

## **Electronic Colonialism: Outsourcing as Discontent of Media Globalization**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper addresses the implications of outsourcing during the US-Afghan and the US Iraq conflicts. According to Chomsky media filters every information at five levels. This research focuses on the filtration process at information sourcing level. The objective is to identify and highlight the role and implications of global information sources. Ideologis, policies and politics of developed countries unseeingly affect developing countries due to their increased dependence for information. Analysis of the coverage of conflicts by Pakistani dailies is approached through quantitative analysis, in-depth interviews and focus groups of the related journalists and sub-editors to highlight the outsourcing process. The findings suggest that the main sources of strategic and political news were outside Afghanistan, Iraq or Pakistan however humanitarian news were covered by Pakistani journalists. Pakistani news sources were facilitating the agenda set by the news agencies of developed countries. This tilt is evident in Pakistan's foreign policy as well.*

**Keywords:** Global media, communication flows, media reliance, outsourcing, influences on media content.

### **Introduction**

Media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is defined by three important developments of 20<sup>th</sup> century; the demise of communism, the increasing integration of world markets and very rapid advances in communications technology. After the disintegration of Soviet Union, free trade and the free flow of information became the dominant philosophies of the late twentieth century, with the United States the chief protagonist of both (David & Crawley, 2001, p. 21). America started capturing the world market, monopolizing the economic resources of the world more rapidly than ever before and went on dominating over media. As a result, global media emerged as a dominant industry, perhaps even more powerful than governments in perception management and construction of realities in subtle ways. Rapid political and technological developments of the past decade had produced certain changes that our old maps could not register.

The schemas of centers and peripheries have given way to market globalization and a new world (dis)order. Before the disintegration of Soviet Union, the international geography of newsgathering seemed to have solidified into a pattern structured on cold war rivalries and tensions. The larger cross-border flows of media outputs, the growth of media Transnational Corporations (TNCs) and the tendency toward centralization of media control are the prominent features of the media globalization during the last decade. We need new maps of the emerging global news geography, both in terms of the major suppliers of news, the geographic and cultural maps that news coverage represents, and the discourses and images constructed by the 'center' about 'peripheral' countries. With tendencies both toward globalization and toward localization, it is a pertinent moment to analyze the new, emergent geography of "foreign" as well as international news.

According to Herman and McChesney (2001), "From the beginning the global news services have been oriented to the needs of the wealthy nations which provide their revenues. Thus news agencies were, in effect, the global media until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even after the dawn of broadcasting, their importance for global journalism was unsurpassed" (p.12).

The statement shows that global journalism is not a new phenomenon however, the media conglomeration trends and increased concentration of information sources in few hands accelerated with the passage of time. According to Herbert (2001) "Global reporting started with the first war correspondents, the father of them William Russell who reported during the Crimean war in the mid-nineteenth century for the London Times. His revelations about the army's poor performance helped bring down the British government... The difficulty with practicing global journalism is that reporters are supposed to be loyal to their own side. This has been the case in every conflict since Russell's time; and it will always be thus" (p. 36).

The import of Western media system, particularly the American system, to less developed countries resulted in the dominance of news flow, entertainment, communication technology and English as universal language. Schiller believed that further domination and dependency would come with further extension of the new information technology. Such phenomena gave rise to the term "media imperialism". Schiller (1976) defined "communication imperialism" as a conscious and organized effort taken by the U.S. military-communication conglomerates to maintain a commercial, political, and military superiority. Boyd-Barrett noted that the term "media imperialism" referred to international media that consisted of two characteristics. The first characteristic was that the media influence and cultural invasion were unidirectional. The second characteristic was the imbalance of power resources between the countries concerned.

This study is equipped with empirical data to explore whether globalization of media is a proponent or opponent to freedom of expression in developing countries especially with reference to war reporting after 9/11. Farrar (1997) states that people can have an access to those world events which are selected by New York, London, or Paris. Though the world watched 9/11 attacks with their own eyes owing to the technological advancement but in the light of Ronald Farrar's statement it is a fact that these images were controlled and disseminated by US-based CNN or London-based BBC. Media flow particularly from the United States to less developed countries and the influence of American media on foreign audience dominated the academic analyses of international media in the past few decades. In 1970s, the less developed countries called for a redistribution of global information resources and proposed 'The New World Information and Communication Order' (NWICO). Despite of the NWICO, the imbalance of international news and programs flow still continues.

According to the studies conducted by Varis (1984), the dependency on foreign programming has begun to decrease, but the imbalance of news flow still exists. The advancement of communication technology facilitated the growth of global news system and enhanced the Western dominance of global news flow. Media economics has increased the importance of foreign markets. The availability of wire services along with CNN and BBC's transmissions around the world have influenced the newsgathering processes of print media that ultimately strengthen the domination of global news coverage by western news organizations. Varis (1984) pointed out that although new communication technology may provide additional means of dissemination of information, it may also lead to widen the gap between those who have access to information and those who do not have it. Because of the imbalance of news flow, the dominator may shape a new global culture and value. Technological resources make the balanced distribution of information possible but the resources are in the hands of the very limited number of powerful nations.

Global news sources like BBC and CNN news channels and international news agencies like AFP, AP, Reuters etc. have more credibility and reliability than local news sources in less developed countries. Moreover, global news sources are more conveniently accessible to journalists so they depend upon them. It is evident that reliance on global information sources is cost-effective for the print media organizations of developing countries so they depend on these sources without perceiving the aftermath of their lavish usage. Usage of the particular media also reflects the power relations of the given country. It is the age of information and wars are fought on the grounds of information technology. The technologically advanced countries had the ability to control information that emerged as a power in the recent phenomenon. McKibben writes, "We believe that we live in the 'age of information', that there has been an information 'revolution'. While in a certain narrow sense this is the case, in many important ways the opposite is true." Embedded journalism facilitates the purposes of war by manipulating and controlling information. According to Noam Chomsky consent is manufactured by filtering information at five levels including media ownership, information sources, advertising, flakes, and ideology (that is anti-Islam after the disintegration of Soviet Union). Since journalism has an "ideological component," as described by Patterson, provides a way of seeing the world, so wire and television agencies' coverage is not neutral.

As a matter of fact, not a single media of the world can report all the events happening around the world by itself; it has to depend upon other sources and each source perceives reality in its own way. The availability of wire services along with CNN and BBC's transmissions around the world have influenced the newsgathering processes of print media that ultimately strengthen the domination of global news coverage by western news organizations. It is generally assumed that CNN provides inevitably an American perspective on domestic as well as foreign events. According to Kevin Anderson, while the US was preparing for a war on terrorism, the media was preparing for a battle for information. US military commanders in the Gulf War tightly controlled access to information during the Gulf War, restricting most journalists to escorted pools. Moreover, the media was concerned that President George W Bush's administration would have similar policies with respect to the control of information, especially owing to the role the key members of his administration played in the Gulf War. Like Vice President Dick Cheney was the then Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State Colin Powell was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. George W Bush signaled that, like his father's administration during the Gulf War, he wanted to keep tight control of the flow of information. For example, when the US invaded the tiny island of Grenada in 1983, the press was shut out. The policy of tight press control continued through the 1989 invasion of Panama and through the Gulf War. The media felt the control was so tight during the Gulf War that the Washington bureau chiefs of some of the largest media organizations in the US wrote to the then Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to complain. They said, *"The combination of security review and the use of the pool system as a form of censorship made the Gulf War the most under covered major conflict in modern American history."*

Coverage of US-Afghan conflict through selected media restricts the true assessment of the costs to Afghan civilians. It can only be guessed, but we do know the projection on which policy decisions and commentary were based, was a matter of utmost significance. As a matter of simple logic, these projections provided the grounds for any moral evaluation of planning and commentary, or any judgment of appeals to "just war" arguments; and crucially, for any rational assessment of what may lie ahead. New York Times Published a news on October 7, 2001 that Bush Says, *"Time Is Running Out; U.S. Plans To Act Largely Alone. A sign of Washington's insistence that its hands not be tied was its rejection of United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan's entreaties that any American military action be subject to Security Council approval"* (News covered by Elaine Sciolino and Steven Lee Myers).

In the perspective of US-Afghan conflict and Iraq war, global media like BBC, CNN, Al-jazira, AP, Reuters and AFP tried to cover every aspect of the war; Pakistani media heavily depended on them. Numerous flow studies had shown a remarkably similar pattern of global news coverage (Shapiro et al. 1996). This pattern meant that in most major news channels across the regions of the world, there were the continual newsmakers of the United States and Western Europe. Herbert (2001) quotes Tunstall that news flow (by which he means news collection) is similar to the flow of other sorts of communication, such as telephones or transportation. Global news sources are very uneven. Some cities have hundreds of reporters from around the world covering stories that happen there; some countries, inevitably the poorer more remote ones, have hardly any journalists from outside covering events at all (p. 20). This of course affects the picture of the world as a whole and the picture of individual trouble spots.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Hamid Mowlana (1990) suggested 'Center-periphery model' of news flow, based on the work of Galtung, contended that the world is divided into dominant central or dependent peripheral countries, with a predominant news flow from the former to the latter. The Center countries are rich in technology as well as communication. The technology axis, that includes hardware versus software and the communication axis that consists of production versus distribution, determine the communication autonomy. Technological advancement has deepened the division of the world into 'haves' and 'have-nots' and the former influenced upon every aspect of the latter. This imbalance in global flow of communications supported the more developed countries to manipulate and handle information for the fulfillment of their interests. Thomas L. McPhail (2002) discussed Electronic Colonialism Theory (ECT) theory regarding imbalances in global flow of communications in his book 'Global Communication: Theories, Stakeholders and Trends'. Electronic Colonialism Theory (ECT) mentions the prevailing trauma among Third World countries. He has theorized changes in global communication system by combining the insights of Immanuel Wallerstein's World System Theory with the Electronic Colonialism Theory.

The World System Theory (WST) describes three levels of technology involved in the global communications; countries equipped with modern technology are labeled as core nations; countries that are in transitional age and striving hard to get an access to modern technology are semi-peripheral nations; while countries with poor information and communication technology are peripheral nations. The implications of this model highlight the fact that most developing countries are obliged to rely on core countries for getting information.

Shoemaker's 'Hierarchy of Influences Model' approaches media studies from several levels. It provides an opportunity to analyze the undue reliance on global news sources in various perspectives. News is a product of certain influences including individual influences, media routines, organizational, extra-organization and ideological influences. From news content we can infer many of the facts that shaped it; one is the editor's selection of stories that tells us something about his or her priorities and the ideology of the organization. The coverage of US-Afghan conflict and Iraq war is also a subject of these influences. Foreign news agencies covered the events and issues in their own perspective. Their news product, consciously or unconsciously carried influences exerted at various levels. Some critics suggest that journalists consciously bias their news reports in line with their personal attitudes, and sometimes unconsciously their worldviews and perceptions of social reality may influence their work (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991, p.71).

### **Research Methodology**

This study is an attempt to examine relationships between global media flow and media dependency of developing countries. It focuses on the usage of global news sources in the English dailies of Pakistan (The Dawn, The Nation & The News) with reference to post 9/11 US-Afghan conflict and US-Iraq war. The period of study for US-Afghan conflict starts with 9/11 and includes America's attack on Afghanistan, i.e. 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001. The period ends to the election of Hamid Karzai as the president of Afghanistan i.e. 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2002. The universe of the post 9/11 study is 275 days that make 39 weeks. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques are applied to draw samples. Stratified sampling ensures the proper representation of the stratification variables to enhance representation of other variables related to them. A stratified sample is likely to be more representative on a number of variables than a simple random sample (Babbie, 1989). From 39 structured weeks, each week of the universe served as a stratum and two issues from each stratum were selected. Every Sunday was included as the volume and circulation rises on Sundays. The other issue was selected on systematic sampling and every other day of the stratum was selected. If an important event occurred during any structured week, the issue of that day was also selected. The unit of analysis was the news, on any page, about US-Afghan conflict.

Since the same pattern of news sources was observed for the coverage of US-Iraq war, triangulation method was applied to get a better understanding and deep insights. Triangulation refers to the application of more than one research method and divided into within-method and between-method triangulation. The former involves the use of varieties of the same method to investigate a research issue whereas between-method triangulation involves various research methods. Sometimes this meaning of triangulation is taken to include the combined use of quantitative and qualitative research to determine the convergence of findings (Denzin, 1970). The data for the analysis of the coverage of Iraq war was collected through focus groups and in-depth interviews of news reporters and news editors of the same three English dailies who were dealing with the war coverage.

For the purpose of reliability the data was ranked on a three-point scale: favorable/ supportive to American cause (+), unfavorable/ opposite to American cause (-) and neutral/ balanced/ moderate in the portrayal of US-Afghan conflict. Any news was considered to be favorable (+) if it favored or supported American cause by using terms, words, catchy words, idioms, phrases, adjectives, slogans like terrorist(s), fundamentalist(s), conservative(s), fanatic(s), guerrilla(s), anti-democratic, ethnic, ultra-Islamic, extremist(s), suicide bombings for Afghans or Taliban. Any news was considered to be unfavorable/ opposite to American cause (-), which associated words, terms, catchy words, idioms, phrases, adjectives, slogans with Afghanistan like innocent people, crisis, killings, atrocities, fear, unarmed, fragile media, propaganda, information warfare, destruction, use of weapons like daisy cutter bombs. In order to reduce and avoid the bias of qualitative approach, the researcher reread the material as many times as necessary to satisfy herself that the inference 'opposite' was consonant with all of the relevant portions and characteristics of the original news as the meanings reside in the 'totality of impression'. Any news was considered to be moderate, neutral or balanced if it contained the words, terms, catchy words, phrases adjectives, idioms, slogans like aid programs, food and health programs, reconstruction, rehabilitation, peace making efforts, political stability etc. for Afghanistan.

**Findings:**

**Table 1 : (Attention Score: Front Page News)**

TOTAL NEWS ITEMS	COVERAGE ON FRONT PAGE	AFP	AP	REUTERS	STAFF REPORTERS
THE DAWN Total n = 619	THE DAWN n = 128 21 %	44/128 34 %	2/128 1.57 %	14/128 11 %	58/128 45 %
THE NATION Total n = 723	THE NATION n = 163 23 %	70/163 43 %	3/163 1.85 %	7/163 4 %	68/163 42 %
THE NEWS Total n = 661	THE NEWS n = 180 27 %	40/180 22 %	17/180 9 %	26/180 14 %	61/180 34 %

The above table shows that in 39 structured weeks, daily the Nation covered 723 news items in total including all the pages regarding US-Afghan conflict and remained on the top as far as news items coverage is concerned. Daily the News covered 661 news items that appeared on different pages and remained second for the coverage of US-Afghan conflict. Daily the Dawn covered 619 news items that was the lowest among the three newspapers under study. As far as news items coverage on the front page is concerned, The News covered 27% news items that was the highest. The Nation covered 23% news items on the front pages while The Dawn covered 21% news items on its front pages. Daily The Nation gave highest coverage to AFP on its front page that was 43% of the total news items while The News and The Dawn depended more on staff reporters but the news items were mostly related to humanitarian issues. However all the three newspapers allocated one full page to the US-Afghan conflict that appeared with different titles including ‘America under Attack,’ ‘America At War,’ ‘America Strikes,’ ‘America Strikes Back,’ ‘War Against Terrorism,’ ‘Afghanistan Crisis.’ This shows a direct influence of CNN as its transmission also carried a few titles mentioned above. However, one of the dailies, The Nation, titled its page for a few days as ‘War on Afghanistan.’

**Table 2 : (Attention Score: Back Page & Other Pages)**

TOTAL NEWS ITEMS	COVERAGE ON BACK PAGE & OTHER PAGES	AFP	AP	REUTERS	STAFF REPORTERS
THE DAWN Total n = 619	THE DAWN n = 491 79 %	173/491 35 %	6/491 1.23 %	77/491 16 %	133/491 27 %
THE NATION Total n = 723	THE NATION n = 560 77 %	324/560 58 %	4/560 0.72 %	13/560 2.33 %	134/560 24 %
THE NEWS Total n = 661	THE NEWS n = 481 73 %	181/481 38 %	71/481 15 %	86/481 18 %	79/481 16 %

According to the above table, Daily The Dawn covered 79% news items on its back page and other pages and was the highest in covering the news items of US-Afghan conflict on back page and other pages. The Nation and The Dawn’s coverage was 77% and 73% respectively on their back and other pages. All the three newspapers published most of the news items covered by AFP. The Nation, The News and The Dawn’s coverage of AFP was 58%, 38% and 35% respectively on their back and other pages. The Dawn and The Nation gave the second highest coverage to the news items of staff reporters while daily The News covered Reuters’ news items on the second number. As far as the reliance on global news sources during US-Afghan conflict is concerned, all the three newspapers greatly depended on AFP. Daily The Nation covered AFP’s 394 news items out of 723 total news items and its dependence was 55%. The Dawn covered AFP’s 217 news items out of 619 total news items and its dependence on AFP was 35% while daily The News covered 221 out of 661 total news items and its dependence on AFP was 34%.

The 'Framing' analysis of all the three Dailies show that Daily the Dawn usually avoided giving a banner headline or title or labeling any of its news pages and tried to be neutral and unbiased. However, its reliance on global news sources and the content analysis reflects an inclination towards US foreign policy. Daily 'The News' usually published a banner headline or title like 'America Under Attack' or 'War on Afghanistan' on page No. 11. It also published the title 'War Against Terrorism.' The Nation was portraying nationalistic view and published the title of 'America At War' on page No. 11. The titles reflect the policy of newspapers regarding US-Afghan conflict.

**Table # 3: (US-Afghan War News reported by AFP, AP and Reuters)**

		THE DAWN Total n = 619	THE NATION Total n = 723	THE NEWS Total n = 661	TOTAL
AFP	Front Page	44	70	40	154
	Back & Other Pages	173	324	181	678
	Total US-Afghan News	217	394	221	832
AP	Front Page	2	3	17	22
	Back & Other Pages	6	4	71	81
	Total US-Afghan News	8	7	88	103
Reuters	Front Page	14	7	26	47
	Back & Other Pages	77	13	86	176
	Total US-Afghan News	91	20	112	223

n = Total number of news covered regarding US-Afghan conflict

As far as the reliance of western news sources during US-Afghan is concerned, all the three newspapers greatly depended on AFP. Daily The Nation covered AFP's 394 news items out of 723 total news items and its dependence was 55%. Daily the Dawn covered AFP's 217 news items out of 619 total news items and its dependence on AFP was 35% while daily the New covered 221 out of 661 total news items and its dependence on AFP was 34%.

**Table # 4: (Framing)**

TITLES OF THE PAGES	THE DAWN	THE NATION	THE NEWS
America under attack	No	No	Yes
Terrorists strike US/ Terror in America	No	Yes	Yes
America at war	No	Yes	No
War against/ on terrorism	No	No	Yes
Afghan crisis	Yes	Yes	Yes
War on Afghanistan	No	Yes	Yes

The table shows that daily the Dawn usually avoided giving a banner headline or title or labeling any of its news pages. It tried to be neutral and unbiased. From September 12, 2001 to December 22, 2001, it did not label any of its news pages. However during 2002, it sometimes published the title of 'Afghan Crisis' on page 10 or 11. Daily 'The News' usually published a banner headline or title like 'America Under Attack' or 'War on Afghanistan' on page No. 11. It also published the title 'War Against Terrorism' that justifies American assault. Daily the Nation is considered to depict the nationalistic stance and it published the title of 'America At War' on page No. 11. The titles show the policy of a newspaper at a certain time period. The shift from one title to another is also debatable and shows changes in policy.

**Table # 5: (Direction Of The Contents)**

NEWSPAPERS	+	-	0
THE DAWN			
Total n = 619	103	93	423
THE NATION			
Total n = 723	98	142	483
THE NEWS			
Total n = 661	212	78	371

**Direction Of The Contents**

- (+) = Favorable/ Supportive to American cause  
 (-) = Unfavorable/ Opposite to American cause  
 (0) = Neutral/ Balanced/ Moderate

In favorable or supportive news items, America was portrayed as a peace loving state. The American attack was focused as an attempt of its self-defense. American cause as projected on media was the eradication of terrorism and promotion of peace and tranquility. In the unfavorable news items, America was portrayed as a sole super power that desires to dictate its terms and conditions all over the world. American attack on Afghanistan was unjustified. Moderate news items were presenting both warring states without any favor, inclination, slant or angle and using only qualified adjectives.

Triangulation method facilitated the researcher to blend quantitative approach with the qualitative one. Focus group and in-depth interviews of the concerned reporters and editors of the three newspapers were conducted. The focus groups in the dailies Dawn, Nation, and The News were conducted comprising of news editors and reporters. The groups concluded that;

- The dailies had contracts with different global news agencies therefore; they give coverage to those sources. Despite the fact that the coverage is biased, embedded and there are always marginalized news but they were obliged to depend on the contracted sources. Due to lack of funds and technology, it is convenient to consult available global news sources.
- There were restrictions on the mobility of peripheral countries' reporters. They can't get an access to all events. American coalition did not give an access to the war zones. There were security problems for the reporters of peripheral countries. US news reporters moved with their army but peripheral countries' media moved in apprehensive environment.
- Embedded journalism hinders from getting true picture. Western media usually portrayed Saddam as 'dictator' and Taliban as 'Terrorists' and focused American attack as 'War for Democracy' and 'War against terrorism'. It did not focus on humanitarian aspects like killings of women and children. The reliance on western news sources was detrimental for Pakistan but the newspapers did not had any choice. When embedded news items are received on the news desk, the reporters are helpless to scrutinize the true information however, the editors try to cross check by other news sources.
- Nobody from the peripheral countries was on the war theatre, whether it was in Iraq or Afghanistan. It usually passed on the information got by AFP, Reuters, CNN or BBC's correspondents. There was bias in the coverage and embedded journalism too but we did not have any other option except depending on them. Objective journalism is not possible however; we try to use qualified adjectives. We sent our correspondents to cover US-Afghan war and we preferred their news items. There was an existing trend of information subsidies and the editors did not feel any change in this trend during these wars.
- Pakistani reporters did not get an access to Taliban until and unless they assured American forces to cover their viewpoint.
- Media is an integral part of western political systems. American media promotes capitalist approach. Media conglomerates or corporate media enjoy all facilities and resources and toe the policies of government in international affairs. They try to dominate so they employ large number of reporters and relay their own version of reality. Though the opposite viewpoint also gets coverage but in the parallel media that is not very strong rather fragile.

Tabloid and eveningers give the contrary version but have very less readership. It is not a matter of freedom of press but a matter of political economy. US-Afghan conflict and Iraq war was covered on the same lines.

- Western countries are rich in technological hardware and software and they use media as a tool to promote their ideology. Developing countries should seriously take measures to establish their own strong networks of information. Though Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) has tried but it lacks efficacy.
- As far as 9/11 and Iraq war are concerned, the Dawn did not make any changes to get news from other sources rather it continued with routine. Nationalistic and ideological stance was of prime importance in the coverage. According to Pakistan's Chief Executive, Pervaiz Musharraf, Pakistan's survival was at stake. India was portraying Taliban as Pakistan's product and instigated America to take action against Pakistan as well. The other newspapers covered Taliban's viewpoint attained from Al-jazeera but the Dawn did not follow this policy.
- The Dawn is a liberal, independent and democratic newspaper and it reflected the same in covering both conflicts.
- Daily the 'Nation' always maintains ideological stance on the issues and it reflected its ideological stance on views and opinion pages.
- Daily 'The News' never depended on a particular source for the coverage but applies the 'first arrived, first cover' policy. The news sources that accessed 'The News' first were preferred. There was no policy of discrimination in covering news of any news sources.

The findings of the focus groups strengthen the notion that media dependency relationships are based upon goals and resources. Individuals, groups, or organizations in a society or a state always have different goals. Goals are achieved through resources and the resources are attained by different measures. One of those measures is media information system, which has three parts; Information gathering through reporters, Information processing through editors and information dissemination to let people know about the prevailing world (DeFleur & Rokeach, 1989). High dependence on the three western news agencies shows an inclination of Pakistan's foreign policy towards America and Europe. The simple choice of one story over another is as much a political choice as it is economic and professional. It determines what part of our national consciousness becomes and what values and ideas take precedence in the general public.

After 9/11, it actually took the America nearly four weeks to deploy her forces and launch the first strike against Afghanistan. The preparation for embedded journalism were quite evident as the television networks started their build-up much earlier before 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001(America attacked on Afghanistan). Initially, the two major international networks, the CNN and the BBC, helped soften the ground for the impending attacks by creating a climate of fear and uncertainty. For nearly four weeks, the 3,000 or so journalists from the major electronic and print media who poured into Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta and Karachi very successfully reported non events in such a way as to make them appear to be events of major significance signaling the start of a big war. The war on terrorism that President George W. Bush declared after 9/11 portrayed Islam as 'fanatical', 'terrorist' and 'extremist' religion. Tass and Pravda, (Tass being the Russian version of AP) referred to Afghan rebels as 'terrorists'. There were alternative descriptions like 'Afghan guerrillas', freedom fighters', or 'insurgent' but the western labeled them as terrorists. The media was used to circulate the new definition of terrorism to justify American activities. America waged a war against terrorism and urged to promote peace and tranquility through war throughout the world.

America invaded Iraq on March 30<sup>th</sup> 2003 and the pretext was weapons of mass destruction. In the beginning, global media framed US-Iraq war as America's noble cause of eradication of terrorism and dictatorship, promotion of peace and installation of democracy for the welfare of Iraqis. However, on a later stage (September 16, 2004), when U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan declared Iraq war illegal, there was a more focus on the death toll of US soldiers. In January 2005, Pakistani newspapers reported that the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) search in Iraq is declared over and the source was CNN. After November 2006, Iraq war was quoted as civil war without the evacuation of US troops. Deaths of Iraqi people were also reported by the same sources. Iraqi sources were almost absent. However, a few Pakistani journalists tried to enter in Iraq but denied. The findings of focus group and in-depth interviews suggest that mass media content is a socially created product, not a reflection of an objective reality.

Although the stimulus of a story might be a real-world event and problem, measurable through other sources of social information, however, many factors determine what will be transmitted and how it will be treated. Not everything 'eligible' to be mass media content actually gets into the media. The process, called 'gatekeeping' involves selection of items from the universe of possible ones, so, media routines are developed as a way of making the media workers' job more efficient. The media operate under certain expectations about the nature of content from the audience and work under constraints imposed by sources. The ultimate power in a media organization comes from the owner who sets the direction and the ultimate policies regarding the selection and coverage of media content.

'Framing' is a term researchers use to refer to how an event is portrayed in a particular news story. Hackett (1984) pointed out that "framing is not necessarily a conscious process on the part of journalists; it may well be the result of the unconscious absorption of assumptions about the social world in which the news must be embedded in order to be intelligible to its intended audience." The in-depth interviews suggested that global news flow, whether from agencies or employed journalists, has been at the forefront of new technological advance. Latest technology facilitates to gather and distribute news and information and indicates a strong relationship of journalism with new technology. As a result the international agencies emerged as the major agenda-setters because they make the decisions on how and whether international stories will be covered. They choose where to allocate their resources and hence which stories will be covered. They decide on which stories to send to their clients, how much visual element they will provide, what kind of audio and accompanying background text they will send. So the news agenda on international news events and issues is set thousands of miles away by developed countries, for the rest of the world.

### **Conclusion**

International news flow is mostly from the United States and the United Kingdom to the rest of the world. In fact most news flow takes place between a small number of countries, mainly the US, Britain, France, West Germany, Russia, Italy and Japan. Furthermore, a special problem of the developing nations has been the information imperialism of their former colonial masters. During the colonial era, the mass media were organized to satisfy the needs of the former colonists; and following the end of actual colonialism, the media have yet to shake off this legacy. However, information management has become a large-scale industry which seems at times to threaten some of the basic rights of a democratic society. Global news agenda setting by editors and reporters is very effective because the mass media are major sources of information about foreign countries. News flow between countries is closely related to the size of national news collection and dissemination and the difficulty of producing news at home. This news dependency on the more developed states is a growing example of media imperialism and electronic colonialism.

The media of developed countries are central in galvanizing an international response and generating public opinion in a specific manner. Greg Philo (1993) writes in his article "From Buerk to Band Aid: The media and the 1984 Ethiopian famine" that the everyday practice of the media institutions and the journalists who work within them feel that they all are at some level in competition with each other to sell stories and maximize audiences. From the journalists' point of view, they must do this at a given cost and at a set level of resources. The same state of affairs were observed during the coverage of US-Afghan and US-Iraq war and Pakistani media tried to maximize its audience by using more reliable and credible sources at low cost. What appears in the news is the outcome of a process of negotiation between the reporter and the source of information. This interaction is subject to a number of agendas, personal, organizational and political that is brought to bear on the reporter and the source within their own organization. We can be aware of the factors that shape the behavior of the gatekeeper but we are less aware of the factors that shape the behavior of the source. News is not a reflection of a world 'out there' but, as Molotch and Lester have said, is a product of the 'practices of those who have the power to determine the experience of others.'

In the light of the findings of in-depth interviews, focus groups, quantitative and qualitative analyses, the following measures are recommended:

- The developing countries should establish information distribution networks of correspondents who can monitor and produce publications and articles to counter the negative propaganda.
- The developing countries should be more 'self-confident' and overcome 'western domination' by providing the world with news from their own perspective.

- Contrapuntal texts can help to overcome stereotypes about developing countries and portray their better image in the context of 'orientalism.' There certainly exists alternative media all around the world, but it has to be taken into consideration. It should be determined and accentuated that the news agencies, editors and journalists of Pakistan as well as from other developing countries are interested in using the alternative information.
- More balanced information flow could consist of two elements: the stronger reliance on local journalists and media; and the encouragement of correspondents to work according to the ideals of the public journalism movement that arose in the 1990s in the US, acting 'as if the journalists belonged where they were and cared about that place' (Merritt, 1995).
- Self reliance, economic prosperity, profusion of resources and strong networks of information are the call of the day for developing countries if they want to avert electronic colonialism and retort to propaganda.
- Independent journalism should be promoted in peripheral countries. Kabul today is limited to a handful of tiny-circulation newspapers and magazines that have sprung up after Hamid Karzai took over on 13 June 2002. Most of the newly launched newspapers are owned and controlled by agitators and supported by political parties. The editors of these journals said that they suffer from lack of funds, untrained staff and poor technical facilities but that they operate with relative freedom from official interference especially compared with the state-run TV and radio, which reach a far larger audience in a country where most people are unable to read and write. Professionalism is direly needed if media have to play their respective roles.
- Regional organizations should take initiative and specific measures to establish and develop essential elements of their own communication system: internet, print media, broadcasting and telecommunications along with the related training and production facilities.

The premise of globalization is 'increased interconnectedness' that leads to the optimal benefits. This study suggests that imbalance of information flow between core and periphery countries may lead to the increased interconnectedness but results as a discontent of globalization. Continued reliance of developing countries for getting information will only facilitate electronic colonialism and further imperial relationships based on geopolitical web. Therefore, we need new maps of the emerging global news geography, both in terms of the major suppliers of news, the geographic and cultural maps that news coverage represents, and the discourses and images constructed by the 'center' about 'peripheral' countries.

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