Treatment of the Press to Pak-Us Relation on War on Terror

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the editorial treatment of the press to Pak-Us Relation on War on Terror, Exploring the Case after the Death of Osama Ben Laden. Two elite newspapers Dawn and The News were selected for this research study. In the first part of the study geo-political position of Pakistan is described. Basically this research tries to present an overview of the treatment of Pak-US relation after the death of Osama Bin Laden by Pakistani press. This study conducts content analysis of The Daily Dawn and The News. Editorials of two elite newspapers of Pakistan were analyzed separately for this study. The rationale behind the choosing of these newspapers for this study is that these newspapers had wide circulation in the country. Time period of this study is six month after the death of Osama Bin Laden. The unit of analysis for the study was editorials of the both newspapers. Both of the newspapers were yield different results. These results were collected differently.

Key words: Terrorism, Pak-US Relations, Drone Attacks, Osama Bin Laden

INTRODUCTION

Mass media acquired the great significance in the recent era through constructing the relation at abroad level. It provides information to public about different happening around the world. Media have strong influence on individual’s mindset, culture, norms, values and traditions. The core function of the media is to provide news information to its audience. In the world all media organizations had their own polices and agenda’s in selecting the news. Media men frame every news stories according to their own point of view. Due to that reason media men had powerful influence in making and molding public opinion. Newspapers have their agenda in editorials pages and reshape the public opinion.

Media has become a battlefield after the destructive incident of 9/11. Media has played a vital role in making perception each other at international arena. This way Media hide and expose some issues to its audience and build up public opinion about any issues. There are many objections and misconception about Pak-US relations had portrayed by media. Where these misconceptions portrayed in mass media? And with what extent it portrayed in media? These are the questions arisen in the researcher mind. This study focuses to cater these questions.

Mainstream English newspapers were selected for the study. The Daily Dawn and The News were chosen for the study due to wide circulation in Pakistan. Editorials and opinion pages had powerful influence in shaping and molding the public opinion. Editorials of three month of both newspapers after the death of Usam Bin Laden are scrutinized for the study.

Pakistan was emerged on the map of the world as “Islamic Republic of Pakistan” in August 14, 1947 (International Media Support, 2009)[1]. Organically Pakistan is located in South Asia. Its total vicinity is 796096 sq Km. K-2, world’s 2nd highest peak is located in north of the country [1]. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Geographically it has its own importance for super powers in the world.
Saudi Arabia’s nationality holder Osama bin Mohammed bin Awad bin Laden was born on March 10, 1957 in Riyadh. He belongs to “a billionaire construction magnate” having ties with Saudi Royal family. The Guardian London (2004) [2] reported that Osama Bin Laden said, “God knows it did not cross our minds to attack the Towers, but after the situation became unbearable—and we witnessed the injustice and tyranny of the American-Israeli alliance against our people in Palestine and Lebanon—I thought about it. And the events that affected me directly were that of 1982 and the events that followed—when America allowed the Israelis to invade Lebanon, helped by the U.S. Sixth Fleet. As I watched the destroyed towers in Lebanon, it occurred to me punish the unjust the same way: to destroy towers in America so it could taste some of what we taste and to stop killing our children and women.”

FBI, “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” list added Osama Bin Laden as 456th person on June 7, 1999. He was accused for capital crimes in 1998 US embassy attacks (CBS News, 2001) [3]. Bill Clinton has persuaded and appealed in the United Nations to impose sanction and force Afghanistan and Taliban to extradite Osama Bin Laden. On October 10, 2001 George W. Bush released the most wanted terrorist list where Osama Bin Laden was among the top thirteen fugitive terrorists. US government has sent a request to Taliban for extradition of Osama Bin Laden while Taliban government refused to hand over all accused persons to USA. Taliban Government “offer to try him before an Islamic court if evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the September 11 attacks was provided It was not until eight days after the bombing of Afghanistan began in October 2001 that the Taliban finally did offer to turn over Osama bin Laden to a third-party country for trial in return for the United States ending the bombing” (Wikipedia, 2012) [4]. President Bush rejected that offer and stated that, “there's no need to discuss innocence or guilt. We know he's guilty (The Guardian, 2001) [5].

Capturing of Osama Bin Laden and other Accused terrorist was the prime agenda of US government. In Clinton administration many efforts were made to access Osama Bin Laden but all failed. After the September 11 attacks US administration declared that Osama is the mother of all evils and terrorism. US forces along with the help of Afghan’s forces had carried out a search operation in the caves of Tora Bora but failed to capture Osama. President Barack Obama has pledged before his presidential election that, “We will kill bin Laden. We will crush al-Qaeda. That has to be our biggest national security priority” (Arena, 2001) [6]. When Barack Obama elected he decided to change the policies of Bush administration. Osama deployed more than 30,000 additional troops in Afghanistan to cater the security and search operations needs.

Various intelligence reports pointed that Osam Bin Laden is hiding in a suspected location near the Abbottabad (Zengerle & Bull, 2011) [7]. US special forces military unit has raided at that compound on May 2, 2001 at 1:00 am Pakistani time. US forces were approached Osama compound from Afghanistan at night and took the dead body of bin laden to Afghanistan (Dilanian, 2011) [8].

Government of Pakistan and military establishment accused of protecting Osama Bin Laden (Schultz, 2011) [9]. President Asif Ali Zardari condemn the blame that Pakistan’s securities forces shelter Osama Bin laden. While a renewed Pakistani columnist Mosharraf Zaidi (2011) [10] reported that, “It seems deeply improbable that bin Laden could have been where he was killed without the knowledge of some parts of the Pakistani state.” But President denied that media blames on securities forces and government of Pakistan is baseless.

Many opinion makers seemed argued on the issue that Bin Laden was residence at compound for last five years (Reuters, 2011) [11]. Osama’s compound was very expensive and located near Pakistan Military Academy which only 100 km away from Islamabad. According to Pakistan’s foreign office statement, Pakistan military and civil government had not any prior information of US military operation against Osama Bin Laden (Rediff, 2011) [12].
Core objective of the study was to find out media treatment on Pak-US relations after the death of Osama Bin Laden. As media is the medium of information among the public and how it made influence on that issue between two countries. The study is focusing on following research question.

RQ: 1 what image of Pak-US relations portrayed in the Pakistani press?
RQ: 2 Does Pakistani press portray the death of Osama positively?

Historical View of Pak-US Relations

Historically Pak-US relations started when Paul Alling, a US ambassador visited Pakistan. After his appointment first Prime Minister of Pakistan made official visit of USA in 1950. Pak-US relations faced many ups and down due to interference of India and Russia. These relations can be separated into three period; cold war era, post cold war era and after the destructive incident of 9/11. Pak-US relations uphold good associations in the period of Eisenhower, Nixon and Reagan comparatively Kennedy, Johnson, Carter, Bush and Clinton’s era.

Pakistan has gained world attention at the time of revolution of Iran and in 1979, Russian’s attack on Afghanistan. In cold war era US government establish and encourage Jihadi movements in Pakistan. US intelligence agency CIA, stimulate Muslim’s passion of jihad against the Russian’s forces. These jihadist organizations were supported through weapons and funding (Ali, 2011) [13]. In post cold war era US officials declared Pakistan as failed state. According to Jameel (2010) [14], “The growing consensus among American policymakers and lawmakers was that Pakistan was not only losing its strategic importance to the United States; it was also becoming an unreliable failed state. That perception was partly transformed after September 11, when Pakistan became a critical theater in the U.S. effort to take the fight to the terrorists.”

M. Ali Bogra, former Prime Minister of Pakistan signed a, “mutual defense assistance program” with then US president Eisenhower. Later on Pakistan signed two security pacts, “South East Asian Treaty Organization” (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Both countries had different motives behind these treaties, US required military base in South Asia while Pakistan needed a strong ally against aggressive neighbors India and Russia. US government has granted financial aids to Pakistan from 1953 to 1961 to fulfill its objectives. Khan (2010) [15] describes it as, “After World War II, containment of Soviet Union was on top of the US agenda. Geographically and strategically Pakistan fitted into the US scheme of encirclement, intelligence gathering, and preventing Communist expansion into West and South Asia.”

As cold war ended US changed its policies towards Pakistan and persuade Pakistan to stay away from attaining the Nuclear power. In November 1, 1983, Richard Kennedy, presented it as;

“But helping friendly nations to address legitimate security concerns, we seek to reduce incentives for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The provision of security assistance and the sale of military equipment can be major components of efforts along these lines. Development of security ties to the U.S. can strengthen a country's confidence in its ability to defend itself without nuclear weapons. At the same time, the existence of such a relationship enhances our credibility when we seek to persuade that country to forego nuclear arms... We believe that strengthening Pakistan's conventional military capability serves a number of important U.S. interests, including non-proliferation. At the same time, we have made clear to the government of Pakistan that efforts to acquire nuclear explosives would jeopardize our security assistance program.”[16]

In 1992 America passed Pressler Amendment which imposed military and economic sanction on Pakistan. Kissinger explains that, “there are neither permanent friends nor permanent foes of a state” (cited in Khan, 2010) [ibid]. Overview of Pak-US relations before the incident of 9/11 depicts many
harsh realities about Pak us relations. In 1965, Indo-Pak war, at that time US left Pakistan alone as Khan (2010) [ibid.] describes;

"But the US played no role, and remained neutral during the 1965 Indo-Pak war. Washington expressed anger that US weapons meant for fighting the Soviet Union were used against India. Supplies of US weapons and spares were stopped and close ally Pakistan was suddenly left high and dry................................While America let Pakistan down in its hour of need, Peoples Republic of China emerged as a solid pillar of support, and offered weapons with technology. It became clear that the United States is not a reliable friend of Pakistan. In 1965 Washington ignored Indian aggression on Pakistan”

US government was in skewed position at the freedom of Bangladesh in war of 1972. Later on US imposed sanction against Pakistan when it got the capability of Nuclear power in 1998. When General Pervez Mushraf revolt civilian government and impose martial law in country US support it (Rampershad & Siraj, 2007) [17]. Horrible incidents of 9/11 yet again led Pakistan as US ally against war on terror. Musharraf's government decided to join US led war against terrorism. According to Baloch (2007);

"Islamabad was pressurized to alter its national course on Kashmir, withdraw its support from freedom movement in Kashmir, and declare some of the echelons of the freedom movement as terrorist organization, banning their operation at its soil. Besides, the few voices for government support, the overall public reaction to Pakistan’s U turns on its long tested policies under U.S. pressure was largely skeptical. Pakistan cooperation with the United States included; granting logistics facilities, sharing intelligence, and capturing and handing over al-Qaida suspects, sealing off its western border and made two naval bases, three air force bases, and its airspace available to the U.S. military." [18]

Clinton (2009) addressed, “If Pakistan becomes more financially unstable, and it increases the danger that we will face from the threat by the extremists to the Pakistan Government” [19]. Government of Bark Obama once again takes a review of its policies towards war against terror and Pakistan. His government has publicized that Pakistan made futile attempt to capture Osama Bin Laden. Kfir (2009) note down that, “The terrorists within Pakistan's borders are not simply enemies of America or Afghanistan--they are a grave and urgent danger to the people of Pakistan. They have killed many Pakistani soldiers and police. They assassinated Benazir Bhutto. They have blown up buildings, derailed foreign investment, and threatened the stability of the state.” [20]

Ali, (2011) said, “Drone attacks inside the Pakistan badly impede the war against terrorism. Actually these attacks killed civilians more than targeted Talban. These civilian’s causality increase the insurgency in the tribal areas.”[21] US government has pronounced that these attacks are the part of war against terror. Los Angeles Time reported,” the CIA received secret permission to attack a wide range of target, including militant whose name are not known” (Auken, 2010) [22]. According to Abbot (2010) [23] Pakistan’s “residents interviewed by the Associated Press in Pakistan’s North Waziristan tribal area, the site of a majority of the strikes since the program began in 2004, said they believe almost all of the victims are innocent civilians.” Wikipedia (2010) [24] explain it that there are 179 attacks from 2004 to October 9, 2010 and 1825 deaths where majority of civilians deaths recorded.

This study is supported by framing theory. Gamson and Modigliani (1987) [25] illustrate it “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (p. 143). Tankard, (1994) identify it “framing stems from a process of “selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration,” (p.3) [26]. Entman (1993) recognized framing practice as, “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to
promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described,” (p. 52)[27].

METHOD

Content analysis procedure is adopted in this research study. Content based on Pak-US relation were analyzed for this study. Content of the main stream English newspapers related to Pak-US relation after the death of Usama bin laden were analyzed. Editorials of two elite newspapers of Pakistan were analyzed one by one for this study. According to Altschull (1984) [28] “Elite press as objective, independent, responsible and enjoying vast circulation”.

This research study is intended to investigate Pak-US relations after the death of Usama-Bin-Laden through editorial treatment of the elite press. Data is collected from primary sources. Time period of the study is three month after the death of Osama Bin Laden. Universe of this study is mainstream English newspapers of Pakistani press. Editorials of selected time period from 1\textsuperscript{st} May, 2011 to 31\textsuperscript{st} July, 2011 were scrutinized for the study. “The Daily Dawn” and “The News” were calculated for the purpose of this research. These newspapers were selected due to wide circulation in the country.

“The Daily Dawn is the Oldest and most widely-read English newspaper in Pakistan. It is known to be a liberal responsiveness newspaper that has often supported contentious leftist social agenda. It was initiated by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in 1941 in Delhi, India but later was shifted to Pakistan. It has a weekly circulation of over 138000” (Einfopedia, 2012) [29]. Following are the reasons for selecting above mentioned newspapers.

“The News” is published by the Jang Group of Newspapers. “It is the largest English language newspaper in Pakistan. “The News” has an ABC certified and its circulation is 140,000. It is publish from Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi/Islamabad. An overseas edition is published from London that caters to the Pakistani community in the United Kingdom.” (Einfopedia, 2012) [30].

A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis was adopted to enhance the consideration of research question. In the study primary categories of context are ascribed. These categories were based on editorials of “The Daily Dawn” and “The News”.

Construction of the Categories

Floger (1984) describes it as, “to which the coding system is logically consistent and the categories clearly defined” p.137. [31] Potter et al. (1999) defined it that, “The designer of content analysis develops a coding scheme that consists of rules that tells coders how to put their observations into the correct data categories” p.266. [32]

For the purpose of creating these categories researcher will focus on the objective of the study and then distribute the data into the manageable categories. Editorials of “Daily Dawn” and “The News” will be the area of study. In these newspaper editorials related to Pak-US relation on counterterrorism are classified into three categories. These categories are as;

A. Editorials Related to Pak-Military Operations
B. Editorials Related to NATO Forces Drone Attacks
C. Editorials Related to Death of Osama Bin Laden

All these categories are described as;
Editorials Related to Pakistan Military Operations

All the editorials based on Pakistan military operations and Pakistan army role on war against terrorism. All the achievements of Pakistan’s military like destroying, capturing and tear down the terrorist network and further military forces linked activities in Pakistan are sorted in this category.

Editorials Related to NATO Forces

All editorials based on NATO Forces military operations and Drone attacks inside Pakistan are tagged in this category.

Editorials Related to Death of Osama Bin Laden

All editorials based on Osama Bin Laden death are categorized in this category.

Quality and Direction of the Contents

There are three types of slant editorials which indicate the directions as positive, negative and neutral.

Favorable (+)

Each paragraph of the editorial will be coded in term of slant paragraph which point out optimistic change and improvement in war on terrorism, portrays Pak-US relations positively and handover the terrorist to US are coded as favorable or positive.

Unfavorable (-)

Editorials which are presenting Pakistan reluctant to assistance, grant support to terrorist, sympathizing with the Taliban and terrorist infiltration into Afghanistan are coded as negative.

Neutral (o)

Paragraphs which had not any direction on image of Pakistan are coded as neutral.

Data analysis, results and discussions

During the elected time period total numbers of editorials related to Pak-US relations were 85. In the month of May, The Daily Dawn published 17 (20%) editorials related to Pak-Ush relations, The News 20 (23%). In June The Daily Dawn published 13 (15%), The News 15 (17%). In the month of July The Daily Dawn published 11 (12%), The News 9 (10%) as showed in (Table 1).

In the month of May, 2011, The Daily Dawn published 17 (20%) editorials out of which 4 (23%) in Category A, 5 (30%) in Category B and 8 (47%) in Category C. The News published 20 (23%) editorials out of which 3 (15%) in Category A, 7 (35%) in Category B and 10 (50%) in Category C.

In the month of Jun, 2011, The Daily Dawn published 13 (15%) editorials out of which 2 (15%) in Category A, 5 (38%) in Category B and 6 (46%) in Category C. The News published 15 (17%) editorials out of which 4 (26%) in Category A, 4 (26%) in Category B and 7 (46%) in Category C.

In the month of July, 2012, The Daily Dawn published 11 (12 %) editorials out of which 3 (27 %) in Category A, 3 (27%) in Category B and 5 (45%) in Category C. The News published 9 (10%) editorials out of which 2 (22%) in Category A, 2 (22%) in Category B 4 (44%) in Category C.
Table: 1, Treatment of the Press to Pak-Us Relation on War on Terror (May, 2011- July, 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>No. of Editorials Related Pak-US Relations (%)</th>
<th>Category A* (%)</th>
<th>Category B* (%)</th>
<th>Category C* (%)</th>
<th>Direction of the Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>17 (20)</td>
<td>4 (23.52)</td>
<td>5 (29.41)</td>
<td>8 (47.05)</td>
<td>6 (35.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The News</td>
<td>20 (23.5)</td>
<td>3 (15)</td>
<td>7 (35)</td>
<td>10 (50)</td>
<td>7 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>13 (15.2)</td>
<td>2 (15.38)</td>
<td>5 (38.46)</td>
<td>6 (46.15)</td>
<td>3 (23.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The News</td>
<td>15 (17.6)</td>
<td>4 (26.66)</td>
<td>4 (26.66)</td>
<td>7 (46.66)</td>
<td>4 (26.66)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>11 (12.9)</td>
<td>3 (27.27)</td>
<td>3 (27.27)</td>
<td>5 (45.45)</td>
<td>3 (27.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The News</td>
<td>9 (10.5)</td>
<td>2 (22.22)</td>
<td>3 (33.33)</td>
<td>4 (44.44)</td>
<td>2 (22.22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>18 (21.17)</td>
<td>27 (31.76)</td>
<td>40 (47.05)</td>
<td>25 (29.41)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In the categories of the contents; category A, editorials related to Pak-military operations present 18 (21%) editorials out of 85 and editorials related to category B based on NATO forces drone attacks were 27 (93.2%). A large number of editorials related to death of Osama Bin Laden followed by category C, 40 (47.5%) as showed in (Table: 1). During three month research study “The Daily Dawn” published 41 (48.2%) editorials out of 85 total editorials. “The News” stand at top with the coverage of 44 (51.8%) out of 85 total editorial during the study period. In direction of the content newspapers
The study intended to investigate media treatment on Pak-US relation after the death of Osama Bin Laden. Article related to Osama Bin Laden, Pakistan military operations and NATO forces attacks inside Pakistan were analyzed for the study. Characteristically findings of mainstream English newspapers were not different. Both newspapers approximately show similar coverage after the death of Osama Bin Laden.

CONCLUSION

Incident of 9/11 has embattled intention of the world about terrorism and Osama Bin Laden. Media has focused the issue of terrorism at the same time as US policies regarding to war on terrorism. Media is a tool of information and formation of public opinion. Media had portrayed the both country image on war on terror and reshaped public opinion in accordance with official stand point of Pak-US relations. US have accused that Osama Bin Laden and other suspected were involved in dreadful activities of terrorism. Lying on these grounds America initiated a global war against terror. Core principle of the war on terror was to capture and sentence the culprits of 9/11 tragedy. Osama Bin Laden was originator and supporter of Taliban Government in Afghanistan, a neighbor country of Pakistan. Pakistan is a frontline country in war on terror. Pakistan is facing ample of problems, suicide attacks, attacks on military and paramilitary forces. Pak-US relation had face many ups and down during past decades. Before the incident of 9/11 Pak-US relations were seemed dagger drawn. A result of both newspapers collectively portrays treatment of Pak-US relation negative after the death of Osama Bin Laden.

References