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Comp Journalism

Assignment 1

9/26/14

1960 Speech

The 1960 state of the union address concerned new frontiers for the American people, particularly in science, based off of the top twenty weighted terms extracted from the speech. The steel industry was becoming more lucrative, likely due to advancements in building rockets designed for leaving the atmosphere. Scientists were developing technology to advance space exploration, of which a major feat - going to the moon - would be achieved later in the decade. America was spending a lot of energy and focus on technology that would help to explore the world above the atmosphere like satellites, jets, and rockets.

It was a time when America was focused on it’s own advancements and “self-indulging” in it’s power. It’s probable that many industries across the board were working together in order to become the first superpower to really dominate the space race.

Analyzing the decades

Over the course of more than 100 years, trends can be seen throughout the state of the union addresses, as well as noticeable topics that differ over each decade.

In the first decade of the 1900s, the speeches focus on the construction of the ‘Panama’ ‘Canal’; in 1904, the United States acquired the project from the French. The speeches also reference the ‘Philippines’, as the Philippine-American War was taking place from 1899 to 1902. We also see the first appearance of the term ‘interstate’, which occurs throughout the 1930s as well. Interstate transportation was increasing as more railroads were being built. In 1901, nine separate locomotive companies were combined to form the American Locomotive Company.

In 1916, the highest railroad trackage in history was achieved, and we see this supported by terms like ‘railways’, ‘interstate’, and ‘industrial’. The 1910s was also the decade of WWI, a time of much ‘unrest’ between Europe and ‘German’ forces and the innovation of vehicles like ‘battleships’ and ‘submarines’. In the 1920s, we were building more ‘interstate’ transportation and learning how to deal with both ‘agricultural’ surplus (and the fall of prices) and ‘veterans’ from WWI. It’s also interesting to note that the term ‘marketing’ is the highest weighted, perhaps related to the boom of the marketing and advertising industry in the 1920s.

In the 1930s, everyone was concerned about the ‘depression’ and ‘unemployment’, which was related to the overproduction in the 1920s. It was also one of the pivotal points for the liberal platform of the ‘Democratic’ Party. The 1940s were expectedly focused on WW2 and retaliating against ‘Hitler’ and the ‘Japanese’ bombing of Pearl Harbor.

1950 marked the start of the ‘Korean’ War where the US fought for South Korea against the North Koreans and China and lasted until 1953. Then, the escalation of the Cold War began in the early 1950s following WW2 and the Korean War against the threat of the ‘communist’ party. There was the belief that ‘atomic’ weaponry would be used. In the 1960s, the US was still fighting against the Communist party in the Vietnam War, which occurred throughout the decade, while dealing with American ‘poverty’ at home.

In the 1970s, we see the occurrence of the 1973 ‘oil’ crisis. And while there was a push for companies to fill their employment to capacity, this also resulted in unusually high ‘inflation’. We see that ‘Afghanistan’ starts to become a relevant term in the 80s due to the Soviet war in Afghanistan, where insurgents received weapon funding from the US. In the 90s, the President addresses the rise of the cost of ‘college’ and the ‘budget’ pressure on ‘parents’.

The twenty-first century sees a huge shift in focus towards the Middle Eastern ‘terrorist’ groups after the September 11th attacks, launching forces in ‘Iraq’ and ‘Afghanistan’ after groups like ‘al Qaeda’. Finally, in the years since 2010, the focus has seemed to shift towards more ‘jobs’ and trying to attract attention to recent ‘innovation’, and perhaps holding ‘businesses’ more economically accountable.