An examination of the discourse between the US and Iran on the issue of nuclear weapons between 2007-10. Does this discourse reflect the ambition of these nations to be the dominant regional power?

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the possible reasons for the continued enmity between the United States and Iran. The question posed, will examine if the current problems in their relationship comes from Iran’s desire to attain nuclear weapons or about the regional power ambitions of both countries. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), texts from official government sources will be examined to suggest alternative meanings and reveal if the ongoing enmity is about nuclear weapons or regional power. The importance of the study cannot be underestimated, as it reflects the possible sources of the ongoing enmity as not just being of recent historical in nature but as a continuation of a seemingly continuous relationship between Iran and various Western powers. Thus, the study can be viewed as a start point for further research in this area which will offer a new perspective into how the Iran- US relations can be viewed.
1. Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

According to Foucault “Discourse is the power which is to be seized” (1984:10);

This study is about power; the power that historically is built up over time, the power of the nuclear weapons issue and, most importantly, the power that words have in political discourse. The objects of this study are discourses emanating from the United States and Iran who seem to be locked in a power struggle for the dominant regional influence in the Middle East. It is logical to assume that it is the US, as the World’s most powerful nation, that has the upper hand in this struggle. However, Iran can be seen as a growing influence in the region and could one day threaten US pre-eminence there.

The structure of this study is as follows: Chapter One introduces the topic and the background context; Chapter Two addresses methodological issues and clarifies how the selected texts will be analysed. Chapters Three and Four look at the texts selected using a grouping method designed and justified in Chapter Two. Chapter Five concludes this study by drawing together the strands of the previous two chapters in order to highlight the validity of the claim that the current crisis is due more to regional political ambitions than nuclear weapons.

This first chapter has three aims: first, to review of some the background issues relating to the discourse between the US and Iran on the Iranian nuclear question. Secondly, an examination of some of the general literature concerned with the US-Iranian discourse which will form the main argument of this document: finally, a brief introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to familiarise the reader with some of the basic themes of that approach.

The Context

The importance of context when working with CDA cannot be underestimated. Iran has a long history of wanting to become part of the ‘nuclear family’. The evidence for this starts in the 1950s’and the Eisenhower administration’s ‘Atoms of peace’ programme. Under this banner, the Shah’s Iran would be allowed access to nuclear technology and the building of a
nuclear reactor was fully supported by successive US Administrations (Squassoni 2003: 1-3). However, after the 1979 revolution access to material for research and construction of the reactor itself ceased (Mattair 2010 pp.54). Following the end of the costly Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) the wish of Iran to become a nuclear state reasserted itself (Mattair 2010: 55). From the early 1990s’ onwards, Iran started to pursue a uranium enrichment programme (Taylor 2010: 61). The disclosure of this programme was an issue of great concern to the US during the 1990s’nd led directly to the imposition, for the first time, of sanctions against Iran, relating to its nuclear activities (Wright 2007: 108-13). This was followed by unilateral sanctions implemented by the US congress further restricting the limited level of economic co-operation between the US and Iran (Wright 2007: 117-8). This tension between the two nations was more-or-less left in a limbo of mistrust until the second Clinton administration’s attempt to resolve the on-going dispute. The Clinton initiative failed to resolve the problems between these nations, partly, it can be argued, and due to the limitations that Clinton faced domestically in the US congress (Wright 2007: 108-119).

The events of 11th September 2001 can be seen as changing the face of the relationship between the US and the Middle East. The Iranian response to the terrorist attacks has been characterised as “sympathy mixed with wariness” (Chubin 2006: 21). Equally, The Iranian response to the Invasion of Afghanistan can be characterised as being favourable insomuch as the Iranians supplied coalition forces with intelligence and did not intervene directly (Sariolghalam 2003: 69). Furthermore, when it became clear that the Bush Administration was going to invade Iraq, the Iranians, yet again, supplied intelligence on the distribution and location of the Iraqi Army (Sariolghalam 2003: 69). this support of the US may be because the Iranians were no friend to the Taliban and, Iran had been supporting the ‘Northern Alliance’ the opposing force to the Taliban in Afghanistan for a number of years (Iran the Pariah State BBC 2009). The decision to destroy the Taliban was, therefore, in the interests of the Iranian regime. In addition, when the US turned its attention to Iraq, Iran’s long running enemy of the war; it was yet again in their interests to assist the US coalition (Sariolghalam 2003: 69). Both of these circumstances give the impression that the US led wars were in fact extremely useful to the Iranians in terms of destroying their long standing enemies.

A second perspective is very much centred on the work of Chubin (2006); who suggests that the Iranian leadership would have been aware of the risk of the US using 9/11 in order to
justify further anti-Iranian policies. Assisting the US in Afghanistan and Iraq may well have been a logical political calculation to placate any further US sanctions or possible invasion. It is impossible to know if this was the case, but, it is reasonable to assume that some form of similar analysis would have gone on in the minds of the Iranian leadership when deciding which policy avenue to take after 9/11. This second perspective gains credence when one considers the attempt by the Iranian leadership to seek a solution, on the back of the continued cooperation, with the formation of the ‘Grand Bargain’. The Bargain was a focused attempt to normalise relations between the US and Iran, greater than any other instance since the fall of the Shah. The bargain was intended to “Resolve all outstanding issues, including nuclear programmes; its relations with Islamic Jihad, Hamas and Hezbollah (Mattair 2010: 56). In other words, it was an attempt to change the very nature of the US-Iran relationship by settling all outstanding issues in the region. This was a considerable opportunity for both sides as it was, in theory at least, to achieve one of the greatest conclusions to an ongoing intergovernmental dispute; unfortunately the US administration did not even respond to this offer and there was consequently no settlement on any of these issues (Mattair 2010: 56).

The publication of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) is of particular interest with regard to the on-going nuclear issue. This report clearly states that Tehran has “Halted its nuclear weapons programme... It has not restarted its nuclear weapons programme since mid-2007 [the date of the report]” (Office of the Director of National Intelligence 2007: 7). The importance of this text is quite profound insomuch as it is an official US agency stating that Iran is not pursuing a nuclear weapons programme any longer. In a sense one might well argue that it is logically then end of the dispute, because without the presence of a nuclear weapons programme the US would end its anti-Iranian stance. This, however, is not the case and leads one to consider what else this on-going enmity may be about.

The context of the relationship between the US and Iran appears confusing and disordered. This is because of the periods of long hostility punctuated by periods of attempted cooperation by one side or the other which appear to have not been reciprocated. In other words, both countries, at different times, have made attempts to normalise their relationship, whether genuine or not, but have never taken full advantage of those periods of mutual interest to solidify that bond. Sariolghalam suggests that the reason for this lack of cooperation is that the current Iranian leadership were young men during the 1950’s and
1960’s and consequently their mindset is one of not trusting the ‘imperial presence’ of foreign powers in the region (2003: 71); in saying this Sariolghalam touches on a sociological reasoning for the problems between the US and Iran. The importance of this in understanding US-Iranian relations is that it was the US and Britain that helped bring down the Mossadegh government and install the pro-Western Shah, who, if still in power today could well be characterised as an oppressive dictator. The US leadership may well have a similar problem with the current Iranian regime because of the fall of the Shah and the subsequent embassy hostage crisis (Sariolghalam 2003: 71). Consequently, the context can be seen as one of mutual enmity in which both sides engage in mutual mistrust and foster long resentment against each other. This perspective, drawn from the evidence detailed, above forms the background for the CDA in this study. The presumption is that both of these countries suffer from their own complex identities built up over time, stereotyping and demonising each other. Consequently, when looking at not only the political but also sociological foundation, of the formation of their identities, it has to presume that Sariolghalam’s theory about the formation of Iranian leadership identity, coupled with the political evidence, gives a convincing picture about the context in which these discourses operate.

Review of Associated Literature

There appears to be a growing body of research centred on the presumption that the US-Iranian standoff is more to do with historical differences, than with the Nuclear Weapons issue (Beeman 2008, Chubin 2006 Kazemzadeh 2010, Sariolghalam 2003,Tarock 2006,). This research complements the points highlighted above insomuch as there appears to be a logical presumption that gives credence to this approach. However, this view is not shared by all academics, Fitzpatrick 2006, Mattair 2010, Sheikhneshin 2009, Shoham 2007, Taylor 2010, ignore, to a large extent, any notion of historical reasoning behind the current enmity and conclude that the reason for the continued issues between these nations is to do with nuclear weapons and Iran’s wish to become the dominant regional power. To this end, the discussion detailed below will examine and discuss these differing perspectives and evaluate them with a view to showing how the research which is being undertaken here fits into their arguments.
William Beeman has been studying the use of language and cultural difference between the US and Iran for the last 40 years. In his opinion, the current crisis dates back nearly 150 years to the colonial influence of the European powers, which, he argues, the US took the de facto place after the end of the colonial period (Beeman 2008: 2-3). In addition, Tarock goes as far as calling the US an “Imperial power in the Middle East” (Tarock 2006: 645); this perspective supports Beeman’s claim of the hostility progressing through the colonial era through to the contemporary period. As early as 1976, Beeman had started to examine the discursive and cultural troubles in Iran. He highlighted that, even before the Iranian revolution of 1979, American foreign interactions were often hostile because they were confused as to how to interact with those of different cultures, especially with complex ones such as Iran (cited in Davies 2008: 213). The importance of his 1976 work is that it occurred before the 1979 revolution which brought in the current Islamic regime; this suggests that there was an undercurrent of hostility even before the overthrow of the Shah. Perhaps the drawback to the work of Beeman is his focus on the cultural perspective which appears to underlie his work. That is not to say that his work is not of great importance, as it does highlight a cultural mindset in the leaders of both countries which is in many ways corroborated by the work of Sariolghalam (2003) discussed in the introduction.

The works of Chubin (2006), Kazemzadeh 2010 and Tarock (2006) appear to focus on a different set of reasons for the current situation. From their perspective the current issues between the US and Iran came about because the role of that the US and Britain played in the overthrow of the Mossadeq Government in 1953 and the US’s loss of their ally, the Shah in 1979. It fits with the work of Beeman and Sariolghalam, as it accounts for an historical reasoning behind the current enmity. However their work fails to give as much depth as one might have hoped; this is because both Tarock and Chubin are talking in purely historical terms about a ‘political’ rather than ‘cultural’ clash. Their work also appears not to focus on some of the nuances of language which allow access to some alternative interpretations of the problems that exist between these nations and as to what their overriding agendas might be. It is for this reason that the use of CDA is necessary to examine this discourse because it allows interdisciplinary analysis to take place and suggest alternative perspectives.

There is also, as stated above, a body of work that suggests that the current situation between the US and Iran is solely to do with Iran’s wish to develop a nuclear weapon (Fitzpatrick 2006: 6-12, Mattair 2010: 55, Sheikhneshin 2009: 101-102, Shoham 2007: 542, and Taylor
2010: 61). This belief that Iran is in the process of developing a nuclear device, comes from, in most cases, intelligence gathered by the US intelligence agencies. Fitzpatrick’s assessment of Iran’s nuclear intentions illustrates cogently the dominant view within US foreign policy circles. Fitzpatrick lists ten reasons why Iran’s nuclear programme is not for civil use as they claim but is in fact for military purposes. These reasons are: military involvement in uranium mine mill, Polonium 210 experiments (that have weapons uses), military controlled centrifuge workshops, defence related work at their Lavisan research site, a Uranium casting document obtained by the intelligence services, detailed drawings of Shahab-3 missile re-entry plans, Uranium conversion links to the military, bomb test shaft plans and other administrative links (2006: 8-12). Fitzpatrick concludes that the Iranian military are behind most of the nuclear programme and thus it is not for civilian use (Fitzpatrick 2006: 13). This is, in essence, the reason why the US believes that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons, and the justification for the impositions of strict economic sanctions. Similar conclusions are reached, from similar source material: Mattair (2010: 57-67), Sheikhneshin (2009: 115) and Shoham (2007: 542) and Taylor (2010: 63-70). If these arguments are to be believed, Iran is in the process of acquiring a nuclear device; moreover, if Iran did achieve nuclear capability it would make it the only state in the region to have such a weapon. This possibility highlights the fact that separating the nuclear weapons issue from the regional power issue is problematic. In other words, according to their perspective one does not negate the other. In this they are correct, as if Iran was to gain a nuclear device; it would change the balance of power in the region. However, what the above authors have neglected is what Beeman (2008) Chubin (2006) and Tarock (2006) appear to have accounted for: namely the historical domination of Iran by imperial powers. The historical aspect, as stated above, has a strong merit to it, as it gives a sense of the underlying historical issues between these two nations. There is, however, what appears to be a large gap between the two perspectives, because those who look upon it as an historical conflict fail to acknowledge the potential threat that a nuclear Iran would pose to the US and her allies.

It is into this gap of understanding that this study aims to focus: the use of CDA with its broad interdisciplinary approach seeks to take account of both the historical, cultural, security and language aspects to highlight some of the potentially hidden meanings embedded in the text, while still considering the context that is so closely related to this topic.
Critical Discourse Analysis

It is important to note that this description of on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) does not address the methodological issues that underlie this study. The aim of this section is to familiarise the reader with some of the broader principals which govern the use of CDA. Furthermore, this section will review other studies conducted, review their findings and touch on the way these studies were enacted.

CDA is a holistic approach which binds together elements from many other disciplines (Kress 1992: 92); it can be used as a vehicle that allows the possibility of suggesting hidden meanings embedded not only within texts but also with reference to the overall context. The Discourse Analysis (DA) approach “Assumes that all objects and actions are meaningful” (Howarth and Stavakakis 2000: 2). Consequently, it has the ability to analyse both the texts being studied, and examine their importance as part of an overall view of how discourses are interpreted. This allows the discourse analyst to look for possible deeply embedded meanings that might be missed or lost in the overall discourse. The ‘critical’ dimension to CDA comes from the discourse analysts themselves insomuch as two factors have to be considered: first, the analyst must acknowledge that these discourses are time specific although that does not affect the rationality of the texts or the conclusions reached (Jager and Maier 2009: 36); Secondly, the analyst must also acknowledge that their findings are not outside the discourse itself; more, that they are adding to the discourse. As a consequence of this interpretation of the texts is subject to values or norms resulting from the discourse (Jager and Maier 2009: 36). What CDA is not, is a search for an elusive ‘truth’ which cannot be disputed (Jager and Maier 2009: 36). Rather, CDA and the analyst are reaching a conclusion while working within the accepted norms and values that they possess.

The use of both CDA and DA in political investigation has grown significantly over the last few years. Studies vary in subject matter, however, especially in the cases of: Erjavec and Erjavec (2009), Jackson (2005) and Nabers (2009).

Erjavec and Erjavec (2009) conducted a study, using CDA, into the speeches of the European Agricultural Commissioner to establish just what might be the future course of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The method of picking their text for analysis is of some interest; because of the ‘random’ nature of the texts picked. Consequently, they use no active discrimination as to where and to what audience the speeches were presented. The results are,
in many ways, a clear indicator of the use of CDA as a political analytical framework, as their work revealed that the Agricultural Commissioner “Used different discourses on different audiences” (Erjavec and Erjavec 2009: 224). The significance of this is that it demonstrates that there is a time and situational aspect to the different types of discourse. There are limitations of the work: for example the selection process employed and random sampling of speeches, could potentially have missed out on some other important speeches without being able to evaluate them because they fell outside of their random sample.

Nabers (2009) uses CDA to analyse the meaning of US foreign policy after the events of 9/11 by looking at the way the Bush Administration manipulated the media in order to guarantee support for its ‘War on Terror’ and subsequent Middle East interventions. What qualifies this above the work of Erjavec and Erjavec (2009) is that it provides a far more useful approach to the formation of a new identity following 9/11. Nabers states that “The Bush administration deliberately constructed a void of meaning after the terrorist attacks, subsequently filling it by assembling equivallential relations between all Americans” (2009: 210). In other words, the Bush administration created an identity of compatriotism between all Americans which allowed them to pursue their agenda in the Middle East. Some might argue that this is perfectly obvious and that CDA does not tell us anything more than we already know. However, CDA goes someway to proving what can only be guessed at; it creates a framework that allows us to focus on speech and text as much as actions to prove the way in which things came to pass and how it was done. The importance of this when examining the US-Iran discourse is that it allows us to examine the possible real reason why and how these attitudes came into being and what agenda the parties may really have.

Richard Jackson’s (2005) ‘Writing The War On Terror’ is perhaps a good example of the way that CDA can be successfully applied to the study of intentions and embedded reasoning within political, cultural and anthropological identity formation. Jackson goes into greater detail than Nabers (2009) or Erjavec and Erjavec (2009) and links the use of media, political discourse and action together to form a convincingly accurate picture of the way in which the public were manipulated into what Nabers called the ‘void of meaning’. Of particular interest in the methodological section of his study is the way that Jackson chooses to ‘group’ his texts together not in chronological order, rather, according to the type of text/action or speech act under investigation. The result means that although displaying the analysis of evidence through time there is a conscious effort to show how certain types of discourses are employed
and to underline these in this fashion. This is helpful because it allows one to look at the work in terms of subject and type rather than looking at it as action-and-reaction. Consequently, it is possible to see the on-going campaign as part of determined organisational methods which built up the discourse of the War on Terror.

The implications for these works on the US-Iranian discourse which is the subject of this study is that CDA is highly adaptable when looking at political discourse. CDA is not looking for ‘truth’; however, it is able to look at the tools that are employed by different purveyors of discourse, and enables us to look behind some of the possible hidden meanings embedded in the text. These may be obvious or they may be deeply hidden and designed to appeal to the inner realm of the individual which in turn can affect the overall direction in which an audience may be willing to act.

**Conclusion**

Looking at the contextual backdrop of the US-Iranian relationship certain key issues spring to the fore: namely that the US was not always opposed to the idea of nuclear industry in Iran and there was a sudden sea change in US policy towards Iran post-1979; that the change in policy was still in place as the dominant mindset even during the time of the Clinton Administration in the 1990’s and that it remained even through to the post 9/11 world under President Bush. Consequently, from this perspective it is logical to assume that the enmity that exists today, in terms of US foreign policy, has grown out of the 1979 revolution.

Contextual analysis is also of particular relevance to the work of Beeman (2008) Tarock (2006) and others who look upon the conflict as historical in nature. This is because it is clear that there was a sea change that drastically affected the relationship between these two states. Moreover, the conclusions reached as to the motivations of the Iranian leadership and their problems with the continued US presence as the “Imperial power” (Tarock 2006: 645), given their history of imperial domination, gives rise to the idea that the Iranian leadership appear to have formed their identity as an anti-imperial state. Sariolghalam’s (2003) suggestion to do with the age and possible background of the Iranian leadership is of particular relevance. What is clear from all of these different perspectives is that the US and Iran have a long and troubled history which although punctuated by limited cooperation has ultimately left both sides in a political standoff.
The aim of using CDA in order to unlock possible alternative meaning to their discourse is, therefore, of some considerable importance. CDA, with its holistic nature, which assumes “That all objects and actions are meaningful” (Howarth and Stavakakis 2000: 2) means that there is an opportunity for a closer inspection of a selected textual basis to the current discourse. Moreover, the ‘critical’ aspect to the CDA framework means that an account can be taken of the underlying norms and values that the analysts themselves are putting into their conclusions. This means that it is possible to take account of the effect that the texts have on the analyst and how their own views have influenced the study. Consequently, the use of CDA can be seen as vital if one is to try and uncover the embedded meanings within the texts and how they relate to all other aspects of the discourse, including that of the analyst.

2. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This chapter is divided in two parts; first an introduction to the texts chosen for analysis, and the reasons for their choice; Secondly, an examination of the key analytical tools employed in this study and how they will be used.

A key term throughout this study is the phrase ‘audience’; the audience refers to those people who listen/ read or in any way ingest the texts under consideration. It is the audience whom the orator wishes to position and, in doing so; bring about a change in their thinking.

Evidence Selection

The texts are all taken from official government sources; that is all the texts are from either speeches by elected or appointed officials or are produced by agencies that represent the governments of Iran and the US. The Texts under examination are: a speech by Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Kimmitt (2008), President Barack Obama’s Inaugural Address (2009), President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s speech to the United Nations General assembly (2007) and the text of an open proposal from the Iranian Government to the P5+1 (2009). The significance of these texts is that they represent official inter-governmental communication between the US and Iran on the issue of nuclear weapons while also covering other issues
which serve to illustrate whether this dispute is about nuclear weapons or about regional power.

The texts will be analysed by separating them into those which can be seen as having particular religious significance and those which deal with the question of legality as justification for the continued enmity. In Chapter Three the two presidential addresses will be considered along religious grounds. In Chapter Four, Robert Kimmit’s remarks and the Iranian Government proposal will be considered on a legalistic basis.

The texts selected for this study have not been chosen at random, rather, they have been chosen because they exemplify the underlying themes that occur in this discourse. This approach owes much to the work of Richard Jackson’s (2005) ‘Writing The War on Terror’ as this thematic rather than chronological approach allows the texts to be examined far more on their general use of reoccurring theme as opposed to chronological action and re-action. The use of this approach allows one to consider the possible broader underlying themes and devices employed throughout this period of discourse.

**CDA Application**

CDA is a holistic analytical framework which means that it looks at all types of communication as text and attempts to reveal possible alternative, often suppressed, meanings embedded in the text (Kress 1990: 89-91). The usefulness when examining the US-Iranian discourse is that it enables closer examination of the possible meanings behind the words themselves to the inferred connotations that those words evoke in an audience. In addition, there will be evidence sourced from outside of the framework to support the assumptions raised within the analysis. The benefit of this is that it will allow a level of verification which supports the conclusions reached and will make for a stronger argument.

There are three important analytical tools used in the application of CDA: political subjectivity, antagonism and hegemony. Because these elements are so closely linked, it can be a difficult to separate them; therefore, what follows is an elaboration of these terms and how they will be applied to this study.

Political subjectivity or subject positioning is a useful initial aspect for familiarisation. It works on the theory that everyone identifies themselves within a plurality of levels
simultaneously. Howarth defines this as “An empirical agent, at any point in time, might well identify herself, or be positioned, as ‘black’, ‘working class’, ‘Christian’ and a ‘woman’” (1998: 278). Thus, the subject identifies with issues and perspectives which effect or relate to themselves. This creates what discourse theorists call equivailential relations which are best understood in terms of the use of discourse to bring people together in common cause. An example of this is, when looking at religious connotations, is the use of phrases such as ‘God bless’ or ‘Will of god’ to attempt to position the audience to identify with the orator by considering their own religious views. Similarly, when one examines the idea of legal justification for actions one may come across such terms as: ‘Legal right’ or ‘Justice’; the implication here is that the actions carried out have a firm grounding in the sense of right and wrong outside the religious context. The effect of this is that the audience may well, on an individual basis, come to identify with one or both of these on different levels. Thus, the audience is positioned to think and identify with the words that have particular implication to them as individuals; in turn, those individuals, once they have become bound together by those values, become part of a dominant discourse which has certain values and characteristics, or hegemony.

Gramsci (1971) defined Hegemony as “Intellectual, cultural and moral leadership” (Cited in Howarth 1998: 279). However, hegemony can be more than this; Fairclough looks upon it as simply a way of conceptualising power which depends on consent or acquiescence rather than the use of force (2005: 216). What is created, through positioning, is a common set of values which could be described as ‘common sense’ if one chose to. Thus, the dominant discourse draws in individuals who grow to identify with those values or ‘facts’. With relation to the topic under examination, this means, for example, that it is a ‘fact’ that Iran is trying to obtain or develop nuclear weapons. This ‘fact’ comes from the opinion of the dominant discourse of the US. Consequently, when analysing the selected texts, references to the ‘facts’ that the US or Iranian regimes are seeking an agenda or are behaving in a certain way, can be seen as an example of a hegemonic discourse in action. What has to be made clear is that the creation of these hegemonies is achieved through the use of discourse positioning. Furthermore, where these two differing hegemonies meet there is Antagonism.

Antagonism links directly to the other two elements already examined in terms of how subjects are positioned through discourse and the creation of hegemony. Howarth defines antagonism in the following way: “The presence of [an] ‘other’ prevents me from being
totally myself...this blockage of identity is a mutual experience for the antagonising force and the force being antagonised” (1998: 275). The implications are, therefore, that the presence of the ‘other’ and the fact that they refuse to identify and become part of your hegemony means that their very existence is a cause of antagonism. This implies that with regard to the US and Iran, and the texts under examination, references to the ‘other’, although sometimes not named, are manifestations of conflict. In terms of examination of the chosen texts terms such as: ‘We will prevail’ or ‘Imperial power’s abusing us’. The implication of these phrases is that the ‘other’ is in some way holding ‘us’ back and stopping ‘us’ from becoming truly ourselves. Consequently, the antagonism is also linked into the elements of hegemony and positioning as it makes the audience identify, or not, on many levels.

Although separately highlighted, there is a close interwoven relationship between subject positioning, hegemony and antagonism. These analytical tools contained within the framework, however, only have meaning as part of the overall discourse that is ongoing, hence the work of the previous chapter dealing with the contextual backdrop to these texts. CDA, therefore, is only effective when one looks at the discourse in these holistic terms. These phrases, or discourse fragments are the key part of the analysis process, as it is to them and their presence and implementation within the text that the investigation will focus. Throughout the subsequent two chapters; three discourse fragments from each of the relevant texts will be examined. This will achieved by looking at each of these fragments under the sub-division of the analytical tools expanded upon above, namely: political subjectivity, antagonism and hegemony. This approach is not the standard format that is usually expected from a discourse analysis; however, it is by no means an original concept. Howarth (1998), when explaining the different methods and perspectives on discourse analysis uses a similar method. The useful aspect of conducting the study in this way is that it allows a clear and concise demonstration of the evidence under consideration and will allow an equally clear presentation of the findings.

The type of delivery of the text under examination will also be considered. An example of this is the Obama text in terms of to whom was the speech intended? And what result might have the desired effect? These questions will help to bring together the discourse fragments to question what may have been meant both in the aim of the speech and its place in the overall context of the discourse. Contained within the following two chapters will be sub headings in
which examples of discourse fragments that relate to positioning, hegemony and antagonism will be examined and discussed.

The critical aspect of this analysis will take place in Chapter five which will focus not only on the time specific nature but also discuss the conclusions reached in terms of what norms and values have been applied throughout this study. It will be achieved by looking at what and how the evidence selection and discourse strands have influenced the analyst.

Using this model it will be possible to decipher possible alternative underlying meanings contained within the given texts, to clarify, what does the text want from the audience in terms of motivations and intentions? Also: how have I (the analyst) applied what I understand, with respect to values and norms, to the stand which I have taken throughout this work? This approach allows the subjectivity of the analyst as much as the textual material under investigation to be questioned which in turn allows for appraisal to occur on a plurality of levels completing the holistic nature of the examination.

3. Religious Discourse

The use of religious rhetoric in the discourse between the US and Iran on the issue of nuclear weapons is the focus of this chapter. Two particular texts will be examined for the possible embedded meanings. The texts are President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s speech before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (26/09/07) and the inaugural address of President Barrack Obama (2009). By analysing the texts, using the CDA analytical framework discussed in the previous chapter, and in particular the religious rhetoric embedded therein, a clearer understanding of whether the current enmity between these nations is about nuclear weapons or regional power may emerge. The reasons these texts are included in the ‘religious’ section of this study is because of the quantity of religious references in these speeches. The measure of this is done by counting the amount of open references to god, holy, scripture, etcetera which the orators have included in the addresses. the Ahmadinejad text has 27 of these references and the Barrack Obama text has 16 for this they are being treated as ‘religious’ in nature and not simply benign.

This chapter will, first, discuss the texts as a whole and how they fit into the overall discourse of the US-Iranian relationship, and then the particular discourse fragments will be examined
both in terms of their possible religious meanings and how they can be seen to relate specifically to the nuclear weapons and regional power issues. This will all be conducted following the same approach using the tools of positioning, hegemony and antagonism as ways of identifying and analysing these discourse fragments.

Time, place and manner of a speech determines its impact in terms not only of the desired audience but also of what the orator wishes to say. With regard to the two speeches under examination, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s speech before the UNGA is interesting because his audience is representative of most of the countries in the World and from this it can be argued that his motivation could well be to plead his case before that audience in order to gain their support. President Barrack Obama’s speech is slightly less easily defined as, unlike Ahmadinejad, he had both a domestic and foreign audience to which he must appeal to. Although not affecting this analysis, it can be seen as posing the potential hazard mixing of foreign and domestic rhetoric; however, this analysis will interpret all the highlighted fragments in terms of their possible foreign policy signalling implications.

Presidential addresses can be seen as the most direct way of signalling to foreign audiences. Ahmadinejad’s speech to the UNGA in 2007 can be seen in this light. It would be hard to characterise it as anything more than an attack against the power of the US not just in the Middle East but all over the world, while at the same time defining a stance for his ‘Islamic’ nation in World affairs. Obama’s inaugural address can be seen in a similar vein as he appears to be trying to balance power with justification. This links into the context seen in chapter one as it is easy to see how both men are trying to maintain and gain power at the expense of the other.

**Positioning**

From the start of Ahmadinejad’s UNGA speech the use of religious symbolism appears to be a guiding principal, as he states that: “I am pleased and grateful to the almighty to have the opportunity once again to attend this important forum” (Islamic republic of Iran 2007). This can be seen as a highly charged statement when one considers the place of delivery and the speaker being the head of the World’s only self styled Islamic Republic. Ahmadinejad is speaking on behalf of the ‘Almighty’ which can be seen as though he speaks for the Muslim World. There is, therefore, an implicit separation taking place between the Christian West
and the Muslim East. When considering the context of the time, for example the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, it becomes all the more important to acknowledge this separation of Christian and Muslim Worlds. The importance of this comes from the fact that if the Iranians do seek to become the dominant power in the Middle East positioning potential allies is all the more important. By opening his speech with a religious reference he is in effect claiming that he (or Iran) is the de facto representative, of the Muslim World. Thus, Ahmadinejad can be seen as attempting to create a position from which to create hegemony of his own.

The creation of this type of ‘other’ in which difference is inferred rather than stated is not as perhaps as unusual as might be first thought. Nabers (2009) states that “The logical relationship between argument and conclusion is often generated by means of binary constructions... Implicit connotations, for example, the headscarf as a symbol for Islam” (: 200). In the same way Ahmadinejad appears to be employing a similar framework in his discursive construction because he does not appear to be openly making that separation. There is a strong case for suggesting that the overall aim of that fragment is to implicitly position the audience at the opening to his speech.

The separation of Muslim and Christian does not appear to be exclusively the perspective of Ahmadinejad. Obama’s speech appears to have made and reinforced this clear distinction between these two worlds. “To the Muslim World, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect” (The White House 2011). There appears to be a plurality of possible meanings embedded in this fragment. First, that there is at least a two World system of Christian and Muslim to which there are obvious sides. There does not appear to be any attempt to escape from the fact that not only do these different worlds exist but also that there appears to be some sort of ongoing enmity between them. This conclusion is defined by Obama directly addressing that ‘Muslim World’ which exists as the ‘other’. The acknowledgment of that cultural ‘other’ is similar to some of the arguments highlighted in the work of Samuel Huntington. Huntington argues that “The most important conflicts will occur along cultural fault lines” (1993: 3); and therefore Obama’s direct reference to that division can be seen as giving an element of credence to Huntington’s’ perspective. The direct address is a very clear manifestation of acknowledgment of that ‘other’. Consequently, its importance in relation to US motivations and intentions is that can be seen as reflecting how they perceive and relate to that ‘other’. Secondly, Obama’s idea of lack of respect and lack of common interest; from this it can be argued that there is or has been a lack of respect shown
to or by that Muslim World. This notion of ‘respect’ is quite vague in a lot of ways as it can lead to many conclusions. However, Booth and Dunne (2002), writing in the aftermath of 9/11, argued that there was a perception amongst many Americans that Muslims failed to respect the values of the US (2002: 3-4). Consequently, it can be suggested that the fragment is in fact arguing the position of the Muslim ‘other’ as being the one showing lack of respect to the US. This ties in with the construction of the argument of Huntington (1993) above, as it positioning the ‘other’ as in some way threatening.

In examining these different discourse fragments there appears to be an element of correlation i.e. the separation of the Christian and Muslim worlds. If it is to be considered in hegemonic terms, it can be seen as ‘common sense’ that this division exists. Thus, there appears to be a clear attempt to separate one from the other through positioning to try and gain greater influence. When one considers the regional power issue at stake in the Middle East, the meaning of these fragments appear to take on a whole new meaning. Both parties appear to be vying for control by appealing to the Islamic World for support in order to gain the upper hand in their power struggle.

**Hegemony**

The Ahmadinejad speech to the UNGA offers a very interesting insight into the nature of hegemonic practices. The very venue of the speech can be seen as an important symbol because the United Nations is of Western Christian origin and hence perhaps without even realising it, Ahmadinejad has been co-opted into becoming a part of that organisation. This is a very cogent example of the insidious nature of hegemony. By attending and speaking at this forum he has, in effect, acknowledged the power of the dominant practice of international relations, and no matter what statement is made during this speech, it will be made within the context of an acknowledgment of the dominant power of the West.

There is a very strong link between the speeches of Ahmadinejad and Obama that can be seen as an acknowledgment of US hegemony in the international sphere, the manifestations of which appear to form a major part of their personal and political identities. Ahmadinejad, for example, makes repeated references to “The big powers...who show disregard of the morals, divine values, the teachings of the prophets and the Almighty” (Islamic republic of Iran 2007). In this case the ‘big powers’ by a process of elimination are the Christian US and her
allies, as there appears to be little other option into which to classify this as the unnamed ‘other’. Consequently, Ahmadinejad can be seen as acknowledging the dominant US hegemony and is further separating himself, and arguably his religion, from it. This perspective of Ahmadinejad’s viewpoint is supported by the work of Mohammadi (2008) in which he characterises Ahmadinejad’s approach to the world in binary terms of “Domination and anti-domination” (cited in Haji-Yousefi 2010: .6). With this in mind, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this fragment is, in fact, in line with this view. The significance of this in terms of hegemony can be seen as an attempt to create hegemony of his own around the principal of the dominators and the dominated. This is further enhanced by a 2005 Pew international survey which concluded that “A majority of people welcomed the idea of another country challenging US military supremacy” (cited in Walt 2005: 107). Consequently, there is a clear purpose and opportunity for Ahmadinejad to use such rhetoric in order to create a possible hegemony of his own.

The use by Obama of overt references to the dominant power of the US is a recurrent theme in his inaugural address. In particular a reference that offers credence to this claim is when he refers to the US as “The most prosperous nation on Earth” (The White House 2011). This is a powerful statement as one can easily make the connection between prosperity and power. It is also a statement that can be seen as in some way menacing because of its embedded powerful connotations as a declaration of the economic superiority of the US over other nations. Arguably, the links between prosperity and power, and, indeed, democracy have been a matter of research for some time. Schofield (2002) draws upon the work of Olson (2000) by underlining the fact that prosperity, power and democracy are, in fact, closely intertwined citing the examples of the British in the 19th Century and US in 20th as being particularly good representations of how economic might brought about their respective hegemonies (2002: 15-6). This link in the Obama text does not appear to be in anyway accidental because this reference to the might of US economic pre-eminence appears to bring about connotations associated with the role and importance of the US as a global player. The implication on hegemony is that it can be likened to Ahmadinejad’s references to the ‘great powers’ because the underlying theme which supports both of these statements is that the US is the most powerful nation; therefore, the nature of the US hegemony appears to be unquestionable and a ‘common sense’ which is at the very heart of hegemony itself. The implications of this on Middle Eastern power relations is of the utmost importance; this is because, as Tarock pointed out, the US acts as “An imperial power” (2006: 645) in the region. Consequently,
Obama’s declaration of power can be seen as a statement of ‘fact’ in the truest meaning of hegemony backed up by the contextual situation of the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus what remains is a sense of domination in which the US has the power. In religious terms this can be seen as serving the interests of Ahmadinejad insofar as it might be viewed as a useful tool with which to try and create equivalential relations between the now ‘established’ Muslim East and the Christian West. This is done by pointing out that dominant ‘other’ does not share the same value system or religion. Through this it means that there is the start of a recognisable pattern to the discourse which as both sides appear to view the US as dominant, however, they both have a mirror image perspective of how they view the use of that power. Consequently it is at this point at which the ‘blockage’ of their respective identities creates antagonism.

**Antagonism**

As seen above there appears to be a discernable dividing line along religious and cultural lines between the US and Iran which could relate to the aspirations of each to be the dominant power in the Middle East. The Iranian nuclear issue can be seen as being, perhaps, the most antagonistic issue facing the US-Iranian Relationship today. Ahmadinejad’s claim that in the eyes of Iran “The nuclear issue...is now closed” (Ahmadinejad 2007) is a cogent example of this. Ahmadinejad appears to be stating that the Iran will no longer tolerate foreign intervention. This perspective is further enhanced when other fragments found in this speech are considered; For example, “Now our country is recognised as one with the capacity for industrial scale production [of uranium] for peaceful purposes” (Islamic republic of Iran 2007). This is in essence also a challenge to the US hegemony, as the dominant ‘common sense’ perspective was that the Iranian nuclear programme is military backed; a view which has been widely accepted and articulated in the work of Fitzpatrick (2006) and others. Consequently, Ahmadinejad is making his case as if in a court of law for the reasons why ‘the big powers’, arguably the US, are unfit due to their predisposition to assume the worst intentions about Iranian intensions. Thus, by discrediting the argument proposed by the US he is, in effect, discrediting this ‘other’. Furthermore, antagonism of what is almost a legal argument is heavily intertwined with religious discourse in these fragments. The effect of is that, through the division of Muslim and Christian, there also appears to be a division between right and wrong, legal and illegal. This could be considered as a two pronged challenge to the established US hegemony.
Perhaps the most important part of Obama’s address is the fragment “We will extend our hand if you are willing to unclench your fist” (The White House 2011). Although not overtly religious in nature it, when coupled with the other use of religious terminology he employs, has several meanings. Two, in particular, stand out: first, that in order for ‘us’ to be able to communicate ‘you’ must come to us. In this sense the onus is on the one with the clenched fist to come to the US and that ‘they’ are the ones who seek to attack us. Secondly, there is a conceivable parallel to religion insomuch ‘as the good Christians we are making the first move towards peace’. Thus, the picture that may be inferred is that it is these ‘others’ who have a different religious background who are ‘bad’ and have these clenched fists which seek to destroy ‘us’. By painting the picture in this light it is conceivable that, although it can be seen as a possible attempt to bring about change, it is change on the terms of the most powerful nation on Earth and that ‘they’ must come to ‘us’. Consequently, there appears to be a definite power dynamic at play in these texts, as they all appear to work from the principal of the existence of the US’s Christian hegemony which, according to the respective views, is a both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ thing. It is into this ‘common sense’ acceptance of this fact that the role of antagonism becomes more apparent.

Conclusion

In investigating the possible embedded meanings in the fragments highlighted, three distinct conclusions can be made; first, that the use of religion in these texts is a key element. The religious perspective in the texts appears to create possible religious connotations in fragments which might not otherwise be considered religious in nature. When considering the implications of the interplay between politics and religion it leads to the suggestion that there is an attempt to position the audience in order to gain support while simultaneously attempting to erode their opponents’ power. It does not seem likely that Iran wishes to have a global reach but there appears to be a definite tendency to discredit the US and vice versa. Consequently, within the historical context of US-Iranian relations since the fall of the Shah, this type of rhetoric appears to be a regional power issue rather than one of nuclear weapons. The justification for this argument comes from the fact that both parties seem to use religion in order to differentiate and paint that unnamed ‘other’ as in some way evil. When one considers the implications for regional power for Iran it is a method of attempting to draw together the Muslim dominated Middle East against the Christian West. This may be
expected from an ‘Islamic Republic’ such as Iran; however, the US, a relatively secular state, still appears to use rhetoric which can be seen as having deeply embedded connotations. The Obama speech appears to be heavily weighted in terms of this use of Christian symbolism. Hence, a supposed secular state is in many ways using religious rhetoric as part of its natural discourse. This means that the methods employed by both parties are similar in a lot of ways.

4. Legal Discourse

The two texts under consideration are the address of Robert Kimmitt (2008) and the *Cooperation for Peace, Justice and Progress* text (2009). Within these texts the aspects of legal discourse will be discussed following the same format as the previous chapter. The choice of these texts as having a legal basis, rather than a religious one, comes from the volume of references relating to: justice, injustice, Right, legal, etcetera. The *Cooperation for Peace, Justice and Progress* has 14 of these references and the Kimmitt text also has 14. For this reason that the texts were included in this section of the study.

Robert Kimmitt’s address to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in the US is interesting not only because of its content, but also its audience. The ADL was set up in 1913 "To stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all" (ADL 2011). Thus, its agenda may be perceived as having Jewish bias as, given the relationship between the US, Israel and Iran, it is plausible to look upon any address connected to it as being egregious in balance. The Iranian text under examination is titled *Cooperation for Peace, Justice and Progress*. The title in itself is interesting, as it positions the audience to look upon this as an Iranian attempt to create some kind of lasting peace. The text is also of interest because it omits any reference to the nuclear issue. Thus, within the text, what it does not say is arguably as important as what it does. It is, therefore, an ideal text from which to draw as it can be seen both as a stance on nuclear issue, by its omission, and Iran’s standing as a regional power.

**Positioning**

Contained within the *Cooperation for Peace, Justice and Progress* is a statement that “The recognition of the rights of nations, respect for sovereignty and principals of democracy”
(Pro-Publica 2011) which suggests several points of interest. Recognition of ‘rights’ can be seen as one such point, as it implies that there has been a lack of recognition of right in the past; coupled with this is the respect for sovereignty, which in many ways links to similar discourse fragment contained within the Obama text discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, it also links with other aspects contained within the work above as it follows the logic of Iran believing that it is being treated poorly by other nations. Consequently, it also links to some of the work of Beeman (2008) and Tarock (2006) as they appear to believe that the domination of Iran by the West over the last 100 years has affected the mentality of the leadership. What this tells us about the nuclear and regional power issues is that it can be seen that the enmity towards other nations is deeply rooted within the Iranian psyche and, in turn, this sense of injustice moves over into other issues such as nuclear and regional power issues.

The remarks of Robert Kimmitt to the ADL also have a legal association in mind when it comes to positioning the audience: “Iran poses a threat to the security of the United States, Europe and the Middle East. But perhaps the greatest threat is to our strongest ally in the region: the state of Israel” (ADL 2008). This is a blatant positioning fragment. It is clear that it casts Iran in the role of a regional ‘pariah’ which is threatening the entire world. Moreover, this fragment endorses Israel as the most important nation in terms of power in the Middle East. Its place within the context of the time period is interesting also as these remarks came not long after the publication of the NIE report (2007) which, as seen in chapter one, cleared the Iranian government of carrying on its military involvement in the development of nuclear technology. This is, perhaps, the clearest indication yet as to how the US views the situation in the region, as it is favouring Israel as its preferred partner in the Middle East. There also appears to be justification in the notion that with the nuclear issue no longer so prominent, the US still views Iran as a threat and this in many ways highlights the continuing enmity and perhaps even more importantly the real view of Iran by the US. The legal aspect of this is that the sanction-based action being carried out remains justified, as they are acting within the legal and just framework they have created.

Both of these fragments reveal some interesting embedded meanings. First, that Iran appears to feel as if the international community does not respect their values. One could look upon the Iranian document as a plea on behalf of whoever wrote it to be taken seriously as a nation and demand respect from the US. Secondly, the Kimmitt text supports the Iranian perception that this blockage between the US and Iran is not about nuclear weapons but about something
else; maybe regional power. Kimmitt presents Iran as the evil ‘other’ in the Middle East; consequently, there appears to be justification for carrying on the current US policy. Thus, both texts can be seen as supporting the Iranian view that their country is being treated unjustly by the international community, especially by the US. Both texts appear to support an idea that the issue is not a nuclear one but is actually about regional power issues. One can therefore assume that one side sees the legal justification for action and the other views it as illegal persecution.

Hegemony

The hegemonic legal discourse in the texts appears to be similar to the hegemonic discourse centred on religion, covered in the previous chapter. This perspective comes to mind when one examines the discourse fragments highlighted below, centred on bringing to the fore the idea of US domination.

In the Iranian text under examination in this chapter we are told about a “Difficult era characterized by the domination of empires, predominance of military powers... and competitions on the basis of offensive capability and the power from conventional and non-conventional weapons” (Pro-Publica 2011). What is contained within this fragment is that there appears to be a threat posed to Iran from these unnamed, dominant powers. It is logical to assume that the text is referring to the US. As contained within the previous chapter’s inspection of hegemony the work of Mohammadi (2008) in which he characterises the approach of Iranian leadership in terms of “Domination and anti-domination” (cited in Haji-Yousefi 2010: 6). It is not unreasonable to argue that, in fact, this appears to be a re-occurring theme in the Iranian mindset. It is also possible to link this to the work of Beeman (2008) and Tarock (2006) in which they ascribe meaning to Iranian actions and thinking as being linked to historical domination by the West. This is supported by the reference to conventional and non-conventional weapons, as it appears to be suggesting that the US, as a nuclear power, and Israel, as a suspected nuclear power, threaten the security of Iran. From this, we might infer, that the fragment suggests the right of Iran to build up a non-conventional nuclear arsenal in order to compete with these powers. Thus, it defines some kind of legal right to carry on with the construction of its non-conventional military capabilities. The perspective appears plausible when one considers the lack of a direct reference to Iran’s nuclear policy in the
document. Thus, what can be argued is that it would be ‘common sense’ for Iran to have nuclear capability as the other powers in the region have it. The hegemonic discourse is, therefore, pointing out the power imbalance in the region and the logic behind Iranian nuclear armament. There is some kind of a legal right implied within this fragment to justify the development of a nuclear device by Iran.

Robert Kimmitt presents the prevailing US doctrine regarding Iran and its legal justifications for continued action against it: “Iran remains a serious threat, a threat that needs to be countered... and warrants continued action by the United States and the world community” (ADL 2008). This can, arguably, be seen as the clearest indication of the US position on Iran; because, what appears to be proposed is that the Iranians, despite the 2007 NIE report, remain a threat to the World. Furthermore, from this fragment one can ascribe the ‘fact’ that Iran is a threat meriting an international ‘legal’ response, as it is necessary for the world as it has accepted that Iran is a problem that needs to be dealt with. This perspective appears to be supported by the work of Chomsky as the US presents itself as a “Benign power” (Chomsky 2003: 194-5). This supports the analysis of this fragment because Kimmitt appears to be placing the US as the non-malignant force who is concerned with the threat by this ‘other’. The fact that the ‘world community’ is mentioned can be seen as maybe stating the US hegemony as being dominant insomuch as the US is incorporating the world against the evil ‘other’ of Iran. It is conspicuous that Kimmitt names the US first and the World secondly as if in some way the World is subservient to the US; from this perspective Kimmitt is highlighting US hegemony and the fact they are justified in carrying out actions against Iran within the international sphere.

From these fragments, as argued to the opening paragraph in this section, it can be seen that there is an acceptance of US hegemony across both sides. However, both sides see the mirror opposites of each other, as Iran views the US as a threatening force, and the US view themselves as a force for good with, arguably, the right of the law on its side. Consequently, one is left with the problem of looking at the context of, not only these fragments, but the continuation of the US-Iranian discourse. The conclusion, looking at both of these fragments and the overall discourse is that the nuclear issue, although important, gives over more to the fact that this continued enmity appears to be centred on a struggle for regional control. The logic behind this is founded mostly on the remarks of Kimmitt because, notwithstanding the
NIE (2007) report, the US still concludes that Iran deserves to be sanctioned despite their vindication of a nuclear weapons building programme.

**Antagonism**

The antagonistic legal enmity between the US and Iran manifests itself throughout this discourse. In the discourse fragments discussed in this section it will be demonstrated that both sides appear to claim a ‘legal’ justification for their respective actions.

In the Iranian text under examination, one particular fragment appears to exemplify the overall position of the Iranian regime: “The existing mechanisms are not capable to meet the present needs of humankind and their ineffectiveness has been clearly proven in the realms of economy, politics and culture” (Pro-Publica 2011). Contained within this fragment is an indictment of the whole way of life in the international sphere, especially when one considers the role of international organisations, for example: the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organisation. The common denominator is that all these organisations are very much seen as US-dominated institutions. Thus, what the embedded meaning of this fragment is suggesting is that these institutions are tainted by the involvement of the US. Such domination appears to be accepted by, for example, Walt who purports this view throughout, that; certainly the US is ‘perceived’ as being such a dominating force within these organisations (Walt 2005: 105-111). Consequently, the Iranians appear to be suggesting that it is all the current World problems are the US’s fault. This leads one to wonder if this fragment was included in the original text to do nothing more than to antagonise the US, by pointing out its mismanagement to the world. In addition, it is interesting to note that this text does not name any such institution or country; it is left to the audience to draw their own conclusions. The existence of that unknown ‘other’ is highlighted as the reason for all the problems in the world. The effects on the regional power issue is that if we accept the perspective, that it brings into question the capability of the US to be a regional power player, as it is portrayed as incapable of doing so effectively. By this same logic it can be suggested that the US has proven itself incapable of effective management and as such it may well be time to relinquish some of that power to another country: i.e. Iran.

Although done in a far more egregious manner, it may be suggested that Robert Kimmitt takes a similar line of antagonism when it comes to suggesting that Iran is incompetent and,
consequently, has no right to manage the Middle East: “I look half way around the World at Iran, where the regime’s economic mismanagement has led to deteriorating living standards for the Iranian people” (ADL 2008). Thus, there is a case for suggesting that the US is using similar rhetoric in order to react against that ‘other’. The speech by Kimmitt negates any reference to the crippling sanctions which have been imposed on Iran since the 1990’s. It can be suggested that this is an attempt to ‘prove’ the incompetence of the Iranian government. It therefore stands to reason that one can take this perspective through into legalistic terms, although they do not mention the sanctions as a cause of suffering. Thus, what can be drawn from this is that there appears to be some ‘legal’ right for their action because the Iranian Government is not only a threat to other nations but also to its own people.

**Conclusion**

Concluding, several things appear to be prominent. First that the Iranians feel as if the way that world affairs work is, in some way, illegal and that the US as the biggest player, is to blame. Consequently, The US feels that Iran is a direct threat to them so, in this sense, when one thinks of the notion of antagonism laid out in the second chapter, one can see that manifested in the text under examination.

Both nations appear to believe that they are acting within a legal framework which justifies their actions, but these differing frameworks appear to be the cause of antagonism, as there are two very different value systems in play. US hegemony is viewed by the US as a good thing and a bad thing by the Iranian’s. Consequently, what is to be drawn from this is that given the past historical relationship between these two nations, there is an irrevocable difference of opinion, which may well explain in some measure the continuing enmity.

Finally, and perhaps of most interest, is the type of language in terms of positioning, hegemony and antagonism employed in both of these texts. There appears to be similar methods employed in all three examples which give rise to an amount of interest about what both sides wish to achieve. The inferred ‘right’, whether it is legal or moral, appears to be an important aspect of their cases. Consequently, it leads to the conclusion that, if both sides are wishing to have a kind of control over the Middle East, they appear to be going about it in a similar way. Thus, the effect of the question under consideration in this study leads one to
conclude, that from this inferred legal and moral right which both sides wish to discredit the other in order to gain some advantage in the region.

5. Conclusion

This study was about power. According to Foucault (1984) the manifestations of power are exemplified within discourse. In this final chapter it is necessary to achieve the goal of deciphering, by reference to the evidence contained within this study, whether the ongoing enmity between the US and Iran is about nuclear weapons or about regional power. To this end, this chapter will examine of the context discussed in Chapter One and the themes developed by examining religious and legal discourses used by the US and Iran. Finally, questions relating to the critical dimensions of the study such as the choice of texts, norms and values and analysis structure will be examined; this will lead to a conclusion biased upon all aspects of the evidence.

A key aspect of any discourse analysis is the context in to which the discourse flows. The Iranian view of the world appears to have been reoccurring theme throughout this study. When looking back at the work of academics such as Beeman (2008) and Tarock (2006); the impression appears to be one of a historical sense of persecution and domination by the West over Iran. This is further augmented by the work of Chubin (2006) and Sariolghalam (2003) who look upon the recent history, the relationship between the Shah and the US, as being a major catalyst for the feelings of enmity coming from Iran toward the US. The US is still feeling politically damaged by the loss of the Shah as an ally and the subsequent embassy siege (Sariolghalam 2003: 71). The US, appears to look upon the Iranian leadership as dangerous and have a desire to build a nuclear weapon (Mattair 2010, Sheikhneshin 2009, Fitzpatrick 2006). However, there is what appears to be conflict with this approach as the publication of the NIE report (2007) vindicated the Iranian military of having any links with their nuclear programme. The finding of the NIE (2007) paints US intensions in a negative way, as it overtly undermines their argument. This leads to the impression that, for the US, this is not about nuclear weapons but about some other.

Thus, the context in the study creates a picture which suggests reasons why these countries and their officials act as they do, and leads to a discussion of the mindset of both parties.
In Chapters Three and Four through an examination of different aspects of the language employed by them. The context above the discussion focused on particular discourse fragments and some of their possible embedded meanings. As discussed above a reoccurring theme from the Iranian perspective was a sense of injustice and a feeling of division. This was born out in both of the Iranian texts under consideration, as there appeared a constant reinforcement of the notion of unnamed ‘other’ being responsible for much of the world’s problems. This thematic assumption appears to be best articulated in Chapter Four when the Iranian view of a “Difficult era characterized by the domination of empires” (Pro-Publica 2011) is highlighted; furthermore, this is reinforced by the work of Mohammadi (2008) when he described the very binary perspective of Iranian leadership in terms of dominated and dominator. This closely links to the context of the discourse highlighted above, as it brings together the impression that the Iranian leadership still views the world in this way. When one considers the ongoing ‘occupations’ of Iran’s neighbours it goes a long way to help produce a picture of Iranian political thinking, as that of a strong threat perception toward the West and in particular the US.

Examining the US using similar terms appears to be slightly more ambiguous; this may well stem from the way, as pointed out by Beeman (1976), that the US struggles to deal with other nations which do not share their same cultural and political history (cited in Davies 2008: 213). This may well explain the many failed attempts by both parties to reach an accord. Consequently, there is an institutionalised way of thinking as to how the US perceives itself and its failure to understand the messages that it is sending to others. In the evidential chapters, both Obama and Kimmitt appear to be as preoccupied with US power; as much as the Iranians. However, the Chomsky (2003) appraisal of the US perception of power as being ‘Benign’ appears to reflect the fundamental difference between these perceptions. What is clear is that US displayed its intransigence when it failed to change its institutionalised perspective on Iran after the findings of the NIE report (2007) and thus what has occurred is the continuing enmity between these two nations. This has displayed US political thinking for what it is, deeply biased against the Iranian leadership.

The similarity in the type of discourse used by these countries is remarkable. This is of particular importance, in Chapter Three, in the way in which they identified and separated themselves into Muslim and Christian. In the case of Iran, as an ‘Islamic Republic’, such and separation might be expected; however, US is a supposedly secular nation which makes their
stance more surprising. Thus, this act of separating on the grounds of religion, and in the same way, can best be described as hegemony. This theme was carried through into Chapter Four when the legal discourse was analysed, as in both texts used, there are similar discursive constructions to position and antagonise that ‘other’.

In considering whether this enmity is about nuclear weapons or regional power the issues raised above become all the more important. The US is the most powerful nation in the world and, because of the current occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan has large military forces in the region. It is, therefore, the current dominant regional power. Whilst Accepting that the US is the dominant power in the region, given the similarity in the use of language in the discourse, it is logical to conclude that the evidence presented in this study suggests that Iran has aspirations to assume that dominant role at some point in the future. That is not to say that the nuclear weapons are not a part of that regional power issue; however, if it was solely about nuclear weapons, as has been demonstrated, the NIE report (2007) would have ended US reliance on the nuclear weapons issue as the excuse for the continued sanctions and overall enmity.

Characterising the discourse as enmity, as has been done throughout this study has undoubtedly affected its findings. It is not unreasonable to suggest that this has not only affected the finding but also the evidence selection process. Consequently, this study cannot be considered outside the discourse but as a part of it. Assuming that in fact there can be a single any single foreign policy objective for either the US or Iran is also a problematic issue. However, as a snapshot in time there has been a discernable pattern presented which shows the application of context to discourse and discourse to context which have been supported by those outside of the CDA field. The result is not ‘truth’ but, rather, a ‘suggested perspective’ designed to facilitate further study. It, might be suggested, that CDA is not best suited to this type of study, however, it would be better to say that CDA is perhaps better suited to the same study but done over a longer period of time and on a more precise question. This does in no way affect the validity of the research carried out as evidenced sourced from both inside and outside of CDA has been used in order to demonstrate that the role of the nuclear weapons issue on the US-Iranian relationship is only a small part of a complex set of issues among them regional power.
References:


