DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION IN RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a strategy for diplomatic dialogue in response to religious conflict. Kenneth Burke’s theory of dramatism provides a means of rhetorical evaluation on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s response to the attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, that were widely seen as caused in some way by an anti-Islam video published online on YouTube. The study discusses how Clinton’s use of identification and division is used in diplomatic dialogue in order to resolve the differences caused by religious conflict, specifically in a speech at the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue on September 13, 2012. By subjecting Clinton’s speech to pentadic criticism and evaluating the pentadic sets of her rhetoric, the study found that the use of identification and division can help groups with different religious beliefs to understand each other and reconcile them to work toward getting past their differences in order to get past conflict.
We the undersigned, certify that we read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree Master of Arts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Importance of Study

The ongoing war on terrorism, which started after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, has been underscored by religious tension. Despite the purported successes of U.S. and NATO forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, violence in the Muslim countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia continue to plague the peoples in those countries. Besides the stressors of war, the sectarian conflicts among various Muslim groups and between the people and governments, and worldwide economic problems, tensions are further stirred when slights to the Muslim community from the outside are perceived, such as an anti-Muslim video is distributed online from a supposed Western source. As Attias (2004) notes,

Islam is not a religion that teaches its followers that when they get smacked upside the head, they should turn their faces so their aggressor can get a clean shop at the other side. While much has been said about the peaceful nature of the Islamic faith, there is little question that Islam has a strong warrior tradition and mythology … (p. 2)

Attias further states that the Islamic notion of jihad, such as the one called by master terrorist Osama bin Laden, is one that is provoked. “The terrorist never sees himself as the aggressor in battle; he is reacting to a battle begun by his enemies” (Attias, 2004, p. 3). Various groups exist scattered among various Muslim communities, and many seek to use such provocations to wage attacks on the general population and cause sectarian strife. Gerges (2007) states, “Tragically, the Iraq War has given rise to a new generation of militants who use terrorism as a rule, not an exception” (p. 9).
Gerges (2007) laments, “Americans have come increasingly to believe that Islamism, not just jihadism, is a mortal threat to the West” (p. 7). Further, media continues to “perpetuate the myth that the September 11th attacks were widely embraced by all mainstream and militant Islamists and even the ummah (worldwide Muslim community)” (Gerges, 2007, p. 8). The customs and practices in Muslim countries, such as those oppressing women’s rights, are seen as unjust by Western societies, and fuel further misunderstandings about Muslims. For some Muslims, especially young jihadists, the military conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as seen as “external aggression perpetrated against their community and religion” (Gerges, 2007, p. 9). The misunderstandings between Muslim and Western societies and the continuing conflicts have stymied progress in diplomatic relations. Diplomats struggle to bridge the cultural and political divides in their work to improve relations between countries embroiled in the war on terrorism, and this struggle has often been underscored by the need to resolve conflicts perceived to be caused by religious differences.

**Statement of Purpose**

This study seeks a means to improve diplomatic dialogue for more effective resolution of religious conflicts. Dialogue has become a major force in changing the misperceptions that exist in Muslim states, as well as those between the Muslim community and Western nations. As Gerges (2007) notes, mainstream and enlightened Islamists have worked to expand the political debate in Muslim societies, as many Islamists are gradually becoming initiated into the culture of political realism and the art of the possible. They are learning to make compromises with
secular groups and rethink some of their absolutist positions. Events have forced them to come to grips with the diversity of Muslim societies … (p. 8)

This greater participation in political dialogue also is helpful in relations with non-Islamic entities such as the United States. The engagement between Muslim and Western states on the political front is often in reaction to violent ones, and developing a strategy in diplomatic relation can reduce the potential for such violence in the name of religion.

Ultimately, this study hopes to discover the effectiveness of applying the rhetorical theory of Kenneth Burke to diplomatic dialogue. Burke’s theory of dramatism was based largely by his observations of World War II, but this study aims to determine if his ideas are applicable to the war on terrorism affecting the world today.

**Definitions of Terms Used**

A preview of the terms used in this study is provided to alleviate confusion on their application.

- **Division** — The differences that exist between speaker and audience.

- **Dramatism** — The rhetorical theory of Kenneth Burke that focuses on human relations, and attempts to answer “What is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?” (Burke, 1969, p. xv)

- **Identification** — The recognized common ground that exists between speaker and audience such as physical characteristics, talents, occupation, experiences, personality, beliefs, and attitudes (Griffin, 2009, p. 290).

- **Motive** — Burke’s work for cause, or what moves people to act or say what they do.
**Pentad** — A rhetorical analysis tool developed by Burke to evaluate a speaker’s view of a situation, using five key elements of human drama — act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose.

**Rhetor** — Another term for speaker.

**Rhetoric** — Using Burke’s dramatistic perspective, rhetoric is the art of elaborating and exploiting ambiguity to foster identification” (Blakesley, 2002, p.199).

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

The remainder of this thesis consists of four additional chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of literature. The review discusses the theoretical and philosophical foundations, as well as ethical assumptions, of this study, examines Kenneth Burke’s theory of dramatism, and ends with the research question for this study.

Chapter 3 defines the scope and methodology of the study, and Chapter 4 addresses the study of a rhetorical artifact using Burke’s dramatistic pentad. This section ends with a discussion of the findings from the pentadic analysis of Hillary Clinton’s speech at the U.S.-Morocco strategic dialogue in September 2012.

At the end, Chapter 5 evaluates the limitations of this study and provides recommendations for further work.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Philosophical and Ethical Assumptions

The work of diplomats is often simplified as one that deals with foreign relations, especially in the political sphere. In the United States, the role of the Secretary of State can be described as America’s representative to other countries, or America’s top diplomat. According to the Department Mission Statement, State officials work to “advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world” (United States Department of State Fiscal Year 2012 Financial Report, 2012). The nature of their work places diplomats in areas of the world where there will be differences not only in language and ethnicity, but also in beliefs, traditions, politics and social systems.

The current war that America and its allies are fighting against terrorism networks has also been perceived by many Islamic countries as a war against Muslims. Jihadists have worked this perception in their favor, prolonging the war that started in response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, in the United States. A common misperception by Americans has been that all Muslims are unified in a hatred against Western nations and that the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks are embraced by the entire Muslim community (Gerges, 2007). However, there is a variety of differences among Muslims, just as there exists among Christians. For example, there is a difference between mainstream Muslims and fundamentalists, or extremists. Further, Muslims belong to sects, the two well-known being Sunnis and Shiites. The differences present in the
Muslim world are often overlooked because the main story that comes out of Muslim lands has been presented by Western media as a war fought along religious lines, with insurgents fired by their desire to wage jihad against infidel occupiers. But it’s not the only story, and it’s easy to miss the others if religious motivations are instantly ascribed every time something goes up in smoke. (Witte, 2007, p. 6)

Western media presents a view of Muslims as violent societies, but Witte (2007) found that journalists often ignore the pre-existing tensions in Muslim regions or the way jihadist groups or local strongmen may take advantage of otherwise peaceful activities such as protests to assert their control. In his observation about covering stories in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Witte (2007) states “those inciting the violence had other objectives in mind. The reason, it turned out, had little to do with religion. Instead, it was all about power” (p. 6). The struggle for power in Muslim regions can be confusing to Western society because democracy represents a political state, while in Islamic countries, “the Islamic state is a muttagi or religio-political and ‘God-fearing’ state” (Mowlana, 2007, p. 26). Because Western media will often skim over these tensions, misunderstandings may persist between Americans who are used to society that separates religion and state and Muslims who have no such division.

The war and the violent events associated with it present other problems related to communication. Because of the nature of the media and the Internet, news is available immediately, though not always as accurate nor complete as it could be. How diplomats respond to crises caused by violence can affect how effective future relations will be, and the success can also be steered by how much diplomats understand and tolerate otherwise
divisive factors. Buber’s I-Thou philosophy maintains that dialogue, or ethical communication, is “not only a morally appropriate act, it is also a way to discover what is ethical” (Griffin, 2009, p. 81) in a relationship between two parties. Buber (1923) says “The relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou” (p. 11). He also says, “Relation is mutual” (1923, p. 15). By standing one’s own ground while being profoundly open to the other, tolerance can be practiced and greater success in diplomatic relations can be achieved.

Theoretical Basis

Kenneth Burke’s contributions to rhetorical analysis provide the foundation for this review. A discussion of the dramatistic pentad as a tool for speech evaluation will explain how a rhetor’s motive can be discovered. Much of Burke’s dramatism concepts are explained in his body of work including A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives. Burke’s analysis of motive brings about the ideas of identification, especially in a world that is so divisive, and how communication can help people who have their differences find how to identify with each other. Hillary Clinton’s speech on September 13, 2012, in which she addressed the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, reflects her belief in different groups being able to find identification and for governments to be the agents of supporting that identification. The theories of dramatism at work in Clinton’s speech reflecting what Burke saw as an alternative to war shed additional light on how dialogue is used to achieve the rhetor’s purpose.

Dramatism

What is the best way to get a message across? How can a communicator best formulate his or her message? Burke would say it depends on what element of the human
drama he or she would like to emphasize. In *A Grammar of Motives*, Burke (1969) uses the dramatistic pentad to analyze parts of human interaction, and he explains the pentad using these terms:

You must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*.

(p. xv)

Burke chooses these terms for “their everyday simplicity” (1969, p. xvi). Because his method of analysis deals with language and thought as modes of action, Burke uses the general terms that come from dramatic analysis and applies it to the examination of human relations. He notes that *scene* can be “a blanket term for the concept of background or setting *in general*, a name for any situation in which acts or agents are placed” (p. xvi). When talking about *agent*, Burke notes that subdivision may be needed under this heading, as an agent could be helped by others (co-agents) against someone (counter-agent) to do something, an *act*, to achieve a *purpose*. He also notes that *agent* can be applied to abstract concepts, or “any personal properties that are assigned a motivational value” (p. xx). *Agency* is a term that can be applied to an instrument or to something that is a means to an end.

For Burke, the dramatistic pentad simplifies the contemplation of human motivation by providing simple terms that are more easily understood. Further, he states, “all statements that assign motives can be shown to arise out of them and to terminate in them” (1969, p. xvi). A person’s motivation can be discerned by analyzing the context, or
the drama, of what is said. Blakesley (2002) explains “the dramatistic view of the world holds that language is not simply a tool to be used by people (actors), but the basis for human beings acting together and thus, of all human relations. Words act, in other words, to define, persuade, appease, divide, identify, entertain, victimize, move, inspire, and so on” (p. 5). Rhetors use the pentadic terms to describe a situation, and it is in how they explain that situation that their motive can be discerned (Foss, 2009).

By pairing up the terms into ratios, depending on which are emphasized in the drama, the reason for why a person acts or what that person hopes to achieve can be studied. What is more, the ubiquity of the terms is such that “we find examples of the two ratios everywhere; for they are at the very centre of motivational assumptions” (Burke, 1969, p. 11). Burke explains that determining the ratio of the terms or the dominant terms helps to learn what the rhetor is trying to emphasize in his or her message. “The ratios help a critic trace how each term in the pentad is tied to other terms. … Explication of the ratios suggests which term controls the other terms, and in this term, Burke suggests, motive is located” (Foss, 2009, p. 357). Gurrionero and Canel (2009) believe that the ratios are speaking choices, in that the speaker “addresses attention to specific angles when describing a situation” (p. 5), thus producing the ratio that “orientates the interpretation of the situation” (p. 6). By choosing which terms to emphasize, the rhetor is attempting to direct the audience to a specific point.

Kneupper (1981) affirms the importance of the ratio of terms in rhetorical analysis by stating that it is necessary in the identification of motive. “The ratio concept is critical to the power or pentadic analysis of motive, because motive is not assigned except in the presence of a ratio. … Only when there is a sense of one term controlling or dominating
others is a ratio present” (p.899). There are ten possible ratios, employing a pair of each of the terms. Weiser (2008) notes that, “as Burke insisted from the first, his dramatistic ratios — interplay between scene/act/agent/agency/purpose — while potentially not so mathematical, were in fact not open to precise measurement but instead were inherently ambiguous” (p. 112). The fact that these ratios are not precise allows for dialogue about the message being constructed and the rhetor’s motive for it. According to Hamlin and Nichols (1973), of the one or more terms emphasized in a message, the particular element that a speaker emphasizes determines his or her perspective or viewpoint (p. 97).

One of Burke’s aims with his body of work on dramatism was to encourage dialogue that was open to anyone. The pentad allowed for different perspectives to be brought to the table of discussion (Kneupper, 1981; DePalma et al., 2008; Weiser, 2008). Burke said that language was a way for humans to relate to one another and to talk about what is experienced. The pentad, then, does not discriminate against right and wrong. “The terms of the pentad in all of their interrelationships better approximate a model for an open universe of discourse than available alternatives” (DePalma et al., 2008, p. 332).

Burke applied the terms of dramatism to the parts of human interaction to expand the discussion on communication. Language cannot stand on the foundation of simple meaning. It relies on the “intent,” or what Burke identifies as motivation. He encourages contemplation of language then as a means of furthering an understanding of how humans act and relate to one another.

In order to understand what Burke means by motivation, one must remember that Burke treats the topic of motive in several books. It is a term loaded with meaning. But Burke would remind us that it is humans who have given meaning to language. Language
does not define us; we created language to define our perception of reality. In *Language as Symbolic Action* (1968), Burke offered a “Definition of Man” that stated: “Man is the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal” (p.16). The “symbol-making, symbol-misusing” addition was to reflect his beliefs that not only do humans use symbols, we also create them and even misuse them when we fail to consider “the substance of the things they name” (p. 6). This is where misunderstanding and miscommunication occur. The human drama goes on as each interaction proceeds from either an effective and understood communication or a miscommunication.

Human relationships change as people absorb and respond to what they experience. Gurrionero and Canel (2009) state “Burke takes motive as a concept used by people to make actions understandable to themselves and others” (p. 4). As people interpret reality, they find themselves not only adding to or changing their ideas and beliefs, but also explaining those ideas and beliefs to other people. Burke insists that people must be in constant contemplation of their experiences and bring the fruits of those contemplations to the table of dialogue. The communication held between two or more parties thus reveals the motives people have about their responses to the world as it affects them. “When describing situations, selection of symbolic expressions made by the people are motivated; linguistic choices are not unintended, but they pursue a specific aim” (Gurrionero and Canel, p. 4). Those linguistic choices are often determined by what each party perceives about the other and by what message each communicant wishes to impart. The perceptions reveal how much each person identifies with the other.

**Identification and division**
As Borrowman and Kmetz (2011) note, “identification and division, thus described by Burke, are natural human tendencies” (p. 281). In his discussions about the principle of identity and the principle of merger, Burke states that for two terms, “we may stress either the element that two terms have in common or those respects wherein they are distinct” (Burke, 1969, p. 414). This is possible because each term has “potentialities” that help define the degree from which it differs from another term. According to Blakesley (2002), dramatism “helps us analyze the basis of our unity and our difference, with rhetoric working to forge new identifications” (p. 18). Differences can sink humanity into a state of war, and it is when those warring parties find identification that they transcend war. Rhetoric can help with that transcendence, since “for Burke, the primary aim of rhetoric is identification, which he describes as an alignment of interests or motives and that he is careful to distinguish from persuasion” (Blakesley, 2002, p. 15).

A primary goal of a rhetor is to get the audience to agree with or understand a message. Persuading the audience to accept what the rhetor is trying to communicate depends on how much both parties are willing to put aside their differences and find common ground. Burke (1969) writes that: “Men have developed from a competitive situation in nature; hence, they are naturally competitive; but their essential competitiveness may, by various economic and/or psychological transformations, be sublimated into cooperation” (p. 330). As a result, humans do not see eye to eye on many issues; their understanding of situations can differ by a wide range of degrees. Identification, therefore, is “a natural response to and healing of man’s innate separateness, or division” (Borrowman & Kmetz, 2011, p. 275). By finding a similar belief, attitude, or characteristic, a sense of closeness develops and binds two people.
Thus, identification is necessary in communication because it strengthens the possibility of a message being accepted by the receiving party.

According to Edward C. Appel’s essay “Kenneth Burke: Coy Theologian” (1993), Burke “warns his readers against being taken in by the ‘official position’ a speaker or writer pronounces” (p. 100). He wants us to consider the elements of language, to wrestle with the symbols, in order to find identification. But Burke describes human interaction in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950) as “the Scramble, the Wrangle of the Market Place, the flurries and flare-ups of the Human Barnyard” (p. 23). Burke understood that our differences, our personal motivations, determine how we identify with one another.

In cases of violence spurred by an undercurrent of religious conflict, such as in terrorist attacks, there is often a sense of outrage over the deaths and injuries of those involved not only by their families and work associates but also by the members of the general population who have come into contact with them. The members of the region where such attacks take place are often fatigued by the violence around them and not working with the attackers. When tired of the “flurries and flare-ups,” there is a potential for identification by two or more groups. Borrowman and Kmetz (2011) note that it is possible for citizens to “become ‘substantially one’ with one another by uniting over particular individuals or events. ... At times, the unity of identification is drawn from (or manufacture of) common enemies of the state ...” (p. 278).

**Tolerance as Alternative to War**

Burke’s ideas about dramatism can be sourced in his experience of war. While he was wrestling with those ideas and writing them out, he was grappling also with the horrors of war. He recognized that human nature in its basic form engenders a warring
personality, and he also acknowledged that there could never be a total peace because of that human characteristic. Burke communicated these thoughts in his letters to his editor Allen Tate, and often felt the need to explain his work on dramatism:

A Comedy that would have as its slogan: Towards the purifying of war – which I am trying to decide whether to monumentalize still further as Ad Bellum Purificandum or as Ad Purificationem Belli. You will read here of an Original Sin grounded in the very nature of human utterance. And the entire project – Grammar, Rhetoric, and Symbolic – is designed not to eliminate war but to translate war to a higher level. And to the naked eye, this “higher level” might even look like peace. (Burke to Tate, March 23, 1944)

Burke ends up choosing Ad Bellum Purificandum, or Towards the Purification of War, because he believed that there was a way to “transcend” the divisions that lead to war. For Burke, dramatism was not only a means of rhetorical analysis. It was also meant to determine how human relations can transcend over the matters that engender war. As Weiser (2007) notes,

Burke’s response to the ‘total war’ surrounding him in the 1940s was to produce a methodology for effective action within the one arena that war strove hardest to eliminate: the parliamentary babel of diverse perspectives. Dramatism would lead toward the purification of war because it enabled a way to talk about differences as linguistic entities and consider together their essential points of unity. (p. 298)

Weiser believes that Burke’s theory of dramatism could be applied to modern conflicts such as the one the United States is waging on terrorist networks. “Burke insisted that in
a war … the proper response was … to expand people’s tolerance for new conversations” (Weiser, 2007, p. 291).

Tolerance is important in human relations because it is more than just acknowledging differences in values. In keeping with Burke’s theory of identification, tolerance enables two different people to go beyond those differences. In recognizing personal values and practices, people are easily categorized into specific groups, which increases the potential for division. When another person attempts to declare the beliefs wrong or offensive, a conflict is stirred up and the focus of the dialogue can be reduced to a focus on the differences. Burke believes that tolerance, or finding a point of merger, can be constructive because it allows parties to go beyond their “war.” Clark and Corcoran (2000) state that “tolerance is morally worthwhile precisely because, although the beliefs of the other are devalued, the tolerant person values the person who holds those beliefs” (p. 630). Further, a person who is truly tolerant has been able to cultivate a disposition “to subdue our natural inclination to distance, reject, or hold at arm’s length others whose beliefs and practices differ from our own” (Clark & Corcoran, 2000, p. 630). Instead of focusing on the beliefs and practices that divide them, people can see that each person is valuable as a human being of worth.

With dialogue, the groups can see how they can work together to get beyond war. This means that the potential for war remains, which is as it should, as Burke already acknowledges that war is a basic characteristic of humans (Weiser, 2008). But one group can attempt to reach out to another to find identification through rhetoric. Ahmed (2009) conducted an analysis of the political rhetoric in Bangladesh, a secular state that was facing a spate of terrorist attacks. In his analysis, he stated that the ruling party in
Bangladesh employed identification heavily in a speech, noting that the speaker “draws symbolic parallels between him/her and the audience. In the case of Bangladesh, the BNP-led former alliance government draws clear lines between “us” (the government) and “them” (the terrorists)” (p. 88). Ahmed concluded that “identification can be created by two groups demonstrating that they face a common problem and thereby should build a coalition” (p. 95). The aims of any coalition built by two groups can be achieved by dialogue. The motivations of both groups can be examined, and the basis for their unity can be the driving force, or new motive, that drives them to act. Hamlin and Nichols (1973) believe that messages can be constructed by using Burke’s pentad, as “knowledge of the effects of different verbal strategies would be of value to the practitioner as well as to the rhetorical critic” (p. 97). Their study sought to determine whether different Burkean strategies elicited different degrees of interest from an audience. The simple method of using single sentences is extremely limited in scope, though it does suggest the direction where an audience may be led. Further, the participants in the study were limited in the description of their response to each of the sentences, which ranged from “very uninteresting” to “very interesting.” Hamlin and Nichols found that “strategies containing a purpose term are more interesting than a scene-agent strategies. As to the nature of these strategies, the term purpose denotes ends, goals, values, or ideals which can be assigned to particular actions” (p. 101). Kneupper (1981) also believes that dramatism can be applied “to the composing process or to the question of whether the theory can function as a technical art in guiding the production of discourse” (p. 900). Considering the use of the pentad as in understanding the different perspectives of reality,
the likelihood of creating a message that begets a greater understanding or acceptance
increases.

**Rationale**

Diplomats, who are in constant dialogue with other parties whose motives may
not align with theirs, would likely find the concepts from dramatism useful, especially in
dealing with matters today wrought by the United State’s war on terrorism and the
countries where terrorist networks carry out their acts in the name of religion. Burke
wanted people to engage in dialogue in order to get beyond the horrors of war.

The proper response to total war was not a call for total peace – a pure cessation
of all violence as the only end in itself. Like the purity of semantics, that was too
rigid. Instead, Burke’s call was “to perfect and simplify the ways of admonition”
so that the “motives of combat” that form our essential nature could be “refined”:
humanity’s warlike tendencies might be channeled into competition instead of
killing … (Weiser, 2008, p. 122)

Although Burke was responding to the world war in the 1940s, his theory of dramatism
and goal for a “purification of war” can be applied in modern times because the theory
promotes tolerance and recognizing that, despite the differences that divide the human
race, identification can help us transcend war and make way for the conditions for peace.

**Research Questions**

This thesis will attempt to answer the following questions: How does
identification play a role in diplomatic communication to reduce religious conflict? To
that end, how does Hillary Clinton’s speech employ Burkean concepts with a goal of
finding an alternative to war and violence?
By applying the dramatistic pentad to the analysis of Clinton’s speech, this thesis aims to discover Clinton’s motives and how she achieves them in diplomatic dialogue. Chapter 3 will discuss the scope and methodology of this thesis.
Chapter 3: Scope and Methodology

Scope of the Study

This study evaluates Hillary Clinton’s speech through the lens of Burke’s dramatism. Clinton’s speech on September 13, 2012, at the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue at the Department of State in Washington, D.C., was the first time she officially acknowledged the existence of an online video that had sparked outrage in Muslim countries. It was also two days after the most horrific outcome associated with that outrage: the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, and the killing of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. The date of the attack, September 11, coincided with the 11th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks in the U.S., which were seen as the catalyst for the United State’s war on terrorism.

The successes touted by the United States in the war on terrorism are significantly damaged by the continued perception by many Muslims of the war as a war waged by an infidel country against Islamic nations. The anti-Islamic YouTube video titled “Innocence of Muslims” was widely condemned, and protests that turned violent, even deadly, erupted in several countries. Because the video was seen at the time as an excuse for the attack on the Benghazi consulate, Clinton had to address it as a matter of state interest. According to Youssef and Ismail (2012), the State Department was only starting to be aware of the video’s existence and the response it was generating in Muslim countries at the time of the Benghazi attack. This study does not touch on whether the video was indeed a cause of the Benghazi attack; rather, it seeks to evaluate Clinton’s response to the violent outcome, which was believed to have been affected in some part by the video. Also, this study focuses only on the events up to the time of the speech and
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will not include further fallout in the U.S. political arena regarding the government’s response to the Benghazi attack and in the legal troubles of the creator of the “Innocence of Muslims.”

**Methodology of the Study**

This study uses qualitative methods. Qualitative research aims to show “how humans use signs and symbols to create and infer meaning” (Griffin, 2009, p. 20). Burke’s dramatistic pentad is a tool for rhetorical analysis, and it can be “helpful in pinpointing a speaker’s motivation and the way the speech serves that need or desire” (Griffin, 2009, p. 296). This research takes a critical approach, specifically a dramatistic approach that shows how tactics of division and identification of a group is used (Rubin et al., 2010, p. 215). It focuses on the various elements in the rhetor’s speech that can be identified as terms of the dramatistic pentad. Several pentadic clusters can be found in Clinton’s speech, and they help to emphasize Clinton’s condemnation of the attack and her particular diplomatic message. The evaluation of the speech also helps extend the reach of Burke’s dramatism as a tool for achieving a social purpose.

By defining the five terms of the dramatistic pentad and identifying these terms in Clinton’s speech, this thesis aims to identify the dominant term(s). Furthermore, the pentadic analysis will be used to discover Clinton’s overarching goal with the speech. The five terms Burke defines in his Dramatistic Pentad are: act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. The pentad can be used as a means of examining Clinton’s attempt to promote peace in Muslim countries and reduce conflict believed to be rooted in religious differences.
This study focuses on the events up to the time of the speech and will not include any further fallout in the U.S. political arena regarding the government’s response and in the legal troubles of the creator of the “Innocence of Muslims.” The aftermath of any investigation into the State Department’s operations as well as President Barack Obama’s administration will not be considered, as these inquiries are still in progress at the time of this study. What is important for this study is that specific events happened in a limited time frame and affect the relationship between the United States and Islamic countries.

**Validity and Reliability of the Methods**

The use of dramatism for this thesis is appropriate because Burke offers not only a tool for analysis but also “a way to determine why the speaker selected a given rhetorical strategy to identify with the audience” (Griffin, 2009, p. 291). According to Foss (2009), one of the assumptions of dramatism “is that humans develop and present messages in much the same way that a play is presented. We use rhetoric to constitute and present a particular view of our situation” (p. 356). By applying dramatistic analysis to Clinton’s speech, it is possible that a method for diplomatic response to religious conflict, specifically with the West’s response to predominately Islamic countries, can be constructed and evaluated.

**Ethical considerations**

Records of a speech, especially as presented in various media, have the potential of not being transcribed accurately. In order to work with the most reliable record of Clinton’s speech, the text of the speech used in this research is the transcript that was made available on the State Department’s website.
In Chapter 4, the pentadic sets of ratios present in Clinton’s speech will be identified and discussed in order to determine the dominant term and motive.
Chapter 4: The Study

Introduction

This study analyzed Hillary Clinton’s speech from September 13, 2012, at the Opening Dialogue of the Strategic Plenary Session, for the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue at the Department of State in Washington, D.C. The analysis will attempt to discover how identification is useful in diplomatic dialogue, especially as a response to religious conflict. The analysis will also determine if Clinton’s overarching goal includes a proposal to find an “alternative to war.”

Clinton’s speech can be divided into two parts. In the first part, Clinton digresses from the U.S.-Morocco strategic dialogue to address the YouTube video, *Innocence of Muslims*, and the resulting attacks on the Benghazi consulate and deaths of four Americans. The second part is the description of issues facing the U.S. and Morocco that will be discussed in the dialogue. I will identify and discuss pentadic sets present in both parts of the speech, and determine if there is a dominant term or ratio present in each set. I will also discuss how identification and division are utilized in the speech and to what effect. By doing so, I hope to find insight into what Clinton hopes to achieve with this particular diplomatic dialogue.

Data Analysis

Pentad 1

Agent: Hillary Clinton
Act: Condemnation of violence in Libya
Agency: Speech at opening of strategic dialogue
Scene: Opening plenary of U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue
Purpose: Respond to the violence in Libya
As Secretary of State, Clinton’s participation in the strategic dialogue is necessary, a part of her job. At the beginning of her speech, however, she digresses from U.S.-Morocco relations to respond to the violence in Libya that resulted in the deaths of four Americans including an ambassador. The act of condemning the violence, which is an addition to her speech for the U.S.-Morocco dialogue, becomes the focus at the beginning of her speech. By saying, “Before I begin to address the significance of this Strategic Dialogue and the next step in our relations with Morocco” (Clinton, 2012, para. 1), she makes the act of condemning the violence important because it is not a topic immediately related to the strategic dialogue. Moreover, her position as America’s top diplomat at the time adds to the weight of the condemnation, as she is an official voice of the American government. She clearly is using her role as the controlling figure of the speech, and the need to respond to the violent events surrounding the Benghazi consulate attacks.

Clinton uses the Burkean concepts of identification and division throughout her speech. At the start, she says, “Let me state very clearly — and I hope it is obvious — that the United States Government had absolutely nothing to do with this video. We absolutely reject its content and message” (Clinton, 2012, para. 3). By using language that directly uses division in order to separate the U.S. from any responsibility, she places a line between the U.S. government and those involved with the video. She has to do this because Egyptian newspapers on September 10, 2012, published stories about a protest at the U.S. embassy being called “because Americans allowed such a movie to be produced” (Youssef & Ismail, 2012). Addressing Muslims who blame the U.S. for the video, Clinton reminds them that the U.S. promotes freedom to exercise religion, and that
all faiths are welcomed and respected. She encourages identification by describing the U.S. as a “home to people of all religions” (Clinton, 2012, para. 3), a description that can make America an inspiration for those Islamic countries that experience violence and sectarian strife almost daily.

**Pentad 2**

Agent: Creator(s) of the online video “Innocence of Muslims”
Act: online publishing of the video
Agency: YouTube, an Internet website
Scene: Internet
Purpose: anti-Islam activism

Clinton’s assessment of the online video is that has “deeply cynical purpose: to denigrate a great religion and to provoke rage.” The purpose of the video is the dominant term in this pentad. If the creator felt compelled to offend Muslims, the best method is to do something that goes against the tenets of Islam. By insulting the Prophet Muhammad as a womanizer, the video’s creator is committing one of the taboos of Islam. The contents of the video are an insult to Islam, and Muslims everywhere are justifiably angered by the video. By publishing the video online, the creator also ensures the greatest potential audience and the greater number of those who would be offended.

The agent in this case was revealed to be Morris Sadek, a Coptic Christian from Egypt now living in the U.S. and an anti-Islam activist (Youssef & Ismail, 2012). He is not identified in Clinton’s speech, most likely because he is not important, though his act is. However, the act of producing the video is dependent on Sadek’s purpose. Clinton’s emphasis on the purpose in this pentadic set can be seen as an invitation to question why he committed this act of producing and releasing the video. Because of the revulsion that is naturally expected of the video’s audience, Clinton hopes to encourage identification
with the audience by describing a mutual reaction. The agent-act ratio from Pentad 1 is continued when Clinton inserts herself in further condemnation of the video. In an act of identification, Clinton says “To us, to me, personally, this video is disgusting and reprehensible” (para. 4) She aligns her personal views with others who feel the same about the video. She also divides everyone who is against the video from the video’s creator. By saying, “We condemn the violence that has resulted in the strongest terms, and we greatly appreciate that many Muslims in the United States and around the world have spoken out on this issue,” Clinton also aligns Americans with Islamic countries, strengthening a bond that could encourage better relations between them.

Pentad 3

Agent: terrorists
Act: deaths of U.S. ambassador and 3 other Americans
Agency: violence, e.g. attacks on consulate
Scene: U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya
Purpose: vengeance for religious offense (presumably)

Clinton also uses identification to appeal to her audience’s sense of the value of life:

Violence, we believe, has no place in religion and is no way to honor religion. Islam, like other religions, respects the fundamental dignity of human beings, and it is a violation of fundamental dignity to wage attacks on innocents. As long as there are those willing to shed blood and take innocent life in the name of religion, the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace.

(para. 5)

The agents in this pentad, by killing the four Americans at the Benghazi consulate in a perceived retaliation for the insult to Islam, are accused by Clinton as not acting
honorably as prescribed by religion. Identification and division are further utilized in Clinton’s condemnation of the attacks on the consulate in Benghazi. The terrorists are acting in a manner that goes against a fundamental religious belief, which separates them from all other people of faith, of any religion, according to Clinton. In this pentad, Clinton is presenting a situation that can only be perceived as wrong. Agents committing evil acts for a purpose that is perverse to moral tenets — this is all just wrong. If Clinton succeeds in getting the audience to agree with her, she is able to deepen the divide between the perpetrators of violence and all decent, right-acting people. She will also succeed in asserting that people should not commit violence, an idea that falls under the agent-act ratio.

Pentad 4

Agent: governments
Act: draw the line at violence
Agency: “stand up and draw the line at violence” (para. 7)
Scene: respective nations/states
Purpose: peace

Clinton moves on to assert that further violence can be avoided. In direct response to the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, she reminds governments that they must protect diplomatic missions because “these are places whose very purpose is to promote better understanding across countries and cultures” (para. 5). Any attack on diplomatic missions and the people who work there is an attack on “the idea that we can work together to build better understanding and a better future” (para. 5). Clinton places the responsibility of promoting peace on leaders in government or civil society and religious leaders. Leaders, the agents in this pentad, must act by “[drawing] the line at violence”
(para. 7), and that can be in forms including speaking out against violence and protecting the entities that promote peace and understanding.

**Pentad 5**

Agents: U.S. and Morocco  
Act: diplomatic dialogue  
Agency: working groups  
Scene: Benjamin Franklin Room, State Department, Washington, D.C.  
Purpose: strengthen relations between U.S. and Morocco and work for common goals  

The second part of Clinton’s speech returns to the main purpose of the strategic dialogue, which is aimed at strengthening relations between the two countries. The agent-act ratio dominates this pentad, with Clinton outlining the different matters that the two countries must address in diplomatic dialogue. The topics of the working groups are political reform, the economy, security, education and cultural ties. Throughout this section of the speech, Clinton sounds an upbeat note about the outcomes of the working groups. Through the use of identification, she voices America’s support for Morocco’s growth and prosperity. Words such as “encourage,” “support,” “together,” “share,” and “close partners” are used to emphasize the partnership between the two countries — all the more reason for continued friendship. That partnership will allow them “to solve problems and produce results that make our nations stronger, more peaceful, more secure, more prosperous, and also contribute to doing the same for the world” (para. 21). In addition to all this, Clinton cites “one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century” (para. 20), which is interfaith dialogue. She requests Morocco’s input on how the two countries can bring together their people, who are of many diverse faiths, “to exchange ideas, to build understanding, to promote religious tolerance” (para. 20). All of the other work would be for naught if violence caused by religious differences continues to happen.
Results of the Study

Clinton’s speech was analyzed to identify pentadic sets. Each dramatistic pentad was analyzed to determine a dominant term or ratio of terms. The dominant terms helped to understand what message Clinton wanted to impart throughout her speech.

RQ1: How does identification play a role in diplomatic communication to reduce religious conflict?

Clinton employs identification to delineate the difference between right and wrong action. She asserts that there is a right way to act in regards to religion. The U.S., by means of its Constitution, guarantees the freedom to practice one’s faith and promotes respect for different faiths. The religious tolerance that exists in the U.S. precludes it from participating in acts of violence in the name of religion. By speaking out against the violence that resulted in the deaths of four Americans at the U.S. consulate in Benghazi and condemning the anti-Muslim video, Clinton stresses the right way to act when confronted with religious differences. By stating that violence in the name of religion and against innocents is a “violation of the fundamental dignity” (Clinton, 2012, para. 5), Clinton appeals to the moral core of beliefs held by the audience. A general agreement among people is that it is wrong “to shed blood and take innocent life in the name of religion” (para. 5). It can also be agreed that the online anti-Muslim video was meant to offend Muslims.

Clinton also uses identification to encourage rapport among different groups. Identification is also useful to arouse sympathy for others who have different beliefs. As Clinton stated, people around the world have decried the violence in Benghazi and condemned the online video. The similar reactions demonstrate that people all over the
world, regardless of their country of citizenship or their religion, share the same
sensitivity and regard for right action. Morocco and the U.S., as evidenced by the
strategic dialogue, also have much work to share for the mutual benefit of both countries.

RQ2: To that end, how does Hillary Clinton’s speech employ Burkean concepts with
a goal of finding an alternative to war and violence?

Identification and division are used throughout the speech to point out acts that
are wrong — production and online dissemination of the anti-Islam video, as well as
violence in the name of religion — and acts that are right, such as condemning those
wrongful acts and working toward peace. Clinton also makes a case for religious
tolerance and interfaith dialogue, which are endorsed by Burke as necessary for
transcending war. Both allow for the differences between people, or the divisions that
exist between them, but advocates for creating peaceful conditions in which human
relations can thrive.

Discussion

This study was undertaken to answer whether the concepts developed by Kenneth
Burke, especially identification, for his theory of dramatism are useful for diplomatic
communication in response to religious conflict. The dominant ratio of terms in Clinton’s
speech appears to be the agent-act ratio. The agents and acts identified in the pentadic
sets prescribe the action that must be undertaken in response to religious conflict. The
acts of condemning and drawing a line at violence, of promoting peace, and encouraging
interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance are in line with diplomatic relations between
different groups. Clinton’s response to the violent attack on the U.S. consulate in
Benghazi and her preview of the issues facing the working groups at the strategic
dialogue in Washington, D.C., have a common goal, which is to promote the mutual welfare of the two countries with interfaith dialogue. Instead of letting religious differences divide the two countries, opening the dialogue can help build relations despite the current war on terrorism. The review of literature in Chapter 2 found that open dialogue required that differences be accepted in order to improve human relations. The common perception spread by jihadists that the war is one waged by the U.S. and its allies against Muslims can be countered by religious tolerance. As Kephart (2004) notes, “the constant identification of these terrorists as not like us prevents not only an identification with them, but also true revelation and personal growth” (p. 18). It is clear that American and NATO forces, as well as the countries they represent, must do more to show how they are helping the people in Afghanistan and other countries affected by the war on terrorism. Tolerance is more than just acknowledging that differences exist.

The tolerant person is, rather, disposed to recognize the other as an object of inestimable worth. The tolerant person says, in effect, our fundamental disagreement does not diminish my estimation of your worth as a human being and, therefore, though I disagree with your beliefs or practices, still I will endure them. (Clark & Corcoran, 2000, p. 630)

Burke’s concept of identification, therefore, is useful in diplomatic rhetoric. The current fear in Afghanistan that the withdrawal of foreign forces by 2014 would only lead to a chaos and increased corruption can be alleviated if all parties affected by the war on terrorism still happening in Afghanistan could find a way to work towards improving the general welfare. Weiser (2007) believes that rhetoricizing theories such as dramatism, through application, can be used to “turn the lens on today’s situation of war – to offer a
tool to purify war, to transcend divisions rather than perpetuate them” (p. 301).

Therefore, in light of Buber’s I-Thou philosophy, ethical dialogue enhanced by identification can promote tolerance and strengthen human relations.

The summaries and conclusions, as well as the limitations of this study, will be discussed in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Summaries and Conclusions

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this qualitative study are based on speculation, or subjective analysis, by the researcher. As an individual responding to a speech after it had been given, the researcher undoubtedly has a different reaction based on background experiences, religious and moral beliefs, level of education, and other personal characteristics. In addition, the findings are affected by the researcher’s exposure to world events, including those related to the war on terrorism, as a career journalist.

The study was also limited due to the fact it was based on a transcript of the speech. The researcher was not among the audience at the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue, and there is no information on what kind of reaction the speech received from audience members. There is also no feedback included on reaction from outside the strategic dialogue, such as opinion articles in major newspapers, about Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s speech.

By relying completely on the application of the dramatistic pentad on the text of Clinton’s speech, the researcher does not have the reasons from Clinton about her reasons for the speech other than what she states in the speech itself. The pentadic sets included in the study were identified based on analysis of the text, but it is possible there are other pentadic sets that could have provided additional insights about the diplomatic dialogue. It is also possible that other researchers may not agree about the dominant terms and ratios identified by the researcher.

Recommendations for Further Study
It is clear from the continuing war on terrorism and the offshoots of sectarian violence that deep divisions are still rampant across societies. Because diplomacy is often the means by which countries tackle widespread issues, Burke’s theory of dramatism can provide a way to bridge those divides. If identification is “the primary aim of rhetoric” (Blakesley, 2002, p. 15) and rhetoric works “to forge new identifications” (Blakesley, 2002, p. 18), perhaps greater understanding can be an attainable goal in diplomatic dialogue. Kneupper’s study (1981) laid the foundation for applying the pentad at the beginning of the composing process and suggested “the theory can function as a technical art in guiding the production of discourse” (p. 900). His work could be continued with the use of texts that are more complex than the single sentences he used to analyze response.

Another recommendation is for a study that looks at the ongoing diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Morocco. If both countries are actively engaging in interfaith dialogue as they implement the plans described by Clinton in her opening remarks, a communication audit or other research method can be conducted to evaluate the effects of identification and division in the groups involved among members who attended the strategic dialogue.

Conclusions

Weiser (2007) sought to explain Burke’s development of dramatism in response to war. His dilemma, she states, was “how to promote purpose and unity without devolving into totalitarianism” (p. 290). With dramatism, “differing perspectives — and transcendence — the search for points of merger — in an effective parliamentary debate” (Weiser, 2007, p. 287) could help form the response to war by means of rhetoric. Dramatism encourages opening the table of dialogue to everyone regardless of their
different beliefs and perspectives, which is keeping with Buber’s I-Thou philosophy. That philosophy recognizes the worth of each person in relation to each other. Burke’s identification through rhetoric would help point the way to transcending those different beliefs and perspectives. That identification is strengthened when each person shares his or her reality with another person, by fully engaging in a relationship with that other person. As Hillary Clinton noted in her speech, global conflicts intensify the need for “people of different faiths to exchange ideas, to build understanding, to promote religious tolerance” (2012, para. 20). Tolerance, then, allows people effectively use dialogue to transcend their differences and move closer to peace.
References


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ROLE OF IDENTIFICATION IN DIPLOMACY FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION


Appendix

Text of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s Speech at the Opening Plenary of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue, September 13, 2012, at the Benjamin Franklin Room, Department of State, in Washington, D.C.

Good morning. Well, let me welcome our friends and colleagues from Morocco here to the Benjamin Franklin Room on the eighth floor of the State Department for this very important first session of the U.S.-Morocco Strategic Dialogue. Before I begin to address the significance of this Strategic Dialogue and the next step in our long relations with Morocco, I want to say a few words about the events unfolding in the world today.

We are closely watching what is happening in Yemen and elsewhere, and we certainly hope and expect that there will be steps taken to avoid violence and prevent the escalation of protests into violence.

I also want to take a moment to address the video circulating on the Internet that has led to these protests in a number of countries. Let me state very clearly – and I hope it is obvious – that the United States Government had absolutely nothing to do with this video. We absolutely reject its content and message. America’s commitment to religious tolerance goes back to the very beginning of our nation. And as you know, we are home to people of all religions, many of whom came to this country seeking the right to exercise their own religion, including, of course, millions of Muslims. And we have the greatest respect for people of faith.

To us, to me personally, this video is disgusting and reprehensible. It appears to have a deeply cynical purpose: to denigrate a great religion and to provoke rage. But as I
said yesterday, there is no justification, none at all, for responding to this video with violence. We condemn the violence that has resulted in the strongest terms, and we greatly appreciate that many Muslims in the United States and around the world have spoken out on this issue.

Violence, we believe, has no place in religion and is no way to honor religion. Islam, like other religions, respects the fundamental dignity of human beings, and it is a violation of that fundamental dignity to wage attacks on innocents. As long as there are those who are willing to shed blood and take innocent life in the name of religion, the name of God, the world will never know a true and lasting peace. It is especially wrong for violence to be directed against diplomatic missions. These are places whose very purpose is peaceful: to promote better understanding across countries and cultures. All governments have a responsibility to protect those spaces and people, because to attack an embassy is to attack the idea that we can work together to build understanding and a better future.

Now, I know it is hard for some people to understand why the United States cannot or does not just prevent these kinds of reprehensible videos from ever seeing the light of day. Now, I would note that in today’s world with today’s technologies, that is impossible. But even if it were possible, our country does have a long tradition of free expression which is enshrined in our Constitution and our law, and we do not stop individual citizens from expressing their views no matter how distasteful they may be.

There are, of course, different views around the world about the outer limits of free speech and free expression, but there should be no debate about the simple proposition that violence in response to speech is not acceptable. We all – whether we are
leaders in government, leaders in civil society or religious leaders – must draw the line at violence. And any responsible leader should be standing up now and drawing that line.

I wanted to begin with this statement, because, as our Moroccan friends and all of you know, this has been a difficult week at the State Department. I very much appreciate, Minister, the condolences your government expressed to our Embassy in Rabat. And even though that tragedy happened far away in Benghazi, we found a reminder of the deep bounds that connect Morocco to the United States. It was in the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco that one of the Americans we lost this week, Ambassador Chris Stevens, fell in love with the region when he served as a Peace Corps volunteer there. That experience set him on a decades-long career of service. So in the memory of fallen friends and colleagues, let us remind ourselves of the many ways in which not just our governments but the people of our two nations have worked together to build a better future.

In many ways, the United States looks to Morocco to be a leader and a model. His Majesty King Mohammed deserves great credit for the work you’ve undertaken. In fact, after my visit to Rabat earlier this year, I told my team: “We need to start a Strategic Dialogue with Morocco.” No country has been a friend of the United States longer than Morocco. You were the first nation to recognize us back in 1777. But we’re not satisfied with simply having a friendship that is longstanding. We want one that is dynamic, growing, looking toward the future. So let me highlight a few of the areas we should focus on today.

On political reform, we have all seen remarkable changes taking place across North Africa and the Middle East. I commend Morocco and your government for your
efforts to stay ahead of these changes by holding free and fair elections, empowering the
lected parliament, taking other steps to ensure that the government reflects the will of
the people. Today, our political working group will discuss how the United States can
continue to support your efforts to translate commitments into actions. Because as we all
know, democracy, real reform, require that people themselves feel the changes in their
everyday lives: the courts reformed, the government more open and transparent, universal

I’m especially pleased by Morocco’s commitments to take on the deeply troubling
problem of child marriage. We know that child brides are less likely to get an education,
more likely to face life-threatening problems, particularly around child birth and delivery,
which not only shortchanges them but can even rob them and their communities of their
lives and talents. So we want to encourage the government and civil society to continue
their important work together on this issue.

With regard to the Western Sahara, the United States continues to support efforts
to find a peaceful, sustainable, mutually agreed-upon solution. U.S. policy toward the
Western Sahara has remained consistent for many years. We have made clear that
Morocco’s autonomy plan is serious, realistic, and credible, and that it represents a
potential approach that could satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara
to run their own affairs in peace and dignity. We continue to support the negotiations
carried out by the United Nations and hope parties can work toward resolution.

With respect to the economy, our second working group will focus on what more
can be done to deliver tangible economic benefits. Morocco’s economy is relatively
healthy, but you face the same problem that is now endemic across the world – unemployment is still too high, especially among young people.

That’s why the United States is providing $1.5 million to support an effort to attract foreign investors, foster local economic development, and combat corruption across the region. And I’m pleased to announce that later this year we will hold a Morocco business development conference here in Washington to connect businesses from both countries.

Today, we should discuss ways to build on all of these efforts by increasing bilateral trade, a particular goal of mine since so much trade from Morocco goes to Europe. I’d like to increase the amount of trade coming to the United States, and also to improve economic integration across North Africa, which could greatly benefit Morocco because of Morocco’s stability and Morocco’s very strong economic foundation. The greater integration there is, the greater the benefits for Moroccans.

Third, the attack in Benghazi this week reminds us that security remains a vital issue. Through our work together on the Global Counterterrorism Task Force, the United States and Morocco already share crucial information and best practices, and I thank Morocco for hosting a Global Counterterrorism Task Force workshop on threats in the South Atlantic next month.

We are also collaborating through USAID, the Peace Corps, and other agencies to help provide Moroccan youth with alternatives to criminal and extremist organizations. And so we are partnering to help strengthen Morocco’s criminal justice system and law enforcement.
There will be a lot to discuss in the meeting today. And let me add, the United States greatly appreciates the constructive role Morocco is playing on the UN Security Council, especially your support for the effort to end the violence and bloodshed in Syria and help to usher in a new democratic future for that country. I commend Morocco for offering to host the next ministerial meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People, and we look forward to continuing to work closely together as close partners even after your term on the Security Council has ended.

Finally, our education and cultural ties are reason for much celebration. This year marks the 30th anniversary of our official program to facilitate academic exchanges and other bonds between us. There are more than 5,000 Moroccan alumni of these programs. Two are with us today – Dr. Benjelloun and Dr. Ouaouicha – and we thank them. But among all our work on this front, from preserving Morocco’s historic sites to empowering youth, there’s one area I particularly hope we can focus on today and receive your advice and counsel – namely, interfaith dialogue.

In these tense and turbulent times, it’s more important than ever for people of different faiths to exchange ideas, to build understanding, to promote religious tolerance. It’s one of the great challenges of the 21st century, and it’s one that we must address together.

So we have a lot of work to do, Minister, but our friendship runs long and deep, and as the treaty our nations signed in 1786 says, and I quote, “Trusting in God, it will remain permanent.” I’m confident that we will continue to solve problems and produce results that make our nations stronger, more peaceful, more secure, more prosperous, and also contribute to doing the same for the world.
So again, let me welcome you, Minister. It’s been a great pleasure for me to get to know you, to work with you, to be your colleague bilaterally, regionally, and globally, and also welcome your distinguished delegation.

Thank you.