



Open Access



Peace Reporting: Intra-afghan Dialogue and Role of Media

Muhammad Riaz¹ Muhammad Jamil² Muhammad Noman³

Abstract: John Gatling's model of journalism has been applied to coverage of newspaper reports on peace in Afghanistan in three leading English newspapers: the New York Times, Outlook Afghanistan, and the Daily Dawn. As an important pillar of the state, the media plays an important role in resolving disputes through its news reporting. By shaping it, they shape and edit people's opinions. In this way, the media is a powerful tool for shaping the nation's policy in international communication. So, the social responsibility theory of the press is discussed in this regard. The purpose of this study is to explore the coverage pattern of "terrorism and the ongoing war in Afghanistan" through print media in the framework of peace. News from three major newspapers shows that the coverage of the war and peace efforts in Afghanistan is dominated by the framework of peace journalism. Each story was coded for Peace Journalism as modeled by John Gatling. The three salient features of peace journalism that have been observed are the unbiased approach, the multidisciplinary approach, and the avoiding evil language. All three newspapers were objective and reported in their entire context. Most of the time, newspapers' approach was to resolve disputes rather than to direct them.

Key Words: Taliban, Afghan Peace Process, Intra Dialogue, Peace Framing

Introduction

Afghanistan is a landlocked nation that shares borders with Pakistan to the east and south and is situated in the center of Asia. Afghanistan's citizens have long struggled with security issues, and the Taliban's protracted conflict with the US has only served to deepen and amplify their military activities throughout the nation. In response to the Taliban attacks, former US President Donald Trump escalated airstrikes and dispatched close to 3,000 additional soldiers to Afghanistan, which led to a rise in civilian fatalities. The first meeting between representatives of the Taliban and US officials took place in Doha in October 2018. Over the following year, there were eight rounds of negotiations. Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the head of the Taliban's political office in Doha, and co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar represented the party in the negotiations, while US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad represented Washington. Between July and September 30, there were 1,174 violent fatalities and 3,139 injuries, which is a 42 percent rise over the same time the previous year. This occurred throughout the discussions. More than at any other point in the previous ten years, the US Air Force dropped a record 7,423 bombs on Afghanistan, according to data from the US Central Command Combined Air Operations Center.

Since 2009, when the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan started keeping track of casualties, almost 100,000 Afghans have died or been injured. Following the murder of an American soldier, Trump unexpectedly halted negotiations with the Taliban in September 2019. In an apparent attempt to seal the Agreement, the US president also called off planned private meetings at Camp David with the president of Afghanistan and the Taliban. The Taliban intensified its attacks following the suspension of negotiations, making the last quarter of 2019 the deadliest since the US invasion in 2001.

¹ Assistant Professor, Riphah Institute of Media Sciences (RIMS), Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

² MS Scholar, Riphah Institute of Media Sciences (RIMS), Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

³ MS Scholar, Riphah Institute of Media Sciences (RIMS), Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan.



There are four basic components to the US-Taliban peace deal: a pledge by the Taliban not to allow foreign armed organizations to use Afghanistan as a base of operations, the full departure of US-led forces, and intra-Afghan discussions. And the armistice. The United States had pushed for a statewide ceasefire during the discussions, while the Taliban had said that their primary demand was the total removal of Western soldiers. When the US first attempted to broker a dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghan government, the armed organization rejected, calling the government in Kabul, which is backed by the West, a "puppet government." met with the Taliban in Doha for a two-day intra-Afghan discussion, including women.

In 2019, a group of Taliban negotiators met with Afghan leaders in two intra-Afghan discussions that took place in Moscow, the Russian capital. To pull out of the conflict before the 2020 presidential election, President Trump has decided to reopen negotiations with the Taliban in December of last year. On February 22, a week-long "reduction in violence" (RIV) between the Taliban and US and Afghan security forces went into effect, igniting expectations for an end to the protracted conflict. The RIV was a success; only small-scale assaults were noted. The deal was signed in Doha on February 29 by representatives of the US government and the Taliban. United States and NATO forces will leave Afghanistan within 14 months, according to a joint statement released by the US and the Afghan government just before the deal was signed. "The United States will reduce the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan to 8,600 and implement other commitments in the U.S.-Taliban agreement within 135 days of this joint declaration and the announcement of the U.S.-Taliban agreement," read the joint statement. The media has always been important, either in a good or bad way. Media in Afghanistan also bears a heavy burden from the conflict. More than fifty journalists from local, national, and international media organizations are said to have died while performing their jobs. The media has long been obsessed with the Afghan War. that the Subcontinent's future depends on Afghanistan's peace. Thus, the media played a crucial role in promoting peace in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the US administration is attempting to involve the media in the peace process. The reporters attending the peace process conference received a thorough briefing on the process's evolution. Interviews with Taliban commanders were allowed by the media. Top Taliban leader featured in an article published by the New York Times. Despite this, several media partners harshly criticized the New York Times for it. The media aired live coverage of the preparations in Moscow and Doha.

According to Malcolm X, a Human rights activist, the Media have the power to alter decisions and convert minds. Thus, the media helped people see the need for peace, and that conversation is the best way to bring about it. Media has a very important role in intra-Afghan talks, and it was instrumental in bringing fighters to the Tables.

Last week, the Afghan Taliban refused to meet a negotiating team that included Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. The Taliban's spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, in a statement, said, "To reach a true and lasting peace, the aforementioned team must be agreed upon by all effective Afghan sides so that it can represent all sides." (Jamal, U [2020](#)).

Literature Review

The link Between Media and peace is clear. Terrorism and violence need publicity, which the media can easily provide to them. That's why the role of media was seen as conspicuous during the war. It has recently been observed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The media provides a huge amount of publicity to these wars and shares some dramatic images. That's why the role of media in war is prolonging debate. (Wolsfield, G. [2004](#)).

Rabin's government sees the media as a great tool for mobilizing the opinion of the Israeli public regarding the process of peace. However, the media knows that it will face great opposition to the Agreement. It was necessary to agree with the Public for the peace process, and the media was the only tool that could mold public opinion. Because it is the only source of news and information for the people of the peace process. (Wolsfield, G. [1997](#)). In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, Israeli media made their blame, and Palestine media did accordingly. They blame the peace actor for their nationality. (Frideman, E Mischler, A [2020](#)).

Human history is full of struggles with conflict, like recent American police brutality and the racial profiling protests in major cities and the wildfires in different states. Health pandemic situations like Ebola and recent COVID-19 followed by military conflict, regressive regime, and war terrorism. All these examples show that humans were in search of peace every time. In this context, peace through media is a meaningful addition to the conflict environment and the era of globalization. (Rhodes, L. D. [2020](#)).

According to Khan, B. Y., Naseer, F., & Ahmad, R. ([2021](#)), although the deal was about to harbingering a new era of peace in Afghanistan, according to the realistic school of thought "ideas cannot construct the world". The implementation of peace seems a difficult task after this recent inhumane attack on the state. No stakeholder is ready to leave its interest in the region.

Researchers will quote Fareed Zakaria:

The leadership crises and intra-state socioeconomic and political upheaval multiply the state's inability to Drive its National interest and fall prey to the Power Politics of competing forces. Abdul Jalil Benish wrote in his article "Impunity and Instability: An Unbroken Cycle."

World News Digest described the civil war in Afghanistan as follows: on March 6, rebel forces launched a much-publicized onslaught against the eastern city of Jalalabad, sparking the start of the first major fight in the conflict since Soviet soldiers withdrew from Afghanistan in mid-February. The rebel assault, however, stalled after making some early successes, and by March 24, Western observers reported that the conflict had come to a standstill. [See 1989 Afghanistan: Rebels Elect Interim Leaders, 1989 Soviets Complete Troop Withdrawal from Afghanistan; Kabul Regime Faces Advancing Rebels. There were around 12,000 government forces stationed across the city. The mujaheddin, or rebels, had amassed a force of ten to fifteen thousand warriors for the attack. This attack was among the earliest attempts by the mujaheddin to engage government soldiers in a conventional war. The rebels had limited themselves to guerrilla-style hit-and-run tactics for most of the ten-year conflict. The rebels had been threatening to assault Jalalabad for weeks before the offensive. The leaders of the rebels had bragged that the city would fall in a week. (Jan, I Hussain, S [2020](#))

According to Muhammad Anwar Nasar, "Ashraf Ghani's regime holds its spectacular perspective regarding the intra-Afghan dialogue. The current regime is committed and crystal clear that the government cannot be dissolved at any cost to ensure peace for new settlements. Other than this, the intra-Afghan dialogue can be commenced if the Taliban or any other faction accepts the existing government as the representative government of the Afghan people. Moreover, Ghani and his team avoid repeating the 1992 experience when Dr. Najibullah was dethroned for the sake of acquiring peace in Afghanistan. The intrinsic and esoteric aims of Dr. Najib's dethronement were different from what was exoterically propagated. The end of Dr. Najib's government crumbled the state into anarchy and civil war followed by his inhuman execution" (Nasar, MA [2020](#))

According to Maryyum Masood, "There are apprehensions in the meantime that, the Taliban may not give up violence, which remains their principal leverage, for achieving the objective they have fought for, all those years" (Masood, M and Malik, S [2020](#))

Problem Statement

This study aimed to find out the coverage pattern of the ongoing war in Afghanistan through print media in the framework of peace as described by Gatling. Primarily, this article intended to examine the print media coverage regarding peace and war journalism. In this article, the researchers examined the coverage pattern of three leading English newspapers: the New York Times, Outlook Afghanistan, and the Daily Dawn.

Research Objective

To explore the coverage pattern of "terrorism and the ongoing war in Afghanistan" through print media in the framework of peace.

Research Question

How did media play a role in peace in intra-Afghan dialogues?



Gatling Model of Peace Journalism

Peace Journalism, as described by Gatling, is a framework for reporting conflict that emphasizes presenting a more balanced view by showing the perspective of all concerned. It seeks to delve deeper into the root causes of conflict and highlight potential solutions rather than solely focusing on the surface violence. This approach aims to humanize all the stakeholders, avoid sensationalism, and foster dialogue, ultimately contributing to understanding and potentially resolving conflicts. However, its application can vary and is subject to criticism within different journalistic contexts.

Social Responsibility Theory of Press

This theory defines that media should play a role in society that provides accurate information about specific issues and should not provide such information that creates violence or then creates law and order situations, and news should be authentic and balanced (Fourie, 2001). This theory also protects the public rights (Coe, P. 2018). So, Social Responsibility Theory is most relevant to our study as it examines how the media plays its role according to morals.

Therefore, according to (Bandura, Ross, and Ross 1961) Bobo doll study, the social learning theory states, "media play effect on behavior." In his study, they present emotional responses, attitudes, and manners of models; observing others is a major principle. Bandura imparts four steps of social responsibility theory, which contain an operant and cognitive learning view; these steps are as follows:

The individual produces a movement that is consistent with the observation.

1. Attention – human beings observe the environment to some extent.
2. Mind observation
3. Reproduction – a movement that is consistent with the observation.
4. Motivation – the individual can't do anything unless you use common sense.

According to Bandura (1973), observation of social models proves that learning is compatible with aggressive behavior; on the other hand, he said that there are three factors that are more likely to affect people who are affected by the media.

Methodology and Data Collection

The methodology used for the Article is the content analysis of three newspapers, "Daily Dawn," "Daily New York Times," and "Daily Outlook." The content of the newspapers and news is noted in the heading of headlines, and story themes of the newspapers are studied for discussion. The purpose of the study was to examine the print media's role and whether the methodology used in our print media is compliant with the concept of the peace process. For this purpose, we go through leading these three newspapers. We have taken and selected English newspapers because the majority of news about Afghanistan is in English newspapers readers, so we have taken it in mind that due to this, we could know the English newspapers and how they induce the readers.

In this research, the quantitative method was used to collect and analyze the data on the intra-Afghan dialogue situation, whether the print media plays the role of social responsibility or not, and did the newspaper provided the information about the intra-Afghan dialogue. To what extent does a print medium help you with Afghan dialogue? The data are collected from the American, Pakistani, and Afghan newspapers; there are three newspapers taken data Daily Dawn (Pakistan), Daily Outlook (Afghanistan), and New York Times (United States); news from those newspapers are analyzed to explore the role of media for six-month reporting of the said Newspaper was the duration of our sample sizing. That is how peace dialogues are reported. The article is divided into two discussion chapters on the basis of news. The first Report is before the peace talks, and the second is after the Doha meetings. The data analysis is based on Social responsibility theory. The main aspects of this theory are an ethical philosophy wherein individuals are accountable for upholding their civic duty; an individual's acts will benefit society as a whole. In this way, a balance must be struck between economic development and social and environmental welfare. The main purpose is to investigate the connection between language, story, agenda, story angle, and how media constructs and represents Afghan peace-related stories. Among all the newspapers, they are selected and analyzed.

Data Collection

Data collection in every research is a very important and very sensitive matter. All research is depending on the data. In this type of research, the survey method is used. In this research, the data was collected from three of the most famous and widely read newspapers. Six months of data was collected for this research. All stories are collected in which the Afghan Peace process was mentioned or discussed. During data collection, only news items were selected; there were advertisements, but they were ignored. Extracting the dialogue data focused on the economic and social impact of the peace so that it would not be difficult to draw conclusions. On the other hand, Google questionnaires were distributed to 100 people, and answers were obtained. These questions were asked to people of different ages and different fields.

Data Analysis

This chapter includes the analysis of the newspapers. The analysis is done in the light of social responsibility theory. A total of six months of data was collected from three different newspapers. Daily Dawn (Pakistan), Daily Outlook (Afghanistan), and New York Times (U.S). All the newspapers are among the most widely read. While collecting the data, care was taken as to whether the print media was playing its social role in Intra Af ghan dialogue reporting. The questionnaire explains all the things very closely.

Universe of the Study

Almost every piece of news published in both newspapers during the six months of this research study was the population of the study.

Sample Size

In this research, three English newspapers have been taken as a sample size. All the news stories published in these newspapers during the last six months have been taken as a sample size.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the role of print media in building the peace process for Afghan dialogue and find out whether misuse and violation of the ethical values in the news stories; we will also look at the Pakistani government's role in building peace in Afghanistan.

Discussions

Table 1

Coverage of news stories by newspapers in war and peace journalism

Newspaper	War Frame	Peace Frame
Daily Outlook Afghanistan	45%	55%
Daily New York Time	51%	49%
Daily Dawn	42%	58%

The first table was about the coverage of the News stories by newspapers in war and peace journalism; in Daily Outlook, Afghanistan published 45% of news stories about war, and 55% are based on peace framing. Daily News York Times, 51% are in favor of war framing, and 49% are in favor of peace. Daily Dawn published 42% in favor of war and 58% in peace framing.

Table 2

Topics in the news converge

Categories	News	Percentage
Daily New York Time	100	21%
Daily Dawn	100	32%
Daily Afghan Outlook	100	46%



The second table was about the newspaper coverage of Afghan dialogue; for this purpose, randomly check the publication of news. Daily News York Times randomly published 21%, daily Dawn 32%, and Daily Afghan Outlook published 46% of news once in three months.

Table 3

Distribution of war and peace frame in the news stories

Frame	Frequency	Percentage
Peace	780	78.2%
War	182	21.8%

The third table is based on the distribution of War and Peace frames in the News stories during Afghan Intra-dialogue. The result was that 78.2% of news stories in the above three newspapers were in favor of peace and 21.8% in favor of war during the Afghan Intra dialogue.

Table 4

Framing of Taliban as foe or friend

Frame	Frequency	Valid Percent
Taliban as Friend	220	34.5
Taliban as Foe	654	65.5

Table 4 was the framing of the Taliban as Foe or Friend? During the reporting of these three newspapers, 34.5% were in favor of the Taliban as a Friend and 65.5% of news stories published the Taliban as a Foe.

Conclusion

Although Media foundations and theories describe the socially responsible role of media for development, peace, and conflict resolution, when media becomes commercialized, it somehow falls away from its basic responsibilities. As we all know, media is likely to be considered the fourth pillar of the state, so media have a great responsibility, especially in this era of globalization where almost every individual has access to media.

Based on the content analysis of three newspapers from three different states that were directly involved in the Afghan war and Afghan Peace Dialogues, we finally concluded that Media had played a very positive role in initiating, promoting, and stabilizing the Afghan peace process. Media shows that it's a new dawn of peace and prolonged suffering in the subcontinent; the people of Afghanistan will be back to their homeland and normal life. Media frame the news related to Afghan peace dialogues in a way that it is the only way to bring peace, and the War Should be ended. It will not be exaggerated if we say that even the media has become biased toward the Peace process in Afghanistan. According to the reports, we know that the Media also faced great losses in the Afghan War. More than fifty Journalist died in the Afghan war in the line of their duties.

Suggestions/Recommendations

Based on our studies and research, we will further suggest to the new researcher interested in finding the role of media in the peacebuilding process that the Afghan wars are now approaching an end. New researchers may find and do good work on the Nagorno Karabagh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan or the Hong Kong conflict over new Chinese law.

References

Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. A. (1961). Transmission of aggression through imitation of aggressive models. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 63(3), 575-582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0045925>

- Coe, P. (2018). (Re)embracing social responsibility theory as a basis for media speech: Shifting the normative paradigm for a modern media. *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly*, 69(4), 403-431. <https://doi.org/10.53386/nilq.v69i4.186>
- Fourie, P. J. (Ed.). (2001). *Media Studies: Institutions, theories, and issues* (Vol. 1). Juta and Company Ltd.
- Friedman, E., & Herfroy-Mischler, A. (2020). The media framing of blame agency in asymmetric conflict: Who is blaming whom for the 2014 Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations failure? *Journalism Studies*, 21(13), 1873-1892. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2020.1797526>
- Jamal, U. (2020). *The Taliban Rejects Ghani's Intra-Afghan Dialogue Team: What Now?* Thedi diplomat.com. <https://thedi diplomat.com/2020/03/the-taliban-rejects-ghanis-intra-afghan-dialogue-team-what-now/>
- Jan, I., & Hussain, S. (2020). Media, War and Peace: Towards Peace Journalism Strategies in Pakistan. *Global Regional Review*, V(I), 340-345. [https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2020\(V-I\).37](https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2020(V-I).37)
- Khan, B. Y., Naseer, F., & Ahmad, R. (2021). Impact of Taliban's takeover on the academic performance of Afghan scholars in Pakistan. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VI(II), 260-267. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2021\(VI-II\).26](https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2021(VI-II).26)
- Masood, M. & Malik, S. (2020). *Intra-Afghan Dialogue: The real path to peace.* <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/intra-afghan-dialogue-the-real-path-to-peace/>
- Nasar, M. A. (2020). *The complexity of intra-Afghan Dialogue.* Daily Times. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/569153/the-complexity-of-intra-afghan-dialogue/>
- Rhodes, L. D. (2020). Peace Though Media. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 5288-5291. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/viewFile/16458/3247>
- Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). Promoting peace through the News Media, Some lessons from the Oslo Peace process. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 2(4), 52-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1081180x97002004005>
- Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). *Media and Path to peace, Communication Society and politics.* Cambridge University Press.