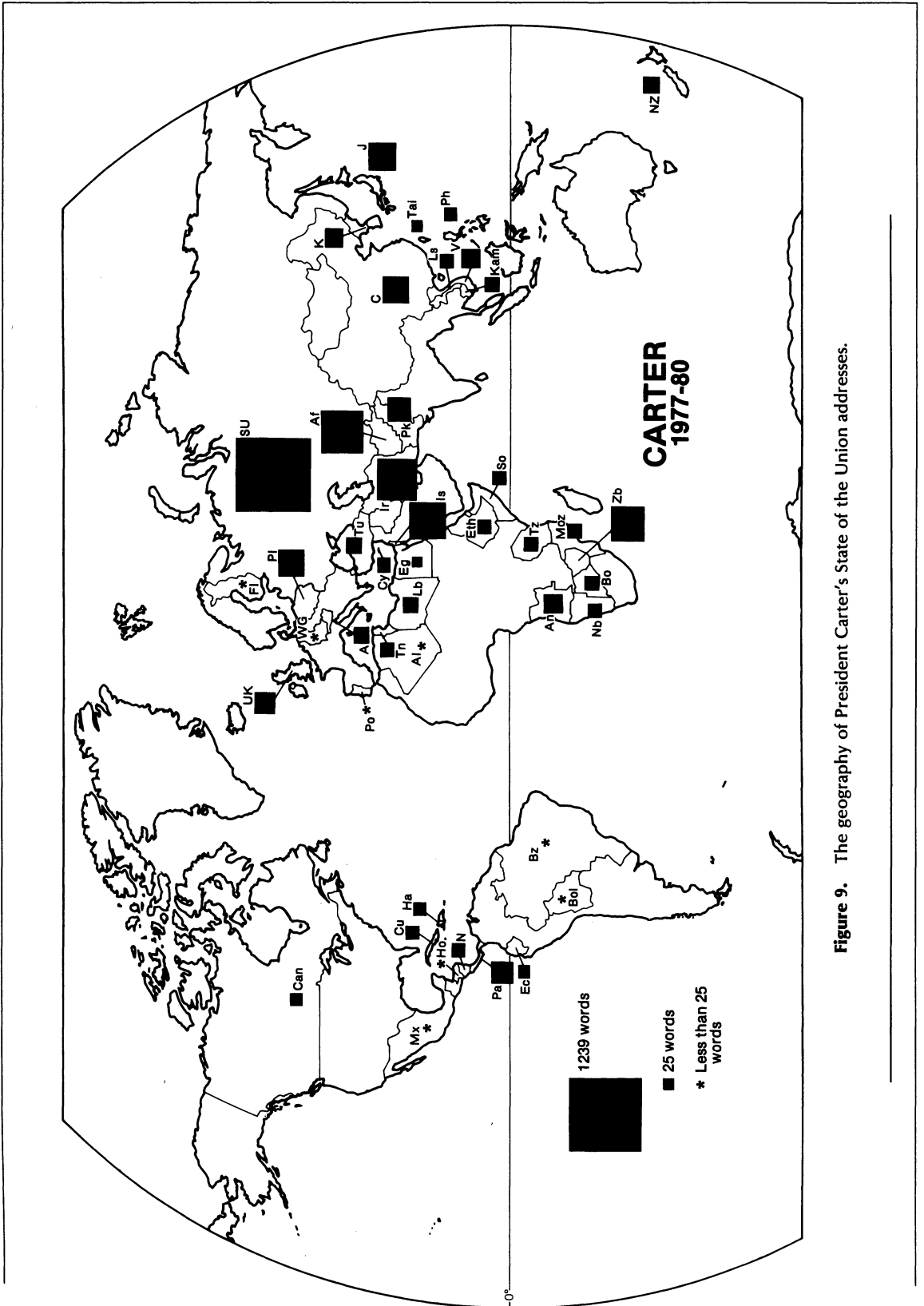


Figure 9. The geography of President Carter's State of the Union addresses.

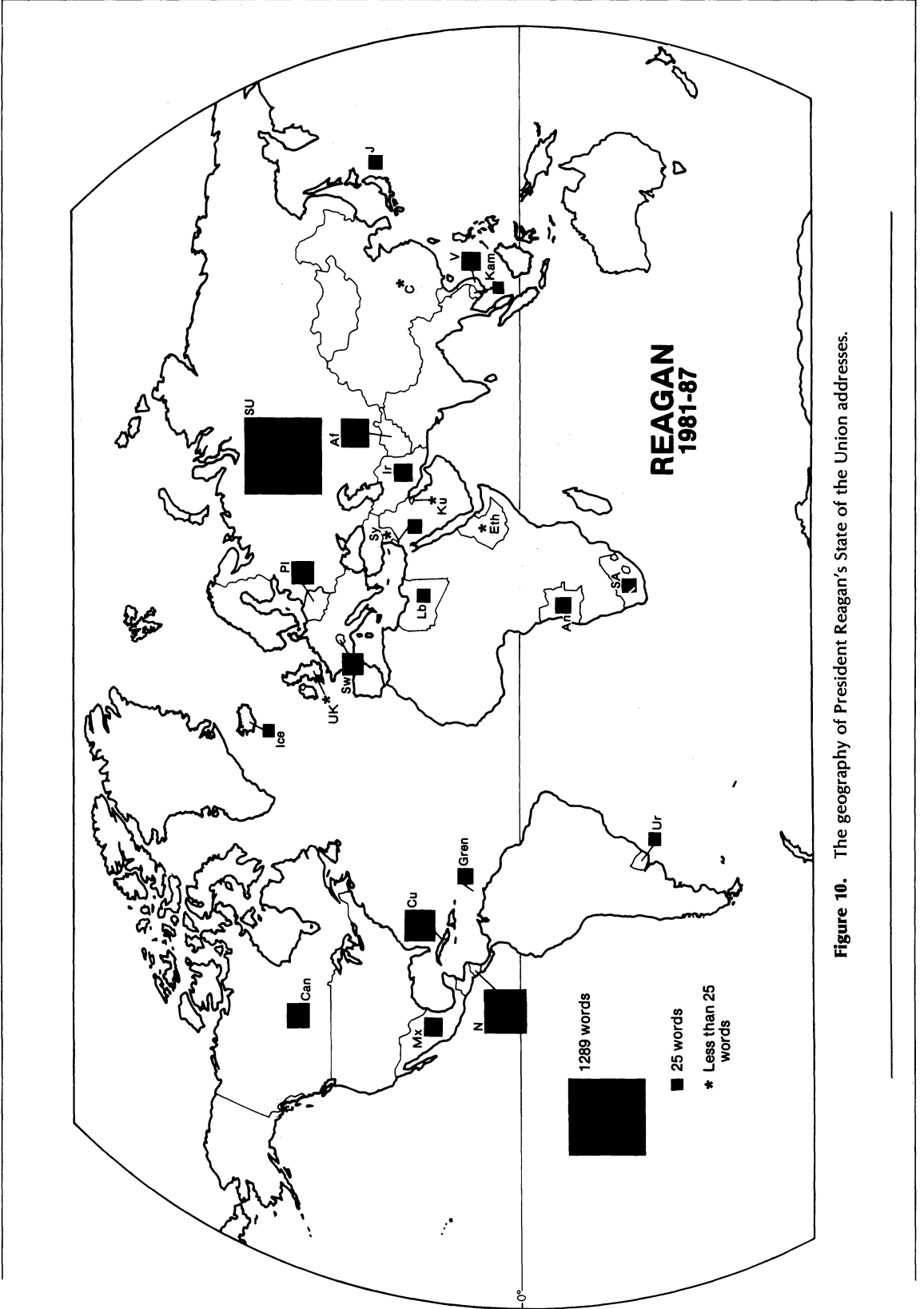


Figure 10. The geography of President Reagan's State of the Union addresses.

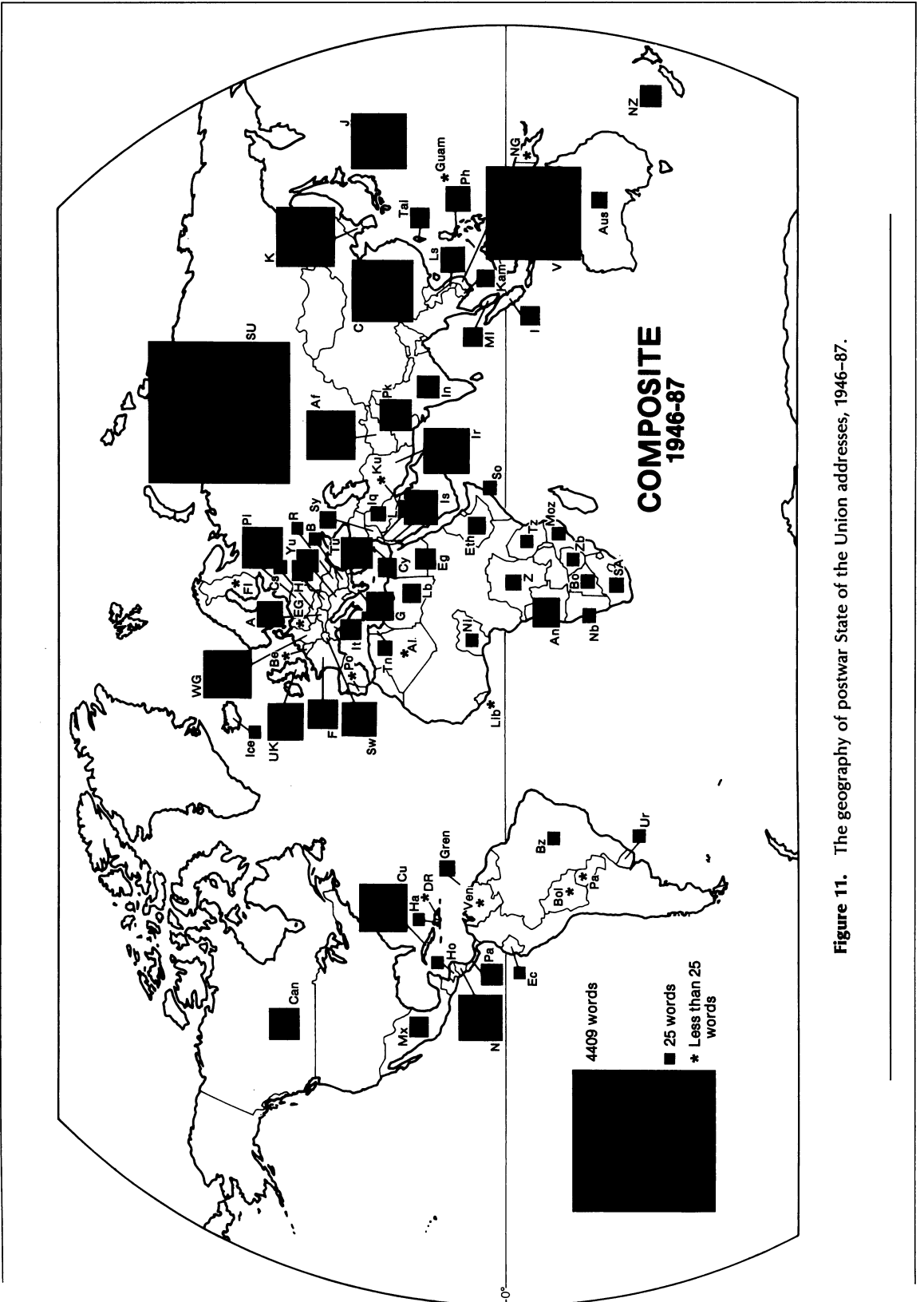


Figure 11. The geography of postwar State of the Union addresses, 1946-87.

the limited amount of time that the president has to review all aspects of policy, both domestic and foreign, we should not expect complete global coverage. However, the relative emptiness of huge areas of the globe, especially Africa and South America, on most of the maps bears eloquent testimony to the concentrated nature of American foreign policy on a few places and one competitor, the USSR.

Apart from the unexpectedly high values for Switzerland, Austria and France (sites of specific conferences or talks), the maps display few surprises for anyone familiar with the evolution of postwar U.S./USSR competition, both directly in the form of the nuclear arms race and indirectly in the form of the regional competition to build alliances, help friends and undermine allies of the opponent. The subpatterns of regional detail are of interest as they indicate the clear shift from the Eurasian heartland to the Third World during the past forty years, reflecting American concerns that developments in many newly-independent states run counter to U.S. positions and that the USSR is actively pursuing a policy of undermining Western interests (Abolfathi et al. 1979).

There are four consistent geopolitical themes in the addresses and they are summarized on the composite map (Fig. 11). First, events in various regions (Nicaragua, Iran, the Horn of Africa, etc.) are linked to the global competition with the USSR. The tenets of anticommunism, military strength, globalism, interventionism and containment reappear with unsurprising frequency in the State of the Union addresses. Second, the next tier of interest, as reflected in the maps, extends to those countries in which the U.S. has been involved in war, directly as in Korea and Vietnam or indirectly, as in Cuba, Nicaragua or Afghanistan. The presidents justified American involvement in the early years of the war and during the buildup of American forces. The State of the Union message provides a perfect opportunity to build public support. Third, a great deal of attention is devoted to strong regional powers, both friendly and hostile, if they are located in conflict zones. A clear indication of this importance of regional location is the relative attention to Brazil and to Iran. China, Japan, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Poland and West Germany have received disproportionate attention during the past four decades. Again it is noteworthy that these states are arranged in a semicircle around the USSR

and are integral portions of the postwar zone of containment, the geopolitical foundation on which American foreign policy was structured after 1947. The final element of the maps is the relative absence of South America, the hemisphere of greatest geographical propinquity, and of Canada, America's largest trading partner. Given the enormous American political and economic interests in the Western hemisphere, it is instructive that it is only the conflict areas of the hemisphere that receive any detailed examination and explanation in the State of the Union addresses. While a political region may be central in American foreign policy, unless it is also a conflict zone, it is unlikely to receive proportionate attention in the speeches.

Further details on the relationship between the geopolitics of the State of the Union addresses and the state of U.S./USSR relations can be obtained from Table 2. The emphases in the addresses correlate well with Halliday's (1986) account of the geography of the four eras of postwar superpower relationship. During the cold wars, public awareness of the superpower competition increased. But there is no significant increase in the foreign policy ratio in the speeches in the years when foreign policy is rated more important than domestic issues, as shown in the Gallup Polls (Table 2). Places in which the U.S. is heavily involved, such as Vietnam, cloud the simple correlation of public awareness and superpower conflict.

The Environmental Model of Presidential Addresses

Having mapped and described the regional distribution of foreign policy in the State of the Union addresses, we now employ an environmental model to try to understand the temporal pattern of the two key dependent variables, the foreign policy proportion of the speech and the specific place proportion. The relative level of each in an address is considered to be a function of the environment in which the president is operating. Specifically, the total environment is subdivided into three elements, the domestic, international and political environments (Table 3). For each environment, three independent variables were selected and regressed against the dependent variables. As indicated earlier, there is no autocorrelation in

Table 2. Importance of Foreign Policy Issues and Specific Regions According to Foreign Policy Salience^a and the State of U.S./USSR Relations

	Salience of foreign policy		Eras in U.S./USSR relations ^b			
	Most important issue		1946-59	1960-69	1970-79	1980-87
	Foreign	Domestic				
Number of speeches	25	17	14	10	10	8
	Percentages					
Ratios						
Foreign policy	26	22	28	27	20	22
Specific places	56	44	41	57	36	78
Regions						
Americas	7	6	1	6	4	19
W. Europe	9	5	10	8	6	3
USSR + E. Europe	11	11	9	6	6	28
Africa	2	2	0	2	4	4
Middle East	6	3	3	2	2	16
E. Asia	7	6	8	4	8	3
Rest Asia + Aust.	12	4	3	22	8	5
Unspecified places						
Allies	3.9	2.3	4	5	1	3
Adversaries	0.6	1.9	2	1	1	0

^a Based on Gallup Polls.

^b Defined in Halliday 1986.

the dependent variable series and the Durbin-Watson and the Theil-Nagar statistics indicated no significant autocorrelation in the error terms of the equations. All nine independent variables were forced into the equations (rather than a stepwise procedure) so that the relative strength of the model for the two dependent variables might be compared. In the first equation, for the foreign-policy proportion, four variables have zero-order correlations greater than 0.35, but in the second equation, only one variable (USMINV) is as strongly related to the specific-place proportion (Table 3). The R²s differ significantly; the environmental model is unable to explain much of the variation of the specific-place proportions, but the foreign-policy proportion model has an R² value of over 0.50.

Four variables (two international and two political environmental) provide most of the explanation in the environmental model of foreign-policy proportion. The domestic environment (the economy and public opinion of the president on foreign policy and the relative importance of domestic and foreign issues) bears little relevance to the amount of time devoted to foreign policy. The overall political success of the President (POLSUC), the ratio of U.S. to Soviet military expenditures (USSUME) and So-

viet military involvements (SUINV) are tied for the most important predictor (Table 3), but the relationships are different. While the military expenditure variable is positively related to the foreign-policy proportion, political success is negatively related. These results are not surprising. It is well known that the popularity of American presidents generally rests on their perceived successes in the domestic economic and social environment and that foreign-policy decisions rarely have the same impact on their popularity as domestic events. Conversely, foreign-policy failures, such as a prolonged war, or profound embarrassment, such as the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, can severely damage a president's reputation. The most popular presidents, with the exception of President Reagan, have devoted little time in their addresses to foreign policy ($r = -.21$).

As American military expenditures increase relative to Soviet expenditures (USSUME), the foreign-policy proportions of the addresses increase. Presidents justify the military buildup in strategic terms, especially in terms of the U.S./Soviet competition with its global implications for the alliances. In another way, however, the stimulus of Soviet actions to American foreign policy as reflected in the State of the Union messages is important but counterin-

Table 3. Results of Test of the Environmental Model: Regression of Foreign Policy and Specific Region Ratios, 1946-87, with 9 Environmental Factors

Dependent variable	Coefficients	Independent Variables											
		Domestic					International					Political	
		GNP	FPAPP	FPSAL	USMINV	USSUME	SUMINV	ELECT	POLSUC	TOTAPP			
Foreign policy ratio	b	83.34	.08	4.21	.45	40.96	-2.03	2.96	-.57	.07			
	St. error	63.44	.19	6.82	.60	19.94	.93	4.26	.34	.38			
	t-ratio	1.31	.45	.62	.74	2.05	-2.17	.70	-1.68	.18			
	beta	.22	.07	.12	.12	.47	-.34	.12	-.47	.06			
	Simple r	.24	-.17	-.09	.01	.42	-.38	-.12	-.40	-.38			
Specific regions ratio	b	108.18	.25	12.38	-1.93	-22.77	-.65	.89	.19	-.42			
	St. error	118.49	.35	12.72	1.13	37.24	1.75	7.95	.63	.72			
	t-ratio	.91	.71	.97	-1.71	-.61	-.37	.11	.30	-.57			
	beta	.20	.16	.24	-.36	-.18	-.08	.02	.11	-.24			
	Simple r	-.01	.10	.17	-.30	.03	-.04	.00	-.08	-.08			

R² = .51; D-W Statistic = 2.02; Overall F = 2.76; sig. of F = .02

R² = .18; D-W Statistic = 1.50; Overall F = 0.57; sig. of F = .80

tuitive. Soviet military involvements (SUMINV) are negatively related to the foreign-policy proportion (Table 3). The explanation may lie in the geographic distribution of Soviet involvements. The vast majority of the involvements counted by Kaplan (1981) have been on the borders of the USSR, in East Europe and in Northeast Asia, areas considered part of the Soviet "orbit" (O'Loughlin 1987). These Soviet involvements are not viewed as a key element of the global U.S./USSR conflict, and therefore do not act as a direct cause of increased American attention to foreign policy. The last significant zero-order correlation, total approval (TOTAPP), is rendered insignificant in the multiple regression equation by the political success variable because of modest collinearity.

None of the nine environmental variables are significantly related to the specific regions variable. Only USMINV (American military involvement) has a *t*-ratio close to 2.0. In this case, the relationship is negative. Given the involvement of the U.S. military abroad, one would expect the president to devote a portion of his State of the Union address to examining the intervention in the next speech. The reverse is the case. Presidents may wish to downgrade the importance of the commitment of U.S. troops in the face of possible domestic opposition to their deployment. Only President Johnson talked at length about the use of American military force in a specific region during the course of a war and his term in office. We must conclude that the environmental model is not an adequate representation of the emphasis on specific regions in the addresses and that more individualistic explanations of the attention devoted to certain countries is needed. For example, if we add a dummy variable for the Johnson years to the equation, the R^2 value jumps from .18 to .30.

Our results do not replicate Ostrom and Job's (1986, 59) conclusion that "there is support for the proposition that the use of force is a presidential decision that resides in a decidedly political context. The absolute and relative levels of popular support turn out to be the most important influence." We find no political influences on the attention to foreign policy in the State of the Union addresses. Instead, the role of the international environment, especially the use of American troops and the military-expenditures variable, provide the most useful predictors. Presidents use the address to

generate support for military buildups, to condemn the Soviet Union and to reestablish the five central tenets of postwar American foreign policy. Failures are underplayed and successes exaggerated and most of the globe does not receive specific attention. Instead the focus is consistently on the Soviet Union, and the actions of that superpower and its perceived allies are used to build public support for the president's policies. Unlike the use of force, the foreign-policy actions and beliefs of Presidents are mostly beyond the range of public knowledge and the Presidents can pick and choose for their public pronouncements. The great difference in explanatory power of the environmental model for the use of force and foreign-policy attention in the major Presidential speech of the year is testimony to this private/public distinction in American foreign policy.

Violence, Cooperation and Images of Countries

An important issue in Presidential speech-making is the frequency of images associated with specific countries. Terms such as "allies," "enemies," and "Communists" and reference to expectations of violence and to military preparation are common in State of the Union addresses, with hopes for cooperative arrangements with the Soviet Union relatively infrequent. Neither Fitch (1985) nor Nijman (1988) associated these violence and cooperative images with specific places; we tested the association between our ratios and the annual variability in Fitch's two indices, expected violence and "Allies/enemies/Communists," and Nijman's index of cooperation.⁵ As expected, there is a positive correlation of Fitch's two indices (expected violence, $r = 0.37$; Allies/enemies/Communists, $r = 0.28$) and our dependent variable, foreign-policy proportion. As Presidents give increasing attention to the U.S./USSR competition and to the need for military preparedness against a perceived threat, indicated by higher violence expectations scores, the speeches have greater foreign-policy proportions. The correlations with specific places are, however, non-significant ($r = -0.03$ and 0.07 respectively). These results provide further confirmation that, while the general foreign-policy attention is predictable, the regional detail is idiosyncratic and only partly overlaps the

Table 4. Countries and Images, State of the Union Addresses, 1946-87

Country	Common interest	Opposing interest	Not specified
Soviet Union	4	66	20
Vietnam	1	48	3
Korea	0	17	7
Japan	14	0	8
China	4	9	6
Cuba	0	13	0
W. Germany	8	0	4
Afghanistan	0	11	1
Iran	0	11	1
France	0	8	0
Israel	3	0	5
Britain	4	0	3
All countries	60	210	150

general global superpower competition. The correlation with Nijman's cooperation index is weak and negative (-0.16) for the foreign-policy proportion and near zero (-0.02) for the place-specific ratio. Discussion of cooperation was largely avoided before 1960, that is, until the ebbing of the first Cold War and its confrontations in Korea and Central Europe. From 1970-78, the detente years, cooperation reached maximum expression in the speeches but dropped precipitously to the levels of the 1950s from 1979-83. During the past half-decade, it has again turned upward.

The State of the Union addresses are mostly devoted to general issues, especially the "Soviet threat," and little time is left for regional details in years in which there is no major American involvement in regional conflicts. Levels of reference to expected violence were strongest in the years of the first Cold War (1947-58) and consequently correlate positively with the loci of that contest, in Northeast Asia and in Western Europe. It is interesting that references to "Allies/enemies/Communists" correlate more strongly with reference to regions outside the USSR/East Europe area because Third World regions usually enter the speeches only when the president perceives a threat to American interests from the Soviet Union and its allies. A recent example is the frequent reference by President Reagan to the Soviet actions in Central America and the Caribbean.

A clarification of the images (positive, negative and neutral) associated with each country is given in Table 4. We classified each direct place reference as a shared (common) interest

between the U.S. and that country, an opposed interest or a neutral, value-free commentary. Of the 420 references for the 42 years 1946-87, exactly half had negative connotations, usually a combination of a discussion of a threat to American and democratic interests and values or a direct mention of the negative aspects of Communism. Far fewer (60) references were to shared views and opinions while a large number of references (150) were not specifically positive or negative. Not surprisingly, the USSR topped the list of states with associated images, which were invariably negative. Other states with strong negative images were Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Afghanistan and Iran. In each case, the presidents stressed why the U.S. was acting in response to what they saw as developments that were counter to American policy. Over time, the images can change, as in the case of China. America's postwar allies were invariably portrayed as under threat in the early cold-war years, but in later years as supporting American global efforts.

The American president is a highly visible figure, both at home and abroad, and can dictate the tone and measure of foreign policy of the U.S. as well as shape the global perspective of the Western alliance. One has only to think of the transformation of Iran from a close American ally under the Shah to an opponent after the Islamic Revolution, to recognize the potency of the image in determining public attitudes to foreign states. The importance of place images goes beyond the president's foreign-policy agenda as country stereotypes, elaborated by the presidents, help to shape the cognitive maps of the audience that, in turn, persist long after the public presentation.

Conclusions

In this paper, we set out to examine the world as portrayed in the most important annual political address in the U.S. We wished to understand the rise and fall of attention to foreign policy and to specific countries in the speeches. Our key assumption is that the amount of attention to issues and places in the State of the Union message is an accurate reflection of the geopolitical perspective and political agenda of the President at the time of the speech.

We were able to show that the five postwar tenets of American foreign policy, as defined

by Kegley and Wittkopf (1986), appear consistently in State of the Union addresses and are reflected in a distinctively changing American geopolitics. In the 1940s and 1950s, emphasis was placed on the perceived threat to the "Rimland," that zone of containment arranged in a semicircle around the Soviet Heartland. In the 1960s, attention to specific conflicts in Cuba and Vietnam was added to the dominant U.S./USSR competitive theme. In the 1970s decade of detente, attention to foreign policy was reduced, only to be revived strongly in a regional guise in the late 1970s and 1980s by Presidents Carter and Reagan. During the 1980s, the regional focus of U.S./USSR competition has shifted to the Middle East, Southern Africa and Central America. The maps can be viewed as abstract but visible representations of the geopolitical shifts and emphases of postwar American foreign policy.

Unlike Kessel (1974), we could not find much consistency in the annual variation in foreign-policy proportions in the State of the Union addresses. Position on the electoral calendar and domestic political factors were unimportant in determining the amount of the speech devoted to foreign policy and to regions of the globe. More than half of the variation in the foreign-policy proportion is explained by the environmental factors. Factors such as the U.S./USSR competition (indicated by the military-expenditures ratio) and U.S. and USSR military interventions provided useful prediction. Regional attention in State of the Union messages cannot be accurately predicted from the political, domestic or international environments. A more idiosyncratic approach is needed, measuring the specific regional issues prominent at the time of the speech. Since the international environmental variables measuring U.S./USSR competition are the most useful predictors, further evidence is provided for the centrality of Soviet policy for all postwar American presidents. A comparative study of American and Soviet statements on the same geopolitical issues, perhaps in the context of UN Security Council statements, would provide an indication of the relative importance of each superpower in the other's world-view.

By examining the number of words devoted to each country, an index of regional emphasis, we avoided interpretation problems associated with image categorization. A project of developing accurate presidential global images can-

not be tackled until a defensible adjectival classification is developed. While some preliminary studies have been completed of foreign places and peoples, it is not clear how these cognitive maps and place images are formed. It is our contention that the messages that the public receives from the President from platforms such as the State of the Union address are powerful forces in helping to create, change and reformulate political cognitive maps of the world. A study of the place-emphases in presidential speeches is a necessary part of the analysis of the geopolitical world-views of the American public.

If we accept that the relationship between president and public is symbiotic in terms of foreign-policy discussions, images and agendas, then at least three further types of political cognitive mapping studies are needed. Though the president may be the most important global actor and his/her visibility to the public will guarantee that White House statements will receive full media attention, other important military and political leaders develop and modify American foreign policy. Their global images and geopolitical cognitive maps are also important. We need further study along the lines of the work by Eaton (1984) and Henrikson (1980) on their world and regional views. A second major lacuna in current research is the study of the translation of presidential and elite images to the public mind. In this regard, television plays a major role, and we need further study of the world as seen through television, both news and entertainment programs. Davis (1988) has shown how place images in television news (turmoil, threat, poverty, war, etc.) are combined with an individual's (background) characteristics to determine attitudes and beliefs toward American foreign-policy objectives. Finally, though many have decried the barrenness of the global cognitive maps of Americans and their general geographic illiteracy, images of foreign places and countries are not generally well-documented or understood. We need to understand how stereotypes are formed, what media and persons are important in forming them, and the consequences of these images for political beliefs and actions.

Though Sloan (1988) offers a valuable starting-point, the geopolitical basis of American foreign policy still needs detailed examination. Globalist and regionalist perspectives have al-

ternated in Washington, each translated into a specific geography of foreign policy. One form of geopolitical practice is speechmaking, a necessary element of consensus-formation in a democracy. The geopolitical emphases and images of presidential speeches, based on geostrategic principles, justify and anticipate direct policy actions such as the use of military force. Using Sloan's (1988) chessboard analogy, the position of the chesspieces (allies and opponents) on the board is as important as their number and strength. Geopolitical analysis, therefore, is the understanding of the evolving structure of the board, that is, the changing distribution of the alliance blocs and the ways (processes) they evolve. The "geopolitical codes" (Gaddis 1982) of the global leaders constitute part of the environment-policy-makers-actions-changed-environment nexus. In this light, we attempted to link the Sprouts' (1965) environmental model to an empirical geopolitical study, thereby reasserting the relevance of political geography to the main body of international relations research.

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Notes

1. These points were raised by the *Annals* reviewers.
2. For the State of the Union messages, 1946-87, we were forced to make a number of coding decisions. In 1969, President Nixon broke tradition by stating he did not plan the usual State of the Union speech. We used his Inaugural Address of that January as a replacement. In 1973, Nixon broke tradition again and delivered six written messages in as many weeks. We analyzed all six speeches, the majority of which were totally concerned with the domestic economy. In the three-year period, 1978-80, President Carter gave two versions of the State of the Union address; we used the shorter, broadcast message. The years 1961 and 1981 were also noteworthy, when Presidents Kennedy and

Carter, instead of oral presentations to joint sessions at Congress, sent written statements to the Capitol. (Carter's written statement in 1981 was 76 pages in length.)

3. Modeling the foreign policy proportions as a time-series process, we can determine if the temporal pattern is composed of a series of random shocks, or if the pattern is regular or predictable. In the case of the foreign policy proportion, a time-series ARIMA (Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average) model of the form (0, 0, 0) is most appropriate, indicating that the annual variation since 1946 is composed of a series of random shocks. The first-order autocorrelation coefficient (ACF) (correlating each value with the value for the year before) is slightly negative, indicating an up-and-down pattern of emphasis to foreign policy in the addresses. The two-year cycle is, however, not structural and probably reflects the short-term commitment to specific developments overseas and the competing demands of domestic and political concerns at home. Full results of the time-series analyses are available from the authors.
4. For the Americas regional ratio, an integrated moving average model (0, 0, 1) is indicated with a coefficient of $-.50$. We can interpret this model as reflecting the influence of the specific timing of events in Cuba, the Caribbean, Panama and Central America. For the Middle East and Rest Asia/Australasia, an autoregressive model of order 1, ARIMA (1, 0, 0) is most appropriate. This model indicates that the values in one year are significantly related to the values in the previous year. The coefficients are large and positive and reflect American concerns with regional developments over a period of years. In other words, these two regions have retained a strong position in America's global consciousness, and this importance is reflected in the Presidents' State of the Union addresses. For the other four regions, an ARIMA model of random shocks of the form (0, 0, 0) is indicated. The proportion of foreign policy words devoted to these regions is randomly distributed over time, and the first-order ACFs are also small. They are all positive, indicating that the values are related from one year to the next but the relationships are not significant.
5. Fitch (1985) counted negative references to the Soviet Union and references to "Allies, enemies and Communists" and computed these as a proportion of the total words in the speech. Nijman's (1988) index is the number of treaties and agreements signed between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in each year.

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