

Bush's 9 11 speech

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Jocelyn Hankins Professor Kelly Murphy College Composition II 26 February 2012 Rhetorical Essay of George W. Bush's Speech, 9/11 Address to the Nation I read and watched George W. Bush's " 9/11 Address to the Nation" and found the speech to be ineffective. The President's speech started off and ended efficiently with its appeal to pathos, however, its lack in logos overshadowed this and made the speech unsuccessful. This essay will examine the President's use of rhetorical appeals and how they made his speech a failure. The president's speech started off with an appeal to pathos by sounding sympathetic and playing on the audiences' emotions. He spoke of all the victims the attack effected. Bush says, " The victims were... men and women, military and federal workers, moms and dads, friends and neighbors. " Bush also used descriptive words that almost painted a picture of how horrific the attack was in saying, " the pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge--huge structures collapsing have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. " The second paragraph of the speech also appealed to pathos by Bush acknowledging his audiences' sense of patriotism stating, " America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining. " Bush appealed to pathos and ethos when he says, " praying for those who grieve, for the children whose lives have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security have been threatened. " Bush acknowledges that the majority of his audience shares the same values and beliefs. Also using an appeal to ethos, George Bush included the bible verse Psalm 23 and spoke of being comforted by a " Power greater than any of us. " He wants to appeal to our

sense of patriotism and show his sympathetic side by talking about our great country and how this will not “ dent the steel of American resolve” or “ touch our foundation. ” This speech’s strongest appeal was it’s appeal to pathos. It effectively drew an emotional response from the audience. George W. Bush tried to use ethos by assuming that the audience respected and believed in him as the President of the United States and Commander in Chief. In the speech, George Bush tries to show his awareness of the complexities of the situation by giving examples of how many people were victims of the attack. The entire speech was too vague though, to be successful in making his audience feel confident that he possessed the capabilities to complete the task at hand. His general tone and approach to the speech shows the lack of efficiency in using logos, showing very little detail and presenting no concrete plans as to exactly what the nation was going to do regarding retaliation. The president’s lack of details and supporting evidence of the reasoning behind the attack, the parties or party involved, and the strategy or plan of what will be done following the attack, were all very broad generalizations and too vague to be persuasive. It was not made clear as to what would be done to resolve the situation and was lacking concrete facts to back up his plans. For instance, Bush says, “ I implemented our government’s emergency response plans. ” What exactly are those “ plans”? Also, when stated “ the search is underway for those who were behind these evil acts, ” the audience is left wondering what is involved in this search, or how much man power is really going in to this search? When the President states that they are taking, “ every precaution to protect our citizens at home and around the world from further attacks, ” the reader may wonder or

question how the government is specifically handling this? Are we really safe here and abroad? What exactly has changed since the attack that will insure our country and it's citizens are safe from another attack and from terrorists? Another ineffective statement I found was when the President said, " I have directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and bring them to justice. " This statement and this speech as a whole, would have been more persuasive if he had included more numbers or statistics. By not giving us those details, I feel not only did it weaken the strength of the speech, but it also hurt his appeal to ethos. He portrays himself to be either too ignorant to know exactly what was happening in the defense plans, or insinuates his audience is not smart enough to realize his lack of details. George Bush's honesty is questionable because it could make someone wonder if he was intentionally, or unintentionally, leaving the details or statistics out of the speech. If it was intentional, then that would mean the president was being manipulative, which does not help his credibility or make him seem trustworthy. The President closes his speech with an appeal to pathos when he talks about uniting as a country and how our country will overcome this tragedy, " This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace... we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world. " He tries to leave the audience with a strong sense of patriotism by saying, " And God bless America. " I found George W. Bush's, " 9/11 Address to the Nation" to be overall ineffective. The biggest downfall of the speech was found with his pathetic appeal to logos. This appeal should have been the heart of the argument and should have had the strongest

emphasis. I found it to be the opposite. The speech's strongest appeal was to pathos but that alone did not make up for its lack in logos, making the speech ineffective overall. This was definitely not a persuasive speech.

Works Cited Bush, George W. " 9/11 Address to the Nation. " The White House, Washington D. C. 11 September 2001. Address. Barnet, Sylvan, and Hugo Bedau. Current Issues and Enduring Questions. New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2002. Print.