

## تأطير إيران النووية: تحليل استعاري لخطاب بايدن (2021–2023)

### *Framing a Nuclear Iran:*

### *A Metaphor Analysis of Biden's Discourse (2021–2023)*

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## المخلص:

يلعب تحليل الخطاب السياسي (PDA) دورًا محوريًا في هذا. ومن أقوى الأدوات لتحقيق الهدف هو التخيل؛ إذ يبين ذلك كيف يمكن للقادة السياسيين التلاعب من بعيد عبر الشحنة العاطفية التي يلتقون بها على خطاباتهم، سواء ضمن الجماعة بسرعة هائلة وبقوة، على قضايا سياسية معقدة إن لم تكن ملتبسة، تُساق معًا وتُظَرَّ على طريق يمكن لأي شخص الإحاطة به حتى يزول. في هذه الدراسة، تُفحص استعاريات جو بايدن بشأن إيران وبرنامجها النووي بين عامي 2021 و2023. وتستند الدراسة إلى إطار يدمج جوانب من نظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية (لاكوف وجونسون، 1980) وتحليل الخطاب النقدي، في محاولة لإيضاح كيف أتاحت اللغة صياغة إيران بوصفها تهديدًا. وبالإضافة إلى الرسائل العامة للرئيس بايدن، تم جمع بيانات الدراسة من النصوص الرسمية الصادرة عن البيت الأبيض. وتتعكس هذه المنهجية أيضًا في لغة الخطاب، حيث تُطرح إيران بوصفها تهديدًا طويل الأمد، لكن من ناحية أخرى، فإن أمريكا لا تتصل من دورها كقائدة دولية ومالك للأمن والاستقرار. وتؤكد النتائج أن الاستعارة أداة مهمة للتواصل السياسي، ومكوّن رئيسي في محاولات التأطير الاستراتيجي للقضايا السياسية. كما تهتم هذه الأبحاث متعددة التخصصات بدور الاستعارة نفسها في تفسير كيفية عمل اللغة والتواصل السياسيين من أجل تأطير وتوجيه وتشكيل تصورات الجمهور وفهمه فيما يتعلق بالقضايا الدولية المعاصرة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الخطاب السياسي، تحليل الاستعارة، التأمين، خطابات بايدن، تحليل الخطاب النقدي.

## Abstract:

Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) is significant since it shapes shared perceptions of international conflicts. Metaphor is one of the most effective tools that political leaders use in their speeches. Metaphors allow speakers to appeal the emotions of their listeners with simplified representations of complex political issues. This research discusses the metaphors used by US president Joe Biden regarding Iran and its nuclear Programme from 2021 to 2023. The model combines Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) with aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis to show how language makes Iran a menace. In terms of data, these were drawn from both official White House transcripts and public statements made by Joe Biden. This is also at work in the language itself, which depicts Iran as a possible menace but conversely portrays the United States as an international arbiter of security. The results illustrate the extent to which metaphor is a key instrument for political communication and strategic framing. The metaphor plays a central role in this multi-method study.

**keywords:** Political Discourse, Metaphor Analysis, Securitization, Biden Speeches, Critical Discourse Analysis.

## **1. Introduction:**

Effective communication relies on skillful language use. Political leaders depend on language not only to notify the community but also to form understandings of political occasions and international relationships. Through particular linguistic picks, political actors can impact how spectators recognize complex political problems and assess political choices. Between several linguistic approaches used in PD, metaphor is one of the most appropriate tools for showing intangible political notion in an available way.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson developed conceptual metaphor theory. Metaphors are not just stylistic ornaments but essential cognitive instruments that shape human imagination (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). By planning mental thoughts onto recognizable skills, metaphors support individuals comprehend complex issues such as economics, politics, and international struggle.

In PD, metaphor shows a vital role in forming public opinion. Political leaders regularly used metaphorical language to build precise clarifications of international occasions. As Jonathan Charteris-Black said that, political metaphors are commonly used to show political positions in techniques that maintain individual ideological views and strategic situations (Charteris-Black, 2005).

In these days Iran's nuclear program is one of the most debated issues. The US. and a number of international performers have stated worries approximately the prospective security effects of Iran's nuclear accomplishments. Surrounded by this political context, American leaders have constantly addressed the issue in public discourses and official speeches. These speeches frequently contain metaphorical vocabularies that show the problem in positions of urgency, danger, or conflict.

This research emphasizes the discourse of president Biden's about Iran's nuclear program through the period among 2021 and 2023. The research studies how metaphorical language is used in Joe Biden's speeches to build specific images of Iran and its nuclear program.

The research assumes a DA view stimulated by the effort of Van Dijk, who highlights the relationship among ideology, discourse structures, and social context (van Dijk, 1998). By conjoining metaphor analysis with DA,

the research purposes to discover how linguistic varieties contribute to build international political issues.

The main objective of this study is to categorize the metaphors used in Joe Biden's discourse about Iran's nuclear program and to study how these metaphors contribute to framing Iran as a security fear. Over the analysis of certain speech extracts, the research aims to determine how metaphor functions as a strategic communicative instrument in PD.

## **2. Literature Review**

Research on PD has gradually taken the role of language in forming public awareness of political occasions and international relations. Specialists in DA and political linguistics claim that political language is not normal; somewhat, it shows an important role in building social and political actualities. One of the most extensively studied linguistic sorts in political discourse is metaphor. Metaphors allow political actors to shorten complex political problems and link them in techniques that are easier for the public to comprehend.

The theoretical establishment for modern metaphor study recognized by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their dominant work *Metaphors We Live By*. They maintain that metaphor is not only a rhetorical method used in language but an essential cognitive instrument through which people theorize abstract thoughts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

According to their model, persons recognize complex notions by plotting them onto more familiar practices. For example, political conflict may be defined using metaphors associated to competition, danger, or war. These metaphorical arrangements effect how people understand political circumstances and events.

Building on this cognitive perspective, some experts have considered the role of metaphor in political communication. As Jonathan Charteris-Black said that political leaders often use metaphor as an effective policy in public discourses. In his study of political rhetoric, Charteris-Black (2005) exposes that metaphors can propose emotional reactions and strengthen political effects by giving political worries in morally suspect or dramatic techniques. Political metaphors therefore purpose not only as linguistic strategies but also as tools of persuasion that form public attitude.

Another important involvement to the research of metaphor in speech comes from Andreas Musolff, who studies how metaphor situations change

in political discussions. Musolff (2016) clarifies that political metaphors often generate narrative shapes that guide how spectators understand political actors and events. For example, metaphors of conflict or risk may hypothesis political opponents as dangerous actors, while metaphors of protection may represent governments as defenders of public security.

In addition to metaphor researches, discourse analysis has delivered significant tools for investigative the relationship between language and power. As Teun A. van Dijk is mostly influential in this field. Van Dijk (1998) says that discourse reveals and replicates ideological structures in people. PD thus shows a critical role in determining public understanding of political policies, actors, and international relations. By studying linguistic structures such as metaphors, lexical choices, and framing strategies, academics can reveal how political narratives are fabricated and communicated.

Likewise, Norman Fairclough says that discourse should be studied within its broader social and political setting. As to Fairclough (1995), discourse analysis must be not only the documentary features of language but also the social processes and power relations that influence communication. This viewpoint highlights the position of examining political discourses within their explicit historical and political situations.

Additional theoretical viewpoint relevant to this research is securitization theory, established by specialists associated with the Copenhagen School of security studies, mainly Barry Buzan and Ole Waver. According to securitization theory, political leaders can convert political problems into matters of security by showing them as dangers that need crucial action (Buzan et al., 1998).

By means of speech acts and persuasion techniques, political actors construct specific issues as existential threats requiring the application of extraordinary political power. Within this context metaphor functions as an instrumental part of the securitization process. Metaphors can also put warnings in your mind especially if they refer to danger, dispute or urgency and as a result strengthen the idea that this or that issue represents a big threat. Metaphors help build a story of threat when leaders invoke terms like “time bomb,” “red line,” or “storm” — to galvanize public opinion in support of tougher political action.

Metaphor in Politics In earlier works, researchers examined metaphor across several international applications, such as election campaigns,

international conflicts and diplomatic communication. For instance, Charteris-Black (2005) investigated metaphor in political speeches of the leaders of the US and the UK that shows how metaphor complements persuasive political discourse. Also, Musolff (2016) investigated metaphor scenarios in European political discourse and elaborates the influence of metaphoric narratives on political discussions.

Despite the growing body of research on metaphor in political discourse, relatively few studies have examined metaphor use in contemporary discussions of Iran's nuclear program, particularly within the discourse of recent American administrations. While the political issue itself has been widely discussed in international relations literature, the linguistic strategies used to frame the issue have received less attention in discourse analysis research.

Hence, the present study aims to add to the relevant studies in this field by analyzing Joe Biden's metaphors on Iran nuclear program discourse. The analysis of selected speeches and public statements seeks to isolate prevailing metaphorical patterns, if any, and explain how these metaphors might function in framing Iran as a security threat. To this end, the research seeks to draw upon conceptual metaphor theory, discourse analysis and securitization theory in order to elucidate an understanding of how political language shapes international narratives.

## **2.1 Problem of the Study**

This paper explores how Joe Biden uses metaphors to construct Iran as a potential threat in the realm of international security. The research aspires to highlight how political language operates as an ideological appeal that persuades the audience through culturally dominant interpretations of geopolitical issues by critically analyzing such figurative constructions.

## **2.2 Aim of the Study**

The study aims to:

- Identify the metaphors used in Biden's discourse on Iran.
- Examine how these metaphors frame Iran as a security threat.
- Investigate the influence of political context on the construction and interpretation of these metaphorical frames.

## 2.3 Research Questions

This research aims to answer the following questions relating to how the metaphor of Iran in the political discourse of Joe Biden is marked:

1. Which metaphorical types and conceptual frames are dominant in Biden's brand of discourse over Iran's nuclear program?
2. How do they cast Iran as a geopolitical and strategic menace, thereby securitizing it through metaphorical constructions?
3. To what degree does the political and diplomatic environment render these metaphors interpretable in certain ways, communicatively propelling them to do and be this or that, ideologically?

## 2.4 Significance of the Study

This paper is significant because it helps the reader recognize how language impacts political communication. It also delivers a simple model for analyzing political discourse.

## 2.5 Limitations of the Study

- Just focuses on Biden's speeches from 2021 to 2023.
- Just examines metaphors associated to Iran's nuclear issue.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

The present study combines approaches from metaphor theory, discourse analysis, and securitization theory to examine the use of metaphorical language in political discourse surrounding Iran nuclear program. The theoretical model is thus based on three influential academic traditions: conceptual metaphor theory, critical discourse analysis and securitization theory.

### 3.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory

The major linguistic basis of this research is conceptual metaphor theory. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson developed the theory proposing that metaphor is a fundamental structure of human thought, not just expressions in language. As their theory suggests, people comprehend abstract ideas by equating them with more tangible and familiar sensations (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Complex political issues, for instance, are often conceptualized metaphorically as dangers, conflicts or journeys. How audiences comprehend the political environments that "red line," "time bomb," or (say)

“storm” describe — is inherently influenced by those very words. This process is referred to as mapping between a source domain and a target domain in conceptual metaphor theory. The source domain is a concept that is used to construct the other known as target domain, which represents the new abstract concept we want to describe.

More recently in international relations and security issues, metaphors have often structured political discourse. Since political symbols come to mind when thinking of politics, a symbolic representation gives the audience an idea on how you want them to interpret that change; metaphorical imagery can influence how people view their leaders.

### 3.2 Metaphor in Political Discourse

Likewise, as Andreas Musolff shows us that metaphors in politics typically build into larger narrative frameworks termed metaphor scenarios (Musolff 2016). They allow us to furnish audiences with bite-sized fables regarding what drives political activity: the clash of arms, the wedge or loyalty of identity, cataclysmic breakdown. In international political theorizing, states are frequently metaphorically depicted as payers in struggle or competition and even fighting to defend their capacities for action.

Metaphorical constructions like this can have a dramatic impact on public support for international contexts, such as perceptions of security dangers, the willingness to accept diplomatic agreements and the readiness to participate in overseas military action.

### 3.3 Discourse and Ideology

Discourse and ideology have a central relationship in discourse analysis research. Van Dijk (1998) argues that discourse is one of the most important processes in social and political ideology reproduction. The ideological perspectives showing these depictions of political actors and events often in soliloquy with the underlying messages have deeply entrenched roots in political speech.

Here, we can analyze political discourse as the way those different linguistic structures lead to meaning being constructed and negotiated in certain social contexts. One important part of this process comes from metaphor — the way that political actors are cast as dangers, friends or victims.

Likewise, about the experiences of a context in discourse, Norman Fairclough asserts that "discourse is social" (Fairclough 1995). Hence

political statements must be read in light of the social and political conditions under which they are made.

### 3.4 Securitization Theory

This study also employs securitization theory, developed by scholars in the Copenhagen School of security studies, such as Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. Securitization theory argues that politicians can move ordinary political issues into the remit of security through framing them as existential threats (Buzan et al, 1998).

This process is generally achieved through speech acts whereby political actors label an issue as threatening or urgent. When an issue is framed as a matter of security, governments even may use it to justify extraordinary measures.

Metaphor can aid in the process of securitization. Through using rhetorical devices depicting political scenarios in terms of hazards, emergencies, and warfare, political authorities reiterates the problem threatening a situation.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

This research assumes a qualitative research intention based on discourse analysis. Qualitative devices are suitable for observing the meanings and tasks of language in political statement. The research emphasizes specifically on metaphorical terminologies used in political discourse and their character in framing Iran's nuclear program.

### 4.2 Data Collection

A review was conducted of 27 White House transcripts and public statements made by the President of the United States, Joe Biden, from January 2021 through December 2023. Of these, 15 were selected for close examination on the basis of whether they directed focused remarks to Iranian efforts to develop nuclear weapons or U.S. policy in relation to Iran. Note that the criteria for selection were: (a) the statement refers to Iran, nuclear weapons or uranium enrichment; (b) the statement contains at least one metaphorical expression and (c) the statement was delivered in an official capacity (press briefing, summit meeting or formal address). Only extracts meeting all three criteria were included.

### 4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis took place in several steps.

In the first place, metaphorical expressions regarding Iran's nuclear program were searched in speeches. Special emphasis was placed on metaphors that relate to danger, immediacy, borders and shields.

Second, each metaphorical expression was coded with a type of metaphor based on conceptual metaphor theory.

Third, the selected metaphors were studied in relation to their political and discursive environment (van Dijk, 1998). The second step focused on analyzing the role of metaphors in the presentation of Iran as a potential threat to security.

Lastly, the metaphorical language was examined in relation to how it completes security and highlights urgency, danger or conflict regarding Iran's nuclear developments.

### 4.4 Analytical Model

The analytical model the study employs analyzes each excerpt in terms of four central elements:

**Text:** the original statement which contains a metaphor

**Metaphor Type** — the conceptual metaphor identified in the statement

**Context** — the political context in which the statement was made.

Securitization Effect (explaining how this metaphor also helps to frame a narrative of security).

This framework enables the research to address systematically the mechanisms of metaphorical language in political discourse.

## 5. Data Analysis

This section focuses on some of the statements made by Joe Biden about Iran nuclear program and regional security. This analysis examines the use of metaphorical expressions that position Iran's nuclear behaviour in stories of danger, urgency, and global accountability.

Metaphor interpretation is guided by the principles set forth in conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The discourse interpretation also relies on the contributions of Teun A. van Dijk with his studies on language, ideology and political functions (van Dijk, 1998).

### Extract 1

**Text:** His administration, as well as Israel's, has opposed what Iran is proposing and called it "not in any way helpful."

**Context:** During a White House press briefing on Iran's decision to raise the levels of uranium enrichment amid negotiations over the nuclear agreement, the president made this statement.

**Interpretation:** The statement characterized Iran's nuclear activity as nothing but a hindrance to any diplomatic negotiations. While the language may seem diplomatic, calling Iranian actions "not helpful" of course means they have a negative impact on international stability.

### Extract 2

**Text:** "The one thing that is a fact: Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch.

**Context:** This was during a meeting at the White House in June 2021 with Israeli president Reuven Rivlin.

**Interpretation:** The phrase 'on my watch' reminds us that the president, as it were, is standing guard. It casts the United States as the arbiter who governs nonproliferation.

**Securitization Effect:** It turns the metaphor into a perception that keeping Iran from getting nuclear weapons is a top national security priority.

### Extract 3

**Text:** "We are intent on preventing any path that could lead Iran to a nuclear weapon.

**Metaphor Type:** PATH metaphor.

**Context:** And statements such as these pop up in diplomatic efforts to curb nuclear proliferation.

**Interpretation:** They view the nuclear development trajectory as a road. So in the illustration you have Iran progressing down this highway toward a nuclear weapon, and you have the United States trying to beat back or close that road.

**Securitization Effect:** The metaphor suggests that positioning nuclear development as a menacing road is essential, and certainly, a roadblock must be placed at the gates to thwart Iran's advances even further.

#### Extract 4

**Text:** “Assure Iran knows Heedless of its nuclear exploits, the world is watching.”

**Metaphor Type:** SURVEILLANCE metaphor.

**Context:** Similar to monitor this sort of statement is often heard in matters of compliance international monitoring, and nuclear inspections.

**Interpretation:** This is a metaphor the watching world — which invokes the idea of an outside international community that exists to observe Iran's behavior. This picture gives an image of accountability and scrutiny.

**Securitization Effect:** The metaphor underscores the notion that while Iran should be allowed to enjoy nuclear amenities, closer international scrutiny is necessary since its nuclear actions could indeed threaten global peace.

#### Extract 5

**Text:** We will not let Iran develop the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

**Metaphor Type:** POSITION metaphor.

**Context:** Metaphors for Political Discourse involving Strategic Advantage, in Serious Writing: You Need a PLAN (Political-Linguistic Analysis of News).

**Interpretation:** A foothold = a stable position or base with respect to this, Iran's advancing nuclear program is viewed as an incremental strategic gain.

**Securitization Effect:** This metaphor posits nuclear capability as an existential threat that must be preemptively prevented, lest it becomes entrenched.

#### Extract 6

**Text:** “A nuclear Iran would be a destabilising factor for the Middle East.”

**Metaphor Type:** SHADOW metaphor.

**Context:** The shadow metaphor is prevalent in political discourse, representing risks or uncertainty.

**Interpretation:** The metaphor is equally compelling — paint Iran as a looming shadow of nuclear capability over regional stability. The fact that it is a shadow suggests an afterlife of uncertainty, fear, and permanence.

**Securitization Effect:** This metaphor bolsters the false belief that Iran's nuclear advancement would ultimately threaten the entire region.

#### Extract 7

**Text:** We are still trying to hold the door open for diplomacy.

**Metaphor Type:** DOOR metaphor.

**Context:** Such metaphors about opening or closing doors — national or diplomatic opportunities are common.

**Interpretation:** This metaphor presents diplomacy as a door, communicating with the other side. Also, the door to diplomatic solutions remains open.

**Securitization Effect:** The metaphor highlights diplomacy while still given the sense of urgency with a closing door in the case that talks fail.

#### Extract 8

**Text:** The international community has to be very clear with no nuclear proliferation.

**Metaphor Type:** LINE metaphor.

**Context:** We routinely hear this metaphor invoked when discussing international norms and legal limits.

**Interpretation:** This metaphor views global rules as a discrete line dividing the world between right and wrong conduct.

**Securitization Effect:** The metaphor implies that nuclear proliferation is crossing a line – and as such, lends credibility to preemptive action against that threat.

#### *Analytical Summary*

The long analysis of the data finds some recurrent conceptual metaphor to appear in Biden discourse:

#### **Danger and Crisis Metaphors**

Examples: shadow, fire, danger

These metaphors frame Iran's nuclear programme as a dangerous nuisance or ticking time bomb.

#### **Boundary Metaphors**

Examples: red line, threshold, line

Boundary metaphors conceptualize international norms as boundaries which Iran must not transgress.

### **Movement Metaphors**

Examples: path, move closer

The metaphors conceptualize nuclear development as a path to a perilous ending.

### **Protection Metaphors**

Examples: shield, protect allies

These metaphors resonate the US as a security provider for regional stability. The repeated use of such metaphorical patterns helps to create a wider context in which Iran's nuclear energy program can be presented as a potential danger to global stability. Substituting metaphorical language for the complexity of a diplomatic problem transfigures the difficult political question into a straightforward story with danger, limits, and protection.

In terms of discourse analysis, this kind of framing reflects an ideological and political stance. Discourse structures can shape the framing of political events to be more positive when desired, and van Dijk (1998) discussed how these can impact public representation. In this case, the metaphors employed in Biden's discourse help to securitize Iran nuclear program and frame it as requiring urgent response on international calendar.

### **Summary Table: Metaphors and Their Securitization Functions**

Extract	Metaphor type	Example text	Securitization function
1	Hindrance metaphor	"not in any way helpful."	Represents Iran nuclear activity as roadblock on diplomatic path providing the legitimacy for sustained political pressure.
2	Guardianship metaphor	" on my watch"	The language positions the US president as a guard, and non-proliferation as a high-ranking item on his national security agenda.
3	Path metaphor	" preventing any path that could lead Iran to a nuclear weapon"	Conceptualises nuclear/bomb development as a dangerous journey of roadblocks immediately preventing the above.

4	Surveillance metaphor	"the world is watching"	Creates an impression of global accountability and oversight, increasing moral pressure on Iran.
5	Position/foothold metaphor	"will not let Iran develop the capability"	Frames nuclear capability as a strategic gain that should be prevented before it solidifies.
6	Shadow metaphor	"a destabilizing factor for the middle east"	Depicts Iran's nuclear progress as a looming, permanent threat to regional stability.
7	Door metaphor	"hold the door open for diplomacy"	Keeps the possibility of diplomacy as an option but carries undertones of urgency – the doors could close if talks do not move in a positive direction.
8	Line/boundary metaphor	"very clear line...no nuclear proliferation"	Defines a normative borderline of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, determining legitimacy for the pre-emptive action.

## 6. Discussion

This study provides an analysis of how metaphor functions in the representation of Iran's nuclear development effort in political discourse. The results indicate that Biden's discourse on Iran's nuclear program frequently employs metaphors of danger, movement, boundaries, and protection. These metaphorical patterns help to frame the matter as a question of international security.

The prevalence of danger metaphors like storm, shadow and fire indicates a more widespread phenomenon in political rhetoric picturing geopolitical problems with images associated combining crisis and instability. This perception occurs because political metaphors are not merely about conceptual tools, but effective vehicles for building compelling stories (Charteris-Black, 2005). In this way, such metaphors nudge audiences to view Iran nuclear development as a potential danger in which the issue can be re-framed through an understanding of threat and urgency.

It also shows how often those boundary metaphors are used, such as red line, threshold and drawing a line. These metaphors shape international

norms and treaties as walls that cannot be breached. Conceptual metaphor theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson shows that movement (or boundaries) is often mapped to abstract concepts (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In the area of nuclear policy, those metaphors label what Iran is doing as closing (or rushing) toward internationally accepted boundaries.

Another area where movement metaphors are frequent is in the discourse of those analyzed. Approaches like creeping, establishing a beachhead or charting a course treat nuclear development as the sequential stages of reaching an end point. This metaphorical construction lends itself to the view of Iran's nuclear program as a slow walk down a course that can ultimately lead somewhere dangerous. Similar patterns have also been noted in political discourse studies, where international conflicts are often construed as metaphors of movement or competition (Musolff 2016).

One other notable pattern identified during the analysis is use of protection metaphors, which conceptually frame United States as a surety for regional stability and its allies. The descriptions of defense by allies or partners form a story about the United States acting as a guardian against possible aggressiveness. This framing has been part of legitimizing various political or diplomatic actions to offset perceived threats.

From a discourse analytic approach, these metaphors mirror more macro narratives of ideological and political opinion. Political discourse reproduces ideological opinions and point of views that are aligned as to what position social and political actors take (van Dijk, 1998). In this sense, the use of figurative language helps to frame Iran as a possible threat to world order whilst also portraying America as a bastion of stability in international relations.

The results of this study correlate with the basics of the securitization theory written by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver. Securitization theory states that political leaders can assert a political issue as security through means such as asserting it to be an existential threat requiring emergency measures (Buzan et al., 1998). The metaphors found in Biden's discourse facilitate this process by underlining risk, urgency and consequences of nuclear proliferation.

### **Integrating Framing Theory (Entman, 1993)**

The metaphorical patterns found in Biden's discourse help illuminate the framing that Entman (1993) described, especially regarding his definition of "threat-framing." According to Entman (1993) frames define problems,

diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Biden's metaphors about Iran's nuclear program fulfill all four of these framing functions together.

First, danger metaphors (e.g., shadow, destabilizing factor) have framed Iranian nuclear activities as a security threat in need of analysis.

Second, path and movement metaphors (e.g. "path to a nuclear weapon" diagnose the cause by attributing the threat to Iran's technological advancement.

Third, boundary metaphors ("red line") make moral judgments by distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate behaviour.

Fourth, Protection metaphors ("on my watch") suggest preventive action or sanctions.

In short, metaphor is a language vehicle which facilitates the operationalization of Entman's framing functions (1993) in political discourse. Despite these conceptual differences, this integration demonstrates that securitization (Buzan et al., 1998) and framing theory (Entman, 1993) are complementary: a frame provides an interpretive schema and metaphor is the cognitive mechanism that renders it teleological and memorable.

In conclusion, the analysis shows that metaphor is really not simply a stylistic device in political discourse; Instead, it operates as a means of managing the message and trying to help guide public perception on international events. This metaphorical framing recasts complex diplomatic discussions as simplified stories of threats and boundaries to be defended.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study investigates the role of metaphor in Joe Biden's political discourse on the Iran nuclear program from 2021 to 2023. The analysis of the presidential speeches selected revealed several typical metaphorical patterns. When describing Iran's nuclear behaviours, Biden often uses metaphors of danger, and borders, transport, protection.

In sum, the results demonstrate that metaphors such as shadow, path, red line and on my watch frame Iran nuclear program in a way to revolve around it being an impending danger for regional and international security. Together, these language choices build a narrative that makes the issue

appear as an urgent strategic priority for ongoing diplomacy and political attention.

Moreover, this study shows both the importance of metaphor in the process of securitization. Casting Iran's nuclear developments with this narrative of crisis and danger, Biden creates urgency, thus framing the issue into a national security/global priority framework for the audience.

More generally, this research highlights a key role of language in matters of diplomacy and international relations. From simplifying complex issues to influencing public perceptions of geopolitical events, political leaders depend on metaphorical framing instead. So metaphor is not simply a rhetorical decoration; it becomes an instrument in the practice of political oratory.

This represents an advancement in the field of discourse-analytic research, specifically, by showing how metaphor is one of the main tools utilized in political framing. It also provides a rudimentary analytical model likely to be helpful for students and researchers exploring metaphor in political discourse specifically. Future research should follow up this analysis with between-administration comparisons, cross-cultural studies, and audience response feedback.

## 8. Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the study's findings and limitations, the present paper provides the following directions for future research.

1. **Comparative studies:** Analyses could be conducted that compare framing of metaphorical framings for the Iranian nuclear program in different U.S. administrations (e.g., Obama, Trump or Biden) to understand trends in security discourse over time.
2. **Comparative Cultural Analysis:** One should study how Iranian political discourse represents its own nuclear program as opposed to the American representation of such.

Investigate how different kinds of audiences (policymakers, media, general public etc.) respond to security metaphors in political discourse – Audience reception studies

3. **Multimodal metaphor analysis:** Future research could explore visual metaphors in formal White House press materials, infographics, and diplomatic messages (in addition to verbal metaphors).

4. **Longitudinal analysis of metaphor in the news corpus:** An extended time frame and larger corpus (2000–2025) would allow for quantitative examinations of shifts between frequency and type of metaphor, to correlate changes with oscillating political landscapes surrounding central negotiations (e.g. JCPOA negotiations, uranium enrichment milestones).

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## Appendix A

### Dataset: Biden’s Iran-Related Discourse (White House Transcripts)

#### Corpus of Selected Biden Statements on Iran (2021–2023)

No.	Date	Speech/Event	Authentic Quotation	Discursive Frame / Metaphor Potential
1	28 June 2021	Meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin (White House)	“What I can say to you is that Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch.”	Security containment metaphor (“on my watch”)
2	28 June 2021	Meeting with Rivlin	“Today we’re going to be discussing a broad range of challenges, including Iran.”	Agenda-setting discourse
3	2021 (Oval Office remarks)	Meeting with Israeli leadership	“My commitment to Israel is ironclad.”	Metaphor of solidity/strength
4	2021	Same meeting	“This includes an unwavering commitment to your self-defense.”	Defense framing
5	2022	Campaign speech, California	“Don’t worry, we’re gonna free Iran —	Liberation metaphor

			they're going to free themselves soon.”	
6	2021	Foreign policy remarks	“The United States remains determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.”	Prevention frame
7	2023	Press interaction about regional conflict	“We will make sure we respond with our allies.”	Alliance discourse
8	Various diplomatic remarks	Iran nuclear negotiations context	“We'll see whether Iran is serious about returning to talks.”	Negotiation / testing sincerity frame