

## **South Asian Studies**

*A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*

*Vol. 26, No. 1, January-June 2011, pp. 83-101*

# **US Mass Media and Image of Afghanistan: Portrayal of Afghanistan by Newsweek and Time**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study aims at investigating as how Afghanistan is being represented and portrayed in two leading US magazines - *Newsweek* and *Time*. Prefatory pages of the paper shed some light on the growth of economy and media in Afghanistan followed by a brief overview of relations between the US and Afghanistan during the last decade. The contents of twenty leading articles of *Newsweek* and *Time* were analyzed which clearly depicts that the proportion of negative coverage (57.08%) was greater than the positive coverage (6.08%). *Newsweek* and *Time* mainly represented Afghanistan as an abode of Taliban and extremism, penitentiary for women, a narcotics den, a centre for Islamization, and a safe haven for Al-Qaida and Usama Bin Laden, to include a few.

**KEYWORDS:** Afghanistan, Taliban, Al-Qaida, Mullah Umar and Usama Bin Ladan.

## **Introduction**

Afghanistan is predominantly an Islamic country, constituting 84% of the inhabitants as Sunni Muslim. They are the adherent of *Hanafi*<sup>1</sup> school of *Jurisprudence*; rest of the populations is *Shia*, mainly Hazara (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan>, 20 June, 2009).

Despite efforts of the former Soviet Union to change Afghan's society into a secular one, as well as the US efforts, nothing could drastically change the life style of Afghans. Religion and cultural traditions, and hardly anything else, shade the codes of life in Afghanistan and provide the fundamental basis of controlling people's personal conduct and resolving disputes of all kind.

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Apart from a little urban population, majority of Afghan dwell in remote/rural areas and are divided in tribal and other kinship based groups. They hardly seem to be governed under the modern legal system(s), but are found to be settling their affairs in the light of their traditional customs and religious practices (J.N, 2000: 142).

‘Pashtunes’<sup>2</sup> are the dominant ethnic groups; other ethnic groups include Tajik (25%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (6%), Aimaq, Turkmens, and Baloch.

Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashto are the official languages. Dari is used as the first language by more than one third of the population and it also serves as a lingua franca for the most Afghans. *Pushto* is the mother language of most of *Talibans* in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is an agriculture country with the majority of its population employed in this sector. Although only about 20% of the total land area is economically conducive, agriculture and animal husbandry are among the most significant items of the national product. The major crop is wheat, whereas other products include fruits, nuts, wool and mutton. Industry is based on agriculture and pastoral raw material. Natural resources are comprised of natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper ore, sulphur, lead, zinc, barites, salt, precious stones and iron ore (<http://answers.encyclopedia.com/question/afghanistan-main-exports-and-imports-79006.html>, 26 June, 2010). Natural gas is its main exportable commodity. There is a low production of soap, furniture, shoes, cooper and hand woven carpets. Due to long war and internal tribal strives, export from Afghanistan has since long been confined to opium and hashish. Illegal trade of these banned items is rather the only source of foreign exchange inflow to the country. Its export could reach to a minimal level during the short Taliban regime in 2001-02, which is unprecedented in the recent past.

## Communication Media

Media system in Afghanistan does not reflect a better picture than other sectors of the society. It never grew exponentially in terms of variety of products and technology, unlike the wave of technological development one can witness in the under-developed and developing countries of the world. One can hardly comment on its freedom as it has more often been a victim of unrest and wars. As we understand that the media development process involves, among others, the growth and the structure of media institutions as well as the prevalence, the pervasiveness, and the significance of their role performance in socio-cultural transformation of the society. The main reason for media retardation and disfunctionalism might have to do with the problems in the polity of the country. However, other factors like retarded economy and foreign invasions also contributed to worsen the situation. For media development in any country, these factors play extremely important role as the relationship between mass media and

society is sometime characterized as one of interdependence as mass media are a sub-system within a larger social system (McQuail, 2000: 78) and every part of a social system works in an organic coordination with other parts in both homeostatic and dynamically balanced systems (Baran & Davis, 2003: 209).

However, following have been the picture of mass media in Afghanistan during 1995-97, which remained unchanged for the years to come due to prevalence of political turbulence in the system:

	1995	1996	1997
Radio receivers (000 in use )	2,400	2,550	2,750
Television receivers (000 in use)	200	250	270
Main telephone lines (000 in use)	29	29	29
Daily newspapers Number	15*	12	n.a.
Average circulation (000 copies)	200*	113	n.a".

1998-2001: Number of main telephone lines in use assumed to be unchanged.

2002: telephones (000 main line in use) 33 (estimate); mobile cellular telephones (000 subscribers) 12; internet users 1,000(estimate)

Television receivers (000 in use): 290 in 1998, 300 in 1999. (The Europa World Year Book: 451)

## Education

Mass education is considered as a pre-requisite for economic and political development. That is why the developing and developed countries have shifted their attentions in fostering quality education at mass level. MaCrone in 1967 proposed a linear model of development giving central place to education for development in all the sectors of a society (Weaver, 1985: 104). Awareness about the social and political issues gives an incentive for economic and political participation, which is the end result of quality education. It has been observed that people at higher level of consciousness prove to be an agency of checks and balances for vigilant media in a society. Their criticism provides guidelines to the social forces, and contains and controls the social giants. Same is true with media.

Without a viable education system in place, the expectations for a better media system and media development are mere utopian. Following picture explaining the state of education in the country would substantiate the poor media state as given above:

	Institution	Teachers	Pupils
Pre-primary	88	2110	n.a
Primary	2146	21869	1312200
Secondary	n.a	19085	512900

Higher	n.a	n.a	12800
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Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook [2002]

## The Press

Many newspapers and periodicals stopped appearing on regular basis, in large number of cases, ceased publication during the civil war. Following the defeat of Taliban in late 2001, a number of newspapers and periodicals resumed publication and a sizable appeared for the first time. In February 2002, the media law was amended, removing most restrictions on independent media. News papers and periodicals were required to obtain a license under the legislation. By early 2005, more than 250 publications had been registered with the Ministry of Information and Culture.

The principal dailies include *Anis*, *Armane- Mali*, *Eradeh*, *Eslah*, *Hewad*, *Ittefaq-e-Islam*, *Kabul Times*, *Shari'at* (Ibid). Popular periodicals include *Aamu*, *Amanat*, *Ambastagi*, *Anees*, *Awa-e-Naw*, *Ayina-e-Zan*, *Cinema*, *Kilid*, *Mohahed*, *Parvaz*, *Payam-e-Muhajid*, *Roz*, *Sabawoon*, *Seerat*, *Takhassos*, *Zanbil-e-Gham* (Ibid, p.454). While major news agencies are Afghan Islamic Press, Ariana Press Agency, Bakhtar News Agency, Hindukosh News Agency (*HNA*), *Pajhwok Afghan News* (Ibid).

## Broadcasting

The media were completely banned by the militant Taliban regime (1996-2001): television was banned and Radio Afghanistan was renamed as Radio Voice of Shari'a. The overthrow of Taliban in November – December 2001 led to liberation of the media. On 13 November, Radio Afghanistan was revived in Kabul; music was broadcast for the first time in five years. A few days later, Kabul TV was resurrected, and a woman was employed as its newsreader. By early 2005, there were 42 radio stations and eight private television stations broadcasting in Afghanistan.

### Radio

Most popular radio channels in Afghanistan are Radio Television Afghanistan, Balkh Radio and TV, Radio Kabul, Radio Heart, Voice of Freedom. The channel which are considered to be the independent include Arman FM, Radio Azad Afghan, Radio Killid, Radio Sahar, Radio Sharq, Radio Tiraj Mir, Voice of Afghan Women (Ibid: 455).

### **Television**

Some of the television channels are Radio television Afghanistan, Balkh Radio and TV, Heart TV, Kabul TV, TV Badakhshan, Afghan TV (Ibid). While, independent TV channels include Afghan TV, Aina, Tolo TV.

## **Relations between Afghanistan and the US**

In 90s, the relations between Afghanistan and the US were not cordial rather deteriorated to the great extent that the US imposed economic sanctions, and did not recognize the Government of Taliban. During the last decade, the name of Afghanistan or Taliban for the most American was no less than the red rag to the bull. Afghan history of crisis tells that United States provided every sort of military, economic and political support to Afghan *Mujahaadeen* throughout their war against former USSR.

After Geneva accord, Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1988-89. Najibullah, a pro Communist Afghan ruler, was over thrown in April 1992. Nevertheless, various elements within the *Mujahadeens* divided by ethnic, religious and linguistic differences continued to fight a bloody and indecisive civil war till the rise of *Taliban* (Jentleson & Paterson, 1997: 23).

Consequently, Peshawar Accord 1992 and Islamabad Accord 1994 could not result peace and normalcy or settle the issue of power sharing among warlords of Afghanistan (Safder: 426-427).

Both initiatives taken by Pakistan proved to be futile for settling the dust. Since the withdrawal of Soviet troops to the rise of Taliban, America took no serious interest to resolving the problem of Afghan rivals. Though, some of them were the apple of American eyes during the war against USSR, but the US left their old friends in the lurch. It is pertinent to mention here that at the time of war with Russia, USA provided about 3 billion dollars in terms of military and economic assistance to Afghan and to the resistance movement ([www.nebuy.com/reference/country](http://www.nebuy.com/reference/country)).

The rise of Taliban on the political horizon of Afghanistan in September 1994 surprised the Afghan *Mujahadeen* and the world alike. In a short span of time, Taliban took control of a large portion of Afghanistan. At that time, Washington did not recognize the Taliban controlled three fourth territory of the country. The international community particularly Western Europe and USA had denied recognition to the Taliban because of their adherence to a rather strict version of the *sharia* (Mehmood: 429-431).

The United States mass media, bitterly criticized Taliban over the treatment of women, destruction of *Budha* statues and above all stay of Osama Bin Ladin in Afghanistan. Consequently, the US influenced the UN to impose stringent sanctions on Taliban that resulted in grounding the Afghan airline, apart from

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affecting the banking and other international transaction of Afghanistan (Ibid: 431).

US-Taliban relations reached to the point of no return over the issue of Osama Bin Ladin. America attacked with cruise missiles on the hideouts of Osama Bin Ladin in Afghanistan. After 9/11, Taliban refused to handover Osama to the United States for trial as Washington declared Osama as prime suspect in the incident of 9/11. Consequently, USA with the coalition forces attacked Afghanistan in October, 2001. The ultimate result was collapse of the Taliban regime in the second week of December 2001 (Ibid: 434). Subsequently, the Bonn Accord paved the way for six-month interim Government led by Hamid Karzai (Ibid).

Since then, relations between Afghanistan and the United States continue to improve. Afterwards, the US embassy in Kabul which ceased functioning in January 1989 for security reasons was officially reopened on January 17, 2002 ([www.aims.org/afco](http://www.aims.org/afco)). USA is providing military, economic and political assistance to the present regime of Hamid Karzai.

It is rather easier to conclude that relations between Afghanistan and United States had not been cordial since 1989 till the collapse of the *Taliban* regime in December 2001.

## **Mass Media: The Image Constructors**

In this age of media, the formation of mental picture is not the creation of only our personal experiences. Media in many ways are responsible for the creation of these mental pictures. It is convenient to comment that dependency on information has increased substantially due to the satellite communication power in making, remaking, manipulating, and distorting different images and perceptions in the minds of target audiences. Christopher (1997: 206) writes about formation of images, that image doesn't come from the personal experiences but from the best output of a professional production crew.

According to Bernard (1963: 19), most of us gather our impression and images of other countries and societies from the media. Generally the external world, the world of foreign policy reaches us by the channels of mass communication. The real effective map of the world that is to say operational map of the world is drawn by the reporter and the editor, not by the cartographer.

Several studies have endorsed/proved the power of media that audience communicate in the language used by the channel, they mostly follow the media agenda, respond according to the media reports, and even contemplate on the patterns recommended to them by the media contents. It can be inferred that the media slowly and steadily develop as a force to reckon within the business of shaping, reshaping, building or distorting the images of the nations, communities, religion, caste, colour, creed and different ethnic groups (Mughees-ud-Din, 1997:

1). Recent technological advancement further crystallized the notion wherein million of people are looking at the world events through the prism of media (Jim & Michael, 1981: 19).

It is said that elite media of USA carry out propaganda service for the manipulation of information on behalf of the corporate and political establishment. In view of Edward, Harman, mainstream media primarily utilize the tricks of language that serve propaganda ends with the perspective of manipulation of images. For instances, 'word terrorist is applied to the target enemy (Iran) or the enemy of our friend (*Hamas, Hizbollah, PLO, the Khuridsh, PKK*) not the constructively engages regimes of Turkey, Columbia, Israel or the apartheid government of South Africa' (Edward, 2002).

Several studies have substantiated this concept on solid grounds that American mainstream media has been remained instrument in the hands of foreign policy makers, White House or Pentagon. They carry out instruction(s) of the powerful elite in coverage of international events or in the other words, US mainstream media projects White House agenda in order to achieve the goals of American foreign policy around the globe. Edward & Noam (1988: 46) urged that media's objective in a free society is to manufacture consent among the government rallying the population to endorse elite decisions.

Similarly, Edward Herman in his propaganda model has pinpointed the devices used as tricks in language serve manipulative ends. Herman's model focuses on framing, slant in story, negative tags and connotations, source selections (depending on words feed by official source). It is pertinent to describe here that bureaucratic means may try to slip stories into the news in order to promote/endorse policies and to develop positive or favorable images which they or their agencies favour (Bernard, 1963: .29).

In his propaganda model, Herman further described another device used as a trick in language, i.e. snarling (words that induce negative reaction like fanatics, frenzy, barbaric, extremist, terrorist), purr words (having positive or warm overtones like Genteel General Stability, security reforms, democratic cultures). Some other techniques include, facilitating innuendo (words phrases like linked or reported), personification and use of collective words (like Islamic bombs nuclear Pakistan, Muslim fundamentalism to confuse the issue), removing agency (to remove active doer), put down (less aggressive words which chide rather than snarl like leftists are noisy) (Edward, 2002).

Similarly, Michael Parenti (2003), a renowned American media analyst describes several methods for the manipulation of information and image building. First is '*suppression by omission.*' It means playing down of information. American media have used this technique in order to mute or play down truly sensational stories. For example, the New York Times had not reported till three months the brutalities of Indonesian military in 1965, when she toppled down the regime of president Sukarno. Because CIA fully funded and assisted the Indonesian army which killed half million people, on contrary it took three months

before it was reported in the New York Times, accompanied by an editorial that virtually paid homage to the military responsible for the massacre for rightly playing its role with utmost care.

Further, Parenti says when omission proves to be insufficient for distorting the image of any individual or community then *attack and destroy tools* is applied. In this method, the media shifts from side lining the story to vigorously attaching it. He cited the example of CIA involvement in narcotics trafficking in the decade of 80s. In his words, 'the media did nothing but relentlessly misrepresented and attacked these findings in the most disparaging way' ([www.michaelparenti.org](http://www.michaelparenti.org)). Other techniques, as mentioned by Stanley Cohen, is *exaggerating the seriousness of events / over reporting*, has been used by British and US mass media (Stanley, 1981: 263).

Another device is *positive and negative labeling* like Genteel General, strong defense, Islamic fundamentalist / terrorist, black turban Taliban, print and electronic media generally attached these labels for good or bad motive with certain individual or groups ([www.michaelparenti.org](http://www.michaelparenti.org)).

In view of Michael Parenti, the most lethal and effective propaganda device related to distortion of image depends on framing rather than falsehood. It means twisting the facts, or bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis, and other auxiliary embellishments. Media practitioners can create a desired impression without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity.

Noam Chomsky has also used the term 'framing' in an interview referring to the way the New York Times introduced a news story, which reported an offer by Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait (Mughees-ud-Din, 1997: 24). Primarily, Noam Chomsky argued that the newspaper story marginalized Iraq's offer by opening its story with, a statement from the White House official discrediting it (Ibid).

It is said that main stream media of USA has applied these devices in order to manipulate the images. For instance, most of the studies in 50s, 60s and early 70s about Cuba and Sandinista in Nicaragua endorse with substantive proof about the manipulative role of mainstream media to explain issues of the target in support of their own country (Ibid).

Similarly American mainstream media shifts the direction of their foreign affairs coverage in accordance with the shifts in American foreign policy (Warner & Tankard, 1988: 106). American main stream media has been equating Islam with fundamentalism. It is said that this term is a concoction of American policy makers and contrivances of American and western media moguls (Said, 1997: xvi-xvii) and due to the manipulative technique of repetition frequently used by the main stream media, the term fundamentalism is conceived by the US and Europe necessarily a recourse to terrorism, radicalism, extremism and fanaticism. Words like fundamentalism, terrorist, extremist militant, and violent were found to be linked with the words like Muslim, Islam and Islamic (Mirza, 1996: 538-539). America media like New York Times, Washington Post, News Week, Time



Magazine, CNN, CBS and NBC have been found to be using this technique, thereby distorting the image of Muslim world.

Such words and phrases have been applied or associated with Muslim world. For example, 'Islamic militant from Pakistan', 'Pakistan backed Muslim rebels', 'Islamic terrorist training camp', 'Islamic fundamentalist theme', 'rogue state', 'Taliban are the pawn of Pakistan Intelligence Agencies', 'Pakistan maintained links with terrorists in the region', 'Libya supports terrorists', 'Iranian or Palestinian terrorist groups', 'Pan Arab fanaticism', 'Libya's terrorism', 'Militant Muslims' have been used for American enemy Islamic countries. Similarly positive and favorable words and phrases have also used for US friendly countries like Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

In the light of above discussion, it can be said, two leading US magazine News Week and Time magazine like other main stream media have been criticized for not being objective, fair and impartial in portrayal of Muslim world.

## **Statement of the Problem**

This article investigates the coverage and portrayal of Afghanistan by the *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines during the time period from 1991 – 2001.

## **Objectives of the Study**

This research project is theoretically linked with propaganda model of Herman and Chomsky. The major objectives of this study are:

- to evaluate overall coverage of Afghanistan in two leading US magazines - *Newsweek* and *Time* during 1991-2001;
- to explore the impact of American foreign policy on media coverage of Taliban in particular and Afghanistan in general;
- to make a concise and précised analysis of relations between USA and Afghanistan;
- to evaluate the impact of US mass media in formulation of foreign policy or how the American mainstream media have been reflecting the directions of US foreign policy;
- To put up suggestion for positive portrayal of Muslim countries in general and Afghanistan in particular in American mainstream media.

## **Method**

For this research project, the two leading US magazines, *Newsweek* and *Time* were selected.

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### ***Time Period of the Study***

An eleven years period from 1991 to 2001 was selected for the study. This specific time period is significant due to the reason that the USA emerged as a sole supreme power of the world after the world wide collapse of USSR and dissipation of communism. It has been generally perceived that after the end of cold war, Muslim world is/was capable of posing danger to the West and USA as portrayed by the international media. Similarly, American foreign policy objectives and trends linked to Muslim world were also modified and revived in the wake of end of cold war era. Subsequently, the western media extensively focused the Islamic world after the collapse of Kremlin (USSR). Hence, this specific era (1991-2001) has been selected for the study.

### ***Criteria for Selection of the Twelve Muslim Countries***

Out of 57 Muslim countries, twelve Muslim countries were selected for the purpose of analysis. The criteria for their selection are based on:

1. the geopolitical significance of these countries for the US interests;
2. intensity and nature of their diplomatic, political and economic ties with USA;
3. Population strength, economic condition, positions of armed forces and their status in OIC have been considered pivotal in their selection procedure.

For the reasons enunciated above, these twelve Muslim countries were placed in three categories. In each category includes four Muslim countries.

The categories are as under:

- US Allies (Friendly countries)
- US enemy (Enemy countries)
- Neutral Countries

In the category of US allies, four Islamic countries are Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The US ENEMIES category includes Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Libya. The Neutral countries category involves Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan.

### ***Application of Content Analysis***

Keeping in view the nature of the issue, the content analysis research method has been employed in order to examine the coverage of these Muslim countries in *Newsweek* and *Time*. A sample of all stories from *Newsweek* and *Time* related to the Muslim countries has been drawn from table of contents of both *News Week* and *Time* (1991-2001). Similarly, descriptive and historical methods of research are used to analyze US relations with the selected Muslim countries as well as the growth of US mass media in chronological order.

### ***The Unit of Analysis***

The unit of analysis in the study is each single sentence of the article of both the magazines. The article of magazine as a whole serves as a contextual unit.

### ***Category Construction***

Each sentence of a news article will be coded as one of three main categories - positive, negative or neutral, keeping in view the likelihood of their cultivation of positive, negative or neutral coverage portrayal about the selected countries.

#### ***Positive Sentences***

Sentences which depict development and positive changes in political, economic and social sector promotion of democratic values, peace and harmony, involvement in the accords/ agreement leading to peace and prosperity with other countries will be coded as positive. Moreover, the sentences which communicate appreciation of the initiatives taken by the policy makers or rulers of the Muslim countries would be coded with positive slant.

#### ***Negative Sentences***

Sentences which reflect social strife, natural and human steered deaths and destruction, political instability, catastrophic, chaos and anarchy, shabby living conditions, and political, economic and social intra state and interstate conflicts and deposes will be coded as negative sentences. All such sentences which depict criticism of policies in abovementioned sectors as well as derogatory remarks to distort the personality of the Muslim rulers of the twelve Muslim countries would be coded with negative slant.

#### ***Neutral Sentences***

The sentences which don't clearly mention emphasis on either positive or negative aspects of the concerned Muslim state's economic political and social life will be coded as neutral sentence.

Keeping in view the nature and purpose of the research, framing was identified in these articles from the contextual point of view. The finding / results pertaining to over all portrayal of the Muslim countries would be elaborated by assigning the keywords/terms on the cumulative basis. Portrayal of the Muslim countries was described as favorable, unfavorable or neutral. On account of overall impression of the article, the following rules were devised, for the assessment of the article in the perspective of framing.

#### **Frame 1**

*Rule 1:* Rule for assessment of favorable/ friendly articles

Each article would be considered as favorable / friendly if the ratio of positive sentences is greater than the negative and neutral sentences.

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### Frame 2

*Rule 2:* Rule for assessment of Unfavorable/ foe articles

Similarly, if the ratio of negative sentences is greater than the positive and neutral sentences then the article would fall in unfavorable/ foe category from the contextual point of view.

### Frame 3

*Rule 3:* Neutral articles

Naturally, if the ratio of positive and negative sentences is lesser than neutral sentences the articles would be treated / identified with neutral frame.

*Rule 4:*

Assume if numbers of positive and neutral sentences are found equal in any article in such circumstances the article would be considered as friendly/ favorable article.

It is relevant to mention here that slant in the article was identified/ labeled as positive negative and neutral sentences in the first part of chapter. All the articles were analyzed from the contextual point of view with the above mentioned rules/application; frames were identified in these articles related to three categories; viz, US allies, enemies and neutral Muslim countries.

### *Assessment of Inter coder and intra coder reliability*

The entire news article would be coded and double coded by the researcher. To reduce the chance of error, a research associate coded a random sample of 10% of news stories to evaluate the intra-coder reliability. And, it was found that intra-coder and inter-coder agreement was approximately same.

## Overall Coverage of Islamic Countries in the Newsweek

1099 articles about 35 Muslims countries, Middle East and Islam were published in *Newsweek* (1991-2001). In this connection, 551 issues of News week were analyzed.

**Table-1:**  
Coverage of South Asia and the South East Asia

Year	Total weeks	Total articles	Pakistan Kashmir	Bangladesh	Iran	Indonesia	Malaysia	Afghanistan	Brunei
1991	50	137	3	4	4	2	2	8	-
1992	49	44	-	2	-	1	-	5	-

1993	50	97	8	-	4	5	3	1	-
1994	48	83	2	2	-	3	3	-	-
1995	49	96	5	-	4	4	1	2	-
1996	52	92	2	4	1	9	3	7	-
1997	50	80	4	-	7	7	4	5	-
1998	51	114	2	1	6	24	8	2	1
1999	52	120	4	-	3	17	7	1	-
2000	49	91	11	1	2	10	3	-	1
2001	51	145	6	-	3	13	-	18	-
Total	551	1099	47	14	34	95	34	49	2

The data of table-1 indicate that 47 articles about Pakistan were published in the *Newsweek* during 1991-2001, while total coverage of Bangladesh, Iran, Indonesia and Afghanistan was 14, 34, 95 and 49 articles, respectively.

**Table-2:**  
**Coverage of Muslim Countries from South Asia and South Esat Asia in *Time* (1991-2001)**

Year	Total weeks	Total articles	Pakistan Kashmir	Bangladesh	Iran	Indonesia	Malaysia	Afghanistan	Brunei
1991	50	160	10	4	2	4	1	3	-
1992	47	46	1	1	-	-	-	4	1
1993	49	56	6	-	2	2	1	2	-
1994	48	67	4	2	1	3	1	-	-
1995	51	80	7	1	2	3	2	1	-
1996	51	74	9	5	-	6	5	5	-
1997	50	48	15	2	-	9	3	3	-
1998	50	80	15	-	4	26	15	3	-
1999	52	74	13	1	-	22	7	1	-
2000	50	58	7	-	3	17	6	3	-
2001	49	101	14	-	1	14	6	25	--
Total	547	844	101	16	15	106	47	50	1

The table-2 highlights that total coverage of seven Muslim countries in this category stands with 844 articles in *Time* magazine (1991-2001). In this connection, 547 issues of *Time* magazine were studied.

**Table-3:**  
**Total Coverage of United States Enemies in *Newsweek* and *Time* (1991-2001)**

Name of the country	Total articles in News week	Total articles in Time magazine	Total articles
Afghanistan	49	50	99
Iran	34	15	49
Iraq	97	82	179
Libya	3	06	9
Grand total	183	153	336

The table-3 depicts that 338 articles were published about United States enemies Muslim countries in both the magazines. The data show that 179 articles about Iraq only were published during 1991-2001.

***Portrayal of Afghanistan in Newsweek and Time in Framing Perspective***

**Table- 4**

Magazine	Number of favorable	Number of unfavorable	Number of neutral	Total articles
Newsweek	NIL	8 80%	2 20%	10
Time	NIL	7 70%	3 30%	10
Grand Total	NIL	15 75%	5 25%	20

Table-4 indicates that ratio of unfavorable articles was greater (75%) than favorable articles (NIL).

**Table-5**  
**Overall coverage of Afghanistan in News week and Time Magazine**

Name of magazine	Total articles	Positive sentences	Negative sentences	Neutral sentences	Total sentences
News week	10	36 6.22%	328 56.7%	214 37%	578
Time magazine	10	25 5.89%	244 57.54%	155 36.51%	424
Grand total	20	61 6.08%	572 57.08%	369 36.82%	1002

Table no. 5 indicates that Afghanistan received 6.08% positive coverage and both the magazines carried 1002 sentences about Afghanistan. It was assumed that the proportion of negative coverage would be greater in case of Afghanistan, because Afghanistan's relations with USA are not friendly, as USA did not recognize the Taliban rule. The same could be seen in the data. That's why the proportion of negative coverage (57.8%) was greater than the proportion of positive coverage (6.08%).

**Table-6**  
**Overall coverage of United States Enemies in News week and Time Magazine**

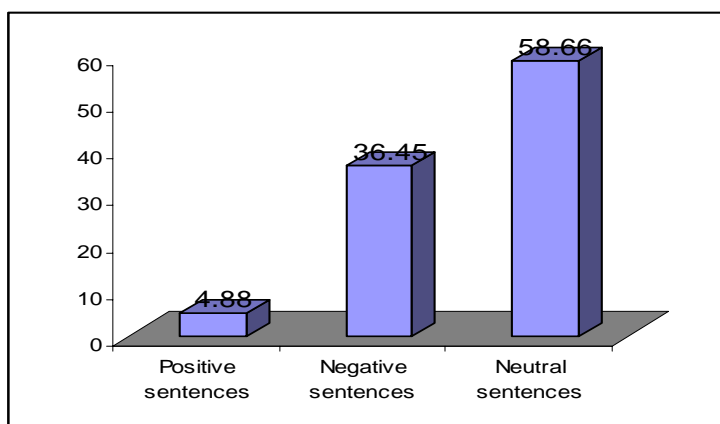
Total articles	Positive sentences	Negative sentences	Neutral sentences	Total sentences
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69	184 4.88%	1372 36.45	2208 58.66%	3764
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The table-6 shows that both the magazines carried 3764 sentences about United States enemies (Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Libya), of which 4.88% (184) sentences were positive, US enemies received 36.45% negative coverage.

The table-6 also highlights that the proportion of negative coverage (36.45%) of US enemies was greater than proportion of positive coverage, of these 4.88% declared enemies of United States.

## Portrayal of Afghanistan



The US mass media including *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines used to pay homage to Afghan *Mujahedin* for their everlasting meritorious services in defeating Russian and blocking the expansion of communists. But after the collapse of former USSR and worldwide dissipation of communism, their services were no more required. *Mujahedin* were no more relevant. The mainstream American media used to call them freedom fighters, and a war with Russian as a ‘Holy War’. Afghan *Mujahedin*, at that time, were treated by the United States media as the great companion friend and ally of West and the United States. When war lords were fighting with each others for authority and power, these heroes of past were overlooked by the main stream media. After the emergence of Taliban, Afghanistan was again portrayed as hub of terrorism. Taliban implemented Islamic Shariah in Afghanistan, but both the magazines misrepresented the Taliban regime. They were described as uncivilized, rustic barbaric and ferocious creatures.

Taliban established peace, unified scattered small warlords and maintained law and order in Afghanistan but both the magazine bitterly criticized their regime. The magazines were full of stories of Taliban’s crime such as forbidding women to leave home without a close male relative, strict rule on veil, and restriction on mix gathering, women education and job of women. The Taliban regime proscribed drugs cultivation, all sort of narcotics use and trafficking were banned;

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in return the magazine were publishing such distorted type of cover story about Taliban which would be negative, and biased. For instance, 'Tyranny of the Taliban: How religious zealots are destroying Afghanistan'; 'Talibans have ignored the business of Government, leaving Afghanistan in limbo' (Time May 29, 2000); 'A visit to capital of Afghanistan extremist regime reveals a harsh world of suppression and despair' (Time Oct 13, 1997).

Overall, both magazines carried 1002 sentences about Afghanistan. The finding indicates that the total ratio of negative coverage was 57.08% (572) sentences in total 20 articles. Moreover, the both magazines bitterly criticized Taliban over the issue of demolishing Budha statute and Osama Bin Ladin stay in Afghanistan. After the incident of 9/11, they were portrayed as the most dangerous creatures on the earth and Afghanistan was described as 'Mecca of terrorism'. Taliban were portrayed as fundamentalists, and terrorist. Muslims extremists, terrorist, fanatics, Islamic militants and fundamentalists were the titles given to Taliban. In a nutshell, it can be said that negative campaign continued till the fall of Taliban. The negative portrayal of Taliban is still on by the mainstream United States media.

## **Language Used by the Magazines for the Muslim World**

As far as language of these articles was concerned, it was found that language of the magazines was provocative, strong and superlative degrees were used. The headlines of the articles were also aggressive. Similarly, such phrases and words were used which deliberately distorted the image of Muslim world. For instance, 'Kabul: Death of a city', 'Defenses that crumble before the Taliban onslaught', 'peace that terrified', 'women are house bound', 'Afghanistan's new Islamic regime may prove both stabilizing and disruptive', 'tyranny of the Taliban', 'a visit to the capital of Afghanistan's extremist regime reveals a harsh world of suppression and despair', 'central, Asia is a fundamentalist tinder box', 'a veteran rebel, another man down?'.

## **Issues Covered by *Newsweek* and *Time***

It is universally believed that prime objective of the media is to create awareness. It links those who have limited chances of interaction with each other. Unfortunately, the American mainstream media including the *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines have primarily failed to do this obligation of promoting better international understanding. On the other hand, the magazines have been deliberately engaged in the propaganda campaign of building misconception distorting images and creating hatred in the minds of US citizens about Islam and Muslim world. It can be said that propaganda campaign ushered by the magazines was in corollary with the White House foreign policy towards Muslim countries.



Similarly, they have covered international affairs from the perspective of United States perceived foreign policy's interest and priorities. The findings of this research strongly endorse the propaganda framework which the US employs using mass media. The magazines have not highlighted the developmental and positive activities of Muslim countries; for instance, space in the both magazines for sports, travel and cultural activities was too little. Same has been found to be true for Islamic culture and civilization. The content analysis of eleven years has clearly indicated that negative aspects in the arena of politics, economic and social sector have been unnecessarily emphasized / played up.

The magazines have given maximum coverage to such topics or issues which developed negative image of Muslim countries in the readers. *Newsweek* and the *Time* have focused the issues such as in Afghanistan, Taliban as extremist regimes, women conditions in Afghanistan, narcotics hub in Afghanistan, Islamization process under Taliban rule, issue of Al-Qaida and Usama Bin Ladan etc.

### **Suggestions to Improving the Image of Islam and Muslim World**

It is suggested that the image of Islam and Muslims in the West requires strong and persistent efforts from the Muslim themselves, both in the Muslim world and in Muslim communities in the West. A comprehensive process, starting from within by consolidating mechanism of Islamic work on the popular and official levels, should be started. It should help appear Muslims as a nation with an identical culture and civilization in order to have their better image in the world.

Effective initiatives must be undertaken to educate non-Muslim, on the Islamic concept of peace and tolerance. Moreover, it is a duty of every Muslim expert to clarify the incorrect view of Islam held by some that lead to conflict and confrontation between the west and Islam (Khaled, 2005).

It is an admitted fact that it is not plain sailing for Muslim media to break through the Western media as Western societies enjoy abundant media coverage which makes it unnecessary for them to look outside. Hence, it is shouldered with the specialized institutions to managing a media program to promote true image of Islam. It is necessary for the success of such campaign that it should be backed up by the necessary funding and human resources ([www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com)).

It is also suggested that Muslim thinkers must better explain Islam by writing books and articles, giving lectures and arranging meetings with people of other religion (Ibid). More English languages radio and satellite television station should be established in Muslim countries. By these satellite channels, Islamic thinker would be in this position to answer the questions about Islam and Muslim countries and political, social and economical condition.

## Notes

1. Hanafi is one of the four schools of thought of religious jurisprudence (fiqh) within Sunni Islam. The Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence was founded by Abu Hanifa, born in Kufa, Iraq about A.D.700. He was one of the earliest Muslim scholar-interpreters to seek new ways of applying Islamic tenets to everyday life.
2. They speak Pushto language and are inhabited in most part of the south of Afghanistan, bordering Pakistan and Iran. Historically, they are known as Pushtunes due to the language they speak.

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