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# War against Terrorism: Perception of Pakistani informants

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## Abstract

Public perception regarding war on terror had been a prominent issue in communication studies. Number of surveys and public opinion polls were conducted to gauge public perception regarding the war on terror. This study seeks to explore how Pakistani informants perceived war on terror through qualitative approach. This study based its theoretical argument on political and communication literature. It probes how Pakistani public perceived war on terror when it's Government decided to support America after 9/11 attacks. For this reason ten Pakistani informants were interviewed. The results showed that Pakistani informants significantly opposed war on terror and expressed negative opinion about America's policies towards Muslim Ummah. They considered that war on terror had enhanced terrorism in the world and caused severe physical and infrastructural damages in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

## Introduction

War on Terror (WoT) was launched by the President Bush after 9/11 attacks in the United States. These attacks were framed as "acts of war against the United States of America and its allies,

and against the very idea of civilized society"<sup>1</sup>. President Bush declared that America would fight against the perpetrators of 9/11 attacks. Therefore, America demanded that Afghanistan should hand over the perpetrators of 9/11 tragedy or be ready to be invaded. Subsequently, American forces attacked Afghanistan on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2001 and by the end of December all major areas of Afghanistan were under the control of coalition forces. Later on, President Bush stressed that Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction were a threat to America. He argued that tragedy of 9/11 had taught the lesson that a distant enemy had the capability to harm the American nation. He was determined to combat the Iraqi threat that could be more disastrous than ever<sup>2</sup>.

The US-led invasion of Afghanistan was approved by the United Nations but there was mixed public opinion regarding the action. However, these attacks made an overwhelming impact on Afghanistan by killing hundreds of civilians and devastating infrastructure. Similarly, during the Iraq crisis 2003, world opinion was confused. Thus, the US government had a coalition of 48 countries at the start and the most prominent of them were UK, Italy and Spain<sup>3</sup> whereas France, Germany, Russia and China, were the countries who opposed the war. The Iraq war was not supported by the United Nations<sup>4</sup>. In spite of this opposition, the US did not refrain it from invading Iraq.

There were a number of studies conducted which discussed war on terror and the role of Pakistan in this war. Likewise, numerous studies discussed the public perception regarding war on terror but these studies mostly discussed the view point of Western public regarding war on terror. This study provided a Muslim perspective by exploring the Pakistani public perception regarding war on terror. This study explored how Pakistani informants perceived war on terror when their government took a 'U' turn in its foreign policy towards Afghanistan government and decided to support war on terror against Taliban.

## Pakistan Government's Stand on the War on Terror (WoT)

Since 1947, the relationship between Pakistan and America had significant position in the foreign policy of the country. While during post 9/11 scenario, these relations took a drastic turn.

The post 9/11 scenario brought a considerable shift in the stance of US policy makers which led to Pakistan-US alliance over the war on terror. With this attention, the Bush administration lifted sanctions and provided aid in exchange for Pakistani cooperation in Afghanistan war 2001. President Bush after 9/11 made it known to the world that either you are with the US or against. So President Musharruf agreed to give "full support" to the war on terror<sup>5</sup>. Despite having public pressure against American war, Pakistan declared its willingness to support coalition action against Afghanistan on September 16, 2001<sup>6</sup>. Pakistan took a U-turn in its policies towards Taliban Government. The Taliban were discarded overnight and US was provided with bases in Pakistan for launching military operations against Al-Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden<sup>7</sup>. Even during initial days of war all logistic support was given without any formal agreements or payments<sup>8</sup>. Pakistan provided military bases to US in Jacobabad, Pasni, Dalbandin and Shamsi. Along with this, 35,000 Pakistani military troops were allocated to protect coalition bases. These troops not only secured the area but also arrested 420 high value Taliban and Al Qaeda members<sup>9</sup>. President Musharraf said in his address to nation on January 12, 2002;

"This terrorist act led to momentous changes all over the world. We decided to join the international coalition against terrorism and in this regard I have already spoken to you on a number of occasions. We took this decision on principles and in our national interest..."<sup>10</sup>

There were four areas of assistance between US and Pakistan that determined the relations between these countries after the 9/11 attacks: <sup>11</sup>

- i. Mutual participation in global war on terror
- ii. Helping states of South Asia to enhance regional stability
- iii. Aiding Pakistan to pursue its economic, political and democratic goals
- iv. Eliminating the divergences between Pakistani and American public for enhancing understanding between the states.

However, in the case of Iraq war 2003, Pakistan Government decided not to support the war. Pakistani Government supported peaceful resolve of the matter. As the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Zafarullah Khan Jamali said on March 18, 2003 that;

"We stand by our principled stand that the matter should be resolved peacefully. But we must only think of Pakistan at this critical juncture" <sup>12</sup>

Likewise, foreign minister, information minister and other Government officials have expressed their opposition against imminent attack in Iraq many times. Pakistan's information minister Mr. Sheikh Rasheed made it clear that Pakistan would not support the United States in the case of Iraq. Foreign minister of Pakistan opposed Iraq attack in these words;

"There is no justification for this war.... I have said several times in the past and I say it again today... All people want peace... Can there be any Pakistani who wants war in Iraq. We have consistently opposed war on the issue and tried to remove differences within the

international community (in the UN Security Council) even this last hour"<sup>13</sup>.

Pakistan Government wanted international consensus on Iraq crisis. It was argued that Pakistan did not want the destruction of Iraq. Along that Pakistan Government used other international platform to avert Iraq war such as OIC, NAM, Arab League and conveyed to the United States that Pakistan was not in position to support Iraq attack. There was immense opposition inside the country. Pakistan Government pressed the United Nations to address the miseries of Iraq. Prime Minister Jamali argued that war in Iraq would not solve any problem but it would increase the suffering of Iraqi people. He stressed to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq<sup>14</sup>.

The above discussion indicated that pertaining to the War on Terror and Afghanistan attack 2001, it is obvious that Pakistan Government supported US actions. Even during Afghanistan attack, Pakistan provided logistic support to the United States. However, in the case of Iraq, Pakistan Government proclaimed that it did not support US action against Iraq. Many times Pakistani ministers and other Government officials expressed their opposition. Thus, on Afghanistan crisis, Pakistan supported the war but during Iraq crisis, Pakistan Government adopted anti-war policy. Now it was pertinent to know how world public looked at WoT.

### **Public Perception Regarding the War on Terror (WoT)**

There had been numerous surveys and opinion polls conducted for inquiring public perception regarding WoT in different countries. It was noted that any government-led military action needed public support for determining political, military and foreign policies.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, it provided political legitimacy and military effectiveness to the military campaign<sup>16</sup>.

Previous studies and opinion polls conducted on American public indicated that Americans mostly supported war on terror. Pew (2002) reported that after war on terror there was criticism

against America but still US and its citizens were rated positively by majorities in 35 of the 42 countries where poll was conducted. However there was more criticism against the US in the Muslim countries but rest of the world supported global war on terror<sup>17</sup>. Los Angeles Times polls found that Americans strongly supported war on terror and some of them expressed that protests, marches and rallies should not be allowed to affect the war process<sup>18</sup>. However, during Afghanistan crisis 2001, 80 percent of Americans supported attack against Afghanistan<sup>19</sup> and 55 percent Americans supported Iraq attack 2003 even without United Nation's approval<sup>20</sup>.

However, some researchers analysed American general perception regarding terrorism. It was noted that after 9/11 that American's scared of another terrorist attack. Davis and Silver studied the results of nine RDD surveys that were mostly conducted in Michigan during 2002 to 2004. It was observed that perception of another attack was quite high with 44% and 37%<sup>21</sup>. Penn, Higgins, Gabbidon and Jordan reported in their study that 70 percent American believed that their government actions were affective in protecting the nation from another disaster<sup>22</sup>. Conversely, ABC News and Washington Post polls (2003) denoted that 44 percent Americans expressed their concerns regarding civilian casualties, 50 percent discussed its negative impacts on American economy, 62 percent argued that war had increased the risks of short term terrorism at home but still they supported war<sup>23, 24</sup>.

However, the studies on British public indicated that British nation expressed their concerns regarding war on terror. British people did not support Iraq attack 2003<sup>25</sup> and they felt that war on terror did not bring success and support for Britain<sup>26, 27</sup>. According to Pew Research Centre British people expressed their apprehensions on Iraq crisis 2003 more than Afghanistan attack 2001<sup>28</sup>.

The opinion polls and surveys from the Muslim countries indicated that Muslim nations had strong negative opinion regarding war on terror. Pew Research Centre reported that five

Muslim nations which were surveyed in 2008, only 8% to 16% public supported war on terror.<sup>29</sup> The survey in 2006 indicated that Jordanians, Turks and Egyptians did not believe that Arabs were responsible for 9/11 attacks<sup>30</sup>. Mostly, Muslims believed that war on terror was an American effort to capture Middle Eastern oil and dominate the world.<sup>31</sup> However, survey results indicated that more than half of Jordanians, Pakistani 40% French and Germans believed that war on terror was a pretext to punish unfriendly Muslim regimes<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, Pakistanis had negative image of America after 9/11. Only 15% Pakistanis had positive perception about America. 59 percent Pakistanis opposed America's war on terror<sup>33</sup>.

The previous studies regarding public perception on the war on terror mainly based on surveys and opinion polls. Interpretative methodologies were lacking in previous research. Particularly in the case of Pakistani's public perception regarding war on terror, qualitative studies were never conducted which has potential to deeply analyze the opinion of Pakistani public. To fill this gap, the present study adopted qualitative approach to analyze Pakistani public perception regarding war on terror. This study would address how the Pakistani public perceived the war on terror?

## Methodology

For this study, qualitative research design had been employed because this design was descriptive in nature and utilized a comprehensive approach.

This study employed the technique of in-depth interviews. Interview was the most appropriate technique of data collection in qualitative research. Unlike surveys, in interviews, the interviewee expressed his opinion in detail and more participants in meaning making<sup>34</sup>. In-depth interview brought the perception of the interviewee regarding the issue. It allowed the informant to speak about his personal feelings, opinion and experience. It also provided opportunity to understand how people perceive the world and happenings around them.

For this study, in-depth interviews were conducted among Pakistani informants and it explored how they perceived war on terror. It was a sensitive topic and previous researches mostly conducted surveys that could not describe the detail perception of the public regarding war on terror. The detail viewpoints of the informants were recorded by the researchers. Their opinion was analyzed through qualitative approach. The findings revealed several themes on how the Pakistani informants looked at war on terror.

### Informants

For this study, ten informants were chosen from Pakistan. The selected informants were educated, well informed about the issue of war on terror and users of their country's respective media. These interviews were taken during the months of February and March 2013. The study used "snowball" or "network" techniques for "locating information-rich informants or critical cases"<sup>35</sup>. As Berg referred that in snowball technique, the contacts were developed by the recommendation of people who were already in circle<sup>36</sup>.

The Pakistani informants were chosen from Multan and Lahore. All of them were purposively selected and well educated, belonged to Middle and upper middle class. They were mostly educators, civil officers, communication experts and executives. Some of the informants studied international affairs, Pakistan foreign policy and political issues of Pakistan and displayed deep understanding of current affairs. These informants expressed their interest regarding the issue of war on terror and expressed valuable comments on the issues. These informants mostly got information from Pakistani mainstream newspapers such as Dawn, Nation, Nawa-e-waqt, Jang and other electronic Pakistani news channels.

### Interview Protocol

The interview was conducted in English or Urdu languages. It involved face-to-face interview in Pakistan. The interview was



based upon their perception about the war on terror and their media. The interview was taken during June and July 2013. The interview questions were related to how they thought about war on terror, the incident of 9/11, al Qaeda, Taliban, the consequences of war in terms of physical and property damage, impact of war on Pakistan, Islam and role of Pakistani media during the war.

### **Analytical Strategy**

For analyzing the interviews from informants, the technique of thematic category analysis was employed, in which, the themes emerged inductively from the data<sup>37</sup> and the researcher did not apply any other external themes. In its first step, the interviews were transcribed by the researchers, so that the nature of the data could better be understood. The data was analysed using Nvivo software. Secondly, the researchers started first reading of the text and identified the major issues or topics. Afterwards, the researchers re-examined the data by thoroughly reading the text; she could do the micro analysis of data which brought new information. Thirdly, the themes started to emerge from data and these themes were arranged by organizing them into similar categories. At this stage, the initial themes were brought, for this purpose; the Nvivo software helped for arranging the data. In fourth step, the initial themes were re-analyzed to see its category and moreover, the description for each theme was described. In fifth step, each theme was re-evaluated with the original data, it was reviewed at whether the information provided was relevant to the theme or not. After this, the final construction of each theme is determined by scrutinizing its title, definition and supporting material. Lastly, the final themes came out from the data, which communicated the actual result of research.

### **Findings**

For this study, the opinions of ten Pakistani informants were explored through in-depth interviews. After 9/11 Pakistani government decided to support war on terror and changed its



that these attacks were planned by Americans for achieving their interests in the region.

“I think 9/11 tragedy was a concocted attack. It was planned and conspired thing. They were just blamed. The Afghans and Osama bin Laden were just blamed for this”  
(P 1)

Although Pakistani informants did not support America for war on terror but they also did not support Taliban for their extremist activities in Afghanistan and after wards in Pakistan. They criticised their way of government in Afghanistan and when Pakistan Government supported war on terror, Taliban’s reaction against Pakistan was widely criticised. Taliban threat Pakistan for this action and later on started attacks on Pakistani territory, which killed large number of Pakistani people.

However, about the United States the informants were of the opinion that it came into the region for its interests. Afghanistan and Pakistani areas of Baluchistan were enriched with mineral resources. The Americans wanted to enhance their presence in the area. Moreover, it was an oil war. The basic driving motive was to capture oil reserves of the Middle Eastern area. For all these reasons the United States planned the 9/11 attacks, put the blame on Osama and attacked Afghanistan. Later on, Saddam was projected as a threat to attack Iraq and capture its resources. As one interviewee commented:

“There are two things. One who made Osama bin Laden. It is America itself who provided money, resources, weapon and even technology to Osama. A person who is sitting in mountains who has only klashenkov how he could demolish America’s high buildings. Secondly, if I look at it from history point of view, from mid of 18<sup>th</sup> century generally and from the start of 19<sup>th</sup> century particularly, it was decided that that country or that nation will rule the world who will

control the supply of oil. It was all excuse, and all drama...So I believe it is all drama due to this US wants to control oil, Afghanistan and Iraq. This time American forces sending plutonium and uranium to their countries from Afghanistan." (P 6)

Another theme appeared from data was the perception about war on terror. Their initial perception was that it was a war against those people that were spreading terrorism in the world and causing the death of innocent people. The people who were spreading terror were emotionally depressed people. The Pakistani informants stressed another perspective saying that it was not a War on Terror, rather it was a 'War of Terror'. They were of the opinion that the War on Terror did not curb terrorism. It enhanced terrorism. The people who were attacked by the United States bombardment became reactionary and started to promote terrorism. As one interviewee commented:

"A young man said when my whole family was bombed in front of me and only I left because I was not at home. How I could love the entire world. In reaction to the terrorism I could become a suicide attacker. If you analyze the terrorist activities inside Pakistan, you understand the people were doing these activities in a reaction. They became reactive after 9/11 attacks and America's aggressive policies. That's why the war proved to be war for terrorism rather war against terrorism." (P 8)

A few informants framed the war as a "war of interests". They were of the opinion that the war on terror was started to realize the aims of some vested interests. These groups could be political and they did not belong specifically to any country or religion. They could be Muslims, Christians or Jews. They adopted extreme measures to achieve their targets. They did not have any reason; the only driving force against them was their own

motives. Some informants looked at the war from the perspective of oil politics. They were of the opinion that war was pre-planned. The United States attacked Afghanistan and Iraq to grab their oil resources and strengthening its presence in the region. It was a game of the United States and Russia using other countries for their interests. One informant commented that it could be the resentment of the West against the rapid spread of Islam in the world. They wanted to defeat Muslims and wanted to strengthen their dominance. The Pakistani informants considered the War on Terror as an action against terrorism but they looked at the war from a different perspective. They stressed on American oil interests, the definition of terrorism and a deeper probe against the perpetrators of terrorism.

Another sub-theme was the portrayal of Afghanistan attack 2001. The Afghanistan war was not supported by the Pakistani informants. They considered it as barbaric, unjustified and prompt action against Afghanistan. They condemned the killings of innocent people there. They stressed the paucity of evidence against Al Qaeda or Osama. One interviewee argued that the war was opposed by most of the countries; it was not even supported by the United Nations. The war produced a negative impact on the affected country but it served the objectives of those countries whose economies depended on oil or weapon construction, particularly America. The war enhanced hostility against the United States and distorted its positive image in the Muslim world.

The Pakistani informants framed Afghanistan war as fulfilling American objectives in the region. They believed that allegations against Osama and Al-Qaeda were not brought to the media. The war had some hidden agenda of the United States. Although Pakistani informants did not support Al-Qaeda and their terrorist activities, they did not endorse war against Afghanistan.

Iraq war 2003 was another sub-theme. In the case of the Iraqi war of 2003, Pakistani informants were more aggressively condemned the war. It was argued that there should not be monopoly of particular countries regarding nuclear weapons. The

informants stressed that America attacked Iraq for its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which were not found after the war. Even United Nations inspectors stressed that there were no weapons in Iraq but America did not bother about any criticism. As one informant stated:

“Iraq war was more illegal than Afghanistan war. In Afghanistan war, some countries like Turkey that were Americanized support the war but about Iraq, Kofi Anan said it was completely illegal war. But after this Obama said it was unnecessary war but Afghanistan was necessary war. This war was carried out on personal vindictiveness; perhaps Bush has some personal clash over there. However there were no weapons were found” (P 5)

Some informants argued that America used Saddam Hussain for its own interests. When Saddam suited their interests they supported him but when their interests were served the dictator became a threat for them. The Iraqi war was framed as an illegal and unjustified war by the Pakistani informants. Almost every informant was convinced that Iraq was attacked for seizing its oil resources. The Pakistani informants most of the time stressed this viewpoint. They argued that America was an industrial country; oil was its basic requirement. It wanted an excessive supply of oil for its industry. That is why it wanted to control the oil resources of the world. The Muslim countries were enriched with oil resources and America wanted to dominate them. As the informants argued:

“It was again oil mission. If we see in detail, the name of the operation was “Operation independence liberation” (I guess) its abbreviation is “OIL”. So it is the same mission. After this, the tenders of oil wells in Iraq were given to American or British companies. Within three years, the 75% oil extracted from there” (P 5)

Another informant pointed out another US objective namely that it wanted to weaken Muslim states. After the war, sectarian violence enhanced in Iraq; when a country was weak America would be in a better position to control it. In the end the loss would be for the Muslims. The informant aggressively argued that America had double standards. On the one hand, it talked about democracy, human rights and on the other hand it killed many innocents in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regarding the Iraqi war Pakistani informants harshly criticized America for its policies and condemned the killings in Iraq.

Consequences of war on terror were another sub-theme emerged from the data. Regarding the consequences of the War on Terror, Pakistani informants expressed their deep concerns. They stressed that due to the Afghanistan and Iraqi wars, there were a number of innocent people killed. Their actual number was quite big. The media did not reveal the number. The forces did massive bombings in Afghanistan and Iraq which killed men, women, children and old people. It was argued why the Western media, which reported every incident in the world, kept the actual number of casualties in these areas hidden. There were mass killings that brought horrific consequences. One interviewee stated:

"If you see the facts and figures, according to this 97% civilians were killed in these attacks and drones attacks in Afghanistan and 3% were terrorists. It is an open secret that more civilian were killed who were innocent"  
(P 2)

Failure of war on terror was another sub-theme. The Pakistanis stressed that the War on Terror did not help to root out terrorism from the world. In fact, it promoted terrorism, hunger, dissatisfaction, alienation and hatred among different nations. The war took the masses away from education, prosperity, peace and welfare. More terrorism was spread in Pakistan, Afghanistan and other countries. People felt more insecure and terrorized. The

War on Terror did not succeed in achieving its targets. It destroyed the countries and did not solve the problem of terrorism. Killing was not a solution to the problem. It was important to have mutual dialogue and to address the root causes of terrorism. By killing people, peace could not be achieved.

Pakistan's foreign policy on war on terror was another sub-theme of the data. It was observed that on this perspective the informant expressed their anger and discontent over Pakistan's policy. They strongly condemned Pakistan's policy on War on Terror and also criticized Pakistan's foreign policy in general. After 9/11 attacks Pakistan supported the War on Terror and took a "U" turn in its relations with the Taliban Government. Pakistani informants argued that Pakistan had a dependent foreign policy. Pakistan was not independent to make its policy. Pakistan was not economically a strong country. It had to depend on America and its lending agencies like the IMF and the World Bank for foreign aid. In this situation Pakistan could not take any independent decision. Its diplomats made the policy that was acceptable to the United States. As an interviewee stated:

"I don't think that Pakistan foreign policy was Pakistan made. This policy was made in foreign. The country that was run by other's aid, the country could not be independent. It had to support the interests of those countries from them it got help. We just proclaim that we are independent or have sovereignty but it was not reality" (P 6)

However, a few termed it as the policy of survival. They argued that Pakistan had no other option than to support America on the War on Terror. If Pakistan did not support the War on Terror, the United States could attack Pakistan. Overall, Pakistan was in a difficult position at that time but most of interviewees did not support Pakistan decision to support the War on Terror.

Role of Pakistani media during war on terror was an important theme of the data. Regarding the role of Pakistani



media with regard to the coverage of the War on Terror, the Pakistani informants were not much satisfied. Most of them expressed negative opinions about it. They argued that Pakistan had a totally free media. It did not have any rules and regulations. However, it was very important to have some rules to run any organization. Without any rules and regulations Pakistan media could not work properly. It was noticed that media most of the time had sensational news for selling their channel or newspaper. Sometimes, their coverage was biased or served the interests of particular groups. Regarding the War on Terror the media provided a jumble of information, scenes and stories but viewers were not sure whether they were true. It followed the Western channels, provided the same news without verification. Sometimes, the media exploited the issue of terrorism. It sensationalized the news and terrorized the society.

However, two informants expressed quite positive opinions regarding Pakistani media. They argued that Pakistani private channels provided enough information about the War on Terror to the masses. The state channels presented the picture but private channels critically analyzed the situation. They commented that Western channels were biased against the Muslim countries but Pakistani media adopted a fair and balanced approach.

Lastly, the portrayal of Islam and Muslim after 9/11 was another important theme. It was asked to the Pakistani informants to comment on Islam and why Islam was linked to extremism. All informants stressed that Islam was a religion of peace, humanity and love. It was a complete code of life. It taught tolerance, peace and respect for others. In fact all religions taught peace. No religion allowed killings or harsh measures. All religions were peaceful. If one read the teaching of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), he always stressed on tolerance. As one informant stated:

“Islam means “Salamti” “Protection of others from me” not about my protection—protection for others---  
What is the message of Islam..there was no harshness,

strictness in Islam.. We can teach others that Islam was a true religion that's it. We cannot pressurize others morally or physically" (P 6)

However, Islam was misrepresented by the foreign media and through the actions of some Muslim factions. Cultural traits of certain countries also played its role. For instance, the Afghans termed their culture and practice as Islamic. They also justified all their actions in the name of Islam. In that case, culture and religion was mixed up and wrong picture of Islam was presented to the foreign world. Another thing was that, there were good or bad people in every religion. Unfortunately, some of the bad people used the name of Islam for fulfilling their wrong desires. Those acts of misdeeds of some criminals cannot be considered as acts of Islam or those of Muslims. On the other hand it was argued that the people who spread terrorism were not essentially Muslims. They could belong to any religion. Moreover, there was terrorism against the Kashmiri or Palestinian people. Why did not the western media link the situation to terrorism? Why did it only blame the Muslims?

But it was also a reality that not only in the western countries but also in the Muslim countries there were different interpretations of Islam. Misinterpretation of Islam created more frustration; there was a need for integration, need for collaboration, people sitting together and solving the issues. The informant also stressed that a positive image of Islam should be shaped by the scholars. That was the duty of the Muslim countries and media also. However, a few informants said that the West was scared of the rapid spread of Islam. It was a great religion that had many believers. It had given its own system and could create an Islamic empire that was threat to Western ideologies. That's why they purchased bad people from Muslims who distorted the image of Islam and linked it with terrorism. Overall, the Pakistani informants stressed that Islam was a peaceful religion and it was wrongly linked with terrorism by bad people. Now it was the duty of the Muslim community to correct the image of Islam and

spread the true teachings of Islam that are based on tolerance, humanity and harmony.

In conclusion, it could be stated that the Pakistani informants expressed their deep concerns regarding the War on Terror and stressed conspiracy theory. Pakistanis did not endorse the government's policy of support for the War on Terror. They did not consider that the War on Terror played any role to curb terrorism. In fact, they stressed that the War on Terror promoted terrorism and they termed it as the War of Terror. Overall, the Pakistani informants used harsh language against the policies of the United States and framed the war in the perspective of the US interests in the region.

## Discussion

Overall, it was observed that Pakistani informants framed the War on Terror in a negative stance and considered it as another form of terrorism. They emphasized that it was a war for US interests against the Muslim countries. They argued that America came into the region to capture oil and gas resources of central Asian states and contain China and Russia<sup>38</sup>. They were sure that the War on Terror did not help to curtail terrorism but on the contrary, it boosted terrorism. Similarly, previous research based on opinion polls indicated that the opinion from the Muslim countries was very negative against war on terror<sup>39</sup>.

Regarding the Afghanistan war 2001 and the Iraqi war 2003, the Pakistani informants argued that wars did not solve anything. They expressed their concerns regarding increasing civilian casualties and infrastructural damage in Afghanistan and Iraq. They were much against the Iraqi war. They did not consider it as a justified war but it was noted that they did not give a positive opinion regarding Saddam. Pakistani informants framed Saddam as a person who was used for American interests. It was observed that the Pakistani informants stressed American interests in South Asia and the Middle East. The Pakistanis adopted aggressive language and stance against America. Mostly, their language indicated that they were quite sure that America planned all crises

for achieving its strategic interests. Similarly, Pew Research Centre found that Muslim nations believed that for 9/11 Arabs were not responsible rather it was American plan to capture oil resources of Middle East<sup>40</sup>.

On the question of Pakistan's foreign policy on the War on Terror, Pakistani informants were not satisfied. They considered their Government policy negatively and commented that it was a dependent policy. The Pakistani Government did not have an independent policy. It was the policy of survival. The majority of informants condemned the Pakistani Government for supporting US policies.

Overall, it was noted that Pakistani informants were aggressively opposed War on Terror. They stressed American interests, collateral damages and negative consequences of terrorism war on the Muslims and Pakistan. Similarly, the Pew Research Centre (2011) also came up with the same finding in its polls with the Pakistani public that most Pakistanis considered America as a potential threat and disapproved the US war on terror<sup>41</sup>.

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