



**Creation of Perception by International Media in Times of Crises;  
Instances from Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan**

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**Abstract**

In the contemporary era, the regime changes or power shift in Afghanistan from the US occupants to the local Taliban have created quite a stir in realm of international relation's academia since the past year. To study the pertinent role of media in crises, this research study analyzes the narrative being built by international media on this particular issue of Afghan Taliban takeover. This study would focus on selective media sites like the CNN, BBC, Hindustan Times, RT and TRT, with goal of following a particular timeline starting from the US evacuation to initial Taliban regime days. The research at hand came to point out that in the initial days of the crises the Taliban were portrayed as victors of great and long battle while in the days to come, this perception has been changes by the international media. Moving forth it was observed that the positive tone of media towards the Taliban started to move towards a downfall, where they considered the Taliban as incompetent in terms of governing the state. Where once the US was criticized, the international media switched the roles. From victors, the Taliban became the villains, negative images were portrayed in respect to solely focusing on the religion, thereby the imposition of Shariah Law in the Taliban regime as well future and safety of women in the state. Clearly pointing to the fact that media which is considered to be impartial, and objectives fails to do so in this account. In reality, the core/hegemony build the narrative through media and solidify their belligerent actions and claims to sustain their favored distorted realities and perceptions, which may quite far from the actual truth.

*Keywords: Afghanistan, Taliban, Media role, Islam, Women rights, Terrorism*



### **Introduction**

For the last few years Afghanistan served as important hub for scholars in terms of conflict and peace journalism due to the ongoing instability within the state. The issue further rose to even more of pertinent stage when the Americans decided to evacuate, as the Taliban with its allies took over Kabul on august 15<sup>th</sup> 2021(Maizland, 2022). This conquest of the Taliban, bringing the Islamic rule back to the land, marked a defining moment for the international jihadist movement. As things progressed, a different outcome was predicted, one that would be different than pre 9/11. One of the major challenges to be accepted in a positive light in the international realm for recognition of their rule (Pantucci & Basit, 2021). The power shift not only had implications for just Afghanistan but the US, the regional players, the global media as well as the hegemons of the globe. (Tariq, Amir & Bano, 2021).

In the portrayal or discussion of any conflict, media plays the major role in setting the foundations of the situation for the audiences, in term framing it either biased or unbiased tones.

Ancient times show evidences of how media has been used as a powerful political tool by international figures like Napoleon, Alexander, Caesar, Mao, Hitler and Stalin one of the big names of history. Using media to facilitate their military and political goals. (Knightly, 2003; Ottosen, 2008). In terms of news coverage, conflict news is considered more pertinent thus is given more emphasis than conflict resolution news. This situation occurs as journalistic values and moral give weight more to informational news. (Galtung & Lynch, 2010; Fawcett, 2002; Wolsfeld, 2004), as a result of such values, the conflict increases as the news coverage through constant stereotyping leads to creation of misperceptions within a specific peace system. (Bratic, 2006). Due to this impending issue, this study has been conducted to analyze foreign news coverage of different organization specific to the timeline of Taliban take over.

The research at hand bases it theoretical framework on the agenda setting theory as well as the Priming and framing theory. As the methodology of the research is concerned, Content discourse analysis (Qualitative) was considered appropriate to scrutinize the news coverage related to Afghanistan in international newspapers pertaining to a specific timeline. The content nominated through simple random selection from The Economist, The Hindustan time and British Broadcasting Company. The rationale behind the selection of these news outlets was due their global prominence in the international realm and specifically regarding the Afghan situation.



**Statement of Problem:**

This abrupt withdrawal after decades of conflict could not become a situation that was to be acceptable by all. There are many different perspectives in the international realm during this withdrawal. Where the Muslims states saw a win, at the same time the West had a completely different perspective than Muslims states like Pakistan. Some criticized this withdrawal decision, as not giving proper training to the locals before the US withdrew, to where some states readily accepted the newly established government and even came forth for their aid. Amidst various perception siding with Afghanistan and being against them, in journalistic terms in the Western and the Indian media seen be neglecting ethical standards by not reporting fact-based as well as only covering issues that favored their own agendas against the Taliban like the controversial women issue. According to the observation, it was noted by the researcher that panic was being shown as viral video clip surfaced on the social media. therefore it became imperative to study how international news outlets set tones regarding different conflicts, whether their show distorted realities or if their content is not biased in reality. the Taliban take over was considered the best-case study to examine this issue of mis-represented narrative/ news coverage.

**Aims of the Study**

The rationale of this study is investigating the initial coverage and discourse of BBC, The Hindustan time and the Economist in terms of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan after US withdrawal on 15<sup>th</sup> august 2021. Then further looking into the agenda and framing being set by the global media at the international level.

**Research Questions:**

R.Q. 1: How did *BBC* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?

In what tone did the BBC frame the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban through their news coverage

R. Q. 2: How did *Hindustan Times* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?

In what tone did The Hindustan Times frame the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban through their news coverage

R.Q. 3: How did *The Economist* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?

In what tone did The Economist frame the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban through their news coverage



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

R.Q. 4: In what tone did RT frame the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban through their news coverage

R.Q. 5: In what tone did TRT frame the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban through their news coverage

### **Objectives**

To find out how *BBC* frame the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse

To find out how *Hindustan Times* frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse

To find out *The Economist* framing after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse

To find out how RT frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse

To find out how TRT frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse

To scrutinize the initial coverage of the BBC, the Hindustan Times, The Economist, RT and TRT in terms of framing the Taliban Afghan issue for the international realm.

### **Literature Review**

Tankard and Severin (1992), claimed to say propaganda was carried out on conflict news to legalize belligerent policies and warfare operations by achieving public support. Media no longer remains an unbiased outlet that once was considered as the watch dog of the public (Lynch, 2008; Lynch & McGoldrick; 2005; Kempf, 2007). Rather it has become tool that is used to distort information to achieve certain outcomes favorable to the powerful. (Galtung, 2002; Kempf, 2003)

Memories about the role of media are not much fascination in the war between Rwanda and Burundi when the media was involved in propaganda activity and it worsened the battle situation by being a war tool (Bratic, 2006)

. Other examples when media could have played better roles and could have rectified the situation include various incidents of mass violence in Eastern Europe during the world wars; and now recently the media coverage in American led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan can also be observed as biased ones. Lots of people could have been saved in these wars only if the media had played a transparent role and it had given peace a chance (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005; Ottosen, 2008; Bratic, 2006). Despite the fact that media



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

can be used for promoting peace, this is something that is under-practiced and not discussed and just merely ignored (Bläsi, 2004). A peace researcher, Syed Abdul Siraj (2006) has maintained that the media is highly obsessed with the conflicting news and that is the point of concern for the media practitioners, peace researchers and conflicting parties, because at times media lead to conflict aggravation (Hussain, 2014). The ethical responsibility of the media requires it to describe the events contextually and transparently while explaining the underlying causes (Galtung, 2002; Kovarik, 2007).

To understand the role of media in the conflicting situations, the dichotomy of peace and war journalism has been largely considered by the researchers (Hussain, 2014).

Wilhelm Kempf (2012) considers it important to reform the content of news media during the war and conflict time. Empirical investigation of many researchers (Lynch, 2005; Siraj, 2006; Lee & Maslog; Spencer, 2006) has shown the preponderance of war journalism which exhibits that currents media practices are inclined towards war and not peace.

Researches since a century have shown that media content has an influence on the audience, (However, there are different paradigms on the degree of media effect). So it can be confidently said that the media can play a role either to resolve conflict or exaggerate it. We can neither confirm the powerful media effect nor the negligible effect (Severin & Tankard; 1992). This is the reason that this research has been conducted to see the news media coverage of the Afghanistan issue by the prominent newspapers of the world.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Framing Theory**

This research based on the theoretical foundations of the framing theory, which is considered as motivator towards the notion of peace journalism as claimed by scholars. (For example, Lee, 2010; Siraj, 2008). Mental constructs that help an individual to conform their thoughts and ideas to better comprehend the social order are known as frames. As Entman (1993) posits these frames are considered to be effective apparatuses used by the individual in process of interpreting realities even though in most cases they are often used unknowingly. Frames provide the necessary interpretations, and each frame operates through a diverse technique. Thereby claiming to say that framing theory posits towards the idea of selecting components of reality and prioritizing it over other realities and any related associations towards vocabularies to overshadow a specific interpretations or reality.



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

Frames reflect the idea of inferences, with every individual having a unique process that others. So Entman points that the framing ideology basically calls out to having choice to select an appealing portion of the reality, then listing as more pertinent than other realities or elements of then association certain vocabularies to that specific reality.

The framing theory helps practitioners and academics of media and communication in understanding certain dimensions and developments in context to safeguarding conflicts. This theory carries ideological, endogenic as well as expert level aspects

This research fundamentally selects the notion of frames negative and positive and then applies that in the context of media portrayal of Afghan Taliban after US withdrawal, focusing on subjects like

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

This research entails the discourse analysis of images and stories from the web. Many scholars in the Media and communication academia use this technique to study texts and images extracted from the media (Ottosen, 2010; Ross, 2006). This methodology conceptualizes on work of Van Dijk. Van Dijk had a very unique and detailed way of looking at elements, he not only focused on the mere writing itself but also connected the notion to the elements of socio and political spheres ,deciphering a greater context in the mix of ideology versus power originating from the media (1998).

Van Dijk (1998) style focuses on being media-centric, as it purely incorporates its work on news headlines, introductions and image which ultimately create the whole perspective. Galtung's War and Peace journalism and Wilhelm Kempf's constructive and destructive coverage models were kept in the background as foundational bricks during the entire study period.

#### **4.2 Population and Sampling**

This research presents the Taliban dispute reporting in Afghanistan in a qualitative analysis. This study selects the economist magazine's cover images as the population as the said image provides a great perspective of the contemporary world due to rapid technological growth. News stories are also an integral part of the media, therefore the BBC, the Hindustan Times, TRT, RT and CNN have also been considered a part of the population.

#### **Sample:**

The decided timeline for this research was one month starting from 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021 to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The sample included the most popular stories and imaged from the Hindustan times, BBC, and the Economist



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

### **Rational for selecting *The Economist***

This media outlets publishes in a magazine format, published weekly newspaper that is circulated digitally. It includes a wide array of themes starting from the Current affairs to technology, international business lastly the most important theme being politics. It has quite large following in the international world. this study as included two images from the front issue of the media outlet pertaining to the Afghan Taliban issue.

### **Rational for selecting *Hindustan Times***

This news outlet has an Indian origin. In this Afghan situation, India being a regional player invested a lot of revenue in this conflict. Due to the states mutual agreements COMCASA, BECA and LMAO, India is considered to be on the road towards being the strategic partner for the US in the years to come.

The British Broadcasting Company is considered as one of the most credible journalism outlets. It originates from the UK and has one of the most watched programs in the international media industry. The BBC has its website which is mostly populated by the north portion on the globe.

### **Rational for selecting BBC**

Starting from august 15<sup>th</sup> to September 15, 2021, BBC has published 527 news pieces. While in this span of one month the Economists contribution to news pieces written with images is 63.in terms of The Hindustan times ,514 is the recorded number. Due to the time limitation of this research as the entire content could not be included in the limited time frame therefore in reference to the objectives 2 images with stories were nominated from the Economist and 1 image and story each from the Hindustan Times and BBC.

### **Rationale for selecting TRT**

Starting from August 15 to September 15 only two articles have been published. The reason for selecting this news site is due to the fact that this is an international news agency, and it was to check whether the content or discourse being created by all major international news agencies are objective or labeling them according to their own agendas

### **Rationale for selecting RT**

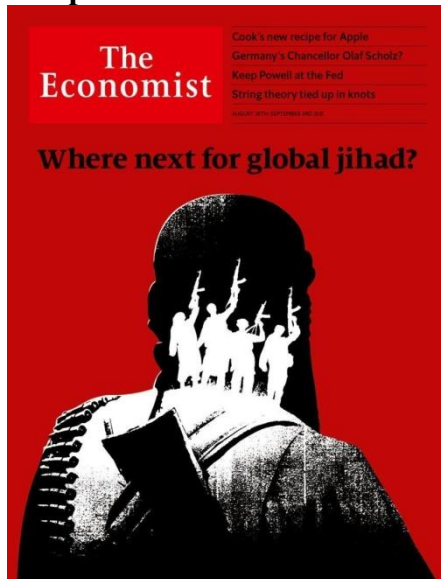
The reason for selecting this news agency, was to add flavor to the already existed pool of media by adding a Russian perspective as well. Was RT using this platform for its agendas or was it actually reporting the actual situation of Afghanistan.





## Critical Discourse Analysis of Two Images

### Sample 1



**Figure 1**

This image has been published in the economist August 2021 edition

#### **Theme:**

There is possibility that Taliban can spread terrorism to the other parts of the world.

Main parts of image:

1. Dangerous Man (Taliban leader)
2. Four men having Kalashnikov
3. Magazine on the shoulder of terrorist
4. Brain of a man
5. Taliban victory in Afghanistan
6. Possibility of spread of “Jihadism “(on international media it is called as Terrorism) from Afghanistan to other countries

Applying Saussure Approach

Signifier: The explicit vocabulary meaning

Signified: The implicit conceptual meaning

**Signifier:** In this main cover of economist a man with some dangerous thinking has shown. Man is holding a Kalashnikov with ammo or a magazine of bullets. Man is represented from the backside. Magazine (Ammo ) of bullets have shown that he wants to fire on people every time. Four men having Kalashnikovs are showing his thinking process. The cerebellum is at the base and the back of the brain, these men specifically have shown in his cerebellum or main part of brain. Man has formal get up





**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

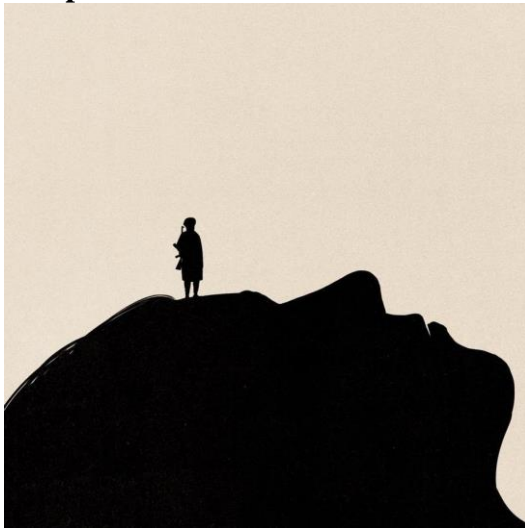
of a terrorist whose intentions are to spread anarchy in other countries in the name of Jihad.

**Signified:** Figure 1 is a clear depiction and representation of economist (London based magazine) policy that is highly inspired by its state narrative regarding Taliban. There is a possible indication that man or jihadist (according to their mindset) wants to spread terrorism in other countries. It depicts that they are portraying that Taliban after taking over the Afghanistan are heading towards spreading terrorism in other countries as well.

Islamophobia is the possible outcome of the studied image because the man is shown in Muslim attire and the word “Jihad” has also been depicted in a negative way.

This image showed that fact no matter how many states were willing to negotiate with Taliban in past few years their media considered Taliban as the terrorists. This image is also showing that Taliban and Afghanistan are at the centre point of west.

**Sample 2**



**Figure 2**

(This image has been published in the economist September 2021 edition)

**Theme:**

Women’s oppression by the Taliban is the main concern of this image. Women development can be stopped by the Taliban that was initiated by the United States.

**Main parts of image:**

1. Oppressed Woman
2. Kalashnikov



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

3. A man of Terrorist attire standing on women forehead
4. Woman feeling burden just she is on gunpoint
5. Patriarchy
6. Man Power
7. Woman is lying and imagining something
8. Women empowerment can be compromised in Taliban regime
9. Women activities are one of the main area of interest of Taliban
10. Color combination is depicting the hopelessness

**Signifier:**

This image shows an oppressed woman laying down with a man on his forehead. The man is in terrorist attire and holding a gun. The woman is shown to fear the man as he is holding a gun. She is shown in deep thinking. The black color depicts a state of fear and hopelessness.

**Signified:**

Women's survival and development can be compromised by the Taliban. The United State tried to give leverage and hope to women but this new era is very dangerous for women's progress.

Women are half part of the population of the country. This significant part can be affected badly due to Taliban Take over in the country. The Taliban would control the brain of women. Taliban are cruel leaders for women that can create hurdles in women development and then the women are in a state of hopelessness.

The Taliban would control women's thinking progress. Women's progress can be restricted by Taliban new policies. This image is showing patriarchy rule in the country that can be re-initiated in the country. Women would possibly not be able to attend the schools; offices, or the workplace; rather they can stay inside homes and perform household duties.

Nowadays women's progress has become propaganda for the international world and media. Media gives a lot of coverage on women progress waves. Economists can use women's cards to portray the Taliban as the wrong leader by depicting Taliban as cruel people for women.

Women can be oppressed by Kalashnikov that is why women start to fear right after Taliban takeover. Color combination of this picture depicts hopelessness and darkness, which repress possible dark periods for women.



### **Sample 3**

#### **Hindustan Times News Story (16 August 2021)**

The main headline is

#### **As Taliban take control of Afghanistan, a look at who's who of the leadership**

The writer wants to trigger its readers to accept the fact that the Taliban are the supreme power of Afghanistan. Who's who means writer urges its readers that they are the supreme and notable power of Afghanistan and they are recognized as the power of Afghanistan. There is no second opinion about who is more powerful in Afghanistan. The writer is very clear about the current power game of Afghanistan. The writer wants to introduce the new government and its notable people.

The writer in its **start** of news story said,

The Taliban, which means "students" in Pashto language, emerged in 1994 around the city of Kandahar. The first line has a neutral tone and the author introduced the word Taliban name , its origin. He used the word emerge because they are a strong group.

The author suddenly changed his tone and said it was a piece of cake for the Taliban to seize the Afghanistan power corridors. They are the winners of the war which started 20 years ago. The writer clearly stated the victory of Taliban. writer argue that American troops invaded and started war but Taliban take control back, writer declared Taliban as winner of war.

In the next paragraph, the writer clears the previous government status and use the word fled which means Ashraf Ghani was fearful from Taliban that's why he himself left his place. He is not forcefully sent to CARS. He gave the sign of some warning and unpredicted possibility for Afghanistan in coming days. He connects the other line by saying that Afghanistan is no safer and citizens of other countries are trying to leave Afghanistan. This situation reveals that the writer indirectly called the country as unsaved place and represents that everyone is trying to leave the country because of fear of Taliban.

The writer, through the word “Frantic Afghans” represents the fear among residents of Afghanistan as they want to leave Afghanistan at any cost due to uncertainty created at domestic level. The writer wants to say that a panic is created after Taliban take over and everyone wants to leave the country



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

due to fear. Moreover, the writer is not representing the other side of the picture.

The writer quoted the story of Aljazeera which is a Muslim news website, in which Taliban spokesperson statement is written. He represents the point of view of Taliban. The spokesperson stated that they are happy after they take over the country and their efforts are fruitful, writers do not add something in it. It seems he does not consider it important to write something that would be an additional thing.

In the next line, the writer has said that due to the fact that US troops have left the country, the incapable Afghan government could not handle the Taliban that is why they took over the power corridors. It can be said that the writer gives the reasons for Taliban over take: one is US withdrawal of troops and the other is mishandling of the Afghan government.

While explaining “**who are Taliban?**” The writer introduces the current leadership of Afghanistan, but before the writer explains the fact there is much confusion about the Taliban leadership because they consider it as hidden under several barriers. The writer is itself confused about the hierarchy and structure of the Taliban government, which is the main theme of the topic.

The writer says that **Haibatullah Akhundzada** was appointed as the supreme leader of Taliban in 2016, who was appointed hierarchically on this job. He didn't have an idea about the reason for his appointed. He does not have resources who can inform him about this. He did not write any clue about his background or his warrior history, although he had previously criticized Taliban as a terrible group. He also said that he only delivers messages on Islamic events. Interestingly here he accepted that the Soviet invasion transformed another Taliban leader Mullah Baradar into an insurgent. He represented the Soviet Union invasion for the general public as an unlucky event by which the Taliban emerged.

**Mullah Yaqoob** ,who is the son of founder, Mullah Omar. He used the word powerful for military commission which represents the Taliban's powerful impact on Indian media. He also used a vast network which depicted that the Indian media considered the Taliban as a powerful entity in Afghanistan. He represents mullah Yaqoob as a powerful and responsible leader. He used powerful words for him which represents his personality admiration.

**Sirajuddin Haqqani** son of Jalaluddin Haqqani is another Taliban leader of Taliban. He is leading the Haqqani network. The US designated means writer said that he himself is not of the view but the US declared the haqqani



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

network as a terror group. Many media outlets do not use such minor formalities but he used it to make it clear that he does not have such kind of jihad.

The author **after brief introduction** of Taliban has said that Taliban rise during the Soviet invasion and after the soviet left, there were civil wars in Afghanistan which were fought by Taliban. They supported US in war against soviet and writer accepted that US take benefit of Taliban to gain victory in afghan war . The US could not get independence without Taliban or mujahedeen. Despite many parties claiming power in Afghanistan they became the sole winner to take the control of Afghanistan.

Writer explains the five years of their power which means the writer wants to suggest that they could get the control over the Afghan power corridor until the next few years with strong control over it.

In the **Modus operandi** paragraph he used the term **enforced** which might mean he thinks Afghan people did not want that kind of strict shariah law and Taliban came into power forcefully. Afghans were not ready to accept them and their rules.

He used the term **unpopular** because the writer wants to convey this was not a satisfied act to imposed laws by their own choice. Right after the cold war writers might want to convey that capitalism was more popular among people.

Internationally condemned act means this power control was not ignorable as the Soviet and US already fought there. It might be possible that the writer wants to explain that this could be the reason for 9/11 or many other event of 21 century.

Writer compared the Muslim countries shariah and Taliban form of shariah. He might be not aware of Islamic laws, but he introduced the term by his personal analysis.

**Women issue** is the most important discussion of international media since the 1990s. He said that all women in Afghanistan were not safe in Afghanistan.

He writes about many **restrictions of the Taliban government** in case of any violation which depicts that the writer is much concerned about afghan society after Taliban take over.

Writer mentioned that **four countries recognized the Taliban** after the takeover but did write the names of all countries. He only wrote the name of Pakistan as might be possible he wanted to damage the image of Pakistan. It was better to mention all the countries instead of highlighting Pakistan. On contrary he mentioned names of UN and US right after it who do not accept Taliban government. Writer believed that no one would accept the Taliban because of the US and UN.



#### Sample 4

##### **BBC news story (August 16, 2021 )**

This article is written by the visual journalism team of BBC , it means news story along with images representing the crux of the whole news story.

**Main headline: the Taliban swept across Afghanistan in just 10 days, taking control of towns and cities across the country.**

Headline of the news story depicted the powerful image of the Taliban and their shocking take over in Afghanistan in just 10 days. Writer wants to clarify how a power game changed in Afghanistan. Writer presents the Taliban as a strong emerging group of countries.



In this very first image a man is holding a Kalashnikov which represents what the writer believed that new Afghanistan will be of this kind and Taliban will rule over the country with the rifle. The man in this image looks very ambitious, which shows that the writer wanted to create an image of the new government of Afghanistan as a terror government which can create trouble for all the stakeholders of the afghan war.

Under the **US troops depart** paragraph the word Emboldened has been used which means the media wants to highlight the fact that Taliban become powerful after US and other forces lose their control in the area. It might be possible that British media did not second the act of Withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. This shows the negativity of British media for Afghan

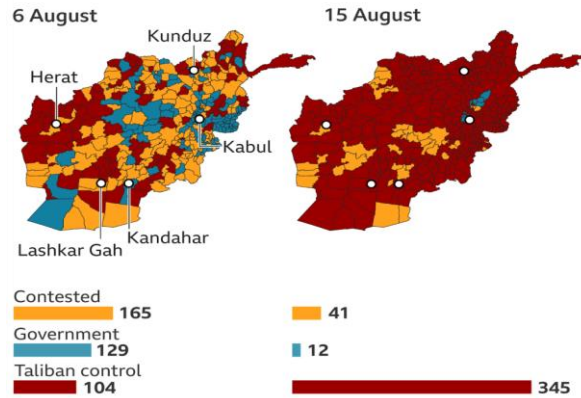




***Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...***

forces. New momentum again has the meaning that they are going ahead due to the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan.

**How the Taliban swept across Afghanistan**



\*Contested is where fighting is ongoing or strong Taliban presence  
Source: BBC Research. Districts according to 2005 government boundaries **BBC**

Research based geographical boundaries with easy-to-understand content in it.

Red color is the color of warning; writers intentionally or intentionally mention the red color as the areas of fear and contaminated areas which show that British media consider Taliban as the warning for the world.

Quick succession means the powerful manner of the overthrow of the Afghan government by Taliban. This Show that writer wants to elaborate that Taliban get the benefit of US forces evocation from Afghanistan. Otherwise, this would not have happened.

In the **Afghan forces collapse** section, *BBC* took a stance against Afghan forces strictly as they said that Taliban proved them so efficient that they easily won from Afghan forces. Despite this, Afghan forces developed through huge funding from the international world.

*BBC* has given each detail of the region which was being overtaken by Afghan forces.





**Where the Afghan forces fought the Taliban**  
Heavy fighting in Lashkar Gah, 2-11 Aug



**Where the Afghan forces fled**  
Troops in Mazar-i-Sharif head for Uzbek border, 14 Aug



In the next paragraph, BBC concluded that Afghan forces are weak as compared to Taliban groups. With heavy support from the US and the international world, the Afghan government proved them incapable. Afghan does not try to sustain them and easily give empire to enemies.

Moreover, this part is based on facts and figures from where and how Taliban won the 20 years long war.

In the **Humanitarian catastrophe** part, catastrophe means that Taliban presence caused a lot of damage to human survival in Afghanistan. Humans cannot make progress and even they cannot be successful in living a normal life. Writer wants to show that the Taliban presence in Afghanistan is a great damage to humanity in Afghanistan. Writer wants to highlight that the Taliban could be a great loss for the people in Afghanistan.

Writer wants to highlight the miserable condition of women in Afghanistan. Women along with their children have shown in a very miserable condition as they are waiting for someone. The writer has failed to explain what the US has done in the past ten years for women.

If Taliban are destructive for the Afghan women, what steps are taken by the US in Afghanistan for the prosperity of women? This is a very thought-



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

provoking question for all western media. If the US did something for Afghanistan it must be mentioned in each and every statement.

Writer mentioned in the **Chaos in Kabul** part that Taliban Initially paused their movement for Full control, but emergency talk caused a break in their victory. This also shows that the Taliban proved themselves a strong force in Afghanistan. International level Taliban gave a message to the world that they would not stop at any cost. This victory hit the western block.

In the next section, **uncertain future** he mentioned that Afghanistan is a war-torn country. It seems that western media is still anxious on Afghanistan's position despite the fact a lot of revenue is spent on this region. A Lot of time and forces are invested in this region, they are giving the message that the future is very uncertain of Afghanistan.

Sample 5

RT 10th sept 2021, news story

**Main headline:** Afghanistan after the US: Human stories behind America's longest lost war

The writer begins the article by bringing attention towards outcome of the 20 year long conflict in Afghanistan. He clearly points out that instead of achieving the original goal of this mission, the US ended up nothing but a massive number of refugees. The very people that they called terrorist became the rulers of this land now.



The writer basically through article shows the aftermath that was suffered by the people of this land. The countless dreadful tales of loss and suffering of the Afghans due to this conflict. A war between a faction and the a state, rendered the innocent civilians as the collateral damage for this conflict. He personally emphasis through these sorrowful tales that US at the end still did not achieve anything other than the deaths of their own soldiers as well as destroying the lives of the people of Afghanistan ,only to leave them at the mercy of the same Taliban's.



**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

This article can be classified as one of the few articles that addressed the real victims of this long and bloody conflict, showcasing their side and through what turmoil they have been going through due to the incompetence of the US in completion of their mission.

Sample 6

TRT ,29<sup>th</sup> august 2021

**Main headline: US in last stage of evacuations as tense calm prevails at Kabul airport**

The writer very objectively narrative both sides of the narrative. He starts the article by explaining the situation that occurred at the Kabul airport. The writer without assuming or predicting future events or failures reported both sides where the US state department statement about the evacuation was mentioned while at the same time, quotes of the Taliban were also added where without any hatred they hoped for a smooth transition of power in the state.



In respect to the image being used ,it just shows that both sides of the conflict are standing side by side ,a simple picture representing a simple situation and no hidden meanings behind it.

**Findings and Discussion**

After a somewhat generic content discourse analysis of 2 images of the economist and 2 news stories, one from the BBC and other from the Hindustan times, a valuable data set became available which can be presented in addressing the three research questions.



<b>Framing of Concepts</b>	<b>The Economist</b>	<b>BBC</b>	<b>Hindustan Times</b>
<b>Portrayal of Taliban</b>	<b>Negative:</b> The picture of Kalashnikov, the dress code and the long beard represent the Taliban as some rigid person, who spread violence in the name of Jihad.	<b>Negative:</b> Taliban takeover has been represented as a quick succession; Afghan forces are portrayed to be incapable of controlling them after the US withdrawal. The Taliban are portrayed with the images of happy faces, long beard, turban and a big Kalashnikov.	<b>Negative:</b> The hierarchy of Taliban has been discussed and their association with Islam has been highlighted. The link of Taliban with Islam, the imposition of Islamic shariah, their Islamic dress code has portrayed Taliban as a fundamentalist force who want to impose their own “shariah” on Afghanistan.
<b>Condition of Women</b>	<b>Negative:</b> Women are being portrayed as being oppressed and forced to stay indoors. The images have shown the start of a strict period for women.	<b>Negative:</b> The condition of women is portrayed as a helpless creature whose future is uncertain.	<b>Negative:</b> This news depicts that all women are not safe in Afghanistan.
<b>Circumstances in Afghanistan</b>	<b>Negative:</b> The use of red in one image and white and black in the other shows no peace there. Red color depicts danger and white and black shows hopelessness. The titles of both images also give an indication that Taliban acts are not being favored.	<b>Negative:</b> The words like Chaos, uncertain future, Humanitarian catastrophe, and the miserable images, like the use of red color in the mapping of captured areas represent that BBC thinks that Taliban are danger for Afghanistan.	<b>Negative:</b> The use of the word “enforced” with Islamic sharia has shown that people of Afghanistan are not happy with this implementation.



**R.Q. 1: How did *BBC* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?**

The news stories have represented the Taliban to be forming an incapable and inept government. They are not considered eligible to make a government in such a big country. Their coverage gives the impression that after the Taliban takeover anarchy has increased in Afghanistan. The major findings of this study are in line with the negative image of Taliban, their association with Kalashnikov, their religion, the terrorism, oppression of women and the debate over who is victorious or loser. Moreover, news story shows that BBC criticized US forces and afghan government as responsible for Taliban success. This shows that the media is highly obsessed with conflicting news and that is the point of concern for the media practitioners (Siraj, 2006).

**R. Q. 2: How did *Hindustan Times* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?**

*Hindustan Times* news story depict Taliban as supreme power in Afghanistan. *Hindustan Times* introduced new afghan government neutrally it means they have accepted their supremacy. The news stories of *Hindustan times* give a very strong notion that women are being oppressed in Afghanistan. This is the image of the Taliban with respect to women as portrayed in the news. However, the fate of women in Afghanistan especially during the Taliban government is a mystery (Tariq, 2021)

**R.Q. 3: How did *The Economist* framed Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their discourse?**

*The Economist* framed Taliban as most powerful party take control over Afghanistan. Taliban are dangerous they could not be maintaining peace in country and terrorist activities will prevail in the country. Islam phobia is also among findings. After Taliban rule hopelessness and women oppressing culture will increase. They don't enjoy freedom and equality. They are forced to remain at their homes, and to not do any kind of job.

**R.Q.4: How did RT frame Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their Discourse?**

RT showed added a different perspective to the already existing discourse. They presented the side that was ignored by most major outlets. The dreadful stories of the Afghans during this battle, the tales of the traumatized US soldiers who had to kill innocent children. The RT also presented the perspective of the Taliban and their grievances towards the American, in a way nobody had seen before, the reason the Taliban were angry was all the infrastructure that existed in Afghanistan were mostly built by the USSR but and in the US time, they did nothing to improve the





**Pak. Journal of Media Science, Vol 3, Issue:2 (2022) Creation of Percetion by Inter...**

conditions but worsened it by destroying their existing infrastructures. At the end they did nothing for the people on ground and worsened their already deteriorating state by destroying their infrastructure.

**R.Q.5: How did TRT frame the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in their Discourse?**

TRT is of the few media agencies that have showed their element of objectivity and partiality in their news reporting. They reported facts objectively by adding narrative of both side and also did not make future assumptions about the rule of Taliban for the years to come. TRT did not publish that many news articles in promoting the Taliban in either positive or negative light, they just reported the exact facts. One of the major element of women oppression that almost all major sites covered did not.

**Conclusion:**

The recent shift in power, from the American Occupant forces to the Taliban forces in Afghanistan, the issue became a source of great prominence in the international media. Today, where in the realm of constructivism where narratives and perspectives play the biggest role in international politics, the portrayal of any state becomes like Afghanistan becomes a solid weapon in either destroying or making their image or future. Thereby keeping this notion in mind, the framing theory had been applied on selected content from the BBC, CNN, TRT, RT ,the Economist and lastly the Hindustan Times. Critical Discourse analysis was used to study the nature of this content. The result of the study showed that narratives were being built to portray the Taliban as incapable of running a state towards peaceful ends. Complete anarchy prevailed in the state. Taliban's were labeled as terrorist who only knew the ways of violence. Connections were drawn between oppression of women, Kalashnikov culture and religion pointing towards the Taliban. Leaving aside the positive sides of the reality, the media outlets only reported the negative and dark images, to build certain narratives in the eyes of the international audience. Making news stories crispy and promoting violence and war journalism instead of playing their responsible and transparent part in the situation. Consequently, the findings projected that negative framing of Taliban was being generated by majority pieces of news.



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