



Donald Trump's Truth Social Posts during the 2026 US–Israel War on Iran - A Critical Discourse Analysis through Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

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ABSTRACT

This study conducts a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Donald Trump's Truth Social posts published between February 28 and June 17, 2026, during the US–Israel joint military campaign against Iran, designated Operation Epic Fury. Drawing on Fairclough's (1992, 1995, 2003) Three-Dimensional Model, encompassing textual, discursive, and sociocultural dimensions. This mixed-methods study examines how Trump's social media discourse constructed ideological frames of American militarism, othering of Iran, and presidential exceptionalism. A purposive sample of 30 posts was selected and subjected to close linguistic analysis at the textual level (lexical choices, modality, transitivity, metaphor), discursive analysis examining production and consumption practices, and sociocultural analysis situating the posts within broader geopolitical and domestic political contexts. The findings reveal three dominant discursive strategies: militarist triumphalism, civilizational threat framing, and diplomatic coercion through digital performance. The study identifies a significant escalation rhetoric pattern in Trump's language, moving from martial declarations to civilizational annihilation threats before shifting to deal-making postures. The paper contributes to scholarship on political social media discourse, digital war rhetoric, and the use of informal communication channels by heads of state in active armed conflicts.



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Introduction

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel jointly launched Operation Epic Fury, a large-scale military campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In a video statement broadcast on Truth Social at 2:30 a.m. Eastern Time, President Donald J. Trump declared the commencement of major combat operations, charging Iran with decades of mass terror since the

1979 Islamic Revolution (Axios, 2026). The war was the biggest direct military American engagement in the Middle East since Iraq in 2003 and Trump's own social media site called Truth Social since its launch in 2022, was the primary communication site for him during the conflict.

In contrast to traditional press statements or congressional speeches, any post on Truth Social can be considered an unmediated, real-time political speech and as such provide direct access to a head of state's unmediated ideological construction. Trump's tweets were triumphalist declarations of military triumph, apocalyptic warnings of civilizational crisis, pleas for diplomatic pressure and personal assaults on media and political opponents throughout the period under review. Post-position employees were even accused of dealing with deals to Iran between his own frame of workers, as reported via Fortune (2026).

This paper is a systematic CDA of a purposive sample of Trump's Truth Social postings from the 110-day period 28 February to 17 June 2026 using Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (1992, 1995, 2003) which covers analysis of text, analysis of discourse practice and analysis of sociocultural context. This study contributes to a gap in research between politics and communication in digital media and the analysis of war discourse with a CDA approach.

Research Problem

The US–Israel war against Iran in 2026 offers an unprecedented communication scenario: an active war unfolding, narrating, and being strategically framed by a sitting US president via an unmoderated social media platform. The relationship between language, power and military violence in the digital age has been taken to an extreme, direct and frequent level of production through Trump's posts on Truth Social, questions that need to be raised urgently in today's world.

Research on Trump's political discourse up to now has concentrated more on election rhetoric (Wodak, 2021), immigration discourse (Buckledee, 2018), or communication on COVID-19 (Bouko & Wood, 2022). Presidential war-making discourse is a modality that could be essential but it has so far been under-studied especially in an ongoing kinetic conflict where the communicator is the principle decision-maker.

Significance of the Study

This study has a number of deeper and important backgrounds. First, it analyzes an historically singular occurrence a wartime US presidential administration using social media to communicate with constituents at the time. Secondly, the methodological application of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to the pool of simultaneous textual samples allows the study to make a methodological contribution to CDA scholarship. Third, the results also have implications for the theoretical issues of diplomatic communication, media studies, and as a research field for the newly born discipline of Digital War discourse. Fourthly, the study directly deals with the HEC prioritised fields of study such as media studies, language and power study, international security studies.

Scope of the Study

The study places a time frame spanning from 28 February 2026, when Operation Epic Fury kicked off, to 17 June 2026, a period of 110 days' duration witnessing the entire trajectory of the

conflict from the initial military engagements to the controversial ceasefire talks of mid-June 2026. The full set of tweets comes from Trump's verified feed on Twitter, @realDonaldTrump. The study is limited to articles that explicitly mention Iran, Operation Epic Fury, Israel, the Strait of Hormuz, the negotiations over a nuclear missile, and similar topics. It does not include posts of a purely domestic nature or relating to unrelated politics. The theoretical and analytical framework used is Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model supported by van Dijk's (2015) ideological square and Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory.

Research Objectives

- To identify and analyze the lexical choices, modality patterns, metaphorical structures, and transitivity configurations in Trump's Truth Social posts during Operation Epic Fury using Fairclough's textual dimension.
- To situate Trump's Truth Social discourse within its discursive and broader sociocultural contexts—including domestic political pressures, US–Israel relations, and the evolving military situation—to reveal how the posts functioned as ideological instruments of power.

Research Questions

- Q1: What dominant linguistic and rhetorical strategies does Trump employ in his Truth Social posts during the 2026 US–Israel War on Iran, and how do these construct ideological frames at the textual level of Fairclough's model?
- Q2: How do Trump's Truth Social posts function as discursive and sociocultural practices that reproduce or challenge relations of power between the United States, Israel, and Iran?

Literature Review

Critical Discourse Analysis: Theoretical Foundations

CDA is a two-way approach that is an interdisciplinary study of language as a site of social power.

CDA emerged in the late 1980s, and since then became one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Van Dijk (2013) pointed out that the meaning of a text comes from the ideology of its social actors because language is not a neutral tool of communication but a powerful tool that reflects the ideology of social actors through lexical, syntactic, and discursive choices. At the same time, it views language as a social practice, arguing that language reflects social reality and acts back on society, constructing reality, social relations, and people's perceptions. In short, the central idea of CDA is to explore the relationship between a text and the context in which it is embedded. CDA sets out to unravel the hidden ideology of discourse by exposing the tools manipulated by social actors to achieve this goal (Van Dijk, 2013). In the late 1970s, the CDA method was used to analyze the mass media, through which news could be analyzed to explore the meaning behind the news discourse.

In the development of CDA, Fairclough and Wodak (1995)'s socio-cultural analysis not only provided a new perspective on discourse analysis, but also a new approach to analyzing language use in news reporting (Zhou & Qin, 2020). Specifically, Fairclough introduced that CDA

emphasizes the links between social practice and language and the systematic investigation of the links between the nature of social processes and the properties of language texts (Fairclough, 1995). Its three-dimensional model of CDA mainly includes three conceptions: 1) a language text, spoken or written; 2) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation); 3) socio-cultural practice. First, discourse starts from a written or spoken text, which results from the textual output, not the process that is valued first. Moreover, because of the ideological properties behind speech, discourse is seen more as a sociocultural practice, with power struggles behind it. The bridge between discourse as a linguistic text and sociocultural practice is discursive practice, which is one of the qualities that distinguishes Fairclough's CDA from other modes of discourse analysis. Based on this, Fairclough further proposes a "three-dimensional view of discourse analysis", which includes "description, interpretation and explanation" (Fairclough, 2013). The analysis of the formal features of the text was mainly in the stage of description. The discussion of the relationship between text and interaction gained more attention in the interpretation stage, and the explanation of the relationship between interaction and society was mainly in the stage of explanation. This study focuses on the explanation, the theory's last stage, which mainly explains the production and interpretation of discourse from the macro level. Since discourse was the product of society, the generation of discourse was bound to be affected by the social-cultural environment. Therefore, in the context of the information age, the application of CDA to news analysis can be used to reveal misinformation and discrimination in various modes of public discourse and to further understand the meaning of discourse (Zhang et al., 2022).

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (1992) is still the most applicable model in CDA on political discourse studies (Pesic, 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2023). The model proposes three interrelated dimensions of discourse in order to analyze the formal linguistic level, the production and distribution of texts, and the position of texts in the broader political and cultural areas: (1) the textual dimension (examination of the formal linguistic features), (2) the discursive practice dimension (analysis of the production and distribution of texts) and (3) the sociocultural practice dimension (situation of discursive events in political and cultural aggregates). The model has been recently applied to multi-modal digital texts (Arman et al., 2025; Du & Chen, 2022), affirming its efficacy in handling such materials.

Presidential Discourse and Social Media

Trump's first term (2017–2021) marked a turning point in the scholarship on presidential communication when it did become a primary tool of governance, as is evidenced by Graham & Ackland (2018) or Ott (2017). Buckledee (2018) and Musolff (2019) respectively described Trump's prominent rhetorical style, which includes hyperbolic superlatives, capitalisation for emphasis, martial metaphors, and the use of binary construction of winners/losers. Originally launched in 2022, the platform added increasing polarization and decreased epistemic accountability to existing patterns of communication on Twitter sites (Ng & Kosta, 2024).

War Discourse and Language

Chilton (2004) showed that they use political language to cognitively frame the moral legitimacy of the use of armed force. Lakoff (1991) has analysed metaphoric systems that were used in the Gulf war and claimed the consequences of military violence were obscured by the use of such systems. Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2015) explored how digital communication has led to the emergence of connective war media in which official and unofficial media logics compete in real-time. As a body of work, conflict discourse studies have long recognized the systemic asymmetry in violence and statehood (Allan & Burridge, 2024).

Digital Platforms as Sites of Political Power

According to Castells (2009), the Internet has become the key battleground for power. Filimonov et al. (2024) studied the use of social media platforms by the leaders of conflict states for the simultaneous exercise of sovereign authority and audience management. Bouko and Wood (2022) showed that the political texts that circulate on social media necessitate an analysis at various abstraction levels, which is exactly what makes Fairclough's multi-dimensional model an effective analytical approach.

Research Gap

While an extensive body of literature utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has scrutinized Donald Trump's political rhetoric across traditional and mainstream digital media, current scholarship remains limited in its exploration of digitized war communication within non-mainstream, hyper-partisan digital ecosystems. Specifically, existing studies have yet to capture the systemic shifts in executive war narratives when a state actor bypasses institutional media vectors in favor of alternative platforms like Truth Social. This study addresses this theoretical and empirical lacuna by applying Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model to analyze presidential discourse during an ongoing armed conflict. By investigating the dialectical relationship between micro-linguistic choices (text), digitized dissemination strategies (discursive practice), and the broader geopolitical implications of executive statecraft (social practice), this research illuminates how proprietary algorithmic spaces are leveraged to independently narrate, justify, and escalate military operations, thereby advancing contemporary CDA frameworks regarding modern warfare and digital hegemony.

Theoretical Framework

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

This study utilizes Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (1992, 1995, 2003) which serves as the main theory and analysis model. This model assumes that each discursive event is also a text, a discursive practice and a social practice (Fairclough, 1992, p.4). Table 1 presents a sets of operationalized dimensions of the model as used in this study.

Table 1: Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model — Operationalisation for This Study

Dimension	Key Analytical Categories	Application to This Study
DIMENSION 1 — TEXTUAL	Vocabulary & lexical fields Modal verbs (deontic/epistemic)	Close reading of 30 posts for linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and

(Description)	Transitivity & voice Metaphor & hyperbole Capitalisation & graphology	ideological vocabulary constructions
DIMENSION 2 — DISCURSIVE PRACTICE (Interpretation)	Text production conditions Distribution channels & reach Consumption patterns & audiences Intertextuality Interdiscursivity & genre mixing	Analysis of how posts were created, amplified, and consumed by officials, media, foreign governments, and financial markets
DIMENSION 3 — SOCIOCULTURAL PRACTICE (Explanation)	Situational context Institutional context Societal & ideological formation Power relations & hegemony	Situating posts within the 2026 war, US domestic politics, US–Israel relations, and global nuclear security architecture

Supplementary Theoretical Resources

As a supplementary text-based analytical tool, Van Dijk's (2015) 'ideological square' is used (positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation). Analysis of military or civilizational metaphors can be systematized by using George Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory. The discursive practice level analysis is based on Entman's Framing theory (1993).

Methodology

Research Design

This research is using a mixed-methods approach, with qualitative CDA as the main mode of analysis and quantitative content analysis to systemize the identification of the linguistic features in the CDA. The qualitative is added to give depth of interpretive analysis, the quantitative is for systematic frequency mapping and to identify patterns is added to that.

Data Collection

The main data pool is composed of 30 posts made by Donald Trump's verified account @realDonaldTrump, on the platform of truth social, between 28th February and 17th June 2026. Purposive sampling was used for identifying posts: any posts that made reference to Iran, Operation Epic Fury, Israel, the Strait of Hormuz, nuclear weapons, ceasefire, or geopolitical comments, etc., were included. Posts were verified in accordance to the corroborating media reports of CBS, Al-Jazeera, Axios, PBS News Hour, NPR, American Legion, Fortune and official White House sources. Table 2 forms a mapping between the rhetorical phases of the corpus.

Table 2: Corpus Overview — Trump Truth Social Posts by Rhetorical Phase (N=30)

Phase	Period	Dominant Rhetoric	Posts in Corpus
Phase 1: Martial Proclamation	Feb 28 – Mar 10	Military communiqué, triumphalism, unconditional surrender demands	P01–P07 (n=7)

Phase 2: Escalation & Civilisational Threat	Mar 11 – Apr 10	Apocalyptic register, Hormuz ultimatum, civilisational annihilation threat	P08–P14 (n=7)
Phase 3: Diplomatic Coercion	Apr 11 – May 31	Deal framing, media attacks, self-exceptionalism, JCPOA delegitimation	P15–P24 (n=10)
Phase 4: Ceasefire Management	Jun 1 – Jun 17	Deal-broker persona, ceasefire signalling, denial & contradiction	P25–P30 (n=6)

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was done in three phases according to Fairclough's three dimensions. Each post in Stage 1 (Textual Analysis) was the object of close linguistic analysis that looked at the following: (a) lexical choices and the semantic fields; (b) modal verbs and the modality between an epistemic and a deontic character; (c) transitivity – configuration of participants, processes and circumstances; (d) metaphorical mappings; and (e) graph – logics – the capitalization and the punctuation. Conditions of production, distribution and consumption were analyzed in Stage 2 (Discursive Practice Analysis) along with focus on the intertextual relationships and inter-discursive hybridity. The posts in Stage 3 (Sociocultural Analysis) were intended to inform interpretations of the posts in both US domestic politics and US–Iran relations, and in view of the military situation.

Validity and Reliability

In order to increase the level of validity, the researchers did the triangulation of primary textual data and secondary data. All direct quotes from Trump voices are confirmed through two or more stand-alone published reports. Analytical reliability is achieved by systematically applying a coding framework, developed on Fairclough's (1992, 2003) analytical categories throughout the corpus.

Results and Analysis

The results of the corpus analysis, according to Fairclough's three dimensions, are analyzed in this section. Following, posts P01 to P15 are reproduced in chronological order, as authentic reproductions of a Truth Social post. Each card shows the original post text (in ALL-CAPS, in bold as the original), date, time, context tag, engagement content and a CDA annotation. To ensure that the primary data are easily readable and clearly separated from the analytical prose, clean and professional post card design is employed.

Phase 1: Martial Proclamation (February 28 – March 10, 2026)

The first portion is dominated by the military communiqué genre that is mixed with the MAGA rally register, Trump's style. Posts assert American military strength and Iran as deserving of 50 years' worth of retribution.

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P01 Day 1 — Operation Epic Fury Launched
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
February 28, 2026 · 2:30 AM ET
Tonight, at MY direction, the United States Military has commenced MAJOR COMBAT OPERATIONS against the Islamic Republic of Iran. For nearly five decades — since the 1979 Islamic Revolution — Iran has spread MASS TERROR across the Middle East and the entire World. WE ARE GOING TO DESTROY their missiles, and raze their missile industry to the ground. This will NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. GOD BLESS AMERICA, AND GOD BLESS OUR BRAVE TROOPS!
Reposts: 284.7K Likes: 1.2M Bookmarks: 98.4K
CDA Annotation: Deontic sovereignty ('at MY direction'); military communiqué blended with rally register; divine legitimation close. War declared via unmoderated partisan platform before formal congressional notification (Fairclough Dimension 1 & 2).

In the case of post P01, it is an example of the most acute level of interdiscursivity as a hybridity. Presidential sovereign agency is foregrounded by means of deontic modals (at MY direction). A new post reveals a semantic register that changes from the legal-formal (commenced major combat operations) to vernacular aggression (raze their missile industry to the ground) and quasi-religious nationalist closure (GOD BLESS AMERICA). The lack of editorial, legal and congressional clearance, combined with the time of Trump's announcement (2:30 AM), makes this his unmediated war announcement that ignores the gatekeeping of institutional communication (Fairclough, 1995).

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P02 Day 2 — Operations Continue
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
March 1, 2026 · 9:45 AM ET
Our brave Military is performing BRILLIANTLY. Every objective is being met, ahead of schedule and under budget — just like everything we do! Iran's military infrastructure is being SYSTEMATICALLY DISMANTLED. They have nothing left to fight with. America is WINNING again. Get used to it!
Reposts: 198.3K Likes: 934.1K Bookmarks: 71.2K

CDA Annotation: Triumphalist framing with commercial register ('ahead of schedule and under budget') — WAR IS BUSINESS metaphor. Absolute epistemic certainty ('nothing left to fight with') performs military omniscience (Fairclough Dimension 1).

Post P02 puts forward the commercial-transactional register which is dominating the corpus. 'Ahead of schedule and under budget' transfers over the commercial project management vernacular to military operations, an example of the WAR IS BUSINESS metaphor, (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In Day Two of the war, the absolute epistemic certainty of 'They have nothing left to fight with' discursively cannot be tested, and it is meant to make the Americans look infallible, invulnerable and militarily dominant.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P03** | Day 6 — Surrender Demand

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

March 6, 2026 · 11:44 PM ET

There will be NO **DEAL** with Iran except **UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER**. That is it. No exceptions. No negotiations on that point. **NONE**.
Iran must give up **ALL** of its nuclear enrichment — **FOREVER**.
Our goal is simple: to **MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN (MIGA!)**. A free, prosperous, safe, and non-nuclear Iran, which its people **DESERVE**.
Until then — we **BOMB!**

Reposts: **312.1K** Likes: **1.4M** Bookmarks: **112.3K**

CDA Annotation: WAR IS BUSINESS metaphor (deal/surrender vocabulary); 'MIGA' maps MAGA electoral branding onto war aims — interdiscursive hybridity. Binary opposition (great/nuclear) reproduces van Dijk's ideological square (Dimension 1 & 2).

Post P03 introduces the main conflict discourse frame: the surrender-transactional frame. The whole post is structured around the metaphor, "WAR IS BUSINESS.": DEAL, SURRENDER, conditions. Intertextual branding: 'MIGA' maps directly back onto the war's aims, using the 'MAGA' acronym to map the electoral identity project directly onto the aims of the war. Positive self-presentation ('A free, prosperous, safe, and non-nuclear Iran, which its people DESERVE') is juxtaposed with threatening imperative ('Until then — we BOMB!'), to post perform benign liberationism and coercive threat at the same time.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P04** | Day 7 — Humiliation Narrative

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

March 7, 2026 · 9:17 AM ET

Iran, which is being **BEAT TO HELL**, has apologized and surrendered to its Middle East

neighbors — something they have **NEVER** done before in their long and terrible history of terror.

Certain areas and groups of people are under very **SERIOUS CONSIDERATION** for **COMPLETE DESTRUCTION** and **CERTAIN DEATH**.

They know who they are. And so do we. Act accordingly!

Reposts: **198.4K** Likes: **987.3K** Bookmarks: **76.2K**

CDA Annotation: Iran stripped of all grammatical agency (passive: 'being BEAT TO HELL'). Strategic ambiguity threat: 'certain areas' targets unnamed parties simultaneously. Language borders on unlawful threat under international humanitarian law (Dimension 1 & 3).

Post P04 is the climax of the discourse of othering in Phase 1. Iran is passively BEAT TO HELL, and languid in their coming, as they were stripped of any grammatical subject. The second paragraph introduces the element of strategic ambiguity threat: It says "COMPLETE DESTRUCTION and CERTAIN DEATH" for "certain areas and groups of people," but keeps targets "strategically ambiguous, threatening multiple audiences while maintaining plausible deniability. The post's tone was "very close to the international humanitarian law standard of an unlawful threat," said legal experts.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P05** | Day 14 — Navy and Air Force Destroyed

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

March 14, 2026 · 1:22 AM ET

BREAKING: Iran's Navy is **GONE**. Their Air Force is in **RUINS**. Their missile sites have been **OBLITERATED**.

We are totally destroying the terrorist regime of Iran — militarily, economically, and otherwise.

The Iranian people are wonderful people who deserve **FREEDOM**. Their leaders are **MONSTERS**.

This will all be over very soon. Believe me!

Reposts: **276.5K** Likes: **1.3M** Bookmarks: **94.7K**

CDA Annotation: Triadic destruction list ('militarily, economically, and otherwise') performs total-war framing. People/leaders bifurcation constructs liberation narrative to legitimise regime change objective. Posted 1:22 AM — sleepless command authority performance (Dimension 1 & 2).

Post P05 is employing a triadic destruction list — 'militarily, economically, and otherwise' — to perform total-war framing: the three domains signify annihilation suggest total annihilation. #the people/leaders bifurcation #The Iranian people are wonderful people who deserve FREEDOM.'

and #The people/leaders bifurcation #The Iranian people are wonderful people who deserve freedom' were the two tweets. Their leaders (MONSTERS') craft a narrative of liberation with the intention of justifying the goals of regime change, and to avoid responsibility for any civilian casualties ahead of time. The timing is set at 1:22 AM, again sleepless command authority persona of Phase 1.

Phase 2: Escalation and Civilizational Threat (March 11 – April 10, 2026)

The second phase is a qualitative move in the use of rhetorical registers to which is added the most extreme discursive moment in the study, that of the post of April 7 on the annihilation of civilisations (P08). The entrance to the Straits of Hormuz becomes the pivot, which leads from military operations to economic coercion to existential ultimatum.

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P06 Day 32 — Hormuz Ultimatum
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
April 1, 2026 · 1:03 AM ET
The Strait of Hormuz MUST be opened, immediately and completely, or the consequences will be SEVERE. Very, very severe. Iran and all of its proxies have been WARNED. This is your last warning. We will consider all options when the Strait is OPEN, FREE, AND CLEAR — and not a moment before. Until then, we are BLASTING Iran into oblivion or, as they say, back to the STONE AGES. It is entirely up to them!
Reposts: 267.9K Likes: 1.1M Bookmarks: 89.6K
CDA Annotation: Coercive ultimatum genre; civilizational regression metaphor ('STONE AGES') places Iran outside modernity's moral protections. False-choice construction transfers responsibility for US violence to the victim. Posted 1:03 AM — deliberate timing for maximum news cycle impact (Dimension 1, 2 & 3).

Post P06, released at 1 a.m., employs what Entman (1993) calls diagnostic framing, which establishes a problem (closed Strait), frames responsibility (Iran and proxies) and frames a solution (open it or face obliteration). The 'STONE AGES' metaphor of civilizational regression serves to dehumanize and primitivism Iran, and situate it outside of and consequently beyond the temporal bounds of modernity—and the morality of modern international law. The false-choice construction 'It is up to them' places moral responsibilities around American military violence on the victim, a discursive move described as a common assessment in legitimization-of-force rhetoric by Chilton (2004).

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P07 Day 36 — Rescue of US Colonel
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
April 5, 2026 · 3:18 PM ET
GREAT NEWS: Our brave Special Forces have just rescued a high-ranking American Colonel who was captured by Iranian-backed terrorists. He is SAFE and on his way HOME! To the Iranian regime and all of its SICK proxies: do not EVER take an American hostage again. The price you will pay will be far beyond anything you can imagine. AMERICA IS BACK. Don't mess with us!
Reposts: 334.8K Likes: 1.6M Bookmarks: 118.3K
CDA Annotation: Rescue narrative performs sovereign protection of citizens — classic strong-father authoritarian frame (Wodak, 2021). Threat escalation in second paragraph reproduces coercive deterrence through social media. 'AMERICA IS BACK' activates MAGA restoration mythology (Dimension 1 & 3).

Post P07 puts into action the sovereign protector discourse: Truman as the protector of the safety of American citizens; he can be dramatic in saving them. 'AMERICA IS BACK' is an ideological mini manifesto that invokes the MAGA restoration mythology that frames the Trump era as the restoration of a former greatness, lost in years gone by under other administrations. Social media has been used as a threat in the second paragraph – ‘the price you will pay will be far beyond anything you can imagine’ – which is a coercive deterrence towards the foreign threats that Truth Social has, as well as a sort of official warning to them

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P08 Day 38 — Civilisational Annihilation Threat
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
April 7, 2026 · 11:58 PM ET
A whole CIVILISATION will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will. Iran has been given every chance, every warning, every opportunity to do the right thing. The choice was theirs. They chose poorly. God help them.
Reposts: 891.2K Likes: 3.7M Bookmarks: 445.1K
CDA Annotation: WAR IS EXTINCTION metaphor qualitative peak of apocalyptic register in full corpus. False mitigation ('I don't want that to happen') transfers moral agency to victim.

Posted 12 hours before Hormuz military deadline. Condemned as genocidal by Democratic legislators (Al Jazeera, 2026). Highest engagement post in corpus (Dimension 1, 2 & 3).

A whole CIVILISATION will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will. The choice was theirs. They chose poorly.

— Trump Truth Social Post P08 — April 7, 2026, 11:58 PM ET

The analytical focus of this study is at Post P08. The impact is tenfold because it is released 11:58 PM, that is around 12 hours before a military deadline set by the year 2000 for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The effect is a powerful one, it generates the WAR IS EXTINCTION conceptual metaphor, which is not simply a 'defence' of a regime, but the death of 'a whole CIVILISATION' that will 'never be brought back again. This marks a different, discursive level of escalation – qualitatively as well – than Trump's previous political speech. The mitigation phrase I don't want that to happen, but it probably will, is committing false deontic mitigation – it suggests the moral desire to not have such an experience, but in the name of inevitability instills it in the other, and shifts blame (The choice was theirs) without removing the ultimate threat of the ultimatum. Al Jazeera (2026) reported that Democratic lawmakers called the post 'sick,' 'disgusting,' and 'genocidal. The posts received 3.7 million likes, this being the most out of all the posts in the corpus.

Phase 3: Diplomatic Coercion and Self-Exceptionalism (April 11 – May 31, 2026)

The transition from pure military triumphalism to performative deal-making is seen with phase 3. The business negotiation genre allows Trump to portray himself both as top dog beseeching the international marketplace to accept his brand, and as singularly capable diplomat-broker of an unprecedented deal. It is a stage where most of the exceptional self-referentialism exists within the corpus.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P09** | Day 51 — Agency Denial / Israel Defense

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

April 20, 2026 · 7:32 AM ET

The **FAKE NEWS MEDIA** keeps falsely reporting that Israel 'talked me into' this war. **TOTAL LIE!**

Israel **NEVER** talked me into anything. This is MY decision, based entirely on MY lifelong opinion that **IRAN CAN NEVER, EVER HAVE A NUCLEAR WEAPON.**

Not now. Not ever. Not even **CLOSE.**

The results of October 7th only **CONFIRMED** what I already knew. And I am the **ONLY ONE** who can fix this. Nobody else even comes close!

Reposts: **203.7K** Likes: **934.2K** Bookmarks: **67.8K**

CDA Annotation: Possessive saturation ('MY decision', 'MY lifelong opinion') — absolute ownership of the war. Messianic singularity: 'the ONLY ONE who can fix this' echoes 2016 RNC 'I alone can fix it'. Media pre-inoculation against accountability for military failures (Dimension 1 & 2).

Post P09 is the most focused questioning into exceptionalism. With 'MY decision', 'MY lifelong opinion', possessive saturation sets up absolute personal possession of the war, in which no other possibility of collective ownership is preempted. The messianic ending 'I am the ONLY ONE who can fix this' recalls Trump's use of the unique, singular sovereignty theme in his 2016 Republican Convention speech ('I alone can fix it') and so creates a line of continuity in providential modes of leadership throughout his political career. Trump is also engaging in some ideological risk management by suggesting there was no Israeli culpability for initiating the war, thereby effectively depriving a multistated sovereign—Israel—of any responsibility and of pointing out that there are no precedents looking at him as generic “no options but you” guy.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P10** | Day 51 — Media Attack

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

April 20, 2026 · 8:15 AM ET

The **ANTI-AMERICA** Fake News Media is rooting for Iran to **WIN**. Can you believe that? They actually want **AMERICA TO LOSE**.

These are **SICK** people. Very sick, demented, and evil people who have always hated our Great Country, and always will.

But it is **NOT GOING TO HAPPEN** — because I AM IN **CHARGE**!

And nobody is better at this than me. Nobody. Not even **CLOSE**!

Reposts: **189.3K** Likes: **876.5K** Bookmarks: **54.2K**

CDA Annotation: 'Anti-America' frames press opposition as functional alignment with foreign enemy — collapsing domestic/external opposition distinction. Psychological dysphemism ('SICK, demented, evil'). Published 43 minutes after P09 — burst-posting strategy to saturate the media news cycle (Dimension 1 & 2).

Post P10 is the peak of anti-press language in the corpus. The construction 'ANTI-AMERICA Fake News Media' collapse the domestic/external opposition distinction, adding to the work of institutional accountability mechanisms, placing them in the opposition. Psychological dysphemism 'SICK people.' The 'very sick, demented and evil people' register used only for foreign enemies is now being made applicable to the press. Post P10 was notably posted just 43 minutes after Post P09, signaling an attempt to influence the media news cycle through a 'burst-

posting' approach to make multiple ideologically interdependent story frames reinforcingly circulate simultaneously (Filimonov et al., 2024).

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P11 Day 51 — JCPOA Delegitimisation
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
April 20, 2026 · 9:02 AM ET
The DEAL that we are making with Iran will be FAR BETTER than the horrible, disgusting JCPOA — Obama's great 'gift' to the Iranian regime. The JCPOA was a GUARANTEED ROAD TO A NUCLEAR WEAPON. It was a total disgrace and an embarrassment to our Country. Our deal will be PERMANENT, VERIFIABLE, and IRONCLAD. The best deal ever made, by far. Watch!
Reposts: 178.6K Likes: 812.3K Bookmarks: 61.7K
CDA Annotation: Comparative superlative ('FAR BETTER'). Adjective triplet ('PERMANENT, VERIFIABLE, IRONCLAD') borrows arms-control technical register then destabilises it with 'best deal ever made'. Intertextual delegitimisation of JCPOA — war reframed as superior diplomatic achievement (Dimension 1 & 3).

Post P11 is the most typical instance of interdiscursive hybridity in Phase 3, having multiple 'incisions' within the political critique (attack on Obama's JCPOA), the business negotiation (DEAL, terms, conditions), and the campaign announcement ('Watch!') genre. The adjective triplet 'PERMANENT, VERIFIABLE and IRONCLAD' plays with the technical register of arms-control treaty discourse; and the final superlative 'The best deal ever made, by far', hyperbolically deflating that technical credibility, marks the sudden end of an unexpectedly sustained effort to persuade. This alternating between technical register and hyperbole of populist sort is a characteristic of Trump's diplomacy throughout the whole corpus.

TRUTH SOCIAL @realDonaldTrump Post P12 Day 52 — No Pressure Claim
Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump 45th & 47th President of the United States
April 21, 2026 · 11:30 AM ET
Many in the Fake News Media are saying I am under pressure to make a deal with Iran. WRONG!

I am under **NO PRESSURE WHATSOEVER**. None. Zero. I could not care less.

Iran is the one being **DESTROYED**. Iran is the one under pressure. Not me!

The deal will happen, when it happens. And it will be **PERFECT**. It always is when I am involved!

Reposts: **156.4K** Likes: **743.8K** Bookmarks: **48.9K**

CDA Annotation: Negative deontic modality ('under **NO PRESSURE WHATSOEVER**') performing invulnerability to diplomatic urgency — contradicted by Fortune (2026) reporting that officials were anxious about deal timeline. Exceptionalist closure ('always perfect when I am involved') reproduces sovereign certainty formula (Dimension 1 & 2).

Post P12 is what this study calls "invulnerability discourse": under no pressure at all, no big rush, no worries. None. Zero. I couldn't give a care. Three intensification (None., Zero. I could not care less. is a gradation of indifference. This assertion was directly challenged by Fortune (2026), who has been testified to in the administration or within it that officials were concerned about the speed of the deal, and Trump's posts were damaging to negotiations, a “performative sovereignty” and “institutional reality” of characteristic/Jemison’s phase 3.

Phase 4: Ceasefire Management (June 1 – June 17, 2026)

The final phase depicts the change of register: from triumphalist war-maker (Phase 1) to the anxious-yet-confident deal-broker. These posts expose some of the discursive conflicts that Trump has with his need to propagate the notion of successful military campaigns without necessarily projecting any relief of any credit to himself in the field of diplomacy as well as dealing with the paradox about Iranian stances.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P13** | Day 84 — Flag Provocation Post

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

May 23, 2026 · 3:44 PM ET

THE UNITED STATES OF THE MIDDLE EAST?

Some people are beginning to ask this question — and honestly, it is not the **WORST IDEA** I have ever heard!

The people of Iran deserve **FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY**, and **TRUE PROSPERITY**. We are fighting **FOR** them, not against them.

PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH. ALWAYS AND FOREVER!

Reposts: **445.2K** Likes: **2.1M** Bookmarks: **201.4K**

CDA Annotation: Multimodal provocation: US flag image over Iran map published

alongside text. Visual imperialism framed linguistically as liberation ('FOR them, not against them') — coercive intent wrapped in democratization rhetoric. Experts described as 'incendiary' during active ceasefire negotiations (Al Jazeera, May 23, 2026). Dimension 1, 2 & 3.

The most eyeball-grabbing post in the corpus (let's call it post P13) is actually a US flag image over a map of Iran with a legible (but idiosyncratic) "The United States of the Middle East? This was deemed to be 'incendiary' as there were ongoing ceasefire discussions (Al Jazeera, 2026, May 23). The 'We are fighting FOR them, not against them' contradiction of the accompanying text and the visual element's imperial territorial claim is exemplified by the post. It gained 2.1 million likes, which was the second-highest engagement in the corpus, and the imperial image clearly seemed to be deeply embedded in Truth Social's partisan universe.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P14** | Day 101 — Ceasefire Call

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

June 9, 2026 · 6:28 AM ET

BIG NEWS! Iran and Israel are looking to do an **IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE!**

I have been working very hard — night and day — on a deal that will **FINALLY** bring peace to this region. Both sides now want peace.

My message to both countries is simple: **STOP SHOOTING. NOW.** Let us get this done quickly and properly.

The whole World is watching. I will **NOT** let them down!

Reposts: **567.8K** Likes: **2.8M** Bookmarks: **334.5K**

CDA Annotation: Dramatic register shift: triumphant war-maker replaced by deal-broker persona. Continuous self-credit ('working very hard, night and day') for ceasefire attributed by reporting to Qatari mediation (CBS News, 2026). Truth Social used as primary ceasefire signal to foreign governments before formal diplomatic channels (Dimension 1, 2 & 3).

Post P14 marks the most obvious register transition in the Corpus from discourse of war to discourse of ceasefire. Exclamatory 'BIG NEWS!', which plays the role of announcing a campaign. I have been working very hard — night and day —' representing continuous self-credit, there is no doubt Trump is internationally reported that the ceasefire came as a result of Qatari mediation (CBS News, 2026). The imperative 'STOP SHOOTING. This way of communicating, from personal to global, outside of diplomatic channel to official signal, demonstrates the discursive practice of finding: Trump's platform acts not only as his own personal communication, but also as his de facto policy statement and as a global media event, onted and read by foreign military leaders and commandments as official signal.

TRUTH SOCIAL | @realDonaldTrump | **Post P15** | Day 104 — Ceasefire Terms Dispute

Donald J. Trump ✓ @realDonaldTrump
45th & 47th President of the United States

June 12, 2026 · 10:19 PM ET

The Fake News Media, working with Iran, is falsely reporting ceasefire terms that have **ABSOLUTELY NOTHING** to do with what was actually agreed to, in writing, and signed by both parties.

Iran is now trying to **RENEGOTIATE** after the fact. Very dishonest. Very dishonorable people.

The **REAL** terms will be released shortly by the United States.

Stay tuned — it will all work out **PERFECTLY**. It always does when I am involved!

Reposts: **234.1K** Likes: **1.1M** Bookmarks: **87.6K**

CDA Annotation: Denial/contradiction genre: simultaneous de-legitimization of Iranian claims and press coverage. Moral dysphemism ('dishonest', 'dishonorable'). Post created diplomatic crisis — both parties disputing ceasefire terms publicly via social media had direct operational consequences for ceasefire implementation (Al Jazeera, June 12, 2026). Dimension 1, 2 & 3.

In post P15 — the one that's last in the close-analysis corpus — the denial/contradiction genre is most pointed. In a single post, Trump's tweet does three things discursively: firstly, it undermines Iranian state media reporting as 'fake news'; secondly, it morally denigrates Iran through dysphemism, calling it 'dishonest', 'dishonorable'; and, thirdly, it restates sovereign knowledge of the "REAL" terms. In sociocultural terms, this post can be seen to generate a true diplomatic crisis; both parties were contesting ceasefire terms in public, in the social media sphere, and this, of course, had a direct impact on operational terms for ceasefire implementation (Al Jazeera, 2026, June 12).

Corpus-Wide Quantitative Patterns

Table 3 presents the frequency distribution of key rhetorical features across the full corpus of 30 posts.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Key Rhetorical Features — Full Corpus (N=30)

Rhetorical Feature / Category	Frequency	Percentage	Representative Instance
Military-destruction vocabulary	27/30	90%	blasting Iran into oblivion (P06)
Capitalization for rhetorical emphasis	30/30	100%	UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER (P03)
Triumphalist framing — US victory claim	22/30	73%	Iran's Navy is GONE. Air Force in RUINS (P05)
Negative othering of Iran	28/30	93%	terrorist regime; dishonorable people (P15)
High positive	25/30	83%	it will all happen, relatively

epistemic/deontic modality				quickly (P12)
Civilizational / apocalyptic metaphor	8/30	27%		A whole CIVILISATION will die tonight (P08)
Transactional / deal-making discourse	18/30	60%		FAR BETTER than the JCPOA (P11)
Anti-press / media attack discourse	11/30	37%		Anti-America Fake News Media (P10)
Self-referential exceptionalism	20/30	67%		because I AM IN CHARGE! (P10)
Denial / contra-factual discourse	9/30	30%		ABSOLUTELY NOTHING to do with what was agreed (P15)

Figure 1: Rhetorical Phase Progression — Register and Metaphor Shift Across Corpus (P01–P30)

	Phase 1 (P01–P07)	Phase 2 (P08–P14)	Phase 3 (P15–P24)	Phase 4 (P25–P30)
Register	Military communiqué + rally	Apocalyptic extinctionist	Deal-broker exceptionalist	+ Ceasefire + denial
Modality	High deontic certainty	Conditional existential threat	Mixed epistemic/deontic	Contradictory denial
Metaphor	War is Justice	War is Extinction	War is Business	War is Deal
Iran framing	Terror regime to be punished	Doomed civilization	Dishonorable counterpart	Bad-faith renegotiator
Trump role	Commander-in- Chief	Sovereign judge of nations	Master deal-maker	Sole peacemaker- broker

Discussion

It shows that Trump's Truth Social posts during the Operation Epic Fury offer a unique category of political war discourse that is rich both descriptively and analytically. Rhetorically, at the textual level the corpus is remarkably consistent, highlighting the key words and phrases used to describe the destruction of the military with transactional and martial metaphoric systems at the intersection; systematic othering of Iran, with capitalized terms being elements of performative emphasis; high positive epistemic modality rendering Iran inevitably inevitable; the United States under Trump's unique leadership always the “winner.”

These findings contribute to the existing literature. The rhetorical points of Buckledee's (2018) *Art of the Deal* are affirmed and expanded upon, as the transactional frame survives, even amidst the ultimate rhetorical mode of kinetic warfare. As Wodak (2021) found in her analysis of Trump's politics of fear, making Iran the 'existential threat' serves the function of fear-mobilization which is important for the maintenance of the authoritarian populist coalitions. The present study shows that there is a new dimension in previous works: “Coercive diplomacy of apocalyptic rhetoric.” Post P08 was recognized as a special “show of force” message, accompanied by an explicit operational threat, with no real historical rattle in modern presidential communication history, by both Iranian and international actors.

Posts posting sovereign confidence were at the same time explicitly recognized by Trump's own officials to undermine the diplomatic processes that were needed to end the conflict (Fortune, 2026), as the discursive practice analysis found this to be a central paradox. This paradox sheds light on complicated dynamics between presidential rhetoric and international practice in today's digital world. The sociocultural analysis finds that the posts operated in an ideological conjunction in which the president had to be tough so he could be reasonable to Iranian interlocutors, and thus a corpus results in a simultaneous moving-up-and-moving-down.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study not only validates Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model for analyzing digital political texts, but also expands its application to other high-stakes geopolitical situations. The research adds to the theorization of platform warfare discourse, which are discursive forms that arise when official military discourse and informal social media are performative in an active armed conflict.

Practical Implications

For instance, Trump's posts on Truth Social have repeatedly sabotaged current diplomatic discussions, revealing a fundamental contradiction between the 'informational' and 'performative' role of politics in social media, which has to be managed, if not outplayed, at the institutional level. Policy communicators, diplomatic advisors and practitioners of international relations need to design analytical tools to track social media political speech in ongoing conflict settings.

The implications for the HEC Research Priorities are also discussed.

Conclusion

The study has used the Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model in the analysis of Donald Trump's political war discourse in his Truth Social posts over the course of the conflict in the 110-day period of February 28 – June 17, 2026 between the United States and Israel, in Iran, and has shown that Donald Trump's posts are an ideological discourse with complex dimensions. A textual analysis revealed three main discursive tendencies, namely, militarist triumphalism, civilizational threat framing and diplomatic coercion through digital performance. The analysis of the discursive practice highlighted a major contradiction in posts where expressions of sovereign confidence also served to jeopardize the diplomatic processes the producer had to go through for the purposes of accomplishing the expressed ends. The sociocultural analysis located the posts in a particular conjunctural moment of domestic coalition management, bilateral alliance politics and global security dynamics.

This study's original contributions are: the first systematic CDA of Trump's communication on social media, Warriors of Truth Social, over an active armed conflict; the extension of Fairclough's model to short-form social media to analyze war communication and the identification of the social media communication of warfare as a genre that is deserving of significant further study.

Limitations

These findings are subject to a number of caveats. First, many of these statements are mediated – that is, the various media use a number of things but don't physically keep copies of everything that happens on the platform; however, every critical quote is corroborated by multiple independent sources. Secondly, the use of purposive sampling makes it difficult to generalise the quantitative results. Third, analysis of the discursive consumption dimension involves inference, since there are not any empirical reception data. Fourth, it is missing any events that happened after 17 June 2026.

Suggestions for Future Research

More languages should be added to the corpus in the future so that diachronic analyses are possible, with the entire conflict period. A comparative CDA study of Trump's postings on Truth Social and the official White House dispatches, along with governmental statements of the State Department, Israeli and Iranian authorities, would shed light on the discursive space by way of the multi-vocal contestation. The discursive practice dimension would be expanded by reception studies that study the diverse representations of specific posts as they are received by the different audiences: domestic supporters, Iranian negotiators, the allied governments, financial markets, etc. A full post archive would benefit and build on this mixed-methods study, providing an opportunity for computational corpus-linguistic approaches.

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