

Copyright
by
Matthew Allen Martin
2015

**The Thesis Committee for Matthew Allen Martin
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following thesis:**

**Conflict Politics Surrounding the Advent of ISIS:
An Iranian Media Perspective**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Faegheh S. Shirazi

Kamran S. Aghaie

**Conflict Politics Surrounding the Advent of ISIS:
An Iranian Media Perspective**

by

Matthew Allen Martin, B.S; B.A.

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2015

Abstract

Conflict Politics Surrounding the Advent of ISIS: An Iranian Media Perspective

Matthew Allen Martin, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2015

Supervisor: Faegheh S. Shirazi

At first glance, Iran and the United States seem to be natural allies in the fight against the Islamic State. However, there has been neither military cooperation between the two countries in this regard nor is there evidence to suggest that the respective governments of these countries understand one another. In a twofold effort of increasing mutual understanding and filling in a gap in media content analysis, this research used qualitative discourse analysis to investigate the Iranian regime's political narrative surrounding the Islamic State as presented by the regime-affiliated publications *Kayhan Farsi* and *Kayhan English*, printed in Farsi and English respectively, from 1 June 2014 to 31 August 2014. The study found that while both Iranian regime publications advocated for the same political ends, they did so via different means; generally, *Kayhan Farsi* justified its stances on various issues by scapegoating the United States and Israel while *Kayhan English* favored legalistic arguments seemingly designed to persuade English speakers to the regime position. The harsh anti-American tone taken by the Iranian regime makes any counter-ISIS cooperation beyond military de-confliction appear unlikely.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Methodology	5
Kayhan and Khamenei	13
Chapter 2: Syrian Elections and Iraqi Mobilization, June 2014	19
The Syrian Presidential Election	19
Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani's Fatwa	24
Conclusion	30
Chapter 3: Kurdish Politics, July 2014	32
Conclusion	41
Chapter 4: Maliki, Abadi and the Iraqi Premiership, August 2014	43
Conclusion	52
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	54
References.....	62

Chapter 1: Introduction

In early June 2014, Islamic militants shocked the world when they swept across northern Iraq and subsequently declared a caliphate. Immediately, governments began to react. On 12 June 2014, a British source reported that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Qods Force¹ had already deployed a 150 man detachment to “assist Iraqi forces as they regroup after the catastrophic loss of Mosul and Tikrit to the Islamic State.”¹ As ISIS began to close in on the Iran-Iraq border, more troops were sent into the fray. Al-Jazeera reports on 23 August that even more Iranians had crossed the border to participate in a joint operation with the Kurdish Peshmerga in an effort to relieve the city of Jalawla, located 30 kilometers from Iran.² But Iran was not the only one to commit military assets. President Obama had approved a small troop deployment to Baghdad by the end of June 2014. By mid-August 2014, the United States had kicked off a bombing campaign aimed to protect the autonomous Kurdish region of northeastern Iraq. To date, the United States and Iran have been steadily increasing their military commitments in the fight against ISIS. The two powers seem to be natural allies in this regard. Yet the United States and Iran see the conflict, and their respective commitments to it, quite differently.

Secretary of State John Kerry articulated American support of the Iraqi government and their political process in public statements made 16 June.³ Kerry’s Iranian counterparts responded shortly after. On 17 June, a spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that the Iraqis shouldn’t expect any help from Americans, who support

¹ Hugh Tomlinson, “Iran’s Special Forces Rush in to Help Floundering Ally,” *The Times*, June 12, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk>.

² “Iran Sent Soldiers to Fight in Iraq” *Al-Jazeera*, August, 23, 2014 accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.aljazeera.com>.

³ John Kerry, “Interview With Katie Couric of Yahoo!” *United States Department of State*, June 16, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227624.htm>.

ISIS and seek to meddle in the Iraqi political process.^{4*} Another significant discrepancy occurred in the second week of August. A high ranking Iranian government strategic advisor published an editorial stating that: “The United States ignores the crimes of miscreant terrorist organizations currently in Iraq and Syria, and avoids calling them ‘preferring to use terms like ‘revolutionaries’ or ‘opposition.’”⁵ This is in direct contradiction to the Obama administration which had been condemning atrocities and referring to these groups as “terrorists” since at least June. In fact, the day after this editorial was published, the American Ambassador to the United Nations referred to militants in Iraq and Syria as “terrorists” three times during an address to the United Nations on the occasion of Security Council Resolution 2170 which condemned ISIS and Al-Nusrah Front.⁶

Like all politicians, American and Iranian officials are under pressure to say certain things, even if they may not be true. Politics is rife with lies and hyperbole. But while political narratives may not always reflect the truth, there is value to understanding them. In some cases, understanding the political narrative may as important as understanding the truth. For instance, in 2003 President Bush accused Saddam Hussein of aiding and protecting terrorists, “including members of Al Qaeda,” during his State of the Union Address.⁷ This accusation was echoed by other Bush administration officials such as then

⁴ “Amrika aameleh naa-amni dar Araaq ast [America is Responsible for Lack of Safety in Iraq],” June 17, 2014, *Kayhan News*, page 2, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

* I have personally translated all Farsi language source text used in this research and take personal responsibility for all translations.

⁵ Ali Akbari, “Amrika dar Araaq chi mikhaahad (What does America Want in Iraq)!?,” *Kayhan News*, 2, August 14, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶ Samantha Powers, “Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, after Adoption of Security Council Resolution 2170 on ISIL and the al-Nusrah Front in Iraq and Syria,” *United States Mission to the United Nations*, August 15, 2014, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.usun.state.gov>.

⁷ George Bush, “Text of President Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address,” *The Washington Post*, January 28, 2003, accessed April 16, 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/bushtext_012803.html.

Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. The claim was a perfect fit to the neo-conservative political narrative designed to garner public support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nevertheless, in 2007, declassified reports showed that the link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda had been fabricated.⁸ Unfortunately, this was too late for the 25,000 Americans who had been killed or wounded in Iraq up to that point.⁹ Understanding this political narrative is important to understanding the Iraq War. Current political narratives that pertain to the current crises in Iraq and Syria are no different.

In this study, I intend to clarify a less popularly understood, but no less important, Iranian perspective on the ISIS conflict by comparing the Iranian daily newspapers *Kayhan Farsi* and *Kayhan English*. I chose this topic, hoping to help fill in a gap in media research. While global media outlets such as the BBC and CNN have been heavily studied, few news outlets in the Middle East have received such attention, aside from Al-Jazeera. Of the already few studies that analyze Middle Eastern news outlets, most look at crisis episodes such as the Arab–Israeli conflict or the Iraq War. Analyzing two *Kayhan** dailies, will diversify media research as no major research has analyzed the narratives of this outlet to the best of my knowledge. I chose to analyze the advent of ISIS because of the plethora of articles found in both *Kayhan Farsi* and *Kayhan English* on the topic; when ISIS invaded Iraq, both editions followed developments closely. This gave me a sufficient amount of data to properly analyze these Iranian versions of the ISIS story and carry out a proper

⁸ Jeffery Smith, “Hussein's Prewar Ties To Al-Qaeda Discounted,” *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2007, accessed April 16, 2015. <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.

⁹ “U.S. Deaths in Iraq Reach 3,000,” *CNN*, January 3, 2007, accessed April 16, 2014. http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/01/01/iraq.deathtoll/index.html?_s=PM:US.

* For the sake of brevity, when I refer to ‘*Kayhan*’ without specifying a particular language’s edition, I mean both *Kayhan English* and *Kayhan Farsi*. Both are newspapers are published daily by the *Kayhan Institute* and have the same editor, as will be discussed in a later section.

comparison. By conducting a cross-linguistic comparison of these two publications, I hope to shed light on how each one treats its target audience.

I also chose *Kayhan* because the nature of the publication allowed me to control for certain variables. Both *Kayhan* publications being studied operate under strict governmental control, with a single editor, chosen by the Supreme Leader (more on this later). This eliminated the methodological difficulty of determining different editors' motivations. In addition, an overwhelming majority of articles printed in each publication do not list an author. This eliminated the difficulty of accounting for different authors' motivations when conducting analysis.

In addition to these scholarly motives, I have chosen this topic for the following personal reasons: 1) I consider ISIS a global security threat and I believe that in the short-term, defeating ISIS tactically is the most viable option for maintaining international security. 2) I believe that the United States and Iran are advantageously positioned to defeat ISIS. The existence of the Islamic State is politically intolerable for both countries. Additionally, both countries hold political and military influence in the region. Iran has shown a keen ability to project power particularly in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. In regard to the United States, it remains powerful despite its tarnished reputation and checkered history of involvement in the region. While the existence of the Islamic State may not be in the interest of certain other regional powers, currently, it is not politically feasible for any of them to take the lead against ISIS. 3) I do not believe that American Middle East policy-makers understand the Iranian perspective or seriously consider it when making decisions. This poses a significant problem as the United States and Iran increase their commitments respective military efforts in Iraq and Syria. Despite almost 40 years of enmity, a degree of cooperation – even if only at a tactical level - must occur if they are to eliminate the ISIS threat in a way that safeguards regional stability. Because successful

cooperation is impossible without mutual understanding, I hope my research can increase Western awareness of the little-known Iranian perspective.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, I use the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach within the field of media content analysis, to qualitatively analyze and compare key events in the ISIS discourse of *Kayhan Farsi* and *Kayhan English*. I have eschewed quantitative methods as I do not believe they are not easily lent to effectual cross-linguistic comparative studies. In addition, quantitative normalization would have destroyed the narrative quality of my study and made it less palatable for readers unfamiliar with the Iranian case, thus obviating my aforementioned goal of increasing Western awareness of the Iranian perspective.

CDA is the most common approach used when conducting media analysis. This approach is rooted in the enlightenment idea of “reality as a human construct,”¹⁰ and more recently in methodologies like ‘content analysis’ and ‘discourse analysis.’ Content analysis is a type of media research popularized in the 1950s by researchers like Bernard Berelson and George Gerbner. The old-school content analyst takes text at face value and favors quantitative methods. For example, he or she would be more concerned with the number of times something was said in a text than why it was said in the first place.¹¹ While this approach to media analysis has fallen out of favor, it contributed to a dialogue on the importance of media research and text as a unit of analysis. Discourse analysis, a more recent development, takes a qualitative, linguistic approach to text. Like the linguistics field, discourse analysis is commonly divided into the formalist and functionalist theories. Formalists concern themselves with sentence structure and macro linguistic patterns while

¹⁰ John Hartley, *Understanding News*, (New York: Methuen & Co., 1982), 12.

¹¹ John Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007): 16-18.

functionalists deal with the “social ideas that inform the way we use and interpret language.”¹² Functionalist discourse analysts are concerned with what language ‘means’ and ‘does.’ Richardson explains: “Language is used to *mean* [*sic*] things and to *do* [*sic*] things that relate not only to the immediate context of speaker-text-audience but also to the wider socio-political, political, cultural and historic contexts which bound a communicative act.”¹³ A “wider socio-political, political, cultural and historic context” is also a concern of CDA, which presumes a functionalist interpretation of discourse analysis. One sees a striking similarity between Richardson’s description of functional discourse analysis provided above and Fairclough and Wodak’s explanation of CDA:

CDA uses discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of ‘social practice’. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but also shapes them.¹⁴

The difference between functionalist discourse analysis and CDA is the “dialectical relationship” mentioned above. Analyzing this feedback loop is an essential part of CDA and implies that a researcher has access to a discourse and data on its target society. In CDA, not only does society affect discourse but discourse affects society. How media discourse affects racism within a society, for example, is a popular research topic in CDA (see van Dijk).

¹² John Richardson, *Analyzing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁴ Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, “Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology,” in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis 2nd edition*, edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer (London: SAGE, 2009), 5-6.

Despite CDA's widespread usage, it is not without critics. Tyrwhitt-Drake claims that it is too ideologically committed. In his view, CDA obscures truth with ideology by using data liberally, thus discrediting it as a methodology.¹⁵ Another critic, Philo, denounces the work of CDA researchers for failing to look outside of the text. He argues for an approach that looks not only at the content of a discourse, but also a message's production and society's reception of this message.¹⁶ These somewhat contradictory criticisms are indicative of the wide range of approaches that fall under the wide umbrella of CDA.

I avoid the ideological commitment discussed by Tyrwhitt-Drake by sticking to the narrative as closely as possible. On that note, readers must keep in mind that *Kayhan* reflects deep rooted ideological positions held by the Iranian government since the Islamic Revolution. For instance, Iranian enmity towards the United States is not an ideology that I have added into the study, but an ideology articulated frequently by Iranian clerics, politicians, civil servants, military personnel and news outlets. In spite of Philo's criticism of CDA, I avoid going beyond the text as much as possible, aside from providing a background of the Supreme Leader and the *Kayhan Institute*. Philo's criticisms have been noted; I do agree that there is value to research that analyzes the production and popular reception of a discourse. However, this study does not do so for the following reasons. First, Iran is a difficult case to research. Free press does not exist in Iran and travel to this country can be dangerous, particularly for Westerners. Furthermore, it is difficult to access the Iranian people remotely due to government blockages of social media websites such as

¹⁵ Hugh Tyrwhitt-Drake, "Resisting the discourse of critical discourse analysis: Reopening a Hong Kong Case Study," *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31:8, (1999): 1081–1088.

¹⁶ Greg Philo, "Can Discourse Analysis Successfully Explain the Content of Media and Journalistic Practice?," *Journalism Studies*, 8:2 (2007): 175-196.

Facebook and Twitter,¹⁷ not to mention the fact that average citizens within the country may not feel comfortable candidly discussing foreign security concerns such as ISIS with an outsider anyway. For these reasons, it would be nearly impossible to comprehensively cover media production in Iran and the reception of Iranian media discourse by Iranians for all but the most uniquely positioned researchers. Secondly, Iranian popular opinion seems to matter little in government foreign policy decisions. The Islamic Republic of Iran has historically stifled public opinion, using violence when necessary. Although elections are held in Iran, they are largely a façade. The Iranian system contains a powerful, unelected apparatus headed by a ‘Supreme Leader’ that regularly overrides popularly elected officials. The Office of the Supreme Leader, which includes *Kayhan* publications, is motivated by a unique political interpretation of Shi’i Islam and implements the Supreme Leader’s objectives, with or without popular support.¹⁸

Because my unit of analysis is the ISIS narrative in *Kayhan*, I am not concerned with whether or not events described in the newspaper took place. My focus is the discourse itself. Although this study’s organization is loosely chronological, it does not provide what van Dijk calls a “biography of the text.”¹⁹ Though changes in the narrative over time may surface, these changes are not the emphasis of the study. Nonetheless, this study does depict episodes over the course of a timespan longer than many other media analysis studies. Carvalho remarks on the dearth of large-time CDA and provides a justification for this approach:

¹⁷ Thomas Erdbrick, “Iran Bars Social Media Again After a Day,” *New York Times*, September 17, 2014, accessed November 19, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/18/world/middleeast/facebook-and-twitter-blocked-again-in-iran-after-respite.html?_r=0.

¹⁸ Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?: The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic*, (Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000).

¹⁹ Anabela Carvalho, “Media(ted) Discourse And Society,” *Journalism Studies*, 9:2 (2008): 163-164.

Most studies of media discourse are like snapshots examining some news items in detail but covering a short time span (only a day or a few days). While this may be relevant for some events, most public issues have a significantly long ‘life’, which is tied to representations in the media. Understanding the evolution of matters such as war, terrorism or climate change, and the ways they are interdependent in relation to the media, is one of the most important contributions to be made by social researchers Obviously, this means a large amount of work and man hours, and researchers need to devise ways to make this feasible.²⁰

Carvalho implies that large-time CDA is valuable even though it requires a “large amount of work and man-hours.” Later in her article, Carvalho discusses ways to reduce the amount of work required for producing this type of research. She recommends beginning with an open-ended reading of every text within the initial period of a corpus, then paring the amount of texts to be analyzed based on criteria developed by each individual researcher, e.g. their unit of analysis. Next, the researcher should analyze this reduced number of texts. Once they have been analyzed, the researcher should have a baseline understanding of the discourse. Now the researcher can reduce labor by jumping forward to “critical discourse moments” and documenting changes in the narrative at these crucial moments, without losing research quality. Carvalho describes critical discourse moments as time periods in which a narrative is likely to change, for example, a political scandal altering the way a politician is depicted in news media.²¹

As for the present study, critical discourse moments are not used to reduce labor. I chose to include every day from 1 June 2014 to 31 August 2014 in order to ensure all important episodes of the narrative were considered. I did, however, follow the first two

²⁰ Carvalho, “Media(ted) Discourse And Society,” 166.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

stages of Carvalho's method. I began by reviewing *Kayhan Farsi* and *Kayhan English* from 1 June to 31 August 2014. All articles which fit into the ISIS narrative, as described below, were considered.

Defining the ISIS narrative proved the most difficult part of this study. Reisigl and Wodak call this process "delimiting a discourse." They acknowledge the difficulty of this process because, "as an analytical construct, a 'discourse' always depends on the discourse analyst's perspective. As an object of investigation, discourse is not a closed unit, but a dynamic semiotic entity that is open to interpretation and continuation."²² Since discourses often overlap, it is important for a researcher to untangle them in order to hone in on their unit of analysis. CDA researchers refer to the overlap between narratives as 'interdiscursivity.' If a researcher fails to disentangle interdiscursive narratives early on, it could result in an impossible project due to a large amount of data covering an excessively wide scope. Consider the following example: a researcher wants to study 'getting ready for work' within the context of a morning routine. If the subject lays out his or her clothes for the following day the night before, should this be included in the discourse? What if a subject occasionally eats breakfast at his or her office, after arriving at work? These situations may or may not be included in the study, depending on the researcher's perspective and how he or she chooses to delimit the data.

The corpus of evidence for the present study consists of every article from the period mentioned above that explicitly mentions ISIS leadership, ISIS organizational

²² Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak, "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)," in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis 2nd edition*, edited by Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer, (London: SAGE, 2009), 89.

behavior, ISIS involvement in the current conflict and political events that occurred as a result of ISIS activity. Articles that did not explicitly mention ISIS in these contexts were included based on the following three considerations:

1. Foreign support of ISIS is an important part of the narrative. However, *Kayhan* does not always make a clear distinction between foreign support of ISIS and foreign support of other terrorist organizations in Syria such as the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Al-Nusra Front or Ba'ath party remnants in Iraq. *Kayhan* often lumps these groups together which may seem strange when considering the American perspective. In the United States, people generally acknowledge their country's material support of the FSA but do not consider their country a supporter of ISIS, Al-Nusra Front or remaining Ba'ath party elements. Should Iran see it this way? One of Iran's few allies in the region is Syria's president, Bashar Assad. But in Syria, the FSA, Al-Nusra Front and ISIS all represent a similar threat to this ally. Since the FSA, Al-Nusra Front and ISIS share a common goal of toppling the Assad regime, it is understandable that *Kayhan* might not always distinguish between these groups. Regarding another Iranian ally, Iraq, *Kayhan* associates ISIS with remnants of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party. Similarly, Ba'ath party elements and ISIS both represent a threat to Iran's alliance with Iraq. For these reasons, *Kayhan* refers to militants belonging to all of these groups – the FSA and Al-Nusra Front in Syria, Ba'ath party elements in Iraq and ISIS in both countries - as 'terrorists,' 'deviants,' 'takfiris,' etc., interchangeably. Therefore I have included any story referring to a foreign country's support of unspecified 'terrorists,' 'deviants,' 'takfiris,' etc., in the study only if that

supporting country had been explicitly implicated as a supporter of ISIS at another point during the narrative.

2. *Kayhan* depicts ISIS as part of a greater ‘Iran vs. the United States’ regional struggle. Disentangling this struggle from the ISIS narrative proved challenging. In *Kayhan*, ISIS is presented as a terrorist group mainly supported primarily by the United States and Israel. The organization is believed to be part of a greater American plot to subvert Iran’s regional interests by destabilizing its allies Iraq and Syria. For this reason, stories related to American meddling in Iraqi and Syrian politics were included in the study. Articles which concerned other countries mentioned in this subversion/destabilization sub-narrative were only included if *Kayhan* had implicated them as a supporter of ISIS at some other point during the period of study. Some countries that fall into this category include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Jordan. Accordingly, I have included articles about malevolent activities of these countries in the corpus.

3. This study does not address the Iranian nuclear issue. *Kayhan* links the nuclear issue neither to America’s regional destabilization effort nor to ISIS, although America’s role in the nuclear issue negatively affects Iran and does appear in *Kayhan* throughout the period of analysis. While *Kayhan* does consider the nuclear issue a means by which the West attempts to subvert Iran, it does not frame the issue in a regional context; the nuclear issue is presented as an international one and focuses on economic sanctions. I acknowledge that interdiscursivity is present in Iran’s international and regional subversion narratives, however, including the international side of this narrative would move the spotlight away from ISIS and make the amount of evidence unmanageable.

Each Chapter will analyze the ISIS sub-narrative or narratives most reported on by both *English* and *Farsi* during its respective month. I have chosen this chronological organization in order to retain some narrative quality in this research. For example, Chapter two will cover June, looking at *Kayhan*'s perspective on the Syrian presidential elections sub-narrative and Sistani's Iraqi mobilization fatwa. Chapter three will investigate *Kayhan*'s portrayal of Kurdish politics following the ISIS capture of Mosul, the most reported topic of July. As for Chapter four, it will examine *Kayhan*'s view on contention surrounding the August change out of the Iraqi premier.

The next section will introduce the publications under study. I will provide a brief history and discuss links between the office of the Supreme Leader and *Kayhan Institute*, an organization that oversees the publication of *Kayhan English* and *Kayhan Farsi*, (henceforth referred to as English and Farsi, respectively). Next, I will address ideological similarities between the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Hussein Khamenei, and the chief editor of *Kayhan*, Hussein Shariatmadari, a perspective known as the 'conservative right' in Iran's political parlance.

KAYHAN AND KHAMENEI

The dictionary definition of *kayhan*, directly translated, is "the space outside of Earth's atmosphere and all that is in it,"²³ often rendered into English as 'galaxy' or 'cosmos.' To Westerners, this may seem an appropriate title for a newspaper whose perspective differs so much from their own. Although *Kayhan* publications may have low

²³ Gholamhussein Sadri-Afshar, Nasrin Hokmi and Nastaran Hokmi, *Farhangeh Mo'asereh Farsi: Viraasteh Jadid [Contemporary Persian Dictionary: New Edition]*, (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 2002), 1053.

readership, they are well established through government funding and “[offer] insight into the most extreme views of Iran’s leaders and into the mind-set and plans of those who are at the center of power.”²⁴ In this section, I will provide background information on the *Kayhan Institute* and its relationship to *Farsi* and *English*. I will also address these publications’ relationship to the office of the Supreme Leader via the director of the *Kayhan Institute*, Hussein Shariatmadari.

Founded in 1942, *Farsi* was a well-respected news outlet during last three decades of the Pahlavi era.²⁵ *English* was established in 1959 and considers itself the oldest English-language newspaper in Iran.²⁶ After the 1979 revolution, the Islamic Republic founded the *Kayhan Institute* and brought all existing *Kayhan* publications, including *Farsi* and *English*, under its control in an effort to establish itself as the new source of cultural guidance for Iran.²⁷ Today, the *Kayhan Institute* receives massive government subsidies and is managed by a personal appointee of the Supreme Leader.²⁸ The institute oversees twelve publications, including *Farsi* and *English*. The various *Kayhan Institute* publications are considered to be mouthpieces of Supreme Leader Khamenei, espousing a political orientation described by Khiabany as one that is “in favor of total Islamization of public and private life in Iran, bringing all aspects of public life under *Shari’a* . . . they [persons of this persuasion] oppose liberalization policies and seek greater intervention of the state in the economy.”²⁹

²⁴ Michael Slackman, “Freed by Revolution, He Speaks for Iran’s Hard-Liners,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2007, accessed April 4, 2015.
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/22/world/middleeast/22shariamadari.html?_r=2.

²⁵ Shapour Ghasemi, “Kayhan Newspaper,” *Iran Chamber Society*, 2006, accessed April 4, 2015.
http://www.iranchamber.com/media/articles/kayhan_newspaper.php.

²⁶ Gholam Khiabany, *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 84.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁹ Gholam Khiabany, *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity*, 38.

The Office of the Supreme Leader is the most powerful institution in the Iranian political system. The post is currently held by Ayatollah Khamenei who was appointed for life in 1989. He serves as the commander and chief of the armed forces, head of all law enforcement forces and has a huge support office with officials placed all over Iran and the world who report directly to him. Khamenei guides foreign policy via ‘cultural bureaus’ placed in Iranian embassies and domestic policy via officials placed in every provincial office. In addition, Khamenei directly appoints persons to positions such as the head of the Judiciary, President of State Radio and Television, Friday Prayer leaders across the country and the head of his newspaper enterprise, the *Kayhan Institute*.³⁰

The director of the *Kayhan Institute* and chief editor of all *Kayhan* publications is Hussein Shariatmadari. A man of the ‘Islamic’ establishment, Shariatmadari was imprisoned by the Shah for spreading the message of Ayatollah Khomeini before being freed with the advent of the Islamic Revolution. Shariatmadari then served as an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander during the Iran-Iraq War.³¹ It is rumored that he also spent time working as an interrogator for the Iranian intelligence service. In 1993, Khamenei appointed Shariatmadari as Representative of the Supreme Leader-cum-director of the *Kayhan Institute*. The relationship between the Supreme Leader and Shariatmadari appears to be a close one. *PBS* claims that Shariatmadari “speaks for him [the Supreme Leader].”³² Based on a comparison of their rhetoric, this appears to be true.

For Khamenei, hostility towards the United States is a necessary part of Iranian reactionary politics. He believes that since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic has become the new target of the United States and that hostility to the country

³⁰ Buchta, *Who Rules Iran: The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic*, 46-51.

³¹ Slackman, “Freed by Revolution, He Speaks for Iran’s Hard-Liners.”

³² “Interview Hussein Shariatmadari,” *PBS*, August 1, 2007, accessed on April 4, 2015. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/showdown/interviews/shariatmadari.html>.

is imperative to the Iranian regime's survival. Khamenei explained this in a speech given in 2000:

I am quite familiar with politicians and their words as well as the motives behind the propaganda of the international media. Considering this experience, I have now reached the conclusion that the United States has devised a comprehensive plan to subvert the Islamic system. This plan is an imitation of the plan that led to the collapse of the former Soviet Union. The U.S. officials intend to carry out the same plan in Iran, and there are enough clues in their selfish and often hasty remarks made during the past few years indicating that they aim to do so.³³

In a 2003 speech at Shahid Beheshti University, Khamenei further articulated why he thinks that the United States wants to 'subvert the Islamic system':

The primary reason for U.S. hostility toward our country is the Islamic identity of our system and the fact that our Islamic system is opposed to oppression, domination, dictatorship and political, economic or cultural dependence on others.³⁴

Khamenei considers America's efforts to undermine Iranian society as cultural and political, aimed at defacing Islam and creating division.³⁵

Khamenei believes that the United States designs and supports groups like Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in order to subvert Iran's regional interests. For Khamenei, ISIS is just another organization created by the United States to curb Iran's influence. Another way that America challenges Iran is by dividing and discrediting Islam. Khamenei further explains America's intentions in Iraq at a meeting in June 2014 with high ranking Iranian judiciary officials in which he criticized the United States for framing ISIS as a 'religious

³³ Karim Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*, (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2009), 18.

³⁴ Sadjadpour, *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*, 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

organization' and for framing the current war in Iraq as one between Sunni and Shi'i. Khamenei interprets this war as one between those "who want Iraq to join the American camp and those who want Iraq to be independent."³⁶

Kayhan Institute publications support Khamenei's views in theory and in practice. The following excerpt is from a 2007 interview with chief editor Shariatmadari and provides insight into the way *Kayhan* approaches politics. In the interview, Shariatmadari gives a lengthy explanation of *Kayhan's* position regarding Islam, similar to Khamenei's:

We [*Kayhan*] believe the world order should change. It was previously dominated by two poles, and then it turned to a one-superpower system, at the will of the United States, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Countries must have their independence, and our emphasis is the Islamic version of world order. So we defend the Islamic Revolution in our country, and we view events from that perspective. Within the domestic realm, we combat against ethical and especially economic corruption. We confront these issues strongly. Our emphasis is maintaining the country's independence and defending it against those people and those states that seek to deprive it of that independence. We attach a great deal of importance to having a government in the country that is based on the will of the people, and one that functions, of course, within the Islamic rubric.³⁷

In other public pronouncements, Shariatmadari continues this line of rhetoric. In 2013, he called the "death to America" protest slogan part of Iranian identity, going on to say that:

We are in a struggle of identities with America and the autocratic system of government. Our identities are grappling with one another. We will remain in this struggle as long as we defend Islam and they insist on defending tyranny. There are only two situations in which the struggle will end: either we turn away from the pure Islam of Mohammad or they turn away from tyranny.³⁸

³⁶ "Havadeseh araaq fetnehye amrikai ast nah Jangeh shi'eh va sonni [Events in Iraq are American Disruptions Not Shia-Sunni War]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 23, 2014, page 3, accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

³⁷ "Interview Hussein Shariatmadari."

³⁸ "'Marg bar amrika' parchameh hovyatiyeh maa ast ['Death to America' is the Banner of our Identity]," *Fars News Agency*, February 10, 2013, accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13921121001696>.

Shariatmadari's 'identity struggle' lines up nicely alongside Khamenei's beliefs regarding Iran's cultural struggle with the United States. Both believe that America represents tyranny; it subverts Islam and Iranian culture. Iran represents Islam, which is fundamentally opposed to tyranny and Western cultural subversion.

In this section, I have demonstrated the importance of the Supreme Leader in Iranian politics and his relationship to the *Kayhan Institute*. I have also shown parallels between political perspectives held by the Supreme Leader and his representative at the institute, Hussein Shariatmadari. This historical-political setup should enable the reader to make sense of an ISIS narrative which might otherwise have seemed strange or arbitrary.

Chapter 2: Syrian Elections and Iraqi Mobilization, June 2014

This section will compare *English* and *Farsi*'s depictions of the Syrian Presidential Elections and Sistani's Fatwa, both important sub-narratives in *Kayhan*'s approach to ISIS. These two sub-narratives were chosen because they received more attention than any other ISIS-related topic during the period of study. Within each sub-narrative, *Farsi* will be analyzed first, followed by *English*.

THE SYRIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The Syrian presidential elections, held on 3 June 2014, were framed by *Farsi* as a pivotal moment in the Syrian government's security struggle against ISIS. In this sub-narrative, *Farsi* went a step further than *English* by using the Syrian elections to highlight the importance of democracy in combating terrorists and proclaiming the victory of Bashar Assad as a defeat of Western plots. Although *English* also declared Assad's electoral victory a catalyst for the 'ISIS defeat' in Syria, it emphasized different aspects of the sub-narrative and painted a less hopeful picture for the country.

Two days before the elections took place, *Farsi* published an article covering the Friends of Syria Conference in Tehran. It included many public statements made by those in attendance. For example, the Speaker of Parliament, Ali Larijani, voiced support of the democratic process as a solution to the Syrian crisis. The article highlighted a portion of Larijani's speech where he commends the tenacity of the Syrian people. The article also featured remarks by the Iranian Foreign Minister, Muhammad Javad Zarif, who echoed Larijani's support of the Syrians and added that Iran is ready to send humanitarian aid to Syria.³⁹ *Farsi* furthered these positions in an election-day article, that emphasized the

³⁹ "Raahesh haleh bohraneh suriyeh az sandooq ra'i migozarad [Solution to Syrian Crisis Rests in Ballot Box]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 2, 2014, page 3, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

following: 1) the Syrian people are aware that their presence at the polls will foil Western plots, 2) Syrian security forces have ensured the safety of the polling stations, and 3) many people, including the Syrian *'ulama* and American analysts, predict an Assad victory.⁴⁰ In the days that followed, *Farsi* emphasized the legitimacy of the elections, the elections as a defeat of the West, the importance of Assad's victory for Syria and Iran's support of the Syrian government. *Farsi* printed numerous official statements concerning these topics during the post-election period.

On 7 June 2014, *Farsi* reported comments made by the head of an Iranian election monitoring commission sent to Syria, Ala'al-Din Borujerdi. During a meeting with the Syrian President, Borujerdi stated that America and the West were afraid of the Syrian elections.⁴¹ He went on to congratulate Syrian leadership, further stating that these elections were a victory for the Syrian people, the nation of Iran and all of those who stand by Syria. In addition, he pledged Iranian support to Syria during their reconstruction period.⁴² A pair of articles appear on 9 June 2014 that describe the Iranian President and parliament's congratulations to Syria, respectively. In the first article, President Hassan Rouhani congratulated Syrians in a letter to Assad for successfully carrying out their presidential election, an election which Rouhani considered a victory for the Syrian people. Rouhani continued: "The election results show the confidence of Syrian people, and their dedication to stability, safety and national unity."⁴³ The second article discussed

⁴⁰ "Mardomeh suriyeh emrooz ra'iseh jomhureh aayandeh raa entekhab mikonand [Syrian People Choose Their Next President Today]," *Kayhan Farsi*, April 4, 2015, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁴¹ "Mazdooraaneh gharb ba'ad az een entekhabaat tavaaneh khod raa az dast midehand [Western Mercenaries Lose Power After These Elections]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 7, 2014, page 10, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Rowhani beh assad tabrik goft [Rouhani Congratulated Assad]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 9, 2014, page 10, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

parliamentary support in a similar statement signed by 230 representatives. *Farsi* highlighted a portion of this statement critical of the United States:

The success of the Syrian electoral process demonstrated the power of this government and its people in the face of the scheming Americans and their allies. By voting for Bashar Assad, the Syrian nation strengthened the league of peace loving countries who are against the war in Syria, and neutralized the plots of America and other enemies.⁴⁴

English briefly mentioned the Syrian elections on 1 June 2014 in a front page article about terrorist atrocities in Syria. Near the end of the article, it stated: “Terrorist outfits have recently stepped up their brutal attacks on civilians in several cities and towns as Syria prepares to hold an important presidential election on June 3 [*sic*].”⁴⁵ This is a sharp break with the *Farsi* sub-narrative; in *Farsi* we find nothing correlating an upsurge in terrorist activity with the presidential elections. In fact, *Farsi* does not mention violence in Syria at all during this period, instead dwelling on the safety of the country on the eve of the elections.⁴⁶ Another break between the two narratives occurred in the publications’ discussion of ‘election legitimacy.’ While *Farsi* only mentioned the elections’ legitimacy in passing, *English* dedicated an entire article to the topic. The primary source of this report was remarks made by Bouthaina Shaaban, an advisor to Bashar Assad. Shaaban’s statement sums up the article nicely: “I would like to say to all western [*sic*] officials who say they will not acknowledge it [election legitimacy] – gone are days when legitimacy

⁴⁴ “230 namaayandeyeh majles pirooziyeh bashar assad raa tabrik goftand [230 Congressional Representatives Give Congratulations For Bashar Assad Victory],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 9, 2014, page 10, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁴⁵ “Terrorist Mortar Attacks on Aleppo Kill 20,” *Kayhan English*, June 1, 2014, page 1, accessed April 4, 2015, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁴⁶ “Tadaabir shadideh amniatīyeh artesh suriyeh dar aastaaneyeh bargozaariyeh entekhabaateh riaasateh jomhuri [Intense Syrian Military Security Planning on the Eve of Presidential Elections],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 2, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

was derived from the West. The West has no right to give our people legitimacy. It is the Syrian people who make this election legitimate.”⁴⁷

Regarding the Friends of Syria Conference, a 2 June 2014 story found in *English* about the event was similar to the one found in *Farsi*. Both articles emphasized the importance of the democratic process in Syria, as reflected in the titles, “Friends of Syria Back Elections”⁴⁸ and “Solution to Syrian Crisis Rests in Ballot Box,”⁴⁹ in *English* and *Farsi* respectively. *English* covered Iranian officials’ post-election congratulations as well, although the topic received much less attention. A small front page article remarked on the Iranian parliament’s 8 June statement lauding the Syrian people for holding successful elections.⁵⁰

In addition to coverage of the election itself, both publications reported on the elections’ after effects. *Farsi* reported the elections as a defeat for ISIS and Western plots in Syria. An article published in *Farsi* entitled, “The Messages of the Syrian Elections,” explains:

The current President was the best choice for the Syrian people. The participation of more than 83% of Syrians, 88% of which cast their vote for Assad, was a stern response to the claimers of freedom and democracy [the West]. These hypocrites have destabilized the country [Syria] for over three years by sending thousands of terrorists and the most advanced weaponry.⁵¹

The article continues, discussing the defeat of Western plots:

⁴⁷ “No Need to West to Endorse Election Legitimacy,” *Kayhan English*, June 8, 2014, page 8, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁴⁸ “Friends of Syria Back Elections,” *Kayhan English*, June 2, 2014, page 1, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁴⁹ “Raaheh haleh bohraneh suriyeh az sandoq ra’i migozarad [Solution to Syrian Crisis Rests in Ballot Box].”

⁵⁰ “Iran MPs: Syria Election Foiled Plots,” *Kayhan English*, June 9, 2014, page 1, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁵¹ “Paiyamhaayeh entekhabateh suriyeh [The Messages of the Syrian Elections],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 12, 2014, page 6, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

As expected, the West and its allies, who have all taken a belligerent stance towards the people of this country [Syria], were apprehensive about the Presidential elections. The anti-Syrian axis knew that widespread Syrian participation in the election would foil their plots, the most important of which was the removal of the Assad regime.⁵²

Additionally, *Farsi* began publishing articles during this period reporting the defeat of ISIS in Syria, caused by successful elections, as the reason for the group's attack on Iraq.

English also reported that ISIS was defeated in Syria so the group decided to attack Iraq. Unlike *Farsi* however, *English* did not cite 'successful presidential elections' as a catalyst for the defeat, remaining vague on this point. On 14 June 2014, *English* quoted Iranian Basij commander, General Muhammad Reza Naqdi, who said that ISIS is a proxy of the United States operating under orders. According to the article, the commander "implied that Western agents were behind the recent ISIS strikes in Iraq, including taking the city of Mosul."⁵³ According to the article, General Naqdi believed that America and the West will regret their decision to attack Iraq and that America was defeated in its failure to topple Bashar Assad. As he explained, "America has been tricked again, thinking that with the games it has started in Iraq it can continue its rotten . . . policies in the region."⁵⁴

Lastly, *Farsi* coverage explored the implications of the Assad victory for Iran's geopolitical situation, a topic that did not appear in *English*. A pair of *Farsi* articles, published on 8 June, shed light how the Syrian election relates to Iran's regional self-image. The first article, entitled "The Islamic Republic has Brought America to its Knees in the

⁵² "Paiyamhaayeh entekhabaateh suriyeh [The Messages of the Syrian Elections]."

⁵³ "Repeating Failed Policies in Iraq," *Kayhan English*, June 14, 2014, page 2, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Region,” is a summary of alleged Western reports on Iranian diplomatic success against American Middle East policy. The article states that Iran has ‘the upper hand’ in the region due in part to its successful support of the Assad regime, citing a piece allegedly printed in the New York Times.⁵⁵ The second article, which alleged to be based on a Saudi television news report, described the Syrian election as a demonstration of Iranian regional power. According to the Saudi source, the balance of power in the Middle East will not change as long as Tehran supports Damascus, despite Western assistance to insurgents. This source reminds us that the West and their Arab allies sought to overthrow the Syrian regime within a few months, however, the fact that three years later the Assad regime was able to hold elections legitimized the Syrian government.⁵⁶

GRAND AYATOLLAH ALI SISTANI’S FATWA

As the Iraqi government reeled from the ISIS capture of Mosul, Iraq’s top Shi’i cleric took action. At a prayer service on Friday, 13 June 2014, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistaniⁱⁱ issued a fatwa calling for Iraqis to mobilize and fight against ISIS. *Farsi* and *English* followed these events closely and considered the Fatwa an important agent in the Iraqi effort. More specifically, *Farsi* considered the Fatwa a major factor contributing to the Iraqi people’s mobilization and alleged tactical success against ISIS. *Farsi* also reported the Fatwa’s universal acceptance by important religious and political figures. Meanwhile, *English* de-emphasized support of the fatwa. Although the publication did consider the

⁵⁵ “Jomhuriyeh eslami, amrika raa dar mantagheh beh zaanu dar aavordeh ast [The Islamic Republic Has Brought America to its Knees within the Region],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 8, 2014, page 3, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁵⁶ “Entekhabateh suriyeh paiyaameh eghtedaareh iraan beh jahaan bood [Syrian Election was a Message of Iranian Supremacy to the World],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 8, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

Fatwa a motivator in the subsequent troop mobilization, *English* reported more limited Iraqi tactical success against ISIS than *Farsi* did and refrained from linking reported tactical success directly to the Fatwa.

Because *Kayhan* is not published on Fridays, the Islamic day of rest, its coverage of the Fatwa did not begin until the following day, 14 June 2014. On this day, *Farsi* covered a phone conversation about the situation in Iraq that took place between President Rouhani and Iraqi Premier Nouri al-Maliki. During the conversation, Rouhani remarked on Sistani's fatwa: "The noble Shi'i religious authority Ayatollah Sistani's announcement that all must unite in the battle against terrorists will play an important role in Iraqi mobilization and resistance against terrorist killings and crimes."⁵⁷ *Farsi* continued reporting on the important role played by the fatwa throughout the remainder of June 2014.

Farsi reported the fatwa's immediate effect. On the same day as Rouhani's remarks, a back page article entitled "Mobilization Across Iraq in the Fight Against ISIS Terrorists" stated: "The Iraqi people accept the religious edict [Sistani's Fatwa] and enter battle against ISIS alongside the Iraqi Army."⁵⁸ The article went on to emphasize cross-country fervor to volunteer. It quoted an Iraqi commander in charge of operations near Samarra, Sabah al-Fatlawi, who said that: "About 1.5 million people from all over Iraq have volunteered to fight ISIS."⁵⁹ Later on, the article printed excerpts from the Fatwa. In it, Sistani said that anyone who can lift a weapon must join the Iraqi security efforts, adding

⁵⁷ "Ejaazeh nemidahim teroristhaa, amniat va sobaateh araagh raa beh ham bezanand [We Will Not Allow Terrorists to Disrupt Iraq's Stability and Security]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 14, 2014, page 10, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁵⁸ "Baseejeh saraasari dar araagh baraayeh moghabeleh baa teroristhaayeh da'esh [Mobilization Across Iraq in the Fight Against ISIS Terrorists]" *Kayhan Farsi*, June 14, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

that anyone who dies fighting against ISIS will be considered a martyr.⁶⁰ Similar coverage continues for the next six days.

On 15 June 2014, *Farsi* published two articles regarding Sistani's Fatwa. The first, highlighted Iraqi clerical support of Sistani's Fatwa. This short piece revealed that Ayatollah Qazvini, the Friday Imam of the Imam Hussein shrine in Karbala, led Friday prayers wearing combat fatigues and holding a weapon. In his sermon, he called on the people to stand with the Iraqi Army and destroy ISIS in accordance with Sistani's decree ordering *jihad*.ⁱⁱⁱ He went on to say that ISIS is targeting every province, including the religiously significant Najaf and Karbala.⁶¹ The second 15 June 2014 article mentioned the religiously motivated mobilization of Iraqis in the face of ISIS amid a discussion of the disposition of Iraqi forces and ISIS militants. The article concluded with a list of influential clerics who support Sistani's Fatwa, including the President of the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim, and Grand Ayatollah Bashir Najafi.⁶² In regard to the quotations above, two points are worth noting. First, the 'volunteers' obeying Sistani's Fatwa do not necessarily join the Iraqi security forces. As seen in both Qazvini's statement and *Farsi*'s characterization, volunteers are referred to as an entity separate from the Iraq military that organized into, literally, 'people's forces,'^{iv} a term which I have rendered into English in this study as 'paramilitary force.' This characterization held true throughout the Sistani fatwa sub-narrative found in *Farsi*. Secondly, *Farsi* not only reported on Shi'i clerics who supported the Sistani Fatwa, but on Sunni leaders who called for mobilization

⁶⁰ "Baseejeh saraasari dar araagh baraayeh moghabeleh baa teroristhaayeh da'esh [Mobilization Across Iraq in the Fight Against ISIS Terrorists]."

⁶¹ "Ayatollah qazvini dar karbala lebsaseh razm pooshid [Ayatollah Qazvini Dons Combat Fatigues in Karbala]", *Kayhan Farsi*, June 15, 2014, page 3, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶² "Atasheh sangeeneh artesh va mardomeh araagh bar sareh da'esh [Military and People of Iraq Bring Heavy Fire to Bear on ISIS]", *Kayhan Farsi*, June 15, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

against ISIS, as the newspaper tries more and more to discredit Islamic State as a religious movement.

For example, in the latter part of June *Farsi* began to frame the religious decree not only as the impetus for popular Iraqi mobilization but as an agent which turned the tide of the war. In the following excerpt, taken from 16 June 2014, *Farsi* referenced Sistani's Fatwa and Sunni leaders:

Paramilitary forces [literally, 'people's forces'] and the Iraqi Army halt the advance of ISIS towards Baghdad and have uprooted the group from many areas. The entry of tens of thousands of paramilitary forces into the fray has completely turned the tide of the war within the last 24 hours; people responding to appeals by the leading Shi'i religious authority [Sistani] and Sunni *ulama* have taken up arms, and forced ISIS mercenaries to retreat in many areas.⁶³

Farsi coverage over the next few days emphasized the universal support of Sistani's Fatwa. For example, on the 18 June 2014 it reported that United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon "welcomes Ayatollah Sistani's Fatwa regarding Iraqi unity."⁶⁴ The following day featured two articles that reference the Fatwa. In the first, a representative of the Al-Marashdeh tribe of Iraq said that he had accepted Sistani's call for *jihad* and had begun organizing tribal fighters.⁶⁵ The second article featured comments by the Iraqi Premier, Nouri Al-Maliki, "Sistani's Fatwa strengthened our will to fight against ISIS."⁶⁶

⁶³ "Zarabaateh sangeen beh da'esh terroristaa paa beh faraar gozaashtand [Heavy Blows Cause ISIS Terrorists to Flee]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 16, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶⁴ "Azaadsaazi va paaksaaziyeh mantagheh beh mantagheh dar araagh [Liberation and Clearing in Iraq, Sector by Sector]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 18, 2014, page 12, April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶⁵ "Edameye tasfeyeh afsaaraneh kha'en hamzamaan baa piroozihayeh taazeyeh artesheh araagh [Traitorous Officers Continue to be Purged as Iraqi Army Achieves Fresh Victories]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 19, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶⁶ "Maleki: bohraneh konuni araagh yek tote'eyeh mantaghei ast [Maliki: Iraq's Current Crisis is a Regional Conspiracy]," *Kayhan Farsi*, June 19, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

The final explicit mention of the fatwa in *Farsi* during the period of study comes on 28 June 2014. After summarizing tactical successes by the Iraqi Army and popular militia forces across Iraq, the article adverted to the fatwa: “A fatwa issued by the ranking Shi’i religious authority [Sistani] blindsided ISIS terrorists who had occupied sections of northern Iraq since 9 June 2014. ISIS are pulling out of more and more occupied areas by the day.”⁶⁷ A week before this article, two others appeared that alluded to remarkable successes in mobilization. On 22 June, 2014 an article was printed by *Farsi* carrying the headline “Two Million Iraqis Join Intense Battle Against ISIS Infidels” which chronicled Iraqi tactical and recruiting success.⁶⁸ The next day, *Farsi* printed a similar article that stated: “. . . the number of volunteers in the fight against ISIS terrorists has grown so much so that the total exceeds 2.5 million.”⁶⁹ Within the context of this sub-narrative, the sharp uptick in volunteers reported by *Farsi* in these two articles appeared to be linked to the fatwa.

Two themes appeared in *Farsi*’s reporting on the Fatwa sub-narrative. First, the Fatwa is universally accepted - from the Iranian President, to Iraqi clerics, to the Iraqi people, to the United Nations Secretary General. Secondly, the Fatwa resulted in widespread mobilization, especially of paramilitary forces. As mentioned above, *Farsi*’s Iraqi military source reports 1.5 million volunteers by the day after the Fatwa. Within ten days of the Fatwa, the number of volunteer fighters was reported at over 2.5 million.

⁶⁷ “Sarkubeh da’esh dar araagh shaaheh sa’udi raa beh haraas andakht [Suppression of ISIS in Iraq Frightens Saudi King].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 28, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶⁸ “Nabardeh sangeen baa kofaareh da’esh 2 miliyon araaghi sabtehmaam kardand [Two Million Iraqis Join Intense Battle Against ISIS Infidels],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 22, 2014, page 12, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁶⁹ “Pishraviyeh artesh dar shomaaleh araagh baraayeh paaksaaziyeh kaameleh ostaaneh salaahuddin [Iraqi Army Advances Towards Complete Clearance of Salah Ad-Din Province in Northern Iraq],” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 23, 2014, page 12, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

English also considered Sistani's Fatwa a key factor in Iraqi mobilization. On the whole, the Iraqi mobilization numbers reported in *English* are similar to those found in *Farsi*, although they appeared on different days throughout the month. For example, *English* did not report 1.5 million volunteers until 15 June 2014.⁷⁰ *Farsi* presented this statistic on 14 June, the day after the Fatwa. *English* reported two million volunteers on 18 June while *Farsi* did not report the figure until 22 June 2014. Remarkably, the two million figure appears in *English* for the first time on the weekly "Children's Corner" page near the end of an article entitled "Time to Wipe Out Terrorists from Iraq":

These hordes of Lucifer [ISIS] have even threatened to desecrate the holy shrines of the Imams of the Prophet's Household, if they manage to enter the sacred cities of Karbala, Najaf, Kazemayn in Baghdad, and Samarra. However, thanks to the fatwa issued by Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Sistani, around two million Iraqis including Sunni Muslims, encouraged by the edicts of their clerics, have rallied to the defence of Baghdad. This united force is beginning to drive back the cowardly Takfiris.⁷¹

This was not the last time that *English* reported the number. It appeared again the next day⁷² and on 22 June 2014, the same day *Farsi* released the figure, and the day. Unlike *Farsi*, *English* does not emphasize the Fatwa's universal acceptance. *English* featured only one article on this topic, published 25 June 2014 which said that "Iran's Qom seminary school, an influential theological school of Islamic learning, has praised Iraqi top Shia cleric Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali al-Sistani's religious decree, urging Iraqis to protect the

⁷⁰ "Iraq Set to Launch Offensive Against ISIL Terrorists," *Kayhan English*, June 15, 2014, page 8, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁷¹ "Time to Wipe Out Terrorists from Iraq," *Kayhan English*, June 18, 2014, page 4, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁷² "ISIL Terrorists Kidnap 100 Foreign Nationals in Iraq," *Kayhan English*, June 19, 2014, page 7, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

country's holy shrines against terrorist attacks by ISIL.”⁷³ The same 25 June 2014 article again cited the ‘two million’ figure. Here we see a discrepancy as *Farsi* had placed the number of Iraqi volunteers at over 2.5 million two days before.

CONCLUSION

Two trends emerged in our respective publication's coverage of these episodes. First, *Farsi* gave a more hopeful description of events than *English*. For example, *English* reported an uptick in terrorist attacks during the build up to the Syrian elections,⁷⁴ whereas *Farsi* emphasized the security of voting sites.⁷⁵ In the Sistani Fatwa sub-narrative, *Farsi* focused on the Fatwa's universal acceptance and linked the Iraqi security forces' tactical success to the Fatwa, whereas *English* did not. If one includes *Farsi*'s final mobilization figures as part of the Fatwa sub-narrative, we see a larger number of volunteers in *Farsi* by the end of the month than in *English*.

Secondly, *Farsi* put more emphasis on ‘people’ as an agent in the ISIS struggle than *English*. According to *Farsi*, the Syrian people were aware that their votes would foil Western plots.⁷⁶ The Syrian people were also mentioned frequently in congratulatory statements to Assad reported by *Farsi*. *English* mentioned the Syrian people only once, in a small article that quoted the Iranian parliament's post-election statement.⁷⁷ The Iraqi people received similar treatment by *Farsi*. Throughout *Farsi*'s Fatwa sub-narrative, ‘people's forces’ were referred to as separate from Iraqi security forces. In *Farsi*, ‘people's

⁷³ “Qom Seminary Backs Ayatollah Sistani's Fatwa,” *Kayhan English*, June 25, 2014, page 2, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁷⁴ “Terrorist Mortar Attacks on Aleppo Kill 20.”

⁷⁵ “Mardomeh suriyeh emrooz ra'iseh jomhureh aayandeh raa entekhab mikonand [Syrian People Choose Their Next President Today].”

⁷⁶ “Mardomeh suriyeh emrooz ra'iseh jomhureh aayandeh raa entekhab mikonand [Syrian People Choose Their Next President Today].”

⁷⁷ “Iran MPs: Syria Election Foiled Plots.”

forces' organized and served alongside the Iraqi Army, not in it. *English* does not make such a distinction; it only mentioned Iraqi security forces in the fight against ISIS.

While the narratives of *English* and *Farsi* are generally the same, the trends identified above suggest that *English* makes a deliberate effort to speak to a Western audience. For example, *English* chose to dedicate an entire article to the legitimacy of the Syrian elections, whereas in *Farsi*, election legitimacy was mentioned in passing or implied. At the time of the Syrian presidential elections, the general consensus in the English speaking world was the elections were a fraud. Perhaps *English* published an entire article on the topic to challenge this Western assumption and attempt to convince Westerners otherwise. *Farsi* assumed the elections were healthy, an indication that its domestic audience did not need to be convinced. In regard to the Fatwa sub-narrative, *English* does not make a distinction between 'people's forces' and the Iraqi security forces. Anglophone countries, generally, view armed civilian militias in a negative light. Therefore, had *English* reported the 'people's forces' as a separate component of Iraqi mobilization, the Fatwa sub-narrative would have been less palatable for Western readers. *Farsi* faced no such issue. The publication's depiction of volunteers as a separate entity harkens back to the Basij mobilizations of the Iran-Iraq War. 'People's forces' fighting alongside regular forces is a concept that Iranian readers know well.

Chapter 3: Kurdish Politics, July 2014

Kayhan reporting in July was dominated by political developments in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Early failures by the divided Maliki government to quell the ISIS advance led to action by President Masoud Barzani of the KRG, namely, his orders to the Peshmerga^v to seize oilfields around Kirkuk and the decision to hold a referendum on KRG independence from Iraq. These developments caused much friction between the KRG and the Iraqi central government and were followed closely by *Kayhan*. For its part, *Farsi* interpreted these actions as treacherous; Barzani was portrayed as a traitor who supported ISIS, directly opposed the will of the Iraqi people and knowingly pursued the goals of the United States and Israel - two countries *Farsi* alleged to have created ISIS and that sought to partition Iraq. To support these claims, *Farsi* focused on the disunifying nature of Barzani's decisions to seize Kirkuk and hold a referendum, the support the KRG received from enemies of the Shi'i 'resistance front'^{vi} and how actions taken by the KRG forwarded an American/Israeli plot to partition Iraq. *English* took a similar but less direct approach, stopping short of calling the KRG an American/Israeli proxy.

I have divided *Farsi*'s Kurdish politics sub-narrative into three different topics, analyzed in three respective subsections. The first looks at the publication's take on the alleged 'American/Israeli partition plot,' along with the Barzani's role in it. The next analyzes *Farsi* reporting on those persons in favor of the Kurdish independence and partition. The final subsection looks at those who were against it. After analyzing *Farsi*'s portrayal of the sub-narrative, I'll compare it to the *English* version. The *English* portion will focus mostly on the publication's portrayal of the 'American/Israeli partition plot'

since its reporting is essentially the same regarding those in favor of and against Barzani's actions.

A pair of articles appearing on 3 and 12 July 2014 respectively, give an in-depth look at *Farsi's* perspective on what it considered an 'American/Israeli plot.' The first, entitled "The ISIS Fantasy," stated that the United States and Israel formed ISIS in order to target Iran's 'resistance front' and other interests in the region. The article framed 'partition' as part of an American/Israeli strategy aimed at weakening Iran by undercutting a unified Iraq, a key member of the 'resistance front,' and thus strengthening Israel's position in the region.⁷⁸ The second article, entitled "The Zionists' Dream for Kurdish Iraq," explored *Farsi's* view on Israel's relationship to partition, in depth:

From the Israelis' perspective, the fact that Kurds are scattered across the region makes taking advantage of them useful and simple. The Israelis' even believe that forming an independent Kurdistan is a sort of 'strategic investment and balance for Israel.' On the topic, Ofra Bengio says that 'forming an independent Kurdistan would weaken numerous countries with a history of enmity with Israeli such as Iraq, Syria and Iran.' They [Israelis] believe that a Kurdistan formed within the heart of the resistance front can act as a dagger in the heart of those nations in the region who support the front.⁷⁹

Comments made by the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab-African Affairs Amir-Abdollahian also clear up the *Farsi* perspective: "The Iranian Foreign Ministry Deputy for Arab-African Affairs considered the partition of Iraq a Zionist project, saying that 'We will never allow Netanyahu's (Prime Minister of the Zionist regime) dream to come true.'"⁸⁰ In addition, Amir-Abdollahian encouraged Barzani not to violate the constitution, a move that

⁷⁸ "Tavvahom az no'eh daa'eshi [The ISIS Fantasy]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 3, 2014, page 2, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁷⁹ "Khaawbeh sahyunisthaa baraayeh kordistaneh 'araaq [The Zionists' Dream for Kurdish Iraq]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 12, 2014, page 2, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁸⁰ "Amir-abdollahian: iraan ejaazeh nemidehad araaq tajziyeh beshavad [Amir-Abdollahian: Iran Will Not Allow Iraq to be Partitioned]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 7, page 2, accessed July 28, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

would be “in no one’s interest.” He went on: “We [the Iranian government] will not support partition, in the same way that all people of Iraq - including Shi’is and Sunni’s, Kurds and Arabs – will not support partition; we are strongly in favor of territorial unity in Iraq.”⁸¹

In addition to explaining the partition plot, *Farsi* reported on which countries supported it, while using feature articles and quotations to frame Barzani as an enabler of the plot. *Farsi* alleged that his decisions to seize oil rich Kirkuk and hold an independence referendum appeared to have a disunifying effect on Iraq and were the first steps in the realization of an American/Israeli partition plot. For example, a 1 July 2014 article reported that Barzani not only wanted Prime Minister Maliki to step down but implied that the KRG is a foreign proxy: “. . . the Zionist regime, the United States, and even Turkey are talking of partitioning Iraq; Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of the Zionist Regime, officially announced that he will help Iraqi Kurds achieve independence.”⁸² Emphasizing the United States as a supporter of partition, another article cited an anonymous American analyst who allegedly stated that the United States seeks the partition of Iraq.⁸³ Both the United States and Israel are implicated on 12 July 2014 as *Farsi* exposed discourse between Israeli politicians, who favor partition, and their American counterparts:

⁸¹ “Amir-abdollahian: iraan ejaazeh nemidehad araaq tajziyeh beshavad [Amir-Abdollahian: Iran Will Not Allow Iraq to be Partitioned].”

⁸² “Fazaasaaziyeh jaryaanhaayeh gharbgaraa baraayeh takhribeh ravandeh siaasiyeh Araaq [West-Leaning Political Factions Set Stage for the Sabotage of Iraqi Political Process],” *Kayhan Farsi*, 1 July, 2014, page 12, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁸³ “Jalaseyeh parlemaaneh Araaq baraayeh entekhaabeh ro’asaayeh 3 qoveh naatavaan maand [Iraqi Parliament Unable to Select Heads of 3 Government Branches],” *Kayhan Farsi*, 2 July, 2014, page 12, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

Israel has concluded that now is the time for Kurdistan to separate from Baghdad. This is exactly the same sentiment that Avigdor Liberman, the Zionist Minister of Foreign Affairs, communicated to his counterpart John Kerry. This is the same attitude that Shimon Perez, the President of Israel, shared in his letter to Barak Obama, President of the United States.⁸⁴

The aforementioned articles have powerful implications in a publication that openly accused Israel and the United States of creating ISIS and chaotic the situation that enabled Barzani to take actions toward partition. These articles taken in conjunction with accusations by Maliki described below, shed light on the true depth of Barzani's alleged treachery.

Prime Minister Maliki, who made some of the most damning accusations against Barzani, was among the myriad of regional politicians and pundits *Farsi* cited throughout the month who opposed the KRG's provocations and an independent Kurdistan. On the same day of a feature article describing "the partition of Iraq" and "an independent Kurdistan" as ISIS priorities,⁸⁵ Maliki implicated Barzani as a facilitator of ISIS: "Unfortunately, now I must say that the capital of the Kurdish region, Arbil, has been transformed into a center for ISIS, former Ba'ath party members and Al-Qaeda terrorists."⁸⁶ This statement came as no surprise considering days later *Farsi* reported that Maliki had dismissed Kurdish cabinet members and halted Baghdad – Arbil flights.⁸⁷ The same article accused the KRG of selling oil in northern Iraq without the permission of

⁸⁴ "Khaawbeh sahyunisthaa baraayeh kordistaneh 'araaq [The Zionists' Dream for Kurdish Iraq]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 12, 2014, page 2, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁸⁵ "Paazeleh bohraneh araaq [The Puzzle of the Iraq Crisis]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 10, 2014, page 8, accessed July 30, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁸⁶ "E'zaameh daavtalabaaneh tazeh nafas karbala baraayeh paaksaaziyeh kaameleh shahreh tikrit [Fresh Volunteers from Karbala Sent to Clear City of Tikrit]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 10, 2014, page 12, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁸⁷ "Maleki vaziraaneh kord raa az kaabineyeh 'araaq ekhraaj kard [Maliki Throws Kurdish Ministers out of Iraqi Cabinet]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 12, 2014, page 12, accessed August 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

Baghdad, despite an ongoing 'land dispute' - referring to the KRG's continued possession of the Kirkuk oilfields.⁸⁸ Citing yet another of Barzani's efforts to disunify Iraq, the piece stated that he had ordered the digging of a defensive channel across northern Iraq in order to protect the KRG from terrorists. Also mentioned, was Barzani's intent to hold an independence referendum against the will of the Iraqi people.⁸⁹

Other public figures were reported to have spoken out against Barzani's incitements. For example on 1 July 2014, Amir-Abdollahian dismissed the idea of a referendum and the notion of partition: "The wise Iraqi-Kurdish leaders are not seeking autonomy and remain bound to the constitution of the country [Iraq] . . . those who speak of partitioning Iraq are not considering the consequences of such an action."⁹⁰ A 5 July 2014 article, mentioned other politicians who opposed independence and partition:

Salih Muslim, the leader of Syrian Kurds, announced that he also does not support the disunion of Iraqi Kurds. In Baghdad, Iskandar Watoot, a parliament representative belonging to the State of Law coalition, said that Kirkuk will never belong to Kurdistan. Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari [an ethnic Kurd] said that Kurds and Sunnis cannot and must not order Shi'is around.⁹¹

The article also asserted that because an independent Iraqi Kurdistan does not have the support of its neighbors partition is not feasible:

One must tell those who talk about Barzani's recent statements regarding the independence referendum that even he himself knows [partition] is not practicable

⁸⁸ "Maleki vaziraaneh kord raa az kaabineyeh 'araaq ekhraaj kard [Maliki Throws Kurdish Ministers out of Iraqi Cabinet]."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ "Hefz tamaamiyateh arziyeh Araaq moredeh ta'kideh Iraan ast [Iran Stresses Preservation of Iraq's Territorial Integrity]," *Kayhan Farsi*, 1 July, 2014, page 10, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁹¹ "Halaakateh 280 teroristeh ejaarei dar amaliaateh moshtarakeh artesh va mardomeh Araaq [280 Terrorist Mercenaries Killed in Joint Iraqi Military-Militia Operation]," *Kayhan Farsi*, July 5, 2014, page 12, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

. . . Iraqi political parties, factions, and Kurds must be aware that this is not a good time for political turf wars.⁹²

Finally, *Farsi* places Barzani at odds with the Iraqi people. Quoting a spokesperson for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a 6 July 2014 article stated: “The Iraqi constitution has the capacity to secure the needs of all people in the country and we have no doubt that all Iraqis seek to protect the unity of Iraq. The people of Iraq will never concede to partition of their country.”⁹³

Unlike *Farsi*, *English* never fully explained the partition plot – but it did make oblique references to it. As seen in the following examples, while *English* did portray the KRG’s seizure of Kirkuk and Barzani’s desired referendum as treacherous and did highlight foreign support of the KRG’s actions, it did not directly accuse Barzani of carrying out a foreign plot.

On 1 July 2014, *English* ran an article summarizing the situation and emphasizing an overt link between Israel and the KRG:

Lawmakers in Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdistan region have welcomed Zionist Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s call for the creation of an independent Kurdish state. Mardan Khadr Zebary, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK), thanked Netanyahu on Sunday, saying the Kurdistan region and Israel face the same enemies. Bayar Tahir Dosky, also from the PDK, said the Zionist premier’s call made them happy, as he tried to ‘support us and give the Kurds and Kurdistan their rights.’⁹⁴

The article went on to mention the KRG seizure of the Kirkuk oilfields and highlight tension between the central government and the KRG:

⁹² “Tavvahom az no’eh daa’eshi [The ISIS Fantasy],” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 3, 2014, page 2, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁹³ “Mardomeh araaq hergez beh tajzieyeh keshvarehshoon tan nakhaahad daad [The Iraqi People Will Never Concede to Partition of Their Country],” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 6, 2014, page 2, accessed July 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

⁹⁴ “Iraqi Kurds Welcome Netanyahu Support,” *Kayhan English*, July 1, 2014, page 8, accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

Kurdish forces took control of Kirkuk after Iraqi troops entered a battle with the so called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) earlier this month. The latest developments come as tensions have been ratcheted up between Kurdistan's regional leaders and the central government in Baghdad. The Iraqi government has repeatedly slammed the Kurdistan region for exporting oil without Baghdad's consent. Baghdad says it has the sole right to export the country's crude, but the Kurds say they are entitled to market the resources of their own region.⁹⁵

English put much more stress on Netanyahu's support of an "independent Kurdish state" than *Farsi* did, however, it took a much less nuanced approach to the issue; *English* repeated the same talking points in almost the exact same fashion numerous times throughout the month. Nearly every article in *English* regarding the KRG or Barzani mentioned Netanyahu's support of an independent Kurdistan and KRG contentedness with his support. Whereas *Farsi* explained this support as part of an Israeli led plot to partition Iraq, *English* did not make such a connection, although it left room for a reader to assume as much. For the sake of brevity, of the more than a dozen articles that mentioned the Israel-KRG link only three are referenced here.

In the first, the Israeli pro-partition stance is juxtaposed against the Turkish position. After quoting Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister, who was not in favor of KRG independence, the article stated: "Netanyahu expressed support for the potential separation of the Kurdistan region from Iraq. . . . Lawmakers in Kurdistan region [*sic*] welcomed the comments by Netanyahu."⁹⁶ In the next example, printed a few days later, an article focusing mostly on Barzani's alleged opportunism mentioned that: "Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also has supported the creation of an independent Kurdistan state."⁹⁷ The final example comes near the end of the month, as is seen in the final sentence of an

⁹⁵ "Iraqi Kurds Welcome Netanyahu Support."

⁹⁶ "Turkey Does Not Want to See Divided Iraq," *Kayhan English*, July 2, 2014, page 7, accessed September 1, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

⁹⁷ "KRG President Accused of 'Treason' Against Iraq," *Kayhan English*, July 6 2014, page 7, accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

article on KRG oil exports: “The Zionist regime was the first foreign regime to welcome an independent Kurdistan.”⁹⁸

English held a position similar to *Farsi*'s in regards to KRG treachery. Like *Farsi*, it portrayed Barzani and KRG politicians as traitors against the Iraqi central government, citing as proof, their support of ISIS, as well as their provocative actions suggestive of partition. Unlike *Farsi*, however, *English* did not openly state that Barzani was working toward the goals of foreign governments. *English*'s reporting only subtly implied this, using public statements by Iraqi political figures accusing the KRG of supporting ISIS and constantly highlighting foreign, particularly American and Israeli, support of ISIS and the KRG.^{vii} Since both *Farsi* and *English* openly claimed^{viii} that ISIS was created and is supported by the United States and Israel, one could infer from *English* reporting on how the KRG assists ISIS, that the KRG is at the least complicit in the foreign plot to partition Iraq and at most operates as an American/Israeli proxy. The following two pairs of articles provide evidence for this supposition.

In a 6 July 2014 article, *English* presented the viewpoint of an Iraqi politician hostile to the KRG: “An Iraqi parliamentarian has accused the president of Iraq’s Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of ‘treason’ against the central government during the overrun of the northern city of Mosul by the Takfir Takfiri [*sic*] group [ISIS].” Quoting the Iraqi parliamentarian, *English* wrote: “According to our accurate information, Masoud Barzani was involved in a treachery that helped the ISIL insurgents overrun Iraq’s second largest city last month.” The following day, an article about Iran’s position regarding the new Iraqi Prime Minister weighs in on the KRG question: “The ISIL offensive, which led Iraqi troops to abandon their posts, has emboldened Kurdish leaders to press for

⁹⁸ “Iraqi Kurdistan Oil Reaches Texas,” *Kayhan English*, July 28, 2014, page 7, accessed September 1, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

independence of their autonomous northern region. Tehran opposes a break up of Iraq, denouncing it as an Israeli plot.”⁹⁹ The first article, featured a politician that unequivocally accused the KRG of enabling ISIS to overrun Mosul while the second highlighted ISIS as an agent whose actions emboldened the KRG to “press for independence.” These types of articles, taken together, emerged as more subtle version of *Farsi*’s portrayal of the ‘partition plot.’

For the second example, a pair of articles that appeared on 10 and 14 July 2014 will be analyzed. The first, reported on a public statement made by the Iraqi premier in which he openly accused the KRG of treachery:

Prime Minister Nuri [*sic*] al-Maliki on Wednesday accused the Northern [*sic*] autonomous Kurdish region of hosting terrorists spearheading an offensive that has overrun swathes of territory and sparked Iraq’s worst crisis in years. ‘Honestly, we cannot be silent over this and we cannot be silent over Arbil being a headquarters for Daash (i.e. ISIL), and Baath, and Al-Qaeda and terrorist operations.’¹⁰⁰

The second article, quoted a political analyst who stated that: “The United States supports formation of an independent Kurdish state to use the entity to undermine Iraq’s central government.”¹⁰¹ The analyst went on to point out who would most benefit from the fragmentation of Iraq:

Foreign powers, including the US, are keen to recognize an independent Kurdish state. The Americans want to use it as a weapon against the central government. They are threatening the central government that the Kurdish region might do it alone and go outside Iraq.¹⁰²

As with the previous example, *English* does not explicitly accuse the KRG of acting as a

⁹⁹ “Iran to Respect Iraq’s Choice for PM,” *Kayhan English*, July 7, 2014, page 7, accessed September 1, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹⁰⁰ “Iraq PM Accuses Kurds of Hosting Terrorists,” *Kayhan English*, July 10, 2014, page 8, accessed September 3, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹⁰¹ “US Using Kurdish State as Weapon Against Iraq,” *Kayhan English*, July 14, 2014, page 7, accessed September 3, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

foreign proxy, but it does leave room for a reader to reach this conclusion. If the KRG and the United States/Israel support ISIS, and the United States/Israel seek to divide Iraq, could it be more than a coincidence that the KRG is creating chaos and seeking independence? While *Farsi* gave an unequivocal and outspoken ‘yes,’ *English* only nodded its head in the affirmative.

CONCLUSION

It is unremarkable that an Iranian regime publication would take a stance against any empowerment of Kurds in a neighboring country, considering the tenuous relationship the regime has with its own Kurds. What is remarkable, however, is the different approaches the publication took in regard to reporting such an issue to its respective language audiences. While both editions took a tough line against Barzani, unsurprisingly, *Farsi* took a harsher tone than *English*. In *English*, Barzani was a traitor who supported ISIS to weaken the government of Iraq whereas in *Farsi* he is an agent of the United States and Israel consciously acting towards their goal to partition Iraq. *Farsi* demonstrated this by contextualizing Barzani’s actions within an alleged ‘American/Israeli partition plot’ and it while highlighting links between the KRG and the United States/Israel. *English* did highlight such links, particularly ones with Israel, although it neither explained nor contextualized the links within a greater partition plot. Instead, *English* only alluded to the idea of such a plot by presenting a plethora of evidence, then leaving it for the reader to reach the conclusion that Barzani was acting on his own accord or on behalf of a foreign entity.

Similar to the sub-narrative analyzed in the last chapter, *Kayhan* tailored its discourse to its respective audience. *Farsi* berated the United States by invoking a ‘partition plot.’ As the Islamic regime constantly invokes foreign agents as a scapegoat when dealing

with domestic issues, it is not surprising that a regime publication like *Kayhan* would project such allegations onto foreign politics. As for *English*, it made Israel the focus of the ‘partition plot’ by including over a dozen pronouncements implying that Netanyahu was in cahoots with Barzani over partitioning Iraq rather than overtly implicating the United States as *Farsi* did. Considering the mixed support Netanyahu receives from the English speaking world over the Palestinian issue, focusing on Netanyahu in the Kurdish sub-narrative would be a much better way to persuade Anglophones to distrust Barzani and support *Kayhan*’s anti-Barzani position.

Chapter 4: Maliki, Abadi and the Iraqi Premiership, August 2014

Kayhan paid close attention to contention surrounding the Iraqi prime ministership during the month of August. Following a lackluster Iraqi Security Forces response to the ISIS blitz into northern Iraq that many blamed on then Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, President Fuad Masum nominated Haider al-Abadi as the new prime minister. The incumbent Maliki, supported by his Dawa party, subsequently declared the nomination a violation of the constitution and brought the matter to federal court. Eventually, Maliki stepped down after over eight years as prime minister and amid international pressure, domestic protests, federal court rulings and allegations of foreign intrigue, Haider al-Abadi took over the position.

For its part, *Farsi* emphasized that Masum's nomination violated the Iraqi constitution and that the United States' was complicit in this violation. The publication did this, largely, by printing accusatory public statements made by Maliki and his supporters and directed at Masum and the United States. In addition, *Farsi* cited Iranian officials, as well as Maliki himself, who supported his continued tenure as prime minister. Similarly, *English* cited Iranian officials, but more so inasmuch as they supported the Iraqi constitution rather than Maliki. *English* also frequently cited Maliki, however, it reported more on his statements in favor of Iraqi law rather than on his statements supporting himself and accusing Masum of misdeeds. *English* reported support for Maliki, mostly by citing domestic Iraqi entities. Similar to *Farsi*, *English* reported on official statements made by Iranian officials, however, these supported Iraqi law rather than berated Masum. Both publications mentioned a 'foreign plot' aimed at upsetting the Iraqi government, although predictably, *Farsi* gave it much more in depth explanation than *English*. As with previous

chapters, I will address *Farsi's* account first and then compare it with the one found in *English*.

In the first half of August 2014, *Farsi* frequently covered public statements made by Maliki and his supporters in which he accused President Masum of violating the constitution and the United States of meddling in Iraqi domestic affairs. The following three examples illustrate this point.

The first example, came on 5 August 2014 in a report in which Maliki's parliamentary coalition declared that he would remain prime minister: "The State of Law^{ix} coalition believes that the prime minister post belongs to Nouri al-Maliki and announced: 'People who speak of a transition from Maliki are, actually, violating the constitution and seek to hijack the rights of voters. The aforementioned coalition which Maliki chairs, won in the 30 April [2014 parliamentary] elections.'"¹⁰³ In the next example, Maliki reportedly accused the United States of intrigue and Masum of violating the constitution:

Nouri al-Maliki considers the President of Iraq's selection of Haider Abadi as the new prime minister a violation of the constitution and condemned American meddling in Iraq's internal affairs. . . . Maliki took a stance against Washington's support of al-Abadi, saying: 'America has taken the side of someone who has violated the constitution.'¹⁰⁴

The final example appeared on 14 August 2014, in an article which covered Maliki's most pointed accusations, while reporting political tension in Iraq following the Abadi nomination: "Following this decision [the Abadi nomination], Maliki reacted by stating: 'The decision of the President is a violation of the constitution and holds no weight.' Maliki

¹⁰³ "Maleki nokhost vazireh aatiyeh 'araaq [Maliki the Future Prime Minister of Iraq]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 5, 2014, page 12, accessed September 24, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

¹⁰⁴ "Vaakonesheh maaleki va yaaraanesh beh entesaabeh nakhost vazireh jadideh 'araagh [Reactions by Maliki and his Supporters to the New Nomination for Iraqi Premiership]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 13, 2014, page 12, accessed September 24, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

has also said that he would appeal to Iraq's federal court."¹⁰⁵ In regard to Western interference, the article stated:

Maliki had considered the United States a partner in Masum's constitutional violation. Immediately after Masum introduced al-Abadi as Prime Minister, White House officials took Masum's side, along with European and Australian leaders.¹⁰⁶

And then in a seemingly sudden move Maliki withdrew his candidacy, on same day *Farsi* reported these fiery statements.

By the time *Farsi's* 16 August 2014 edition was released, Maliki was no longer a prime minister candidate and its tone had changed in regard to the situation surrounding the prime minister post. Up to this point, pressure on Maliki to step down had been reported as a 'foreign plot' vis a vis statements by Maliki and his supporters. Yet after he stepped down, *Farsi* considered Maliki's surprise decision a 'spoiler of foreign plots.' How can an action reportedly favored by the West, in fact, be a foil to its own intrigues? A pair of 16 August 2014 articles explained. Since these articles had so much to reveal about this remarkable change in sentiment, they will both be cited at length.

The first article of interest, explained three evolutions of a foreign plot to destabilize Iraq, alleged to have been in the works since even before the contentious prime minister selection process:

The election of Haider al-Abadi, a distinguished member of Maliki's 'State of Law' coalition, without any interference by foreigners, showed that the political system of Iraq is capable of coming to an agreement in the most sensitive political situation. And this agreement was reached, even as Iraq's enemies expected the country to fail in solving their domestic disputes through internal, democratic cooperation; even as these enemies expected the discussion over the premiership to

¹⁰⁵ "Ayatollah sistaani az mardomeh 'araagh khaast baraayeh hefzeh araamesh va etehaad tazaahoraat nakonad [Ayatollah Sistani Asks Iraqi's Not to Protest for Sake of Peace and Unity]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 13, 2014, page 12, accessed September 24, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

degenerate into endless bloody conflict.¹⁰⁷

The article continued, by stating that the new prime minister would bring fresh energy that would neutralize plots against Iraq and the Shi'is.¹⁰⁸ Further elaborating on these foreign plots, the article went on:

If one analyzes how America, England, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and some other internal [Iraqi] political factions dealt with the Iraqi people, it's clear that their [the Iraqis] hands had been tied since before the parliamentary elections. Foreign powers sought to sabotage the governmental system of Iraq - the result of diligent effort by Shi'is, Sunnis and Kurds, of all political stripes - and replace it with anarchy. At this point, foreign powers would have been able to use the resulting instability in Iraqi markets for their own selfish benefit. Before the election they tried to put their own forces to work at the ballot box, distributing billions of dollars, and employed various media outlets and other entities in order to assure a favorable election result. But larger religious and revolutionary forces were at work in this election which foiled such [foreign] plots. Only a short time after the parliamentary elections, these same foreign entities imposed a haphazard brand of terrorism [ISIS] on Iraq in order to gain with violence and dissent what they could not gain peacefully.¹⁰⁹

Explaining the final failed evolution of the alleged foreign plot against the Iraqi government, *Farsi* wrote:

After the failed electioneering attempt and the disruption of the security situation, the enemy focused all of its attention on internal divisions in the Shi'i community in regard to the selection of a prime minister. They [foreign enemies] were sure that the Shi'i would not be able to overcome this obstacle peacefully; they were sure the situation would degenerate into violence. And since they were also sure that most Iraqi political, legal and security mechanisms were dependent on the [newly elected to parliament] Shi'i, who constitute nearly 60% of Iraqis, they were sure that the failure of the Shi'i to select a prime minister would result in a collapse of the new Iraqi government. They [foreign enemies] believed this collapse would smooth the way for various foreign and internal plots and oppressions.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ "Ghalebeyeh 'araagh bar seh tote'eh dar chand maah [Iraq Foils Three Plots in a few Months]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 16, 2014, page 2, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ "Ghalebeyeh 'araagh bar seh tote'eh dar chand maah [Iraq Foils Three Plots in a few Months]."

It is worth remark that the final talking point made in this article – that foreign enemies seek to destroy the central government of Iraq – appeared in other reports on the premier and was constantly alluded to in the Kurdish politics sub-narrative analyzed in the previous chapter.

The second pertinent 16 August 2014 article further explained Maliki's sudden resignation. According to *Farsi*, the United States and its allies had aimed to use pressure on Maliki in order to divide the Iraqi government and illicit a security forces response which would have further destabilized Iraq. The resulting instability, according to *Farsi*, would have facilitated an ISIS takeover of the country, which is what the United States wanted all along. Thus Maliki's resignation foiled the plot by using a sort of reverse psychology and doing exactly what 'the enemies' of Iraq allegedly wanted. In *Farsi's* words:

According to news reports, Maliki stunned Western, regional and internal enemies with his Thursday decision to withdraw his candidacy for the Iraqi Premier; the American, English, French and Saudi governments recently took a strong stance against Maliki, blaming all of Iraq's problems on him. But these countries never thought that Maliki's sudden withdrawal of his candidacy would upset all of their plots. Westerners thought that not only would Maliki remain in power, but that he would bring military and security forces into the political arena for his own gain [in order to remain prime minister]. According to the plan that the United States and Saudi Arabia had in mind, this political division and strife in Baghdad would enable ISIS militants to advance on various fronts. . . . Americans counted on the spread of insecurity in Iraq to also affect Iran. For this reason, the enemies pointed a hundred accusing fingers at Maliki and announced that he was the cause of the current insecurity and that he must not remain in power. However, Maliki recently and suddenly announced his withdrawal which thwarted America's plot. We'll have to wait and see what new tricks the foreign and domestic enemies of Iraq have

up their sleeve.¹¹¹

The first 16 August 2014 article explained the *how* whereas the previous one explained the *what*. In summary, *Farsi* reported that the United States and its allies sought to tear apart the Iraqi government to make way for its exploitation of the country by scapegoating Maliki, whom they predicted would misuse the security forces in order to maintain power, thereby weakening the Iraqi counter-ISIS effort and facilitating the takeover of Iraq by America's own alleged proxy group, ISIS.

And as suddenly as he resigned, *Farsi* dropped its August reporting on Maliki and Iraqi political transition. The extent to which *Farsi* changed its reporting on the Maliki and the premiership is remarkable; no other episode in the period under study saw such a shift in sentiment. These two articles, repackaged the entire sub-narrative in a single edition and then subsequently dropped reporting on it. One of the final instances in which Maliki was mentioned came almost two weeks after his resignation in a brief article summarizing a reported meeting between Maliki and the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, in which he praised Maliki for his role in "fighting terrorism" during recent months.¹¹²

Compared to *Farsi*, the first difference found in *English* was that it focused on other people's support of Maliki rather than his support of himself. The next few examples will chronicle *English's* portrayal of Maliki's supporters to include, respectively, the Iraqi people, the Supreme Court and the Iraqi parliament.

¹¹¹ "Maaleki beh naf'eh al 'abaadi kenaar raft teereh fetnehgaraan beh sang khord [Maleki Withdrew in Favor of al-Abadi Saboteurs Thwarted]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 16, 2014, page 12, accessed October 1, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

¹¹² "Tajlileh zarif az maaleki [Zarif Praises Maliki]," *Kayhan Farsi*, August 25, 2014, page 3, accessed October 1, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

The first example comes on 11 August 2014, the day Haider al-Abadi was nominated to replace Maliki. *English* reported that Maliki's supporters were demonstrating on his behalf:

Al-Abadi's [Abadi] nomination came hours after al-Maliki deployed his elite security forces in the streets of Baghdad, partially closed two main streets — popular spots for pro and anti-government rallies — as hundreds of his supporters took to the streets. 'We are with you, al-Maliki,' they shouted, waving posters of the incumbent premier, singing and dancing.¹¹³

The article continued, reporting on Maliki's support amongst his political bloc and quoting his son-in-law: "The nomination is illegal and a breach of the constitution. We will go to the federal court to object to the nomination."¹¹⁴

In support of Maliki, a 12 August 2014 article reported on the Iraqi Supreme court announcement declaring that his State of Law coalition was the largest in parliament as per the April parliamentary elections. In this regard, the article explained: "Under Iraq's constitution, the country's new President Fouad Masoum [*sic*] must ask Maliki to form a new government. Maliki's State of Law Coalition won the majority of seats in April's parliamentary elections. However, the coalition is under pressure to withdraw its support for Maliki and pick another candidate."¹¹⁵

English reported on 13 August 2014 that leaders within Maliki's Dawa party, the largest party in the State of Law coalition, did not support Abadi's nomination.¹¹⁶ With

¹¹³ "Iraq in Turmoil Amid Dispute Over PM" *Kayhan English*, August 12, 2014, page 1, accessed October 3, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ "Iraqi Court Declares Maliki's Coalition as Largest in Parl't," *Kayhan English*, August 12, 2014, page 7, accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹¹⁶ "Maliki's Dawa Party Rejects New Iraqi PM," *Kayhan English*, August 13, 2014, page 7, accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

such support from his party, the article reported that Maliki, “would not give in to pressure to drop his bid for a third term in office.”¹¹⁷

The second difference in the publications’ reporting concerned coverage of Maliki’s public statements. Whereas *Farsi* highlighted Maliki’s accusations against Masum, *English* focused on statements regarding Iraqi law and legal matters surrounding Abadi’s selection. Unlike *Farsi*, *English* eschewed such criticisms: it neither accused Masum of treason nor of taking action at the behest of the United States. In *English*, Maliki was depicted as a supporter of the legal process who was wronged rather than as a firebrand who was cheated by intrigue. The following examples feature *English* articles on public statements reportedly made by Maliki.

For example, on 7 August 2014, *English* reported: “Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said his country’s political issues are an internal affair, and stressed that everyone should respect people’s constitutional rights and choice. ‘We must respect the constitutional merits that ensure the Iraqis’ choices,’ Maliki said in his weekly address.”¹¹⁸ In another example, *English* quoted Maliki as he threatened legal action: “I will submit today an official complaint to the federal court against the president of the Republic for committing a clear constitutional violation.”¹¹⁹

In regards to the official Iranian regime position, *English* reporting was essentially the same as *Farsi*. Both publications reported on officials in favor of the Iraqi political process. For example on 13 August 2014, *English* further reported that Iranian officials were in favor of Abadi’s nomination. The article cited the Supreme Leader’s Representative on the National Security Council, Ali Shamkhani, who supported the

¹¹⁷ “Maliki’s Dawa Party Rejects New Iraqi PM.”

¹¹⁸ “Iraqi PM Emphasizes Respect for Constitution,” *Kayhan English*, August 7, 2014, page 7, accessed October 3, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

nomination and Iraqi national unity in the face of external threats such as ISIL: “Shamkhani urged all Iraqi factions to unite behind the country’s newly nominated prime minister, highlighting Iranian concern over instability in Iraq as it faces ISIL insurgency extending close to Baghdad.”¹²⁰ The article also mentioned Iran’s previous support of Maliki: “Iran has expressed support for Maliki throughout the battle against ISIS militants but has also called for national unity and said it would back the Baghdad parliament’s choice of prime minister.”¹²¹ Again quoting Shamkhani, a 16 August piece articulated support for Maliki’s resignation:

A senior Iranian official [Shamkhani] on Friday hailed the democratic transition in Iraq and reaffirmed Iran’s support for the establishment of sustainable security in the Arab country. ‘The people and government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will utilize every potential to support the establishment of security, the fight against terrorism, and progress in Iraq.’¹²²

Similar to *Farsi, English* ran a pair of articles elaborating on the alleged Western position against Iran after Maliki stepped down. However, instead of emphasizing the agency of foreign intrigue in the Iraqi political situation, as was seen in *Farsi, English* accused the West of misunderstanding the Iranian official position:

The official move on the part of Iran has proven all the skeptics in the West wrong, particularly those who claim ‘Tehran doesn’t favor unity or an all-inclusive government in Iraq.’ Quite the opposite, Tehran supports the new steps taken toward the completion of such a political process in Iraq. That’s because the appointment of the new prime minister and formation of the new unity government is based on Iraq’s constitution, guidelines of the highest religious authorities and national consensus.¹²³

¹²⁰ “Iran Backs Iraqi Parliament’s Decision on PM,” *Kayhan English*, August 13, 2014, page 1, accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² “Iran Hails Iraqi Transition,” *Kayhan English*, August 16, 2014, page 1, accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

¹²³ “For Iraq’s Unity,” *Kayhan English*, August 14, 2014, page 2, accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

In addition, the article defended Maliki and denigrated American foreign policy:

As for the resumption of American military action in Iraq [the start of the coalition air campaign], well, it cannot disguise the overall disarray of U.S. policy in the region, especially in Iraq where the outgoing PM is wrongfully blamed for everything that has gone wrong. It is the new Iraqi government and not the United States that possesses the capacity to reverse the ongoing situation. The new American air power might succeed in saving the lives of those at immediate risk, but it won't redeem a record of failure that now extends over several decades. That failure is definitive and indelible, and has nothing to do whatsoever with outgoing PM Maliki and his administration.¹²⁴

In the second article, *English* addressed the all too familiar 'partition plot,' however, it gave a much abridged version compared to that elaborated in *Farsi*. *English* only briefly reported on the first of the three separate evolutions of the alleged plot discussed in *Farsi*. Quoting Ali Velayati, a strategic advisor close to the Supreme Leader, this *English* article described the 'plot' as an attempt by unspecified enemies to disrupt the April 2014 parliamentary elections: "Despite the intention of Iraq's enemies to prevent the holding of elections and break up the country, all Sunni, Shia and Kurdish groups opposed this issue and finally elected a Sunni parliament speaker, a Kurd president and a prime minister, which was very important."¹²⁵ Aside from the fact that *English* reported this 'plot' as an attempt to disrupt elections, the publication had little else in common with *Farsi*'s lengthy, biting articles on the topic.

CONCLUSION

It is worth noting that neither publication criticized Maliki at any point during the period. Even considering how *Farsi* had initially reported on Maliki, its story was molded

¹²⁴ "For Iraq's Unity."

¹²⁵ "Iran Hails Iraq Transition."

so as to avoid criticizing him once he withdrew his candidacy. A pro-Maliki stance is clear throughout in both *English* and *Farsi* reporting, however, naturally each publication had a different approach. As we saw in previous chapters, *Kayhan* seems have to tailored its message to each respective audience.

As for the *English* sub-narrative of this chapter, an Anglophone audience would not have found extensive articles detailing alleged ‘American plots’ to sabotage the Iraqi government palatable. But this audience may go along with the legal argument, like the one *English* presented in this sub-narrative. Comparably speaking, English speaking governments of the world pay more respect to the law, at least domestically, than those of the Farsi speaking world. With this in mind, the *English* sub-narrative’s legalistic approach read as an attempt to persuade English speakers to favor Maliki. A less detailed explanation of a ‘foreign plot’ and a de-emphasis on accusations of foreign intrigue are a result of this effort.

Along the same lines, it comes as no surprise that *Farsi* would take an approach that blamed foreign entities for meddling in Iraqi affairs and presenting Maliki as a victim of intrigue, the odd 16 August 2014 turn around notwithstanding. Consistent with sub-narratives analyzed in other chapters, allegations of foreign intrigue follow actions that *Farsi* does not agree with. A Farsi speaking readership would certainly be familiar with *Farsi*’s portrayal of the 2014 prime minister transition in Iraq, as scapegoating foreign entities has been staple of regime rhetoric since its inception. In addition, taking a legal approach to an issue such as political transition, such as what we saw in *English*, may have invited dissent among Iranians as the questioned the legal legitimacy of their own Islamic Republic. For this reason, *Farsi* approached the issue like many regime officials approach other issues of concern to the Islamic Republic – by blaming foreign entities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

It is important to note that that both publications took the same general stance on all issues analyzed throughout the period of study. These stances include: ‘The Syrian elections were healthy (Chapter 2),’ ‘Barzani is a traitor (Chapter 3)’ and ‘Maliki was cheated/Western plots were thwarted (Chapter 4).’ This fact, in addition to the facts that both publications are administered by an individual representative of the Supreme Leader and that neither publication lists authors for its articles, allowed me to control for many variables that typically plague CDA research. I have demonstrated that each language edition approaches political sub-narratives differently according to which target audience it is addressing. The *Farsi* edition provided a more coherent approach to the issues analyzed than *English*. After discussing how each language edition addressed its target audience, I will discuss the significance of this finding for English and Farsi speaking audiences. Finally, I will explain what this may mean for the American and Iranian counter-ISIS effort.

Unsurprisingly, the overarching theme of Supreme Leader Khamenei’s political rhetoric – hostility to the United States and opposition to its political goals – clearly manifested itself in the political positions *Kayhan* elected to support. In regard to *Farsi*’s approach, two tropes surfaced that underlie every political issue analyzed in the present research:

1. “The United States creates division.” According to *Farsi* the end state goal of the United States, particularly within the so-called Shi’i countries of Iraq and Syria, is to weaken governments in order to partition and conquer the region. *Farsi* alleged that America uses ethnic and sectarian fault lines to disempower standing governments with the end state goal of partitioning countries in order to dominate them and exploit their

resources. This viewpoint is rooted in Khamenei's rhetoric on Iran as the new target of American intrigues following the fall of the Soviet Union. In the view of the regime, creating division in countries allied to Iran is a convenient way for the United States to weaken Iran without standing up to it directly. Within the ISIS narrative analyzed in this research, *Farsi* accused America of creating division, specifically, by denying Assad's victory in the 2014 presidential elections, by encouraging Barzani to disobey the Iraqi central government and by encouraging Masum to violate the constitution. All of these alleged actions were portrayed as a direct attack on the territorial unity of Iran's allies Iraq and Syria.

2. "The United States supports terrorism." This trope permeated *Farsi* reporting during the period under study, especially the sub-narratives analyzed in Chapters 2 and 3. According to *Farsi*, the United States and its allies train, equip and support terrorist organizations, including ISIS, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, in order to weaken standing governments and subsequently divide and conquer countries under the pretext of fighting terrorism. According to *Farsi*, the utilization of terrorist proxies was the primary method by which the United States and its allies sought to create the 'division' described above - whether this was ethnic division, as in the Kurdish sub-narrative, or sectarian division, we saw in the Iraqi premiership sub-narrative. The idea that the United State sponsors terrorism is also reflected in public statements by Khamenei.

In regard to *English*, the primary difference was not the positions it supported, but how it supported such positions. While it did utilize the aforementioned tropes to a limited extent, overall its approach was less coherent than *Farsi*. *English* used a variety of approaches, such as selectively defending due process or ignoring topics emphasized in *Farsi*, so as to make the publication more palatable to Anglophones. The more nuanced approaches taken by *English* would certainly resonate better with its target audience than

the conspiratorial positions frequently taken by *Farsi*, for example, that the United States supported ISIS at the same time it was conducting an expensive air campaign against the group.

The *English* approach appeared to be a deliberate propaganda effort to persuade English speakers to the Iranian regime's position. As mentioned before, *English*'s perspective on issues at no point varied from those viewpoints printed in *Farsi* did. And while *English* did not have specific talking points that it stuck to across a spectrum of political issues, like *Farsi*, all articles printed in *English* strictly adhered to whatever set of specific talking points selected for each respective sub-narrative. *English* also appeared to make a conscious effort to build rapport with its audience, for example, by covering issues of no relevance to a Farsi speaking audience such as the American professional basketball championship series. Finally, both publications failed to meet what many would consider sound journalistic practices. For example, neither presented an article articulating an opposing viewpoint on any issue analyzed during the period. In addition, both editions contained frequent typos, failed to list authors for almost all articles published during the period of study and made blatantly ridiculous, unsourced claims. Regarding this last point, the previously cited *Farsi* claim that 2.5 million Iraqis mobilized almost immediately to fight ISIS comes to mind.¹²⁶

So why did *English* bother trying to persuade its target audience to the regime's position? I believe the purpose was twofold. First, enmity with the United States has served to legitimize the reactionary Iranian regime since the advent of the Islamic Revolution. Maintaining the idea of foreign enemies, real or imagined, has always justified Islamic regime policy. In the spirit of maintaining this enmity, any form of opposition to American

¹²⁶ "Pishraviyeh artesh dar shomaaleh araagh baraayeh paaksaaziye kaameleh ostaaneh salaahuddin [Iraqi Army Advances Towards Complete Clearance of Salah Ad-Din Province in Northern Iraq]."

policy in the Middle East is in the interest of the regime. This opposition is expressed in variety of ways, to include persuading English speakers worldwide using media outlets such as *English* in an attempt to leverage Anglophone governments. Secondly, throughout the period under study, Iran was engaged in the seemingly contradictory efforts of providing military assistance and advice to one of its closest regional allies, the Assad regime, while at the same time conducting sensitive nuclear negotiations aimed at relieving economic sanctions.* Successfully convincing Anglophones that the United States has nefarious goals in the Middle East would not only distract this audience from reports of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) malign activities in the region - in direct violation of then existing United Nations Security Council sanctions - but could pressure this audience to further question the legitimacy of the Western sanctions regimen.

Following the spectacular 13 November 2015 ISIS attacks in Paris, Western leaders have begun to re-evaluate their counter-ISIS efforts. Meanwhile, Iranian regime leadership has quietly increased IRGC military assistance in Iraq and Syria to unprecedented levels. This seemingly laudable Iranian effort, however, has been tainted with reports of atrocities by IRGC-affiliated Shi'i elements; most recently, a 20 September Human Rights Watch report documenting "enforced disappearances" and large scale property destruction carried out by Shi'i militias against Sunni persons following the recapture of Tikrit from ISIS in March-April 2015.¹²⁷ Mounting evidence seems to indicate that the Islamic Republic's

*The 15 July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) had not yet been passed during the period under analysis. At the time of writing, the JCPoA appears to have improved Iran's international legitimacy despite continued accusations of domestic human rights abuses leveled against Iran by the United Nations and growing concern over the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' ever increasing support of the Assad regime in Syria, Shi'i militias in Iraq, an insurgency in Yemen and the United States Treasury designated terrorist organization Hezbollah in Lebanon. Although articles regarding the nuclear talks not included in the corpus, as stated in the introduction, they were frequent and openly critical of the West and sanctions.

¹²⁷"Ruinous Aftermath Militias Abuses Following Iraq's Recapture of Tikrit," *Human Rights Watch*, 20 September, 2014, accessed 6 November, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/20/ruinous-aftermath/militias-abuses-following-iraqs-recapture-tikrit>.

counter-ISIS efforts may have more to do with power projection and less to do with defeating the Islamic State. Reports such as a *Long War Journal* piece citing an influential IRGC Qod's force affiliated Iraqi Shi'i militia leader who articulated his enmity to the United States and stated that groups under his control would overthrow the Iraqi government with the Iranian Supreme Leader's permission¹²⁸ are particularly worrisome for Western governments currently considering an escalation of their military efforts against ISIS. With an emboldened, post-nuclear deal Iranian regime firmly entrenched in Iraq and Syria, any escalated involvement by the West in this conflict could lead to direct confrontation between IRGC affiliated Shi'i proxies and United States led counter-ISIS coalition forces. The IRGC's history of targeting American military personnel during the 2003-2011 occupation of Iraq, not to mention the Islamic Republic's continued harsh anti-Western rhetoric, has done little to assuage such fears. In addition, the United States has lost much of its already damaged credibility in the region due to ambiguous policy in regards to the Syrian conflict and its support of nuclear negotiations with Iran which culminated in the 15 July 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) despite strong opposition by regional allies such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the Gulf States. These actions have have put the United States severely out of position in the event military intervention against ISIS is deemed necessary. Unless American political leadership is prepared for a potential face-off between American forces and IRGC-backed Iraqi Shi'i militias forces in Iraq and Syria.

In regard to American and Iranian ground forces potentially operating on the same battlefields, the Iranian regime's accusations that the United States sponsors and supports

¹²⁸ Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, "Iraqi Shiite Militia Leader Says He Would Overthrow Government if Ordered by Iran's Supreme Leader," *The Long War Journal*, 12 November 2015, accessed 22 November 2015. <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/11/us-designated-terrorist-of-iraqi-militia-reportedly-in-aleppo.php>

ISIS are disconcerting. As the Iranian regime pursues the twin goals of battling ISIS and regional power projection under the guise of Shi'i Islam, an attack on American assets in the Middle East seems increasingly likely. Logically speaking, if Iran is battling ISIS which America allegedly created and currently supports, why wouldn't regime forces also attack American assets in the region? Considering the IRGC's willingness to target American forces during the 2003-2011 occupation of Iraq, American policy makers should take this threat seriously and plan accordingly.

The biggest weakness of this study is its failure to address the popular reception and production process of the publications under study. As noted in Chapter 1, there many obstacles facing any researcher attempting to directly access the Iranian people and uncover the inner workings of Iranian regime-affiliated institutions. As CDA methodology continues to evolve, perhaps future researchers will develop a way to gather such data in a difficult research environment.

ⁱ “The Qods Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is responsible for extraterritorial operations, including terrorist operations. The IRGC Qods Force is the government of Iran’s primary foreign action arm for executing its policy of supporting terrorist organizations and extremist groups around the world.”
[Qods Force. *Global Security.Org*. Retrieved 15 November, 2014.
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/intell/world/iran/qods.htm>]

ⁱⁱ Sistani appears to have issued this Fatwa by way of his representative in Karbala, Ayatollah Abdul Mahdi al-Karbalai, who announced it on his behalf at Friday prayer. This seems to be the norm for Sistani’s religious rulings, he does not personally issue statements in public.

ⁱⁱⁱ Specifically, Sistani called for ‘*jihadeh kafai* / جهاد کفایی.’ This refers to a type of *jihad* in which only the number of persons needed to complete the *jihad* must participate. In this case, Sistani most likely means the *jihad* participation should be limited to Iraqis.

^{iv} The term ‘*niroohaaye mardomi* / نیروهای مردمی,’ directly translated, means ‘people’s forces.’ However, many currently refer to this conglomeration of Shi’i volunteer fighters as the ‘Popular Mobilization Force’ or ‘PMF.’ Currently, these Shi’i fighters receive heavy material support from Iran and have a high degree of military organization. However, during the immediate post-Fatwa period these ‘people’s forces’ did not possess much organization or sophistication. Therefore, I have chosen not to translate this term as ‘PMF’ for the duration of the study.

^v The “Peshmerga” is a military organization subordinate to the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq.

^{vi} In Islamic Republic political parlance the “resistance front,” or “محور مقاومت / *mehvareh moqaavemat*,” refers to the effort of all oppressed Shi’i Muslims across the region to stand against their “oppressive” governments, which includes but is not limited to, any non-Shiite government in the Middle East. The Islamic Republic encourages these Shi’i and, when politically beneficial as in the case of Palestinians, Sunni Muslims to “resist” the oppressors which include, namely, Israel and its allies.

^{vii} It is worth noting that *English* did not quote a single non-Kurdish Iraqi politician that supported any action taken by the KRG in the month of July.

^{viii} As of the time of writing, October 2015, *Kayhan* continues to claim that the United States and Israeli created ISIS.

^{ix} I have chosen rendered the name of Maliki's "ائتلاف دولت قانون" / *'etelaafeh dowlateh ghanoon*" parliamentary coalition as State of Law in order to remain consistent with how the term is rendered in *English*. The term is sometimes translated occasionally as "Rule of Law."

REFERENCES

Books and Articles:

- “300 More U.S. Troops Headed to Iraq.” *CBS News*, June 30, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.cbsnews.com>.
- Akbari, Ali. “Amrika dar Araaq chi mikhaahad (What does America Want in Iraq)!?” *Kayhan*, August 14, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- Barkho, Leon. *News from the BBC, CCN, and Al-Jazeera: How the Three Broadcasters Cover the Middle East*. Cresskill: Hampton Press Inc, 2010.
- Buchta, Wilfried. *Who Rules Iran: The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic*. Washington: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000.
- Bush, George. “Text of President Bush's 2003 State of the Union Address.” *The Washington Post*, January 28, 2003. Accessed November 16, 2014. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/bushtext_012803.html
- Carvalho, Anabela. “Media(ted) Discourse And Society.” *Journalism Studies* 9:2 (2008): 161-177.
- Cockburn, Patrick. *The Jihadis Return: ISIS and the New Sunni Uprising*. New York: OR Books, 2014.
- Erdbrick, Thomas. “Iran Bars Social Media Again After a Day.” *New York Times*, September 17, 2014. Accessed November 19, 2014. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/18/world/middleeast/facebook-and-twitter-blocked-again-in-iran-after-respite.html?_r=0
- Fars News Agency*. “‘Marg bar Amrika’ Parchameh Hoviyatiyeh Maa ast [‘Death to America’ is a Symbol of our Identity],” February, 10, 2013. Accessed November 13, 2014. <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=13921121001696>.
- Flick, Uwe, von Kardorff, Ernst and Steinke, Ines. "What Is Qualitative Research? An Introduction to the Field." In *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. Edited by Flick, Uwe, von Kardorff, Ernst and Steinke, Ines. Translated by Jenner, Bryan. London: Sage Publications, 2004: 3-11.

Fürsich, Elfriede. "In Defense of Textual Analysis." *Journalism Studies*, 10:2 (2009): 238-252.

Ganji, Akbar. "Who Is Ali Khamenei? The Worldview of Iran's Supreme Leader." *Foreign Affairs*, September, 2013. Accessed on November 16, 2014. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/139643/akbar-ganji/who-is-ali-khamenei>.

Ghasemi, Shapour. "Kayhan Newspaper." *Iran Chamber Society*, 2006. Accessed November 20, 2014. http://www.iranchamber.com/media/articles/kayhan_newspaper.php.

Hartley, John. *Understanding News*. New York: Methuen & Co., 1982.

Ignatius, David. "Iran's Hard-Liners Resist Nuclear Deal." *The Washington Post*, 17 December, 2013. Accessed November 13, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions>.

Inskip, Steve. "Editor Upholds Ideology Of Iran's Islamic Revolution." *NPR*, February 9, 2009. Accessed November 20, 2014. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=100245745>.

"Interview Hussein Shariatmadari." *PBS*, August 1, 2007. Accessed on November 20, 2014. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/showdown/interviews/shariatmadari.html>.

"Iran Sent Soldiers to Fight in Iraq." *Al-Jazeera*, August, 23, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com>.

"Iran blocks YouTube, Google over Mohammed Video." *CNN*, September 24, 2012. Accessed November 19, 2014. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/24/world/meast/iran-youtube-blocked/index.html>

Kasmani, Mohd. "The BBC and Al Jazeera English: The Similarities and Differences in the Discourse of the Pre-Election Coverage of the 2009 Iranian Election." *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 2013: 1718-1739.

Khiabany, Gholam. *Iranian Media: The Paradox of Modernity*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

- Kerry, John. "Interview With Katie Couric of Yahoo!" *United States Department of State*, June 16, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2014/06/227624.htm>.
- Kolmer, Christian, and Holli Semetko. "Framing the Iraq War: Perspectives from American, U.K., Czech, German, South African, and Al-Jazeera News." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 52:5, 2009: 643-56.
- Mayring, Philipp. "Qualitative Content Analysis." In *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. Edited by Flick, Uwe, von Kardorff, Ernst and Steinke, Ines. Translated by Jenner, Bryan. London: Sage Publications, 2004: 266-269.
- Obama, Barack. "Remarks by the President on the Situation in Iraq." *The White House*. June 19, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/19/remarks-president-situation-iraq>.
- Philo, Greg. "Can Discourse Analysis Successfully Explain the Content of Media and Journalistic Practice?" *Journalism Studies*, 8:2, 2007: 175-196.
- Powers, Samantha. "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, after Adoption of Security Council Resolution 2170 on ISIL and the al-Nusra Front in Iraq and Syria." *United States Mission to the United Nations*, August 15, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.usun.state.gov>.
- Reisigl, Martin and Wodak, Ruth. "The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA)." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis 2nd edition*, edited by Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael. London: SAGE, 2009.
- Roggio, Bill and Weiss, Caleb. "Iraqi Shiite Militia Leader Says He Would Overthrow Government if Ordered by Iran's Supreme Leader." *The Long War Journal*, 12 November 2015. Accessed 22 November 2015. <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/11/us-designated-terrorist-of-iraqi-militia-reportedly-in-aleppo.php>
- "Ruinous Aftermath Militias Abuses Following Iraq's Recapture of Tikrit," *Human Rights Watch*, September 20, 2014. Accessed 6 November, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/20/ruinous-aftermath/militias-abuses-following-iraqs-recapture-tikrit>.
- Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007.

- Sadjadpour, Karim. *Reading Khamenei: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2009.
- Sadri-Afshar, Gholamhussein, Hokmi, Nasrin and Hokmi Nastaran. *Farhangeh Mo'asereh Farsi: Viraasteh Jadid [Contemporary Persian Dictionary: New Edition]*. Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 2002.
- Scales, Robert. "The Pentagon's 'Nine Brigade Gamble' on Iraq." *The Washington Post*, November 10, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions>.
- Schiffrin, Deborah. *Approaches to Discourse*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
- Schmitt, Eric and Gordon, Michael. "U.S. Sees Risks in Assisting a Compromised Iraqi Force." *The New York Times*, July 13, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Slackman, Michael. "Freed by Revolution, He Speaks for Iran's Hard-Liners." *New York Times*, September 22, 2007. Accessed November 20, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/22/world/middleeast/22shariamadari.html>
- Smith, Jeffery. "Hussein's Prewar Ties To Al-Qaeda Discounted." *The Washington Post*, April 6, 2007. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://www.washingtonpost.com>.
- Tomlinson, Hugh. "Iran's Special Forces Rush in to Help Floundering Ally." *The Times*, June 12, 2014. Accessed November 15, 2014. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk>.
- Tyrwhitt-Drake, Hugh. "Resisting the Discourse of Critical Discourse Analysis: Reopening a Hong Kong Case Study." *Journal of Pragmatics*, 31:8, 1999: 1081-1088. "U.S. Deaths in Iraq Reach 3,000." *CNN*, January 3, 2007. Accessed November 16, 2014. <http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/01/01/iraq.death toll/index.html>.
- Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael. "Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory and Methodology." In *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis 2nd edition*, edited by Wodak, Ruth and Meyer, Michael. London: SAGE, 2009.
- Zeng, Li, and Khalaf Tahat. "Picturing Terrorism through Arabic Lenses: A Comparative Analysis of Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya." *Asian Journal of Communication*, 22:5, 2012: 433-48.

Kayhan Farsi:

- “Amir-abdollahian: iraan ejaazeh nemidehad araaq tajziyeh beshavad [Amir Abdollahian: Iran Will Not Allow Iraq to be Partitioned].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 7, 2014 page 2. Accessed July 28, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Aamrika aameleh naa-amni dar Araaq ast [America is Responsible for Lack of Safety in Iraq].” *Kayhan Farsi*, 17 June, 2014, page 2. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Aamrikaa az gozashteh za’iftar va manfoortar shodeh ast [America has Become Weaker and More Hated than Before].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 16, 2014, page 3. Accessed October 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Atasheh sangeeneh artesh va mardomeh araagh bar sareh da’esh [Military and People of Iraq Bring Heavy Fire to Bear on ISIS].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 15, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Ayatollah sistaani az mardomeh ‘araagh khaast baraayeh hefzeh araamesh va etehaad tazaahoraat nakonad [Ayatollah Sistani Asks Iraqi’s Not to Protest for Sake of Peace and Unity].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 13, 2014, page 12. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Ayatollah qazvini dar karbala lebsaseh razm pooshid [Ayatollah Qazvini Dons Combat Fatigues in Karbala].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 15, 2014, page 3. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Azaadsaazi va paaksaaziyeh mantagheh beh mantagheh dar araagh [Liberation and Clearing in Iraq, Sector by Sector].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 18, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Baseejeh saraasari dar araagh baraayeh moghabeleh baa teroristhaayeh da’esh [Mobilization Across Iraq in the Fight Against ISIS Terrorists].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 14, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

- “Darkhaasteh shoraayeh amniyat az jome’eyeh jahaani baraayeh sarkoobeh daa’esh dar ‘araagh [Security Councils Asks the World to Stamp Out ISIS].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 9, 2014, page 12. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Devist o si namaayandeyeh majles pirooziyeh bashar assad raa tabrik goftand [230 Congressional Representatives Give Congratulations For Bashar Assad Victory]”, *Kayhan Farsi*, June 9, 2014, page 10, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Edameye tasfeyeh afsaaraneh kha’en hamzamaan baa piroozihayeh taazeyeh artesheh araagh [Traitorous Officers Continue to be Purged as Iraqi Army Achieves Fresh Victories].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 19, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Ejaazeh nemidahim teroristhaa, amniyat va sobaateh araagh raa beh ham bezanand [We Will Not Allow Terrorists to Disrupt Iraq’s Stability and Security].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 14, 2014, page 10. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Entekhabaateh suriyeh paiyaameh eghtedaareh iraan beh jahaan bood [Syrian Election was a Message of Iranian Supremacy to the World].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 8, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “E’zaameh daavtalabaaneh tazeh nafas karbala baraayeh paaksaaziyeh kaameleh shahrehtikrit [Fresh Volunteers from Karbala Sent to Clear City of Tikrit].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 10, 2014, page 12. Accessed August 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Fazaasaaziyeh jaryaanhaayeh gharbgaraa baraayeh takhribeh ravandeh siaasiyeh Araaq [West-Leaning Political Factions Set Stage for the Sabotage of Iraqi Political Process].” *Kayhan Farsi*, 1 July, 2014, page 12. Accessed July 26, 2014. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Ghalebeyeh ‘araagh bar seh tote’eh dar chand maah [Iraq Foils Three Plots in a few Months].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 16, 2014, page 2. Accessed September 29, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Halaakateh 280 teroristeh ejaarei dar amaliaateh moshtarakeh artesh va mardomeh Araaq [280 Terrorist Mercenaries Killed in Joint Iraqi Military-Militia Operation].” *Kayhan Farsi*, 5 July, 2014, page 12. Accessed July 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

- “Havadeseh araaq fetnehye amrikai ast nah Jangeh shi’eh va sonni [Events in Iraq are American Disruptions Not Shia-Sunni War].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 23, 2014, page 3. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Hefz tamaamiyateh arziyeh Araaq moredeh ta’kideh Iraan ast [Iran Stresses Preservation of Iraq’s Territorial Integrity].” *Kayhan Farsi*, 1 July, 2014, page 10. Accessed July 26, 2014. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Jomhuriyeh eslami, amrika raa dar mantagheh beh zaanu dar aavordeh ast [The Islamic Republic Has Brought America to its Knees within the Region].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 8, 2014, page 3. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Kaalbod shekaafiyeh teroristhaayeh daa’esh [Investigating ISIS Terrorists].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 19, 2014, page 8. Accessed April 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Khaawbeh sahyunisthaa baraayeh kordistaneh ‘araaq [The Zionists’ Dream for Kurdish Iraq].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 12, 2014, page 2. Accessed August 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Maleki beh naf’eh al ‘abaadi kenaar raft teereh fetnehgaraan beh sang khord [Maleki Withdrew in Favor of al-Abadi Saboteurs Thwarted].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 16, 2014, page 12. Accessed October 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Maleki: bohraneh konuni ‘araagh yek tote’eyeh mantaghei ast [Maliki: Iraq’s Current Crisis is a Regional Conspiracy].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 19, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Maleki nokhost vazireh aatiyeh ‘araagh [Maliki the Future Prime Minister of Iraq].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 5, 2014, page 12. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Maleki vaziraaneh kord raa az kaabineyeh ‘araaq ekhraaj kard [Maliki Throws Kurdish Ministers out of Iraqi Cabinet].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 12, 2014, page 12. Accessed August 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Mardomeh araaq hergez beh tajziyeh keshvarehshoon tan nakhaahad daad [The Iraqi People Will Never Concede to Partition of Their Country].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 6, 2014, page 2. Accessed July 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

- “Mardomeh suriyeh emrooz ra’iseh jomhureh aayandeh raa entekhab mikonand [Syrian People Choose Their Next President Today].” *Kayhan Farsi*, April 4, 2015, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Mazdooraaneh gharb ba’ad az een entekhabaat tavaaneh khod raa az dast midehand [Western Mercenaries Lose Power After These Elections].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 7, 2014, page 10. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Nabardeh sangeen baa kofaareh da’esh 2 miliyon araaghi sabtehnaam kardand [Two Million Iraqis Join Intense Battle Against ISIS Infidels].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 22, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Paiyamhaayeh entekhabaateh suriyeh [The Messages of the Syrian Elections].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 12, 2014, page 6. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Paazeleh bohraneh araaq [The Puzzle of the Iraq Crisis].” *Kayhan Farsi*, July 10, 2014, page 8. Accessed July 30, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Pishraviyeh artesh dar shomaaleh araagh baraayeh paaksaaziyeh kaameleh oostaaneh salaahuddin [Iraqi Army Advances Towards Complete Clearance of Salah Ad-Din Province in Northern Iraq].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 23, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Raaheh haleh bohraneh suriyeh az sandooq ra’i migozarad [Solution to Syrian Crisis Rests in Ballot Box].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 2, 2014, page 3. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Sarkubeh da’esh dar araagh shaahesh sa’udi raa beh haraas andakht [Suppression of ISIS in Iraq Frightens Saudi King].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 28, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Rowhani beh assad tabrik goft [Rouhani Congratulated Assad].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 9, 2014, page 10. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Tadabir shadideh amniatiyeh artesh suriyeh dar aastaaneyeh bargozaariyeh entekhabaateh riaasateh jomhuri [Intense Syrian Military Security Planning on the Eve of Presidential Elections].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 2, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

- “Tajlileh zarif az maaleki [Zarif Praises Maliki].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 25, 2014, page 3. Accessed October 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Tavvahom az no’eh daa’eshi [The ISIS Fantasy].” *Kayhan Farsi*, 3 July, 2014, page 2. Accessed July 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Vaakonesheh maaleki va yaaraanesh beh entesaabeh nakhost vazireh jadideh ‘araagh [Reactions by Maliki and his Supporters to the New Nomination for Iraqi Premiership].” *Kayhan Farsi*, August 13, 2014, page 12. Accessed September 24, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.
- “Zarabaateh sangeen beh da’esh terroristhaa paa beh faraar gozaashtand [Heavy Blows Cause ISIS Terrorists to Flee].” *Kayhan Farsi*, June 16, 2014, page 12. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/fa/publication>.

Kayhan English:

- “For Iraq’s Unity.” *Kayhan English*, August 14, 2014, page 2. Accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Friends of Syria Back Elections.” *Kayhan English*, June 2, 2014, page 1. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Hunting Maliki.” *Kayhan English*, August 17, 2014, page 2. Accessed October 10, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iran Backs Iraqi Parliament’s Decision on PM.” *Kayhan English*, August 13, 2014, page 1. Accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iran Hails Iraq Transition.” *Kayhan English*, August 16, 2014, page 1. Accessed October 4, 2015, <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iran MPs: Syria Election Foiled Plots.” *Kayhan English*, June 9, 2014, page 1. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraq Set to Launch Offensive Against ISIL Terrorists.” *Kayhan English*, June 15, 2014, page 8. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

- “Iran to Respect Iraq’s Choice for PM.” *Kayhan English*, July 7, 2014, page 7. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraq in Turmoil Amid Dispute Over PM.” *Kayhan English*, August 12, 2014, page 7. Accessed October 3, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraq PM Accuses Kurds of Hosting Terrorists.” *Kayhan English*, July 10, 2014, page 8. Accessed September 3, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraq PM Won’t Quit ‘Without Court Ruling’.” *Kayhan English*, August 14, 2014, page 7. Accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraqi Court Declares Maliki’s Coalition as Largest in Parl’t.” *Kayhan English*, August 12, 2014, page 7. Accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraqi Kurdistan Oil Reaches Texas.” *Kayhan English*, July 28, 2014, page 7. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraqi Kurds Welcome Netanyahu Support.” *Kayhan English*, July 1, 2014, page 8. Accessed August 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Iraqi PM Emphasizes Respect for Constitution.” *Kayhan English*, August 7, 2014, page 7. Accessed October 3, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “ISIL Terrorists Kidnap 100 Foreign Nationals in Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, June 19, 2014, page 7. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “KRG President Accused of ‘Treason’ Against Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, July 6 2014, page 7. Accessed August 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Leader’s Aide Hails Unity Government in Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, August 17, 2014, page 2. Accessed October 10, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Maliki’s Dawa Party Rejects New Iraqi PM.” *Kayhan English*, August 13, 2014, page 7. Accessed October 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “The Nightmare of Takfiri Caliphate.” *Kayhan English*, July 2, 2014, page 2. Accessed August 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “No Need to West to Endorse Election Legitimacy.” *Kayhan English*, June 8, 2014, page 8. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.

- “No Plan to Send Troops to Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, July 2, 2014, page 1. Accessed August 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Parade Held in Baghdad in Support of Iraqi Army.” *Kayhan English*, June 22, 2014, page 8. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Qom Seminary Backs Ayatollah Sistani’s Fatwa.” *Kayhan English*, June 25, 2014, page 2. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Repeating Failed Policies in Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, June 14, 2014, page 2. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Terrorist Mortar Attacks on Aleppo Kill 20.” *Kayhan English*, June 1, 2014, page 1. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Time to Wipe Out Terrorists from Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, June 18, 2014, page 4. Accessed April 4, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Turkey Does Not Want to See Divided Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, July 2, 2014, page 7. Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “UN Lauds PM Maliki for Relinquishing Power in Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, August 16, 2014, page 8. Accessed October 10, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “US Using Kurdish State as Weapon Against Iraq.” *Kayhan English*, July 14, 2014, page 7. Accessed September 3, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.
- “Zionists Spurring Iraqi Kurd Sedition.” *Kayhan English*, July 3, 2014, page 1. Accessed August 26, 2015. <http://www.kayhan.ir/en/publication>.