

## **Conflict Journalism in Pakistan: A Quest for Constructive Reporting**

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study offers a unique perspective to the analysis of conflict communication by applying all the three strands of critical discourse analysis as varyingly advocated by Fairclough and Van Dijk to investigate the reporting Taliban and Balochistan conflicts in Pakistan media. Through textual analysis and detailed interviews with reporters, editors and experts, the study analyses how these conflicts are reported and the factors that determine the nature of reportage. It is concluded that the Daniel Hallin model of media sphere is best suited to explain the nature of conflict communication either towards constructive or destructive coverage.*

**Keywords:** *Conflict communication; critical discourse analysis; securitization, politicization, sensationalism; empathy; responsibility.*

### **■ Introduction**

The literature on conflict and communication has traced the nexus from ancient times to modern era where states resort to propaganda and misinformation to smoothen public opinion during conflict times (Knightly, 2002; Hamelink, 2008; Ottosen & Nohrsdet, 2008; Thussu & Freedman, 2003). Swedish media scholar, Stig Nohresedt (2009) believes journalists being at the pivotal position,

are drawn to the conflicts either advertently or inadvertently thus making them combatants in the conflict that can incite for hatred and violence. Hamelink (2008) has documented the proceedings of the International Crime Tribunal set up after the Second World War when in 1946, a German radio broadcaster was indicted for ‘crime against peace’ and a newspaper editor sentenced to death for incendiary write-ups. In 2003, another court set up to enquire into the Rwandan genocide, sentenced three senior journalists to life imprisonments for incitement and instigating communal discord (Thompson, 2007).

Other researchers have found that media dependency increases during conflicts and hence greater chances of strong media effects (Bratic, 2006; Kempf, 2012). This study is mainly motivated to compare and contrast the coverage of two different conflicts (Taliban conflict and Balochistan conflict) in Pakistan media to know the features and determinants of conflict reporting in national settings. Before doing media analysis, it is essential to briefly discuss the key events in these two conflicts.

## ■ **Taliban Conflict**

The Taliban uprising started in 2004 when Pakistan army started a military operation in the tribal areas of the country in a bid to check the Al Qaeda infiltration into Afghanistan as demanded by the US and Nato forces. This move did not auger well with the Taliban sympathizers who were against this all-out support for the US and gathered under the platform of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and started fighting against the Pakistan army. Due to immense public support for the Taliban among the local tribesmen, the militia was able to transcend to the whole of tribal areas of Pakistan (having a population of 8 million and larger than the area of Belgium). With the passage of time, the Taliban militia established itself as a force to be reckoned with and successfully negotiated the incursions of Pakistan Army. While the Pakistan army has used heavy weaponry including air strikes (on areas inhabited both by Taliban fighters and the tribesmen) to wipe out the Taliban, the later have carried hundreds of attacks on Pakistani soldiers and

civilians (mainly in the settled areas neighboring the tribal region) killing more than 50,000 Pakistanis, injuring many more than that and bringing unimaginable sufferings to the bereaved families besides disrupting the whole socio-economic dynamics of the country.

Now ten years down the road, the conflict is still on. Several peace agreements were signed between the warring groups but these could not be pursued because Pakistan government was under pressure from the US, stiff opposition from the Western funded NGOs and media due to the fear that such a strategy will embolden Afghan Taliban. The most suffering lot has been the poor tribesmen in this whole conflict who are completely sidelined by the mainstream discourse in Pakistan. A major humanitarian crisis is brewing in the tribal area but it is often neglected and mainly discussed as a security problem where force is the only solution (Siraj & Shabbir 2012). Though no one carries the body count of the poor tribesmen in the tribal areas, fears are that thousands have been killed, many more injured with permanent disabilities. Trauma, fear and other psychological ills are common, costing a huge toll on the socio-economic life in the area. This study will explore how the Pakistan media report on this humanitarian conflict.

## ■ **Balochistan Conflict**

Situation in Balochistan (the biggest province of Pakistan) is marred by decades long insurgency led by the nationalists (some demanding more autonomy and others secession from mainland). The root causes of unrest in Balochistan lie in the realization among Baloch people that their resources are being exploited without any benefit to them, says Mir Hasil Bezingo, the nationalist leader from the province (personal interview, May 2013). Balochistan is rich in natural resources and of all the minerals that are extracted, the Center gets a major chunk of profit and the province languishes in poverty and economic deprivation. Additionally, there is greater concern that the developmental projects in the south of the province are designed to colonize the

whole province by the patrons of military and bureaucracy.

To quell insurgency, Pakistan army is engaged in a deadly battle with militants and has killed thousands of them in the past two decades. The conflict has acquired new dimension of 'disappearance of Baloch youth' by the security agencies. Hundreds of mutilated bodies have been recovered so far while the number of those already in the custody is still a secret though it is feared they are in thousands (Herald, 2013). The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2011) in its report filed 140 cases of killings and 143 cases of disappearances of Baloch people in a single year.

This study will analyze how Pakistan media is framing this conflict and whose perspective is prioritized.

### **1.1 Conflict communication: Media, war and peace**

Many researchers have recorded media penchant for conflicts due to their inherent news worthiness (Wolsfeld, 2004; Bratic, 2006) and lopsided notions of patriotism and national interests (Lynch, 2014). The recorded history of conflict communication since the First World War reveals warring states use media for their jingoistic purposes. Studies are available on the excessive use of media for war purposes during the First World War (Lasswell, 1927), Second World War (Hovland, Lumsdaine, Sheffield, 1965) and the Cold War (Hamelink, 2008; Herman & Chomsky, 2010), in Middle East (Kempf, 2012; Ross, 2006), Iraq invasions in 1990s (Lynch, 2006), Northern Ireland (Wolsfeld, 1997; Fawcett, 2002), Eastern Europe (Bratic, 2006 & 2008), African continent (Obonyo & Fackler 2009; Nyambuga, 2011) and now in the present war on terror (Nohresedt, 2009; Ottosen, 2010; Hussain & Siraj, 2012; Hussain, 2014).

But in fact, the realization that media can be used for peace purposes is as old as the fear of its potential of inflaming conflicts. In the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nation Radio was set by the League of Nations to promote peace and harmony in Europe. Its predecessor, the United Nations also established crisis radios in the troubled region of Africa to promote peace and tranquility (Becker, 2004 & 2007). Likewise, there is a growing list of peace media

outlets in modern times to help stem violence and suggest ways and means to resolve conflicts. However, barring these few examples, during conflict times, generally, national media go hand-in-hand with other institutions to win support for the war and demonize the enemy (Hay, 1999). In the case of Pakistan, in the ensuing war on terror, military and government are using media to advance their perspectives (Siraj & Hussain, 2012, Hussain, 2014). In the case of US, researchers have studied the excessive use of media for promoting national interests during the two World Wars, Vietnam invasion, invasions of Latin American states, during the entire cold war with USSR, Iraq and Afghanistan with optimum success (Spencer, 2005; Keeble; 2011; Herman & Chomsky, 1989; Ross 2008). Dorman and Farhang (1987) found that US media coverage of Iran from 1951 to 1978 followed cues from foreign policy makers rather than being independent. Ottosen (1995) found that from 1980 to 1990, Norwegian newspapers' usage of enemy images corresponded with the Norwegian foreign policy. The media were ready to sacrifice their editorial independence for patriotism. Others notably among them Dov Shinar (2009), Susan Ross (2008) and Jake Lynch (2006) have investigated media coverage that sided with the West policy of supremacy over the global South during conflicts in Middle East.

Obviously disagreeing with this approach of traditional media, critical scholars have developed new approaches like peace journalism (Galtung, 2000) and de-escalatory journalism (Kempf, 2003). According to these scholars, journalists must be conscious of the consequences of reportage (even if facts are reported), which can be achieved if journalists try to understand the political, economic and social factors that fuel conflicts and present them in broader perspective (Cottle, 2006). Though they agree, media can never resolve conflicts but they should present conflicts in broader perspectives (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2005). The advocates equate peace journalism with good journalism during conflict times as it offers a detailed, balanced and fairer approach. The prime concern of peace journalism is to enable all the stakeholders in a conflict to share their viewpoints (Kemp, 2005; Shinar, 2003; Ottosen, 2011).

Keeping in view the recommendations of these critical scholars who have mainly analyzed inter-state conflicts, this study will discuss media reporting of the Taliban and Balochistan conflicts.

This study will primarily address the following two main questions.

Q1: What are the key discursive features of media reportage of Taliban and Balochistan conflict?

Q2: What are the key determinants of media reportage of these two conflicts in Pakistan?

## **2.1 Theory and methodology**

Critical discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) acts both as theory and methodology for this study. CDA is the direct outcome of linguistic approach to social theory developed by the European social theorists contrary to the Americanized empirical approaches. It can be defined as “an analysis of written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias. It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts” (Van Dijk, 2003). Van Dijk explains CDA demystify discourses, which produce, exercise and reproduce power by illuminating ideologies.

CDA has three important three strands; Van Dijk’s cognitive approach, Wodak’s historical approach and Fairclough’s linguistic approach. This study draws from the approaches presented both by Van Dijk and Fairclough, which as noted by Jaffer Shayolisami, have no real differences and hence complement each other. According to these scholars, in CDA, there are three analytical factors; text (a news report), discourse practice (the process of production and consumption of media texts), and socio-cultural practice (social and cultural structures that determine media texts) while analyzing communication. Van Dijk gives these factors different titles but the essential ideas are not very different from the above.

For the textual analysis part of this study, the researcher selected two leading TV channels (Geo TV and Dunya TV), two English newspapers (Dawn and The Nation) and two Urdu newspapers (Jang and Express). For each of these two conflicts, five news stories from each of the six media outlets were selected thus making it total of 60 news stories. Though CDA scholars advocate application of lexical analysis, semantic moves, narrative form and rhetorical tropes for textual analysis, however, this researcher is not undertaking a very detailed separate analysis of all these linguistic tools rather will combine them to discuss the 'value-laden phrases and sentences' as applied by a number of communication researchers. This will help me combining my findings with the other two strands of CDA to know why 'issues are reported as they are' and hence help provide a cohesive analysis of conflict reporting in Pakistan.

Similarly for the 'discourse practice' part of the analysis, the researcher interviewed as many as 12 reporters of the selected media. The main themes covered policy of the media in covering these conflicts, news values, newsgathering techniques, risks and opportunities and a host of conflict-specific issues.

Finally for the analysis of socio-cultural practice, editors of the six media outlets were interviewed alongside media experts and conflict stakeholders. This was intended to know the larger issues of social and political discourses that determine media reportage of these conflicts. Issues that arose at textual and institutional levels of analysis were later linked with this tier to comprehensively address the 'why' of conflict reporting.

### **3.0 Research Findings**

Q1: What are the key discursive features of media reportage of Taliban and Balochistan conflict?

#### **a. Taliban conflict**

Pakistan media coverage of the Taliban conflict mainly revolved around the violent incidents that routinely occur between the Taliban fighters and Pakistan Army personnel. So when on April

25, 2012, Taliban attacked a jail in Bannu district and freed some of their comrades, it proved to a major story reported in greater length from various perspectives.

The Nation reported that militants freed ‘hardcore extremists’. The ‘tall beard men’ were equipped with sophisticated machine guns and yelled ‘Allah is the greatest’. They were able to free their ‘comrades’ without any resistance including the one Adnan Rasheed who had attacked General Pervez Musharraf. The detailed report narrates every single account of the incident to pressure government on ‘how daring Taliban are, their strategies and what needs to be done.’ The Dawn reported an exclusive story on the release of Adnan Rashid calling him a ‘jail absconder’. The report mentions him ‘thanking God’ and presents a brief profile of him. Other newspapers reported ‘Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is the biggest threat, staging suicide bombings and attacks on military compounds’. The media, of course, sides with Pakistan security forces treating Taliban as ‘other’ and hence the bad guy. This is an example what Galtung (2000) says ‘violence-oriented reporting’ or specifically to this study, it is the securitization of the issue while the humanitarian aspects are ignored; a conflict in which thousands people have been killed, many more injured and millions displaced. By reporting on the symptoms of conflict and ignoring the substance, the media aggravate the situation and dampen chances of reconciliation (Lynch & MacGoldrick, 2005).

Similarly reportage of other violent incidents follows the same patterns. The media bias against Taliban is evident by calling them ‘extremists, militants’ and ‘killed’ and use the term ‘martyred for Pakistan soldiers’. Dunya TV reported an incident in which two soldiers are ‘martyred’ and four terrorists ‘killed’ in Khurram Agency. The report creates binaries of good and bad groups that creates rift and stem chances for peace and reconciliation (Galtung, 1998; Kempf 1996). The Jang newspaper published a single column story to inform about the refugees fleeing Khyber Agency affected by the military operation in the area. The report said 180,000 people have left the area with 10,000 people reaching the Jalozai camp on daily basis. The number can be more than that, as majority of people preferred staying with their relatives instead of



coming to camp. It is unfortunate that the paper gives minimum space to such stories where the common people appear to be the sufferer. The story does not contain any information about their plight, the problems they have to face, the agony for leaving their homes and a host of other issues inflicting their lives.

**b. Balochistan Conflict**

Pakistan media primarily focuses on this conflict when some violent incidents occur or key stakeholders grab the attention of journalists.

While reporting incidents of killings, Pakistan media usually refrain from adjectives and name-calling to address the actors in the conflict. Security forces are called as personnel of Frontier Constabulary or Pakistan army and similarly Baloch militia are termed as ‘armed men’ or ‘masked men’. For example, The Daily Jang published a front-page story on April 4, 2012 headlined “4 killed in Sui remote control attack” in which 3 Frontier Constabulary personnel were killed including one unidentified man. The story does not refer to the assailants and also avoids labeling them as ‘terrorists or miscreants.’ All the media outlets reported (April 15, 2012) the deadly attack on security forces in which 14 personnel were killed and 15 were injured. The report says ‘attacker’ fired rockets on security forces in Turbat area of Balochistan. The story avoids speculations; a common practice that usually media do but decried by peace journalists for inflaming conflicts. Moreover, the news reports refers to the ‘background’ of the conflict and thus points to the larger issues that have triggered the conflict. The report does not elaborate on the ‘assailants’ and no detailed description of the conflict is reported. By avoiding words like ‘insurgency, terrorism’ the report dampens the incident which according to peace journalism is good to stem exacerbation in the conflicts. A best example of how Pakistan media avoids ‘otherisation’ can be found in an example when the Jang reported on a deadly exchange between security forces and ‘armed men’. A total of 13 people were killed and few injured. The story does not tell how many security forces and ‘armed men’ were killed. This shows the paper sides with the two parties; one entrusted to

maintain law and order and the second aggrieved party who had to resort to guns where political rights are denied for decades.

Similarly, the official outpourings get maximum coverage related to Balochistan issue. The leader of the then main opposition party Nawaz Sharif (now the prime minister) got the limelight when he visited the province.

The daily Jang reported Nawaz Sharif saying, "If Baloch people get rights, no one will be a rebel". Mr. Sharif demanded an end to 'abductions of innocent people and defaced bodies of Baloch'. The report also included his remarks on Balochistan package saying we do not need packages but need 'bandages on injuries'. The Nation reported the meetings between Nawaz Sharif with Baloch leaders to ameliorate the situation in the province. The underlying message of 'solution' and 'Balochistan is being ours' thoroughly resonates in the report. Other media reported Mr. Sharif saying 'Baloch people are not rebels, they are patriotic Pakistanis.' He was reported to have expressed concerns over 'the target killings, disappearance of Baloch youth and mutilated bodies' calling for an immediate halt to these activities. The politician was widely praised for comments and excuse to the people of Balochistan 'who had to suffer at the hands of security forces (though indirect referencing) and poor governance by the democratic government'.

Similarly, all the mainstream media focused on the Balochistan peace case in Supreme Court where the judges were reported to have referred to Balochistan being a 'spirit of the country' and expressed concern over lawlessness in the province. The media reported that situation in Balochistan was grim, people were being killed, abductions were routine affair and the security agencies were least concerned. Efforts for peace in Balochistan also topped the agenda notwithstanding who organized it.

Q2: What are the key determinants of media reportage of these two conflicts in Pakistan?

**a. Taliban Conflict**

As shown in the textual analysis part of the study, the media is reporting this conflict from security perspective and completely ignore the tribal people who are the real sufferers in this conflict between army and Taliban fighters. The reporters being reliant on army for information (no one is allowed to report freely from tribal areas), have no other choice but to reproduce the military press releases share the same slants and frames. So, when the reporters were asked about the negative framing of Taliban, they said the Taliban were the 'national enemy' and responsible for the bloodshed. They said they don't need to be objective while reporting on them. And, even if they tried to remain neutral, the dominant social discourse was against objective reporting. "If I use the word 'militant' for Taliban, they (the news editors) will immediately change it as 'terrorist', said a reporter.

Secondly, security is the major challenge that conflict reporters face when they report on the Taliban conflict. All of them were unanimous that being stationed in Peshawar with of and on visits to the tribal areas was full of dangers and threats. "As a reporter you have to thread a fine line and avoid the annoyance of both Taliban and security forces. "If anyone of them felt bitter about your reporting, you are in real trouble," says Abdullah Jan of Geo TV. Musaratullah Jan of Dunya TV recalled the Bara (operation) incident when in a live beeper, "I said that people say security forces have shot the people. After the live beeper, the management of my organization called me saying "are you crazy, why you mentioned security forces have killed people".

When asked about the securitization of the Taliban conflict in media, the reporters said it was a deliberate act. For them the most important part in the conflict was the skirmishes between Taliban fighters and security forces. "Nothing is more newsworthy for me than to report violence in which Taliban fighters or security forces loss their lives," said Javed Ali of daily Jang. As a journalist, he continued we report on the statements of important stakeholders, clashes in the region and other incidents in which people may be interested. When asked why the human side of the conflict is neglected, the reporters mentioned a number of reasons for it mainly including 'repetitiveness (that is discouraged in news),

news valueless when compared to violence and pressure from management to focus on violent stories.

So mainly it is the dominant discourse formulated through elitist perspective that determine the nature of reporting of this conflict. The Taliban conflict is primarily seen as a security threat. The Taliban are feared to pose a threat to national integrity and hence 'inimical to our state'. Army being at the loggerheads with them having the support of government and majority of people, media discourse is so framed that Taliban are portrayed as agents of destruction and 'our enemies'. Media in Pakistan is barred from discussing the issue threadbare and even certain aspects of that conflict that may be in the national interests are bypassed and never debated. The journalists interviewed for this study, feared backlash from state and army while discussing issues relating to history, strategic interests and our responsibility to tribal people. More than a decade has passed of this conflict and so far journalists haven't been allowed to the war zone. They are simply reliant on the press release issued by military headquarter and independent reporting is only a utopia. According to one expert, any semblance of sympathy with the tribal people (for they being killed in army action) can be detrimental for the reporter and the media organization. The state (in the guise of strong army) appears to be determining for media how to cover the Taliban conflict. Any violation of such an understanding can be detrimental for journalists. They have to side with the army and the state while discussing the issue and that is why the proliferation of words like 'terrorists, miscreants, agents of dark forces' are used for Taliban and their sympathizers.

### **Balochistan Conflict**

As shown in the textual analysis part of the study, the conflict is humanized and the reporters share such a perspective on this conflict.

All the six journalists shared their reservations that Baloch people have been denied their due and that the insurgency has started as reaction to Center's dominance. The Nationalists fear that army and establishment is drawing them out from their

province. Their resources have been exploited, their land is occupied and they are foreign in their own lands. Now certain groups in the area have taken arms against the security forces. “This is a battle over ownership over the province” said Abdul Khaliq of daily Jang and added while separatists’ demands of separation are illogical; the causes that led to these demands are logical and genuine. This abundance of humanitarian content in media reporting of this conflict is due to the perspective shared by reporters from this conflict.

Secondly, all the six journalists and editors interviewed for this study declared reporting from the area is a risky profession and said threats to their lives and family members was the major cause of concern. According to Abdul Khaliq of daily Jang, militant groups, security forces, religious organizations and even political parties threatened them when their positions were criticized. “The problem is when we report, they dictate us on the nature of the content. If we report views of agencies, the militants say we are state agents and when we report views of separatists, the agencies say we work for these groups” said another reporter for daily Dawn.

When reporters were asked about certain features of peace journalism that were exhibited in reportage of Balochistan conflict, they said it was a deliberate act. To a question why expressions like “terrorists or militants” were avoided for separatists who were fighting against the security forces, they gave explanations that peace journalists would certainly approve. Shah Hussain of daily Express said ‘personally, I believe they are not militants or terrorists because if their concerns are addressed, then they can be pacified. Due our policies they have been sidelined and I think they can be mainstreamed if right sort of policies are devised’.

Generally speaking, the people of Balochistan are sympathized in the country. The people are against the rising role of military in the province. Media in Pakistan though frames this conflict from humanitarian perspective but they can’t come in open support for them due pressure from army when it comes to extra-judicial killings, kidnappings and establishment of military cantonments in vast areas. All the reporters interviewed for this

study and representative of parties and others who have expertise in the field said media freedom is curtailed. “We are allowed to speak half-truth but not the whole truth” said one editor. Others said there are genuine issues but media can’t discuss those due to fear from army. One expert said, “If media cross the limit, they will be penalized for being dubbed as anti-military, anti-state, foreign agent and hence killed”.

## ■ Conclusion

This study investigated the two different conflicts in Pakistan by applying the critical discourse analysis. Broadly, media adopted a two-phase strategy to discuss these ongoing conflicts; the immediate face off and the future course of action. The Taliban conflict is securitized and presented in binaries between ‘our army’ and ‘the terrorists’. The reporters and editors agreed these attributes had got a professional consensus. One editor said ‘It is a fact that Taliban are our enemy and the war has been launched by the Pakistan military to cleanse them’. The reporters agreed, however, that objective and constructive reporting from the region was almost an impossible task. A reporter explained his ordeal like this. “As a reporter, you have to thread a fine line and avoid annoyance of both Taliban and security forces”. The reporting is lopsided and the poor tribesmen are completely ignored. Many researchers (Knightly, 2004; Ottosen, 2008, Hussain, 2014; Lee, 2010, Bratic, 2006) have revealed media espouse patriotism when their states are at wars. The reportage of this conflict can be adequately explained from the perspective of Daniel Hallin theory of elite consensus. As on the Taliban conflict, the military and political elites agree to wage a war against Taliban. Media have no option to follow the suit. The alternative perspective that peace agreement is the only solution as demanded by the tribal people (the real sufferers who have be displaced from their homes for years) never make to the media discourse. Pakistan forces have been air-bombarding the tribal areas, where thousands of innocent people have been killed, but Pakistan media cannot report it. The drone attacks have unleashed a reign of terror and a record number

of people are suffering from trauma and psychological issues, but this is a prohibited area for Pakistan media. Critical reports on this conflict can lead to closure of media outlets and death rings for reporters. As Galtung (2002) says the periphery seldom makes to core, so the peripheral voices are always ignored. The conflict is seen from security perspective because the elites promote it.

Similarly, the Balochistan conflict is told from “We’ness perspective” where efforts for peace and harmony are prioritized and common people empathized. The reporters explained such a framing by arguing that the ‘separatists’ resorted to violence when other options of getting justice from Center exhausted and that they openly championed the Baloch cause. A number of studies (Galtung, 2000; Galtung & Lynch 2010; Lynch and MacGoldrick 2005; Lynch 2006; Lynch & Seaga & Hackett, 2008) have revealed when people perspective are added in the media discourse, chances for peace and harmony increases. It seems the media follow the domain of what Daniel Hallin calls ‘the legitimate controversy’. Though they can’t discuss the real causes of this conflict; army fighting Baloch insurgency, which has been started due to military businesses in the province, they do highlight the problems of poor people. Many political parties, human rights organizations and concerned citizens are sympathetic to the cause of Baloch people and hence focus on their plight. So the media while remaining within the legitimate domain highlight certain aspects of the conflict (army hates it but tolerate it) but can’t tell the complete story.

This study supports the main scholarship on war and media that the later never contradict the dictates of states. Though apparently the media may be criticizing certain aspects of the conflict, the spirit and texture of media reporting never come in open opposition to the state policy. It is interesting to discuss why sufferers in Taliban conflict are ignored while the sufferers in Balochistan conflict get the limelight. While the Taliban demand Islamic system in tribal areas the Baloch nationalists demand more provincial autonomy. Both these demands are guaranteed in the constitution of the country and hence nothing objectionable. The people in tribal areas are ignored because by highlighting their problems, the warring strategy like jet bombardment by Pakistan forces can be substantially endangered.

Media in Pakistan has never reported casualties in air sorties. On the other hand, Pakistan army is doing a search operation in Balochistan province, so the overall nature of the war strategy goes uninterrupted. The reporters manage to get information from different sources unlike the tribal areas where army is the single source. Secondly, tribal areas have never been governed democratically, so the people choices are conveniently ignored. On the other hand, Balochistan province is run most of the times by democratic regimes, so the people know how to approach media for sharing their concerns. So in a nutshell, while the Pakistan media must be credited for highlighting popular perspective on Balochistan conflict, it has abysmally failed to constructively report on Taliban conflict in the north west of the country.

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