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Tracing Discursive Strategies to Understand the U.S. Withdrawal from the Iranian Nuclear Deal

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ABSTRACT

Based on a discourse-historical approach, this study examines the discursive strategies used by the United States to reproduce Iranian enmity that constitutes the basis for the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal. Analyzing the U.S. Congressional hearings and speeches delivered by President Trump on Iran, the paper shows how the United States has engaged in legitimizing its antagonistic actions towards Iran by appealing to the discursive strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-representation. Basing its arguments on the topoi of history, threat, and responsibility, the United States presents Iran as a hostile rouge regime sponsoring terrorism and posing a threat to regional and global security. Emphasizing that such discourses are embedded within historical conditions, the paper highlights the historical context and discursive strategies that the United States exploits to justify its anti-nuclear deal actions.

Keywords: United States, Iran, Nuclear Deal, Discourse-Historical Approach

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin İran Nükleer Anlaşmasından Çekilmesini Anlamak Amacıyla Söylemsel Stratejilerin Ortaya Çıkarılması

ÖZET

Söylem-tarihsel yaklaşımı analizine dayanan bu çalışma, ABD'nin nükleer anlaşmadan çekilmesinin temelini oluşturan ABD-İran düşmanlığını yeniden üretmeye yönelik söylemsel stratejileri incelemektedir. ABD Kongresi'nin ve Başkan Trump'ın İran hakkındaki söylemlerinin incelendiği bu makale, ABD'nin, pozitif öz-sunum ve diğerlerinin olumsuz sunulması söylemsel stratejisine başvurarak, İran'a yönelik karşıt eylemlerini nasıl meşrulaştırmaya çalıştığını göstermektedir. Tartışmalarını tarih, tehdit ve sorumluluk argümanları üzerinden söylemleştiren ABD, İran'ı teröre destek veren bölgesel ve küresel güvenliği tehdit eden düşmanca bir rejim olarak sunmaktadır. Çalışma, tarihsel koşullara bağlı olan bu söylemlerin ABD'nin nükleer anlaşmadan çekilmesini meşrulaştırmak için kullanıldığını vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ABD, İran, Nükleer Anlaşma, Söylem-Tarihsel Yaklaşım

Introduction

Despite the nuclear deal concluded on 14 July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, France, and Germany), an overwhelming majority in the U.S. Congress has continued advocating for a hard line position against Iran by depicting the country as the most dangerous threat both for the United States and the international community as a whole.¹ The dominant interpretation in the U.S. Congress regarding Iran's goals and intentions has been based on scenarios in which Iran develops nuclear weapons and uses them to assert its regional hegemony and destroy Israel.² These narratives have risen to center stage after the electoral victory of Donald Trump, who has highlighted the need to revise the nuclear deal in order to toughen its provisions and restrict the capacity of Iran to develop ballistic missiles.

Despite the reactions of other P5+1 member states, on 8 May 2018 Trump pulled the United States from the 2015 nuclear deal, which he labeled as a "horrible, one-sided deal that should have never, ever been made."³ Based on the maximum pressure strategy, the United States imposed new sanctions on Iran, including the implementation of measures that would undermine Iranian oil exports and its metals industry, the designation of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization, and the prevention of Iran's civilian nuclear cooperation with other states.⁴ These steps were complemented with military measures such as the deployment of an aircraft carrier and B-52 bombers to the Gulf region. In retaliation, Iran designated the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) a terrorist organization, announced that it would not abide by the uranium-enrichment level stipulated in the nuclear deal, and, allegedly, conducted attacks on oil tankers and seized two commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf.⁵ These steps illustrate how deeply the estrangement between Iran and the United States remains, making this paper a timely contribution for understanding one of the most consequential international conflicts.

Various scholars have examined the structural basis of U.S.-Iranian animosity and comprehensively revealed U.S. representations of itself as a responsible world leader and Iran as a major threat.⁶ Analyzing how negative mutual representations of Iran and the United States have led to the rise of feelings of misrecognition and disrespect, Duncombe highlighted the increasing Iranian-American frustration throughout nuclear negotiations.⁷ Recent research, however, has directed its attention to the role of the U.S. Congress in the discursive construction of U.S.-Iranian enmity.

1 "The Iran Nuclear Deal Was a Giant Mistake", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 12 October 2017, House Vol. 163, No 164, H7985; "The President's Correct and Necessary Decertification of the JCPOA", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 25 October 2017, Vol. 163, No 172, H8212-H8217; "September 11 and a Nuclear Iran", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 11 September 2015, House Vol. 161, No 131, H5946; "Nuclear Agreement with Iran", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 22 July 2015, Vol. 161, No 115, S5433.

2 "Sanctioning Iran", 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 13 November 2013, House Vol. 159, No 161, H7037; "Negotiations with Iran", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 7 May 2015, Senate Vol. 161, No 69, S2727.

3 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/08/us/politics/trump-speech-iran-deal.html> (Access date 15 May 2018).

4 "The US, Iran and maximum pressure", *Strategic Comments*, Vol. 25, No 4, 2019, p. iv-vi.

5 Ibid.

6 Christopher Ferrero, "The Iran Narrative: The Ideational Context of U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making toward the Islamic Republic of Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol.17, No 1, 2013, p. 41-76; Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict between Iran and America*, New York, The Random House, 2005; David Patrick Houghton, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001; Catherine V. Scott, "Bound for Glory: The Hostage Crisis as Captivity Narrative in Iran", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No 1, 2000, p. 177-188.

7 Constance Duncombe, "Representation, Recognition and Respect: Foreign Policy and the Iran-U.S. Relationship", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 22, No 3, 2016, p. 622-645.

Examining Congressional debates on the Iranian nuclear deal, Oppermann and Spence have shown how narratives on the success and failure of the nuclear deal have been structured in Congress.⁸ Analyzing U.S. Senate hearings on Iran, Kadkhodae and Ghasemi Tari have examined how the U.S. has presented Iran as supporting terrorism, undermining regional stability in the Middle East, engaging in a contentious missile program, and violating fundamental human rights.⁹ Building upon this literature, this article analyzes U.S. Congressional hearings since 2013, when Iran and the P5+1 countries signed the Geneva Interim Agreement (Joint Plan of Action), coupled with President Trump's speeches on Iran after he came to power in early 2017.

Based on the discourse historical approach (DHA) of critical discourse analysis (CDA), which provides an insightful analysis that deciphers the complex link between power relations, discursive construction of identities, and discourse, this article examines the discursive strategies used by the U.S. political elite to legitimize their anti-Iranian actions, policies, and discourses. An important aspect of DHA that suits this study is its emphasis on the broader historical context that shapes threat perceptions and discourses of the United States and Iran vis-a-vis each other both synchronically and diachronically. Moreover, DHA provides discursive strategies as analytical categories to examine the U.S. construction of Iran as a major threat that requires measures such as the withdrawal from the nuclear deal and the imposition of sanctions on Iran. By combining the insights derived from the broader historical context of U.S.-Iranian enmity and the discursive strategies used for the legitimization of U.S. actions, DHA reveals not only the particular discursive themes themselves but also *why* they are employed to demonize the Iranian nuclear program.

On Method

DHA operationalizes its discourse analysis in three steps: the first identifies the general discourse topics, the second investigates the discursive strategies used to legitimize discourses under analysis, and the third examines the relevant context in which discourses are embedded.¹⁰ In accordance with the DHA methodology, the paper starts by analyzing the contents of selected texts from U.S. Congress hearings after the conclusion of the Geneva Interim Agreement, which constituted the basis for ending decades long stand-off on the Iranian nuclear program. In order to understand whether Congressional hearings and Presidential speeches overlap on the Iranian issue, the speeches delivered by President Trump on Iran after he came to power in 2017 were also examined. As important sites of identity construction and indicators of political discourse, U.S. Congressional Records and Presidential speeches are central for understanding the process by which the United States legitimizes its anti-Iranian actions and discourses. Moreover, congressional discourses and presidential speeches can be regarded as direct expressions of political power, as they enable the political elite to express their opinion to other congressional members, the media and the public at large. Such expressions, which reflect how power is exercised, may be seen as a legitimization of or justification for certain decisions and policies.

8 Kai Oppermann and Alexander Spencer, "Narrating Success and Failure: Congressional Debates on the Iran Nuclear Deal", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 24, No 2, 2018, p. 268-292.

9 Elham Kadkhodae and Zeinab Ghasemi Tari, "Otherising Iran in American political discourse: case study of a post-JCPOA senate hearing on Iran sanctions", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No 1, 2019, p. 109-128.

10 Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse Historical Approach", Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (3rd ed.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London, Sage, 2016, p. 32-33.

Based on the multi-dimensional analytical framework provided by DHA, the analysis highlights the historical context of enmity between the two countries by depicting critical historical moments, such as the Iranian Revolution, hostage crisis, Iran's support for Hezbollah, 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the revelation of the Iranian nuclear program. To disclose the discursive strategies used to justify the Iranian enmity, the analysis then shifts to U.S. Congressional hearings and President Trump's speeches on Iran. As reflected in those speeches, anti-Iranian discourses have been articulated through three argumentative strategies, including the topos of history, the topos of threat, and the topos of responsibility. The positive self/United States and negative other/Iran representations have been constructed and legitimized through these three topoi, which are explained in detail below.

The Main Features of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that deals with the analysis of discourse to reveal the use and abuse of power through speeches and texts.¹¹ CDA considers discourse as a mode of social action that constructs social reality, including objects, identities, and social relations. Discourses as social acts are regarded as both constituting discursive and non-discursive social and political practices and as being constituted by them.¹² This dialectical interaction between social realities and discourses implies that discourses are crucial in the construction, legitimization, and reproduction of particular social conditions. CDA provides an analytical method that deciphers the actions of the political elite that enjoys a privileged position in controlling access to the public sphere and legitimating discursively created social reality.¹³ By scrutinizing the discursive strategies through which a certain perspective is exercised in texts, CDA thus provides a useful lens to understand how the use of language shapes and constitutes the processes of the dissemination of knowledge, the creation and organization of social institutions, and the enforcement of power.¹⁴

CDA also points to the link between power and ideology¹⁵, conceptualizing ideology as disguised beliefs, metaphors, and analogies that are perceived as neutral.¹⁶ For Wodak, ideologies refer to a certain worldview based on a combination of attitudes, interpretations, and mental images endorsed by specific social actors.¹⁷ Analyzing the complex link between power, ideology, and discourse, CDA provides an important framework for deciphering how conflict between groups is legitimated through discursive practices that present the self in a positive manner while designating the other as a villain.¹⁸

11 Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, New York, Routledge, 2015; Teun A. Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis", *Discourse and Society*, Vol.4, No 2, 1993, p. 249-283.

12 Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London, Sage, 2001, p. 66; Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis", in Teun A. Van Dijk (ed.), *Discourse as a Social Interaction*, London, Sage, 1997, p. 258-284.

13 Van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis".

14 Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, "Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory", Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (eds.) *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London, Sage, 2009, p. 1-33.

15 Norman Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*, London, Routledge, 2003, p. 9.

16 Wodak and Meyer, "Critical discourse analysis".

17 Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of Racism and Antisemitism*, New York, Routledge, 2001.

18 Fairclough and Wodak, "Critical Discourse Analysis".

Wodak's discourse-historical approach (DHA) provides a valuable tool to disclose the relevant knowledge about the background of social and political situations.¹⁹ To identify the nature of the historical context that has shaped the anti-nuclear deal policy preference of the United States, this study has used the tools of DHA that trace the continuities in the dominant discourse that have been naturalized over time and are now treated as common sense. Revealing the role of contextual factors in which discourses are grounded, DHA presents a four-level model of context, including historical/socio-political context, situational context, text-internal or co-texts, and intertextual and interdiscursive relations.²⁰

The situational context reflects specific events that triggered certain speeches while co-texts refer to selected speeches on a certain issue. Conceiving texts as expressions of the struggle for power of different discourses and ideologies, Wodak and Meyer define intertextuality as synchronic and diachronic links among various texts constructed by making reference to the same actors, topics, and events.²¹ For Wodak and Meyer, interdiscursivity reflects a similar interconnectedness among various hybrid discourses that carry elements belonging to another discourse.²² For instance, the discourse on the Iranian nuclear program is directly interlinked with other discourses on Iran's ballistic missile program, its support for terrorism, or its destabilizing policies in the Middle East. DHA conceptualizes context as the structure that embodies all the relevant knowledge and shared beliefs that are crucial for the construction and interpretation of discourses in a certain way. Actors are assumed to interpret and act upon the social reality as constructed through discourse that is embedded in certain contexts. DHA is thus useful not only for demystifying the relation between the text/discourse and the political position of the elite that produces it, but also for revealing the contextualization of the relevant relation between the text and the producer. Tracing the historical and situational background of issues through the analytical tools of DHA thus helps identify how and why the U.S. politicians use certain discursive strategies to promote and legitimize their anti-Iranian discourses.

Conceptualizing discourse as argumentative that involves validity claims and social actors with conflicting truth, DHA investigates the strategic use of discourse as a vital component of power struggle. According to Wodak, parties to a political struggle engage in legitimizing their positions and justifying their actions by resorting to the macro-strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-representation.²³ Such a strategy is operationalized through discursive strategies, including nomination/referential, predication, perspectivation, argumentation, and intensification/mitigation.²⁴ These strategies, which attribute positive or negative labels to certain actors and then exert arguments to justify these representations, not only reveal the categorization of in-groups and out-groups, but also the process of the discursive construction of social identities.²⁵

By using tools, such as metaphors and metonymies, referential/nomination strategies categorize social actors into in-groups and out-groups. This strategy is important to understand how

19 Reisigl and Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination*, p. 35.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 40-41.

21 Wodak and Meyer, "Critical Discourse Analysis", p. 10.

22 *Ibid.*, p.7.

23 Ruth Wodak, *The Discourse of Politics in Action Politics as Usual*, New York, Palgrave, 2011, p. 40; Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", p. 73.

24 Wodak, *The Discourse of Politics in Action*, p. 40-42.

25 *Ibid.*, p.40.

producers of discourse name certain people, objects, events, policies, and processes, and actions linguistically. Predicational strategies complement such categorization by labeling in-groups and out-groups with positive and negative representations by using certain predicates that elaborate positive representation of 'in-groups/us', but a negative connotation of 'out-groups/them'.²⁶ These positive and negative representations are justified through the use of argumentation strategies that try to legitimate the positions taken against out-groups.²⁷

By examining how social actors describe, report or narrate a certain issue or an event, perspectivization strategies reveal to what extent actors express their point of view on a certain matter. This strategy is helpful for examining the ideological or political stance of the discourse producer when expressing certain nominations, qualifications, and arguments. By embarking on adjectives, quantifiers, and vague expressions, intensification/mitigation strategies aim at fostering the negative representations and positions of others while deemphasizing the negative actions of in-groups.²⁸ This strategy is crucial in understanding whether certain discourses are uttered overtly, intensified, or mitigated.

These overall strategies play an important role for the construction of premises for arguments that help legitimize certain discourses. Reisigl and Wodak conceptualize argumentation as a pragmatic tool for the purpose of persuading the audience by deliberately manipulating his/her perceptions towards people, objects, events, and policies in a way that he/she behaves in a certain manner.²⁹ To reflect the tools for the legitimization of a certain policy or position, DHA most commonly makes use of topoi/loci. Conceptualized as compulsory parts of argumentation, topoi are identified as content-related warrants or conclusion rules.³⁰ Directly linking the argument to the conclusion, topoi are argued to justify the transition from the argument to the claim, like a short cut.³¹ Highlighting the importance of the topoi in revealing covert meanings in discourses and understanding the processes of self/other construction, Wodak provides a list of topoi most commonly used in justifying certain positions³², including topoi of history, topoi of threat or danger, topoi of responsibility, and topoi of culture. For instance, the topoi of history highlights the instructive function of history that teaches social actors specific consequences of specific actions and guides them in their decisions about undertaking or giving up a specific action.³³ The topoi of threat emphasizes the threatening consequences of a certain political decision and accordingly justifies why that specific action should not be adopted and implemented or legitimizes the measures taken against certain threats.³⁴ The topoi of threat is crucial for highlighting the need to unite and cooperate against an external enemy. The topoi of responsibility implies the responsibility of a state or social actors to act for finding solutions to certain problems.³⁵

26 Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", p. 73.

27 Ibid, p. 69.

28 Wodak, *The Discourse of Politics in Action*, p. 42.

29 Reisigl and Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination*, p. 69-70.

30 Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", p. 74.

31 Wodak, *The Discourse of Politics in Action*, p. 42.

32 Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach", p. 74.

33 Ibid, p. 75.

34 Ibid, p. 75.

35 Ibid, p. 76.

Based on the methodological tools of DHA, this article examines the three most used topoi in U.S. Congressional hearings and President Trump's speeches on Iran, including the topoi of history, threat, and responsibility. After examining the historical context in which such topoi are embedded in the following part, the article investigates the discursive strategies used to legitimize the U.S. hard line position against Iran.

Tracing the Historical Context of the Discursive Construction of the U.S.-Iranian Enmity

After the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent U.S. hostage crisis, the relationship between Iran and the United States deteriorated and the enmity between the two countries intensified.³⁶ The Iranian capture of 52 American diplomats as hostages for more than one year constituted a trauma for many Americans. Iranian-U.S. relations continued to be extremely tense after the killing and kidnapping of U.S. citizens by Iranian-supported Hezbollah in Lebanon in the 1980s.³⁷ Relations further declined when the then U.S. President George H.W. Bush signed the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act that aimed at containing rogue states in October 1992.³⁸ The Clinton Administration's embarking on the policy of dual containment on 18 May 1993 institutionalized the negative image of the Iranian state. Accusing Iran of sponsoring international terrorism, Clinton issued in 1995 two executive orders that banned trade and investment in Iran and broadened the 1987 sanctions put on Iranian imports by the Reagan Administration. As a reaction to these sanctions, Iran developed its relations with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.³⁹

The Khobar Tower bombings in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 American soldiers and injured 498 people on 25 June 1996 further increased antagonism between the United States and Iran. As Iran was blamed for the attack, the U.S. Congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act on 16 July 1996, which put economic sanctions on domestic and foreign companies that invested in Iran or Libya. The Clinton Administration pursued this hard line strategy until the rise of a reformist president, Mohammad Khatami in the 1997 Iranian elections. The reformist Khatami reached out to the United States in a CNN interview in which he called for a 'dialogue of civilizations' in January 1998. Khatami praised the great American civilization and also implied that the infamous Iranian hostage crisis was an unfortunate tragedy that he regretted. Based on the socially created image of Iran as one of hostage-taking, declaring a war on the United States and the West, and sponsoring terrorism, the dialogue of civilizations initiative of the Khatami movement was welcomed with caution by the United States.⁴⁰

The United States tried to open a dialogue with Iran on 17 March 2000 through the speech of the then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who admitted the role played by the United States

36 Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of the Middle Eastern Terror*, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2003; David Patrick Houghton, *U.S. Foreign Policy*.

37 Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 209.

38 Christopher Ferrero, "The Iran Narrative".

39 Ebrahim Mohseni-Cheraghloo, *When Coercion Backfires: The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy in Iran*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Maryland, 2015, p. 100.

40 Dawson, Julian, *A Constructivist Approach to the U.S.-Iranian Nuclear Problem*, Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Calgary, 2011, p. 102.

in the 1953 coup that ousted Iran's Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh from power.⁴¹ After two decades of threats and sanctions imposed on Iran, Albright's speech was an unprecedented move. Nevertheless, Khatami's dialogue of civilizations initiative and Albright's call for deepening bonds of mutual understanding and trust between two countries were short-lived, as the Republican President Bush replaced Clinton on 20 January 2001.

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks engendered sympathy from the Iranian public for the American people, and the U.S. war on terror opened a space for both countries to cooperate against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Iran helped the U.S. military operation in Afghanistan by persuading certain warlords to abandon their bids for power and assisted the United States in forming an interim government.⁴² However, the negative depictions of one another by both countries continued along the same lines. Accusing Iran of seeking weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorism, President Bush declared Iran as part of an axis of evil that threatens international peace.⁴³ Denouncing the rhetoric of Bush for being arrogant and humiliatingly aggressive, Khamenei declared the United States to be the most hated Satan in the world.⁴⁴ Bush's axis of evil speech, which aimed at transforming hostile regimes to becoming democratic states by force if necessary, reinforced the United States' deep-seated mistrust of Iran.

After the clandestine Iranian nuclear program came to light in 2002, the mutual animosity and mistrust between Iran and the United States escalated. The United States positioned Iran as an aggressive nuclear proliferator, while depicting itself as a responsible state seeking to curb nuclear proliferation. Given their decades of negative identity conceptions of each other, the way that the United States and Iran interpreted Iran's nuclear program were radically different. Iran claimed that its nuclear program was built for the civilian purpose of generating electricity. Iran insisted on its right to be able to enrich uranium, while the United States insisted that Iran was constructing a nuclear program with military intentions that violated international norms.⁴⁵ Upon its failure to stop its uranium enrichment program, Iran was subjected to UN Security Council Resolutions and bilateral sanctions that imposed an economic embargo.

Faced with the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003, coupled with the threatening rhetoric of the Bush administration about regime change in Iran, Iran made an important initiative toward rapprochement. With a grand bargain proposal submitted to the United States in May 2003, Iran undertook to end its assistance for Palestinian terrorist groups, help in fighting against al-Qaeda, support the Arab-Israeli peace process, and engage in full cooperation on its nuclear program.⁴⁶ In return, Iran asked for U.S. recognition of the legitimacy of its regime, abolishment of all sanctions, and permission to have access to peaceful nuclear technology.⁴⁷ When the Bush administration rejected the proposal, anti-American rhetoric that emphasized the political danger of rapprochement increased in Iran. Iran also engaged

41 Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle*, p. 341.

42 Mohseni-Cheraghloou, *When Coercion Backfires*, p. 108-109.

43 George W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union", 29 January 2002, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PPP-2002-book1/pdf/PPP-2002-book1-doc-pg129-3.pdf> (Accessed 15 January 2015).

44 Patrick Clawson and Michael Rubin, *Eternal Iran: Continuity and Chaos*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, p. 153.

45 Constance Duncombe, "Representation, Recognition and Foreign Policy in the Iran-U.S. Relationship".

46 Mohseni-Cheraghloou, *When Coercion Backfires*, p. 111.

47 Trita Parsi, *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, New York, Yale University Press, 2007, pp.243-245.

in constraining U.S. efforts to threaten the Islamic regime. In order to maximize the cost of the Iraqi occupation, and thus reduce the risk of a future U.S. invasion of Iran, Iran fought a proxy war to weaken the U.S. military in Iraq.⁴⁸

In his 2005 State of the Union speech, President Bush once more declared Iran as the world's primary sponsor of terrorism and a rogue state that pursues nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the electoral victory of President Barack Obama in late 2008 paved the way for a new era in U.S.-Iranian relations. In a landmark video address, Obama reached out directly to Iranian leaders on 20 March 2009, declaring that his administration was prone to diplomacy to build constructive links among the United States, Iran and the international community.⁴⁹ Obama's plea for dialogue was given due attention by Hassan Rouhani after he came to power as the Iranian President in 2013. Unlike previous years of opposition to direct talks with the United States, Rouhani, a former nuclear negotiator, was committed to change the trajectory of Iran's foreign policy from confrontation to cooperation. The Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei embarked on the concept of heroic flexibility in relations with the United States, and Iran's willingness to negotiate on its nuclear program substantially increased. Khamenei's cautious support of engagement enabled Iran to hold a series of talks with the United States, France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, and Germany, the so-called P5+1.

After multiple rounds of negotiations, on 24 November 2013, Iran and the P5+1 signed the Geneva Interim Agreement (Joint Plan of Action) that aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear program. The framework of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was concluded on 2 April 2015, and the parties finalized it on 14 July 2015. In exchange for sanctions relief, the deal urged Iran to reduce its low-enriched uranium stockpile by 98% and not to construct new uranium-enrichment facilities for 15 years, abolish its capacity to produce weapons-usable plutonium, and allow prompt and comprehensive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA). This deal, far from ending the more than three decades of hostility and mistrust between Iran and the United States, was nullified by President Trump in May 2018 due to the discursively created anti-Iranian sentiments as shown below.

Justifying the U.S. Withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal under the Topos of History

DHA emphasizes the role of the discursive construction of the past on present situations when claiming validity for a certain policy.⁵⁰ Embedding discourses to the shared historical knowledge on U.S.-Iran enmity diachronically and synchronically, the United States has constantly produced an evil image of Iran based on the topos of history, by claiming that: "history has shown that Iran is an unreliable and hostile rouge regime sponsoring terrorism, developing nuclear weapons, and violating international human rights." The 1979 Iranian Revolution, the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran, the subsequent hostage crisis, and Iran's enmity towards Israel have been the most frequent reference points of many congressional hearings and President Trump's speeches on Iran.⁵¹ The

48 Mohseni-Cheraghloou, *When Coercion Backfires*, p.112.

49 "Obama Extends Iran an Olive Branch on Videotape" (editorial), *The New York Times*, 20 March 2009.

50 Reisigl and Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination*.

51 "The Disturbing Agreement with Iran", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 2 December 2013, House Vol. 159, No 169, H7378; "The Iran Nuclear Deal", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 18 November 2014, H8037; Donald Trump, 'Remarks

constant repetition of such historical incidents enable the presentation of synchronic knowledge on Iran, including its current nuclear or ballistic missile programs, as the continuation of such diachronic events. Reflecting interdiscursivity, congressional hearings and presidential speeches on the nuclear deal are thus interlinked with traditional historical discourses on Iran. This interdiscursive strategy facilitates the functioning of historical references as short-cut conclusion rules that justify the use of its anti-nuclear deal discourses.

In their efforts to convince the American public about the historical hostility of Iran through the topos of history, the U.S. political elite has used discursive strategies, particularly referential and predicational strategies that not only construct an us/them dichotomy but also function as premises for certain propositions that call for undermining the Iranian nuclear program. Congressional members like Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen have resorted to such strategies when making references to Iranian historical atrocities:⁵²

“Through its proxies likes Hezbollah and Hamas, Iran has targeted America and our ally, the democratic Jewish State of Israel, with violent acts of terror for over three decades, including the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, the 1983 Beirut bombing and Marine barracks bombing, and the 1992 Israeli Embassy bombing and the 1994 AMIA Jewish community center bombing in Buenos Aires, Argentina.”

As part of the strategy of negative-other construction, Ros-Lehtinen combines referents such as ‘our ally’ and ‘its proxies’ with predicates that label various Iranian actions as ‘violent acts of terror’. The use of personal and possessive pronouns as part of the referential strategy serves as a collectivization effort for the creation of an in-group to strengthen the existing dichotomy between us/them. Moreover, the emphasis put on referents, ‘Hezbollah and Hamas’ as allies of Iran and the referent ‘Jewish State of Israel’ coupled with the predication that labels the latter as ‘democratic’ illustrate the connections both countries have in the international system. The United States is presented as having ties with a democratic country like Israel, while Iran is affiliated with notorious groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.

Labeling Iran a hostage-taking state, Senator Johnny Isakson emphasized the humiliation and suffering of the American people during the hostage crisis:⁵³

“Thirty-four years ago today, January 20, 1981, 52 of our fellow American citizens returned home after a harrowing 444-day ordeal of being illegally held hostage in Iran ... Nevertheless, they all paid dearly for this service by being forced to endure humiliating treatment, brutal interrogations, mental and physical torture, while their families suffered endless waiting and genuine fear of their loved ones’ imminent demise...”

The use of nominations such as ‘our fellow American citizens’, ‘they’, and ‘their families’ coupled with predicates that highlight Iranian hostile actions including ‘humiliating treatment’, ‘brutal interrogations’, and ‘mental and physical torture’ manifest themselves in Isakson’s discourse as well.

by President Trump on Iran Strategy’, 13 October 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/10/13/remarks-president-trump-iran-strategy> (Accessed 20 October 2017).

52 “The Iran Nuclear Deal”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, H8037.

53 “Tribute to Commemorate the Anniversary of the Release of the Iran Hostages”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 26 January 2015, Senate Vol. 161, No 12, S463.

The combination of predicates, including 'endless waiting' and 'genuine fear', and a nomination, 'their loved ones', is used to intensify the message that is conveyed, namely the suffering of the U.S. citizens due to the hostile actions of Iran.

In an attempt to justify and legitimize his new Iranian strategy that focuses on containing Iran and preventing its support for terrorism, President Trump has similarly built his discourse on the topos of history. In the Strategy on Iran announced on 13 October 2017, Trump emphasized the historical atrocities that Iran has committed, ranging from the 1979 hostage crisis to the death of 241 Americans in Beirut because of the bombings of Hezbollah in 1983 and the involvement of Iran in al-Qaeda's bombing of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.⁵⁴

Another theme that U.S. policymakers employ to delegitimize the nuclear deal with Iran through the topos of history is Iran's untrustworthiness. Presenting Iran as an actor that cannot be trusted on the nuclear deal, Representative George Holding stated: "history has taught us that we are not dealing with an honest broker in Tehran... Nothing in this agreement denuclearizes a hostile and an oppressive regime."⁵⁵ Holding strengthens his argument on the dishonesty of the other by using predicates that label Iran as 'a hostile and an oppressive regime.'⁵⁶ The use of pronouns 'we' and 'us' as referents indicate that U.S. citizens are united against Iran based on the shared knowledge accumulated over four decades. Moreover, the use of hyperbolic expressions such as 'nothing in this agreement' intensifies the meaning.

When constructing Iran negatively in line with the topos of history, U.S. Congressional discourse has also relied on analogies that have defined the nature of the problem by comparing a familiar situation with a new situation. Using the analogy of North Korean nuclear proliferation, Representative Doug Lamborn emphasized the failure of the international community to prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons. Lamborn used this analogy as a predicational theme that highlighted the secretive ambitions of Iran: "we are witnessing a recurrence of the kind of effort that failed to prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons, but in an even more volatile and dangerous region of the world."⁵⁷ The use of phrases such as 'even more' was an intensification strategy that strengthens the claim that Iran should be contained, otherwise the chaos in the Middle East might increase.

Relating Iranian intentions to those of North Korea through a predicational theme that emphasizes the hypocrisy of another enemy likened to Iran, Representative Doug Collins called for learning lessons from the North Korean case.⁵⁸ Comparing the nuclear deal concluded with Iran on 14 July 2015 with the one concluded with North Korea in the mid-1990s, Representative Ros-Lehtinen argued: "it is a dangerous gamble to make with U.S. national security."⁵⁹ She reminded how the then deal with North Korea failed to dismantle any of North Korea's nuclear infrastructures and claimed that Iran should not be trusted today, just as North Korea could not be trusted two decades ago.⁶⁰

54 Donald Trump, *Remarks by President Trump on Iran Strategy*.

55 "Iran", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 27 January 2014, House Vol. 160, No 15, H1255.

56 Ibid.

57 "Iran", 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 4 December 2013, House Vol. 159, No 171, H7494.

58 "The Disturbing Agreement with Iran", 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 2 December 2013, H7378.

59 "Iran-North Korea", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 29 July 2015, House Vol.161, No 121, H5596.

60 "Nuclear Negotiations with Iran", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 8 July 2015, Vol.161, No 105, H4947; "Iran-North Korea", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 29 July 2015, H5596.

Invoking these historical atrocities and analogies, congressional records and President Trump have depicted Iran as the most dangerous threat to the U.S. and world peace based on the related topos of threat.⁶¹

Justifying the U.S. Withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal under the Topos of Threat

One of the major themes widely used to undermine the credibility of the nuclear deal has been the portrayal of Iran's ambitions as a threat. Based on the topos of threat, "Iran poses a fundamental threat to U.S. interests and world peace,"⁶² the United States has presented Iran as being the foremost security problem in the post-cold war era, replacing the former enemy Soviet Union. Emphasizing the support extended by Iran to Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, many congressional hearings have depicted Iran as the leading state sponsor of terrorism directed against the United States and its allies.⁶³ Such a predicational theme of victimhood has strengthened the negative-other representation of Iran that have been predicated with attributions such as evil, oppressive, defiant, leading state sponsor of terrorism, triggering arms race, and abuser of human rights, etc.

Acknowledging Iranian terrorist activities, Representative Steny Hoyer highlighted that Iran remains a primary backer of Syria's dictator, Hafez al-Assad, who has gassed his own people and continues to target civilians.⁶⁴ President Trump has built upon these threat-based discourses by accusing Iran of fuelling sectarian violence in Iraq and destabilizing Yemen and Syria. Reminding the Iranian regime's two most-used slogans, "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," Trump has indicated that, "given the regime's murderous past and present, we should not take lightly its sinister vision for the future."⁶⁵ Designating Iran as the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism that has close links to al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Hezbollah, Hamas, and others, Trump presented Iran as a major threat to U.S. national interests through the following predicational strategy:⁶⁶

It develops, deploys, and proliferates missiles that threaten American troops and our allies. It harasses American ships and threatens freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf and in the Red Sea. It imprisons Americans on false charges. And it launches cyber-attacks against our critical infrastructure, financial system, and military.

The majority of congressional texts have also depicted Iran as struggling for regional hegemony, which would automatically threaten vital U.S. security interests, commercial activities, and the security of Israel. Along this topos of threat, Representative Hoyer accused Iran of undermining regional stability and the safety of U.S. troops in the region, triggering an arms race, and raising the risk of terrorists' access to weapons of mass destruction.⁶⁷ Designating Iran as a defiant country trying

61 "September 11 and a Nuclear Iran", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 11 September 2015, H5946; 114th Congress, "Nuclear Agreement with Iran", 1st Session, 22 July 2015, S5433; "Iran is Determined to Have Nukes", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 29 May 2014, "House Vol. 160, No 82, H4923; "Iran", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 26 February 2014, Senate Vol. 160, No 32, S1140.

62 "The Iran Nuclear Deal Was a Giant Mistake", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 12 October 2017, H7985.

63 "The President's Correct and Necessary Decertification", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 25 October 2017, H8212-H8215.

64 "Ukraine and Iran", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 28 February 2014, H2095-6.

65 Donald Trump, *Remarks by President Trump on Iran Strategy*.

66 Ibid.

67 "Ukraine and Iran", 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 28 February 2014, H2094.

to create a “satellite ‘Shia Crescent’ stretching to the Mediterranean” in order to dominate the Middle East, Senator Thom Tillis has blamed the Iranian regime for having hegemonic aspirations that would pose a threat to the security of U.S. allies in the region.⁶⁸ The use of the nomination ‘Shia Crescent’ contributes to the us/them dichotomy by emphasizing the Shia identity of Iran vis-à-vis its Sunni enemies that are close U.S. allies in the Gulf region.

Another predicational element widely used in the congressional narrative on Iran to strengthen the topos of threat has been the claimed Iranian commitment to develop nuclear weapons, which pose a great threat to the United States, its ally Israel, and the entire world.⁶⁹ The U.S. Congress has attributed Iran’s pursuit of a nuclear program purely to offensive motives. Representative Ros-Lehtinen presented Iran’s continued nuclear activities, violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, and progress in its ballistic missile program as evidence of Iran’s desire to acquire a nuclear weapon.⁷⁰ These constant repetitions concerning Iranian nuclear ambitions in Congress have served as an intensification strategy for supporting the claims about the necessity of curbing the Iranian nuclear program.

Presenting the nuclear deal as insufficient to prevent Iran from producing nuclear weapons and spending a multibillion-dollar sanctions relief sum on terrorism, Representative Poe used a metaphorical predicate that likens Iran to a wolf and the United States to a sheep to exaggerate Iranian intentions: “Iran is a wolf in wolf’s clothing, and the wolf has made a deal with the sheep not to eat them for 10 years. Then what? Supper?”⁷¹ The use of an interrogative sentence conveys presuppositions that further demonize Iran for its anti-U.S. ambitions and thus serves as an intensification strategy that contributes to the topos of threat by representing the anti-Iranian actions of the United States as the only solution to stop Iran’s hostile intentions.

Likening Iran’s intentions to the genocidal intentions of Nazi Germany as another predicational theme, Representative Tom McClintock labeled Iran a rogue state that can threaten world security with nuclear weapons.⁷² Arguing that Iran has a well-grounded record of violating international law and an obvious desire to acquire nuclear weapons, Representative McClintock highlighted the failure of the nuclear deal to prevent the nuclear armament of Iran. He insisted that the deal has only postponed Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons by 10 to 15 years by allowing its nuclear infrastructure to remain intact and offering an unreliable verification mechanism.⁷³

Based on the nuclear proliferation scenario in the Middle East, most of the hearings have emphasized that nuclear weapons would further destabilize the Middle East and motivate regional states like Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the Gulf States to search for nuclear weapons capabilities.⁷⁴ These discourses depicting Iran as an enemy that arouses fear have been strengthened with the appeal to the

68 “Negotiations with Iran”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 7 May 2015, S2727.

69 “Iran”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 26 February 2014, S1140; “Sanctions in Iran”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 9 December 2014, House Vol. 160, No 149, H8876; “Ukraine and Iran”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 28 February 2014, H2094.

70 “Iran Nuclear Negotiations”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 14 November 2014, House Vol. 160, No 139, H 7981.

71 “Iran-Wolf in Wolf’s Clothing”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 14 July 2015, Vol.161, No 109, H5124.

72 “Iran Nuclear Deal”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 15 July 2015, Vol.161, No 110, H5182.

73 “Iran Nuclear Deal”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 15 July 2015, H5182.

74 “Talk to Iran”, 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 20 November 2013, House Vol. 159, No 166, H7255; “Negotiations with Iran”, 114th Congress, 1st Session, 7 May 2015, S2727; “Iran and the Joint Plan of Action”, 113rd Congress, 2nd Session, 18 November 2014, House Vol. 160, No 142, H8064.

topos of responsibility that has emphasized the duty of the United States to ensure the security of its citizens and its allies by containing Iran through measures such as the withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

Justifying the U.S. Withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal under the Topos of Responsibility

While the topoi of history and threat used in congressional narratives played an important role in the negative representation of Iran and the justification of anti-Iranian actions of the United States, the topos of responsibility has served as a tool for the positive self-construction of the United States. By emphasizing the negative consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran, the topos of responsibility has also functioned as an instrument to indicate what needs to be done to stop Iran's nuclear program entirely. Depicting the United States as a responsible state that continuously promotes world peace and as a world leader that has a responsibility to prevent Iran from undermining regional stability, sponsoring terrorism, and acquiring nuclear weapons, congressional hearings and President Trump have emphasized the urgent actions to be taken to contain Iran.⁷⁵

Positing Iran with a nuclear capacity as the locus of hostility and danger, Representative Poe emphasized the responsibility of the United States to prevent Iran from producing nuclear weapons by using deontic modality: "Iran pretends like it wants peace, but it really wants to conquer the entire Middle East... Now imagine what Iran would do once it had a nuclear weapon? We cannot let that happen. We must stop the Iranian mullahs that threaten both the United States and Israel."⁷⁶ The deontic expressions such as 'we cannot let that happen' and 'we must stop' predicate the United States as a strong state that has the means to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. While the United States uses the predicational theme of a strong and a mighty country for itself, it constructs the Iranian political elite negatively through the referent 'Iranian mullahs', which implies the religious and irrational nature of the Iranian regime.

By projecting a future scenario in which Iran destroys the United States and its allies via nuclear weapons, the topos of responsibility highlights the rightfulness of the United States through a self-defense narrative. As such a hypothetical context invokes fear and victimhood, discourses used as part of the self-defense narrative have led to the short-cut conclusion that Iran is an imminent threat that should be stopped by the victim/United States. The predicational theme of victimhood was used by Representative McClintock, who likened the nuclear deal to Chamberlain's Munich accord with Nazi Germany.⁷⁷ Presenting the terms of the nuclear deal as an appeasement to an oppressive regime that promotes the destruction of the United States and Israel, Representative Wilson reminded the United States of its responsibility to correct the wrongdoing by saying, "it is not too late to prevent a legacy of appeasement and avoid being remembered as a new Neville Chamberlain, establishing nuclear weapons across the Middle East."⁷⁸ This analogy of appeasement has served as an intensification strategy for supporting the argument that the nuclear deal should be nullified.

75 "The President's Correct and Necessary Decertification", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 25 October 2017, H8215; "Supporting Measures Against Iran and Hezbollah", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 25 October 2017, Extensions of Remarks, Vol. 163, No 172, E1426.

76 "Iran is the World Threat to Peace, Extensions of Remarks", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 29 April 2015, Vol. 161, No 63, E615.

77 "Iran Nuclear Deal", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 15 July 2015, H5182.

78 "Outrageous Iran Nuclear Deal", 114th Congress, 1st Session, 8 July 2015, Vol.161, No 105, H4876.

Representative Brad Schneider has similarly claimed the responsibility of the United States to prevent a nuclear arms race by containing the nuclear ambitions of Iran.⁷⁹ Describing the nuclear deal as a giant mistake, Representative Luke Messer urged President Trump to nullify it.⁸⁰ Highlighting the United States' responsibility to confront Iran's aggressive policies and prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, Representative Poe called for tightening sanctions against Iran.⁸¹ President Trump has also emphasized the need to impose tough sanctions against Iran, particularly against Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which he predicates as "Iranian Supreme Leader's corrupt personal terror force and militia."⁸²

Embarking on the topos of responsibility, President Trump has insisted that ensuring regional and world peace requires the renegotiation of the JCPOA in a way that would make sure that Iran permanently abolishes its nuclear enrichment capacity at any level, allows pop-up surveillance of the IAEA, and dismantles its ballistic missile program. Although there have been calls from its European allies, including France, Britain, and Germany, supported by Russia and China, to abide by the terms of the JCPOA, the United States nullified it and ordered the imposition of stringent new sanctions on Iran.

Conclusion

Based on the analytical tools of DHA, this article has examined how the United States has reproduced enmity and mistrust towards Iran and recently justified its withdrawal from the nuclear deal on the socially and historically created discursive structure. It has emphasized that the reproduction of decades-long U.S.-Iranian enmity has constituted the historical context to justify the anti-nuclear deal policy discourses in congressional hearings and President Trump's speeches. The article has illustrated that historical events, including the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent hostage crisis have created the structure within which the United States has consolidated an antagonistic relationship with Iran for nearly four decades. Based on that historical discursive structure, the U.S. Congress and President Trump have attempted to justify the representations of Iran as evil and threatening.

The comprehensive analysis of congressional hearings and presidential speeches has revealed that the discourses used by the U.S. Congress and President Trump have not just served as a legitimating tool for sustaining Iranian enmity but also as a social practice that affects and is affected by the historical context. Bringing agency and structure together, this framework has helped to reveal that both congressional hearings and President Trump's speeches on Iran have been embedded in a cultural historical context. The focus on the historical context upon which the discursive strategy of the United States is constructed has also revealed the non-discursive aspect of power. This dimension of power is important to understand, how discourses grounded in material conditions have enabled the United States to shape its hard line position against Iran. This finding has provided a better understanding for revealing not only the intersubjective construction of any given situation but also its justification and legitimization through discursive strategies embedded in certain historical structures.

79 "The Disturbing Agreement with Iran", 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 2 December 2013, House Vol. 159, No 169, H7380.

80 "The Iran Nuclear Deal was a Giant Mistake", 115th Congress, 1st Session, 12 October 2017, H7985.

81 "P5+1 Negotiations with Iran", 113rd Congress, 1st Session, 21 November 2013, House Vol. 159, No 167, H7336.

82 Donald Trump, *Remarks by President Trump on Iran Strategy*.

By tracing the discursive strategies used by the United States to sustain threat perceptions vis-a-vis Iran, this article has shown how the United States has attempted to justify its antagonistic attitude towards Iran. Accordingly, an important finding of this article is that discursive strategies, including referential, predicational, and intensification, have played a major role in generating, sustaining, and justifying U.S. animosity towards Iran through the topoi of history, threat, and responsibility. The predicates that have labeled Iran as evil, oppressive, defiant, dangerous, or untrustworthy have, in particular, constituted the basis for making short-run conclusive propositions that have claimed anti-Iranian actions.

Another related finding is that interdiscursivity has extended anti-Iranian discourses in a way that would go beyond Iran's nuclear program and include other discourses on the Iranian political regime, its ballistic missile program, or its anti-Israeli actions. This interdiscursivity can be identified not only in congressional discourse but also in President Trump's speeches. This points to another important finding of the article: the overlap of discourse topics, discursive strategies, including the use of value-laden adjectives, metaphors, analogies, and hyperbolic expressions in congressional and presidential speeches. The existence of such intertextuality indicates that the endeavor of positive-self and negative-other construction is a political and deliberate process requiring critical discourse analysis.