

Weapons of War or Purveyors of Peace?

Print Media in India and Pakistan

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International Centre for Peace Initiatives

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Executive Summary

This paper analyses the coverage of bilateral relations in select Indian and Pakistani newspapers. The period covered is from October 1999, when General Pervez Musharraf was appointed Chief Executive of Pakistan to July 2001, when he and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India met in a summit at Agra. The paper also reviews the work of some of the media related organisations involved in fostering regional co-operation and understanding. Finally, it examines practices followed internationally for enabling the media to play a constructive role in peace building. It concludes with recommendations for the consideration of the press in India and Pakistan.

The main conclusion of the paper is that the press in India and Pakistan is neither pro nor anti peace. Rather the press follows the political or military leadership in its own country in articulating views on relations between the two countries. When the governments seek peace, reconciliation and friendship, the press advocates these values. When the governments adopt antagonistic postures, the press also promotes hostility. With a few exceptions, the press in India and Pakistan has largely behaved as a voluntary hand-aid of political masters while addressing bilateral issues.

Other observations are as follows:

- The press in India and Pakistan is formally free. It demonstrates a spirit of free enquiry while reporting on domestic events, but seems to function within both voluntary and external constraints while addressing bilateral relations between India and Pakistan.
- There is little reporting on terrorist acts in the other country and the implications of such acts. When reported, often the official statement of the other government is merely mentioned.
- Small and irrelevant details are sometimes blown out of proportion and reported as major events.
- The press in India and Pakistan are obsessed with each other, not only in terms of the amount of space devoted to the other country, but also in portraying events in terms of victory and defeat.
- The press in each country invariably blames the other side for initiating a violent incident between the two.
- The press in both countries use the official channels of their respective countries as their primary source of information. On a few occasions when an official from the other side is quoted, a response from the officials of one's own country is also carried.
- Enemy images used in the press lead to stereotyping of the people and the country across the border. Certain terms and story structures are used to enhance prejudice and hatred.
- Often different standards and different terminologies are used when describing events and people on different sides of the conflict.

This paper makes specific recommendations for the press in India and Pakistan, from a peace-building perspective. These pro-peace options include:

- Call people and groups by the names that they give themselves
- Construct a sense of identity from many different perspectives
- Look beyond your own victims
- Report on the consequences of an action
- Look beyond official sources and alternatives to government resources
- Verify stories from the other side's official sources and embassies
- Convert "events" into "processes"
- Invite activists to consider the process by which real change may realistically result from their actions
- Write about co-operation, however small
- Don't use harsh examples
- Network with the purpose of sharing articles and ideas
- Build capacity of journalists
- Don't behave like Winners and Losers, instead of telling the truth
- De-escalate the conflict
- Say good-bye to self censorship
- Discourage publication of repeated confrontational statements of officials and hawkish politicians
- Emphasize the track record of agreements and the confidence building arrangements already in place
- Establish an Indo-Pak feature service covering human stories to strengthen ties between people
- Create awareness through the media about the horrifying consequences of nuclear war
- Establish an Indo-Pak media group for conflict resolution or conflict transformation
- Build alliances with NGOs and other components of civil society to embark on creative initiatives
- Give importance to magazine sections of newspapers for detailed discourse on peace issues.

Introduction

-Sundeep Waslekar

It is my pleasure to present the fourth joint paper in the series of joint papers between Indian and Pakistani scholars brought out by International Centre for Peace Initiatives. In the last decade, East and West Germany, Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, factions in Guatemala, Israelis and Palestinians, North and South Koreans have made efforts to transform their relationships – some with success and some without much success. At least a desire for peace has been demonstrated. Unfortunately, in the case of India and Pakistan the basic desire for constructing a positive relationship is found missing, as is any serious degree of mutual trust and confidence. This is also reflected in sharp differences of perception between the elite of the two countries. There are contrasting views on what constitutes right and wrong, core and peripheral, just and unjust. On this background, ICPI believes that it would be worthwhile to make conscious efforts to develop common perspectives on the future of relations between the two countries.

ICPI has come out with three joint papers in the recent months. In *The Beginning of the Future*, ICPI and Islamabad-based Institute of Regional Studies have jointly proposed a set of principles and processes for resolving outstanding conflicts. In a paper jointly authored by Tara Kartha and Ayesha Siddiqua Agha, several measures for curbing the production and proliferation of small arms are proposed, while in a paper jointly authored by Mahendra Lama and Rasul Bakhsh Rais, proposals for enhancing co-operation in the energy sector between India and Pakistan are made. The present paper on the media, by Ilmas Futehally and Fauzia Shaheen, is also relevant to ICPI's involvement in promoting confidence-building measures between media-persons in South Asia.

As much of the activity concerning the media in promoting regional peace and co-operation has focussed on the capital-based English language media, ICPI has chosen to engage the owners and editors of indigenous language and regional newspapers. Between June 1999 and May 2001, ICPI co-operated with other like-minded institutions from South Asia, and elsewhere, in organising three workshops for 38 editors from the press of 16 indigenous languages in South Asia. These workshops took place during periods of intense hostility between India and Pakistan. They have resulted in the establishment of South Asian Editors Forum, adoption of Guidelines for a South Asian Ethos, and a programme for exchange of columns and journalists. Besides three regional workshops, two informal consultations between Indian and Pakistani journalists were also arranged.

King's College of London University helped launch this process at a very difficult time when the Kargil war was at its worst, and also supported the research component. Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS), based in Vancouver, deserves credit for taking the lead role in advancing the process, along with South Asian Media Association in Colombo and Citizens Media Commission in Karachi. The two authors of this paper have actively participated in this initiative. It has also made it possible for them to meet several times to discuss the concept and contents of this paper. I am particularly grateful to IMPACS for taking up an earlier draft of this paper in the third workshop of

the South Asian Editors Forum for a discussion. Finally, it must be noted that Javed Jabbar, Pakistan's former information minister and Vijay Darda, MP and Founding President of the South Asian Editors Forum played a sterling role in leading the process described above, as well as inspiring and encouraging the two authors.

The paper by Ilmas Futehally and Fauzia Shaheen is being brought out at a time when the role of the media in influencing bilateral relations has become a subject of heated debate in India and Pakistan. Much of the debate is inspired by the dynamics between governments and the media at the Agra summit in July 2001.

It is obviously not fair to assess the role of the media in the context of bilateral relations merely on the basis of its coverage of one event. The two authors of this paper draw their conclusions from the coverage of a comprehensive series of developments in the last phase of Indian-Pakistani relations beginning in October 1999 when General Pervez Musharraf was appointed as the head of government of Pakistan, until July 2001 when he and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India met at Agra. This phase was marked by many ups and downs, unfortunately more downs than ups.

Having analysed the coverage of most of the events between India and Pakistan for almost 20 months, the two authors examine if the print media has been playing a pro-peace role or if it has been spoiling the prospects of peace. Their conclusion is startling and should lead to a lot of introspection in the media. It raises questions about the effectiveness and inclination of the print media in informing readers about a neighbouring country, with which their own country has an extremely difficult relationship. More important, it raises questions about the print media's desire for its own operational freedom, its propensity to depend on sources belonging to only one side in addressing a two-sided story, its application of different standards to national and foreign policy news coverage. Most important, it raises the question: Whether the media in India and Pakistan are weapons of war, purveyors of peace or just voluntary hand-maidens of their own establishments.

Weapons of War or Purveyors of Peace? Print Media in India and Pakistan

-Ilmas Futehally and Fauzia Shaheen

Part I: Context

The phase beginning in October 1999 when General Pervez Musharraf took over the reigns of Pakistan, until mid-July 2001 when he visited Agra for a summit meeting with India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, marks one of the most difficult phases in the history of India-Pakistan relations. It began with a certain degree of bitterness as the Government of India refused to interact with the Government of Pakistan headed by the military ruler. It seemed to be ending on a happy note as the heads of the two governments decided to meet at the romantic city of Agra in the middle of July 2001. But it was not to be. The Agra summit might have been declared as an inconclusive, not an unsuccessful, event by the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan. But it did fail to reach any understanding on principles for governing bilateral relations or to agree on any specific measures for peace and reconciliation. It even failed to issue a token joint statement suggesting further steps.

This paper analyses the coverage of bilateral relations by the press in India and Pakistan during the phase beginning October 1999 and ending in July 2001. Indeed, the Agra summit was a great media event. Though the handling of the media at the summit by the two governments has been criticised by different sources for various reasons, the fact remains that the media was not only an observer, but also an important player at Agra. It must be clarified that the media that was particularly relevant to the Agra summit was the audio-visual media, but this paper has focussed on the print media. Besides analysing the press' coverage of India-Pakistan relations, this paper also aims to consider some broader issues. Finally, it reflects on possible options for the press, should it want to make an effective contribution to peace building in the South Asian region.

Methodology and Limited Scope:

The media has grown considerably in the last few decades to include print, TV channels, radio, internet and others. While India and Pakistan both have a diverse mix of different kinds of media, there is a predominance of print media in terms of size and numbers. Both countries have a large number of daily newspapers and periodicals. In India alone, there are approximately 36,000 titles registered with the Registrar of Newspapers. Out of these, about 3000 publications are brought out regularly. The Indian Newspaper Society at present has around 720 member publications. Similarly, there are about 1100 newspapers in Pakistan.

A small research project like this one has, per force, to focus on a few prominent publications. The objective here is to identify trends in reporting of bilateral and other issues rather than pinpoint any specific publications or make comparisons among them. The scope of this study is limited to sections of the print media. While it is true that both India and Pakistan have a vibrant electronic media, the control mechanism exerted on

both are very different and hence it is difficult to compare the electronic media of the two countries. For instance, in Pakistan television is state owned. In India, television is owned by state as well as private interests. As a result, there is a limitation on the number of television channels in Pakistan, but there is a large plethora of channels in India. Some of the private Indian channels can be viewed in Pakistan as well.

Obviously the press in India and Pakistan is diverse. There are contrasting approaches and views. It would not be fair to describe the attitude of the press as one entity. Yet it is possible to discern dominant trends. According to experts, there are about 75 newspapers and periodicals in India and 40 in Pakistan which have an impact either at the national or provincial level. They include periodicals and newspapers in English, the national languages (Hindi in India and Urdu in Pakistan) and local and indigenous languages. For the purpose of our observation, we have focussed on the main English language newspapers such as *The Times of India*, *The Indian Express*, *The Asian Age* from India and *The News International*, *The Frontier Post* and *The Dawn* from Pakistan. Among national language newspapers, we analysed *Navbharat Times* and *Dainik Bhaskar* in India and *The Jang* in Pakistan.

The fact that this study is limited in scope, both by its choice of newspapers, as well as the short period covered, is recognised by the research team. In particular, we are aware that there are numerous languages in the two countries under study. Since it was not possible to do justice to all the languages, widely circulated dailies from the national languages - Hindi (India) and Urdu (Pakistan) - were covered. The objective is to flag the issue and to bring to light certain trends and directions seen in reporting of important events. It is assumed that other scholars and researchers will take up this subject and carry out a more in-depth study, looking at different sections of the press in the region and bring it to the notice of those who are in a position to make a difference.

It was decided not to analyse any provincial or local language papers as the task would be too complex and ambitious. The selection of newspapers for the purpose of this exercise is indicative, though not comprehensive. Besides the newspapers mentioned earlier, we also reviewed, at a somewhat superficial level, some of the other publications in the case of India, including *The Hindustan Times*, *The Telegraph*, *The Pioneer*, *The Economic Times*, *The Statesman*, among others. In any case, the objective is to have an illustrative picture and not a comprehensive report on the role of the press in India and Pakistan in addressing dynamics of bilateral relations.

It is worthwhile to note that the Hindi press in India has a wolf's share of the total readership and circulation figures. The largest publications in the country, according to findings of National Readership Surveys, are regional language publications, and not their more high-profile English counterparts. Similarly, in Pakistan the Urdu press has much wider readership than the English press. It is interesting to note that no new national level English daily is being published from Islamabad and its twin city Rawalpindi since 1990. This shows the importance that the elite in Pakistan give to the Urdu press. The elite in capital cities, including national security decision makers, in both India and Pakistan read both the English press and the Hindi and Urdu press respectively.

The masses tend to read the indigenous language press. Thus, the small circulation but high profile English press is important, as it reflects and influences the decision makers to a great extent. The large circulating indigenous language press is important as politicians and lower ranks of the military read it.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the third workshop for editors and owners of the indigenous language press in South Asia held in the Maldives in April 2001. 27 editors from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives were present. They discussed and debated many of the issues mentioned here and provided useful comments and recommendations.

Background:

It is assumed that the readers are familiar with the history of India-Pakistan relations. The period under observation –the last quarter of 1999 to the middle of 2001 – has seen intense ups and downs as before. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief of Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration in February 1999. This was seen as a harbinger of a new era of peace. Within five months the relationship reached its nadir on account of the ‘near war’ in Kargil. In October of that year, the military in Pakistan replaced the civilian government. Since in the Indian mind the military had been associated with the Kargil episode, India made a policy decision to avoid any contact with Pakistan’s new rulers. India requested SAARC to postpone its heads of government summit scheduled in November 1999. In the following month, the relationship worsened further as an Indian Airlines plane from Kathmandu was hijacked to Kandahar forcing the Indian authorities to release three Kashmiri leaders who moved to Pakistan. One of them, Maulana Masood Azhar, set up a strident organisation.

India demanded Pakistan’s categorisation as a terrorist state by the Western nations in early 2000. This was followed by a battle of words between the leaders of the two countries and exchange of fire across the line of control. In the spring of 2000 there was a speculation about another Kargil-type war in the summer. The war did not happen. Instead, India released leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference from its prisons. In late July 2000, India entered into a cease-fire agreement with Hizbul Mujahideen, a Pakistan-based group. Hizbul Mujahideen decided to end the cease-fire abruptly and claimed responsibility for acts of terror and violence in the following months. As the year 2000 drew to a close, India and Pakistan were not on talking terms with each other, living in the midst of frequent incidents of violence and exchange of gunfire. In early 2001, in the aftermath of the catastrophic earthquake that hit the Indian state of Gujarat, the ice was finally broken and the Indian Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of Pakistan spoke with each other on the telephone.

An opportunity for a breakthrough in relations between India and Pakistan came with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee’s invitation to General Pervez Musharraf in May 2001 leading to the Agra summit on 15-16th July 2001. There was intense media speculation before the summit and the general tone of newspapers in both countries was positive and confident that the summit would lead to some concrete outcome in the pursuit of peace. Newspapers on both sides dwelt upon the virtues of General Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee; their courage, statesmanship and vision in taking the two

countries on the road to reconciliation and peace. Unfortunately, none of this happened, and the summit turned out to be a media event of gigantic proportions that failed to produce any concrete outcome. The dynamics between the two governments and the media had a visible impact on the summit. These included an informal briefing by India's Information and Broadcasting Minister to a section of the media and a breakfast meeting between Pakistan's President and India's leading editors. These two events occurred while the summit was in progress, contrary to normal international practice. The Indian government was criticized by the opposition parties in the country for not handling the media in a suitable manner, forcing the External Affairs Minister to say that the government had no intention of conducting diplomacy through the media. After the summit, India's External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, gave a press conference in New Delhi and his Pakistani counterpart, Abdul Sattar, gave a press conference in Islamabad. Both were telecast live on television. At last, four days after the summit, President Musharraf of Pakistan addressed a press conference to provide his final words on the event. Prime Minister Vajpayee of India chose the Parliament, and not a press conference, to articulate his conclusion.

The Agra summit and its disappointing ending has given rise to wide discussion about the role of the media and the impact it might have had on the discussions at the summit. While the Indian government's media management or lack of it does come into question, it is clear that in today's world it is important for any government to have a coherent media policy and be able to brief the media about its point of view at regular intervals. In fact, on 3rd July 2001, ten days before the summit, *The Times of India* reported that both Prime Minister Vajpayee and General Musharraf met with editors and journalists in their respective capitals to ensure that the media was positive in its reportage of the summit. It goes on to say, "but just how far spin doctors can rescue a failing summit is open to question."

The Media Coverage:

Content analysis of leading Indian and Pakistani newspapers between 1999 and 2001 shows that the press almost always advocated the establishment views in its handling of India-Pakistan relations. When the governments in power were interested in peaceful relations, embodied in the Lahore process, major sections of the press in India and Pakistan advocated peace and friendship. This policy was reflected in reportage, editorials as well as extra curricular activities of media persons. *The Jang* group of Pakistan hosted a meeting of parliamentarians from the two countries a week before the Lahore summit in February 1999. As a large number of senior journalists were invited to the meeting, it also turned out to be an informal media exchange. When political relations were at their worst from May 1999 to April 2000 – a period encompassing the Kargil war, military takeover in Pakistan, Indian Airlines hijack, diplomatic and military exchanges – the press was also negative towards bilateral relations in coverage of events and reportage. There was very limited interaction between the media of the two countries. The only major initiative for media interaction was in the form of three meetings of the South Asian Editor's Forum.

When Hizbul Mujahideen and the Indian government entered into a cease-fire in July 2000, with speculations about Pakistan's tacit approval for the move, the press in both countries welcomed the initiative. The period since the breakdown of the cease-fire has also seen conjunction between the establishment thinking and the press attitudes. Until May 2001, the Pakistani leadership was calling for talks on Kashmir. So was the Pakistani press. The Indian government was opposed to talks, but some prominent persons in India, including a few of the national leaders and former Foreign Secretaries, preferred dialogue. The Indian press expressed divergent views about bilateral talks.

When Prime Minister Vajpayee announced his intention to invite General Musharraf in May 2001, and Pakistan responded positively, the press in the two countries welcomed the move. The Indian media discovered the merit of engaging Pakistan's Chief Executive almost wholeheartedly. Pakistan's press sang praises of India's premier. Thus, in the prelude to the summit, the press on both sides was very positive and constructive about the outcome of the summit. This extended to even newspapers that are perceived to be hardliners on issues of bilateral importance. As an example, *The Jang* in Pakistan and *Panchjanya*, the mouthpiece of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, jointly organised an essay competition for their readers to suggest an agenda for the summit meeting. After the Agra summit, newspapers from both sides began to blame the other for the failure. Pakistan's spokesman at the summit blamed the hidden hand in the Indian cabinet for the failure of the summit. The next day, the Pakistani press announced that India had ruined the summit. The Indian officials blamed Pakistan's President for being unifocal. So did the Indian press.

The above discussion reveals that the press is neither pro nor anti peace or war. Rather, the press in each country simply looks at the political or military leadership in order to formulate views on relations between India and Pakistan. The press is not an instrument of hostility, since it advocated peace and friendship when the governments between the two countries attempted reconciliation at the time of the Lahore and Agra summits and the short-lived cease-fire agreement between India and the Hizbul Mujahideen. The press is simply a voluntary handmaiden of political masters. It appears to be a weapon of war, because most of the time the political masters have preferred conflict and antagonism. Whether the press is a weapon of war or a purveyor of peace, is a question closely linked to the issue of effective freedom of press in India and Pakistan.

Indicators of Free Media:

It is necessary to review the degree of freedom enjoyed by the media since it has been observed that the inclination of the press to report on India-Pakistan dynamics is closely linked to the degree of freedom the press enjoys.

A free media ensures the presence of divergent opinions and assures both the local citizens and the international community that the society is moving towards openness in dealing with its affairs. It acts as a watchdog on politicians, the military, and civil servants, holding them accountable for their actions. It monitors and reports on human rights violations, provides warning of potential renewal of violent conflict, so that this can be defused or at least be prepared for. It gives the citizens the information that they need to take informed decisions and to participate in the development of their country.

A free media also has responsibilities. As Ibrahim Zaki, Minister of Planning and National Development of the Maldives and former SAARC Secretary General said, “the press has an important role in spreading the truth. It has the function to dispel myths and report the facts as they happen; to remove distortions and give the true picture of events as they unfold. The media has the primary purpose to inform quickly and accurately with fairness, all points of view. Most importantly, they should enjoy the freedom to present the facts. At the same time, it is imperative that the media exercise this freedom responsibly, without any bias or prejudice. It is only then that the media will be able to play its full role in bringing people together and creating greater understanding among our diverse communities.”

There are certain characteristics of the Indian and Pakistani print media that are worth reviewing here, as these factors determine to a large extent the freedom of the press and hence the kind of coverage given to sensitive issues in the media.

- **State control over the press**

There is no formal state control on the press, in either India or Pakistan. Much of the print media in India and Pakistan is privately owned. But there is a lot of indirect control over the media by the government. The government in both countries is at times able to persuade the media not to report on certain issues, especially where national security is perceived to be at stake. There are also instances, where through the newsprint import system or through favours granted by the Government, proprietors have secured substantial financial benefits and are therefore hesitant to report on certain issues.

- **Consolidated ownership over the news media**

The ownership of press is in too few hands. When this happens, alternative opinions are suppressed, as there are no outlets for them. In both India and Pakistan, there are a few large newspaper groups that have control over a vast number of newspapers. Further, many newspaper owners have other interests in industry or commodity markets. It is at times necessary that the newspaper does not offend the officials or a section of the political or bureaucratic leadership, in order to protect larger business interests of the owner. Also, different political interests control some of the newspapers; therefore it is

not possible for them to be critical of certain people and their actions. Nevertheless, editors and other staff are generally provided operational independence.

- **Wide variety of news media**

In both India and Pakistan, there is a wide variety of news media – press, television, radio. While TV is state controlled in Pakistan, there are a number of private television channels in India. India also has the state controlled Doordarshan, which is the only channel available in many rural and remote areas of the country. As already pointed out, the print media covers many different languages and daily newspapers as well as periodicals.

- **Professionalism and impartiality of the news media**

The newspapers in the region are known for professionalism and impartiality, when it is dealing with domestic issues, or issues pertaining to countries outside South Asia. There is a tradition of investigative journalism that has been credited for exposing malpractices in high places. The same spirit of enquiry is found wanting in the context of national security issues or foreign policy. One of the reasons for this is the limited knowledge of media persons on the subject, both at the policy and operational levels. Since there is free access to the foreign media in most places, often BBC or CNN is seen as a more authentic source of information by people in India and Pakistan than their own television channels or newspapers.

The journalists who are based in national capitals have to deal with their establishments and face difficult situations with respect to their efforts to remain critical and sceptical observers of policy making. Often, the social and official life between journalists and officials tend to get fused, leading to a reluctance on the part of the journalist to take an independent view of the issue handled by officials with whom they have to interact socially.

- **Codes of conduct**

There are no enforceable codes of conduct for journalists in India and Pakistan. Both countries have their Newspaper Guilds and Societies, which have framed some voluntary codes. Newspapers in India like *The Times of India* have appointed Ombudsmen to keep watch over their content and censure non-compliance of rules. None of the other South Asian countries have an Ombudsman at present.

Looking to the above indicators, it can be said that the press in India and Pakistan qualify as formally free, but in terms of operational reality, they are only partially free media. One of the basic functions of the mass media is to function as a free market place of ideas. This means that the media should be equally accessible to the various different viewpoints and shades of opinion. In the South Asian region, we see that the media often succumbs to the dominant viewpoint and the alternative view is rarely projected on crucial political and national security issues. There is substantial alternative space in the context of reporting on local issues such as community health, municipal administration, education, environment, etc. Thus, it can be said that the print media in India and Pakistan are formally free but suffer various constraints at the operational level.

Part II: Content Analysis

• National Interest

Journalists in India and Pakistan often have to prove their patriotic credentials. Moreover, patriotism is equated with promoting interest of the regime or the government in power. As a result, journalists are expected to support government positions “in national interest”. Sometimes, they are accused of being anti-national if they do not toe the official line. Rajdeep Sardesai has observed: “The (Indian) media is (considered) anti-national because it allowed itself to be used for Pakistani propaganda (at the Agra summit). Similar charges were levelled during the Kargil war and the Kandahar hijacking. During Kargil, anyone who questioned the government’s intelligence failure was immediately labelled anti-national. During the Kandahar hijacking, the media was accused of pressurising the government into releasing Masood Azhar. The anti-national argument is based on a false construction that the government, the media and the nation have shared interests at all times. On the contrary, just as the government must discharge its duties, so too the press must do its job. It was certainly not in the government’s interest to focus on the intelligence failure in Kargil, but did it mean that the media too should have censored its news?... We must flaunt our patriotism and anyone who does not mouth tired old platitudes is branded anti-national.” (Indian Express, 26th July 2001)

The most important factor in safeguarding national interest is to blame the other side for all wrong doings and profess innocence on the part of one’s own country. This is reflected in the manner in which acts of terrorism in both the countries are covered. Often, within hours of a bomb-blast or some other terrorist activity occurring, the intelligence agency of the other side – i.e. ISI or RAW - is blamed for the act by official sources. Officials in both India and Pakistan seem convinced of the fact that the other is trying to undermine their position in the eyes of the world. The media almost automatically takes up this motif and editorials and columns are devoted to the subject. There is rarely an effort by the media to question if their own side was responsible, as such an approach would be considered anti-national.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Hindu*, January 6th 2000, “Engaging the Islamic World”, C Raja Mohan questions, “why should the Islamic countries support New Delhi in its war against terrorism, particularly when a leading Islamic country like Pakistan is involved in a perennial conflict with India?”
- ✓ *The Hindu*, February 4th 2000, “ISI bogey”, V Krishna Ananth says that “in the national political discourse, one is urged to look for the ISI hand anywhere and everywhere”.
- ✓ *The Hindustan Times*, February 4th 2000, Ash Narain Roy, “The Somalia-isation of Pakistan”, says that terrorism, religious bigotry and drug trafficking make a deadly cocktail in the Pakistan society.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*, editorial, January 19th 2000, “An Indian Act”, comments on Sindh Governor Daupota’s statement after the bomb blast at Karachi blaming the Indian RAW for spreading sabotage and terror in Pakistan.

- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, January 19th 2000, “The Karachi Blast” comments, “the people and the Pakistani government are bound to read this blast as an act of sabotage by the Indians”
- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, January 30th 2000, reads, “while most Pakistanis believe that India is behind the latest wave of bomb blasts, we cannot say it with absolute certainty”.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, editorial, March 12th 2000, “Gruesome event” points its finger at India for the murder of Nawaz Sharief’s advocate Iqbal Raad, as “this is the country that benefits most when Pakistan is maligned or when its image takes a soaking”.

The Pakistani papers take it for granted that RAW was instrumental in the murder of Iqbal Raad, the advocate handling deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharief’s case in court, because the Pakistan government seemed to believe so. No reportage of this fact was seen in the Indian newspapers. While the Pakistani papers report on acts of terrorism that are taking place in Pakistan and blame RAW for them, the Indian papers report on acts of terrorism taking place in India and blame the ISI for them. **There is very little reporting of terrorist acts, and their implications in the other country. Where reported, it is an official statement that is reported and there is no analysis of the problem as seen from the other side.**

There have been examples in the last decade of serious criticism of the Pakistani establishment in both the English and the Urdu press. An example is the case of the corruption charges being levelled by the Pakistani press on the serving Chief of Naval Staff. Similarly in India, the Telhelka.com story, that broke the news about corruption in defence deals, forced many military personnel as well as government officials to resign. Such examples are almost exclusively confined to domestic politics and policies.

It is evident that Indian and Pakistani media follow double standards in their treatment of the conduct of national leaders. They tend to be free while criticizing their governments of what they may consider misdeeds in a domestic context. But they tend to protect official stances in the context of adversarial bilateral relations. The same government or political leaders who are capable committing malpractices at home, are treated as persons or institutions capable of committing no wrong while dealing with a hostile neighbour. **As a result, articles critical of their own establishments are not found often in the Indian and Pakistani press in the context of bilateral relations.**

- **Degree of Obsession**

An important factor to be noted is the level of obsession about the other country in the press. An event examined from this point of view was the Agra summit that was held between the leaders of India and Pakistan in mid- July 2001. The Agra summit took place on the same day as the summit between the Presidents of China and Russia, President Jiang Zemin and President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. The Chinese and Russians entered into a Friendship treaty for the first time in 50 years with a clearly anti-US tone, but the Indian and the Pakistani newspapers were so obsessed with the Agra summit that they gave this and other important international events, such as the G-8 Summit very marginal coverage. Before and during the Agra summit, almost 80% of the front pages and a considerable portion of the rest of the newspapers in the two countries were taken up by articles related to the summit. As *The Indian Express* editorial of July 19, 2001 says, “Nothing was left to the imagination of the readers, viewers and listeners. Every detail

came up for scrutiny, every gesture and facial twitch, every item on the menu, every personal embellishment’.

Many newspapers had special supplements and pages devoted to the summit. For example, *The Asian Age* had a full-page “Summit Special” for a number of days before the summit. A large percentage of the articles focused on General Musharraf’s private programme and his meetings in India with people not related to the official talks. TV channels in India and Pakistan TV had round the clock coverage of the General’s visit.

Many of the Indian newspapers also had columns and interviews by Pakistani journalists and columnists. For example, *The Hindustan Times* carried regular articles by Prof Khalid Mahmud of the Institute of Regional Studies, *The Times of India* had regular columns titled “Summit Solutions”, and “Across the Border” written by different Pakistanis and Indians. *The Indian Express* carried many edit page articles by Pakistani journalists and a regular section titled “Pakistan Periscope”. Similarly Pakistani papers also carried a number of articles by prominent Indians and columnists on their edit pages.

Since the Agra summit was a one time event, surrounded by a lot of media hype, it was thought that it would not be fair to the press to single out this occasion to make a judgement on the degree of obsession that the Indian and Pakistani papers have about each other. The month of June 2000 was therefore chosen to judge the news volume devoted to bilateral issues between India and Pakistan and particularly the Kashmir issue, since no significant events took place on the India-Pakistan front during this month. The period was marked by a series of critical events worldwide. There was a dramatic coup in Fiji, a devastating earthquake in Indonesia and the cricket match-fixing controversy in both India and Pakistan. While Indo-Pak relations are always a critical issue between the two countries, the exhaustive coverage given to them against this tumultuous backdrop of current events establishes the undivided media focus on India and Pakistan.

Among India’s Hindi newspapers, *The Dainik Bhaskar* and *The Navbharat Times* continued to feature Indo-Pak bi-lateral issues, particularly the Kashmir issue on a regular basis. In the 30 days of June 2000, 37 news items on the Indo-Pak issue were identified by us in *The Dainik Bhaskar*.

It is noteworthy that 63% of the 37 reports that appeared in *The Dainik Bhaskar* appeared on the front page in June 2000, i.e. they received a position of prominence as far as the readers were concerned and a position of dominance as far as other news events were concerned.

In Pakistan’s Urdu newspaper, *The Jang*, approximately 100 reports were noticed by us during the month of June 2000. The reports concerning India and Pakistan enjoyed prominent places in the paper. The phrasing of headlines was designed to provoke nationalist feelings and sentiments. The exhaustive coverage of Indo-Pak hostilities in *The Jang* was almost war like. This kind of reporting occurs in the English papers only during wars such as Kargil.

An article quoted Asma Jehangir of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan as having said, “look at the propaganda used in the media. It is obnoxious. There is something wrong. I will be much more honest to admit that there is something wrong with Pakistan, but surely everything is not well with India also”. (India, Pakistan keeping hostilities alive: Asma, *The Dawn*, July 31, 2000)

Another aspect of the media’s obsession with the other country is seen in the coverage given to President Bill Clinton’s visit to South Asia in March 2000. Starting from a couple of months before his visit, the press in India and Pakistan were preoccupied with his visit, whether it would include Pakistan, and the possible agenda for discussion with the leaders of the sub-continent. There was also intense lobbying from both Pakistan and India on this issue.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, January 31st 2000, “Why this American mollification of India?”
- ✓ *The Dawn*, February 2nd 2000, report by Masood Haider in New York titled “India steps up efforts to prevent Clinton’s visit to Pakistan.”
- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, March 10th 2000, “Skewed Indian logic” comments that “the ways of Indian reasoning are often quizzical, being so patently self contradictory. And yet the Indians always expect to be taken seriously as reasonable people.”

The Indian media was equally obsessed with the visit of President Clinton to Pakistan. Before the visit to Pakistan was finalised, India wished that President Clinton would not visit Pakistan. In this connection a number of articles appeared in the Indian press.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Hindustan Times*, March 9th 2000, carried an article titled “New Delhi regrets Clinton’s decision”.
- ✓ *The Hindu*, March 10th 2000, carried a rejoinder to this news in an article “Objection to Pakistan stopover childish, says Swamy” which quoted Janata Party President Dr Subramaniam Swamy.
- ✓ *The Tribune*, March 18th 2000, quoted Prime Minister Vajpayee as saying that India would “seriously disapprove” of President Clinton visiting Pakistan after his visit to India.

President Clinton’s visit to South Asia provides an opportunity to gauge the perception of the media towards the other country’s relationship with the United States. It is clear from media reports and articles that both countries are preoccupied with the relations of the other with the US, and the media also plays a part in exacerbating this.

During the period of uncertainty about the President’s visit, there was a lot of lobbying taking place from both the sides that was duly reported in the media. **The media from both the sides seemed to play up the small triumphs on their side. The entire episode was treated in terms of victory for one country and defeat for the other, depending on what kind of statements President Clinton or his administration were putting out.**

In the sphere of the Indian and Pakistani relationship, often small and irrelevant details are blown out of proportion. This is illustrated by a seemingly pointless controversy kicked up by the media in the wake of a telephone conversation between Prime Minister

Vajpayee and Chief Executive General Musharraf, soon after a devastating earthquake hit the Indian state of Gujarat on the 26th of January 2001. The Indian press and the Pakistani press both reported that the call had been made by the leader of the other country.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Nation*, February 3rd 2001, "Vajpayee thanks Musharraf on phone" does not directly mention who called, but implies that it was Prime Minister Vajpayee who telephoned the Chief Executive of Pakistan.
- ✓ *The News International*, February 3rd 2001, "Musharraf and Vajpayee hold direct talks" comments that "Vajpayee called General Musharraf to express gratitude and thanks for the relief supplies and Pakistan offered to send more goods if India so desired, officials said."
- ✓ *The Dawn*, February 3rd 2001, "Musharraf and Vajpayee agree to keep in touch" mentions that the Indian Prime Minister called Chief Executive Musharraf.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, February 3rd 2001, "Indian PM thanks CE for help" by Jawed Naqvi with a New Delhi dateline quotes Indian officials as having said that Musharraf called Vajpayee to express his condolences.
- ✓ *The News International*, editorial, February 4th 2001, "Talking Heads" comments that the next telephone talk should not wait for another disaster to take place.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, February 4th 2001, "Phone call generates controversy".
- ✓ *The Dawn*, Editorial, February 4th 2001, "Good that they talked", says that it does not matter who made the telephone call.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *Times of India*, February 3rd 2001, "General Musharraf's call revives hope of a thaw in Indo-Pak relations" comments that the five minute phone call from Pakistan's Chief Executive was to convey his country's sympathy for the earthquake.
- ✓ *The Asian Age*, February 3rd 2001, "Prime Minister thanks Pakistan CEO", says that General Musharraf telephoned Mr Vajpayee and talked for five minutes on Friday evening.
- ✓ *The Asian Age*, February 4th 2001, "Who called first: PM or Musharraf?" says that Indian reporters, after being briefed by a spokesperson from the external affairs ministry claimed that it was General Musharraf who phoned Mr Vajpayee while the Pakistani press reported that it was Mr Vajpayee who called the Chief Executive.
- ✓ *The Asian Age*, Editorial, February 5th 2001, "Unity in grief" says that in the given context it is patently immaterial whether the Indian Prime Minister or the Pakistan Chief Executive made the call asking for or offering help.
- ✓ *The Hindu*, February 5th 2001, "Controversy over who called whom" by C Raja Mohan says that a "needless controversy in Pakistan over who called whom" hangs over the telephone conversation between the Indian PM and the Pakistani CEO.
- ✓ *The Asian Age*, February 6th 2001, "Musharraf: We'll meet you half way" says that the call made by General Musharraf follows moves by Pakistan and Prime Minister Vajpayee over the past two months to ease tensions along the line of control.

Thus, it is seen that the media in India and Pakistan are obsessed with each other, not only in terms of the amount of space given to the other country, but also in playing up the small victories and triumphs in their relations as perceived by them.

• **Attack and Defence**

Another important factor to be noted while analysing newspaper reports covering a conflict is to note how the motives for a military attack are explained. They may be set

out in legal or ideological terms, or in some other manner. It is interesting to see how incidents along the line of control between India and Pakistan are portrayed in the press of the region.

Pakistani press:

- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, January 25th 2000, “Fighting in the Chamb sector” comments on an attack initiated by Indian forces on a Pakistan military post across the LoC. It goes on to say that it is the responsibility of both India and Pakistan to see that their differences over Kashmir do not get translated into a war.
- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, February 7th 2000, “UNMOGIP records 3,388 LoC violations by India” quoted Pakistan Army Brigadier Khalid Nawaz in which only Indian violations were reported upon. There was no mention made of violations, if any, made by Pakistan.
- ✓ *The News International*, March 17th 2000, “Nawaz’s threat of Kargil disclosure a self serving posture”, says “Kargil was a classic example of the fact that as a reaction to the cruelty and barbarism shown by the Indian troops against the people of Kashmir, the Mujahideen reacted only by launching a campaign to engage armed Indian troops.”
- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, August 3rd 2000, “Toll in held Valley stands at 93”, reports on the continuing acts of brutal collective murders by the troops and the Indian armed agents. There were 7 references in the article of Indian troops or armed agents being perpetrators of the violence against labourers, pilgrims and Kashmiris.

An article titled “Wolves in sheep’s clothing” in *The Times of India*, at the time of the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire analyses the tactics used by militants, such as of dressing like Indian security forces, and seems to provide an explanation on the charges levelled in some articles in Pakistani newspapers that Indian forces were behind the massacre.

Looking at press reports relating to incidents along the line of control, there is no dispute that the aggression from one’s own side is always defensive in nature rather than offensive. In both Indian and Pakistani newspapers, the other side is always the aggressor and the initiator of the violence.

On the massacre that occurred at Kotli on 24th March 2000, on the Pakistani side of Kashmir, Pakistani newspapers reported that it was Indian forces dressed in Indian army uniform that committed the massacre. Indian newspapers reported that Afghan mercenaries under ISI control perpetrated the massacre, in order to shift the blame on India. In such cases, both the sides stick to their own side of the story and there is hardly any coverage given to the point of view of the other side. This is true of not only this particular incident, but a lot of other events as well.

Similarly, both the Indian and the Pakistani newspapers took it for granted that the other country was behind the massacre of pilgrims and others at Amarnath on 1st August 2000. Indian newspapers took for granted that Pakistan backed militant groups were behind the massacre to show their protest against and to create a break down of the cease-fire between the Indian forces and the Hizbul- Mujahideen. The Pakistan newspapers gave credit to the theory that the Indian security forces were responsible for the massacre as the people holding the guns were dressed in clothes resembling the uniforms of the Indian forces. Thus, there is no questioning on either side and theories are reported as facts.

Another interesting event that was analysed for this paper was the announcement of a 28.2 percent hike in the Indian defence budget by Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, the biggest ever hike, to \$13.5 billion for the year beginning on 1st April 2000. It fuelled a lot of discussion and debate in the sub-continent about the arms race and whether or not Pakistan would be forced to take similar action.

Pakistani press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*, column by Lt General (ret'd) Khalid Latif Moghal titled "India's hegemonic designs", discusses the new acquisitions that India might make to build up its military potential. It states, "it is well known that India desires to completely dominate the South Asian region. It knows very well that the immediate hurdle towards fulfilment of this desire is a militarily strong Pakistan. India, therefore, intends to develop a decisive punch not only in the realm of conventional warfare but also that of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare in order to neutralise Pakistan and cripple its military strength. Its next intended objective would be to extend its influence to Iran, the Gulf states, Indonesia, Malaysia and eventually dominate the whole Indian Ocean region".
- ✓ *The Dawn*, editorial, March 2nd 2000, "India's military ambition" comments on India's hike in its defence expenditure and the grave implications that it has for South Asia in terms of instability and deprivation of the social sector.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, editorial, March 7th 2000, "A correct approach" lauds General Musharraf for not following the Indian example of increasing the defence budget".

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Hindu*, editorial, March 2nd 2000, "Guns versus Butter" was critical of the Indian government's increase in defence outlay and the small increase for all social sector programmes.
- ✓ *The Tribune*, editorial, March 3rd 2000, "Defence budget: weak areas" comments on the fact that once unavoidable heads of expenditure like costs of fighting the insurgency in Kashmir and the North East are looked at, very little resources would be left for new acquisitions and modernisation that the Indian armed forces need.

It is interesting to note that while the facts stated in both the Indian and the Pakistani papers are the same, both sides have very different interpretations for the action. While the Pakistani newspapers (mostly) ascribe the hike to India's hegemonic designs and desires of dominating the region, as well as ensnaring Pakistan in an arms race that it cannot afford, the Indian newspapers seem to think that the defence budget hike would not even be able to cover the basic needs of the Indian forces, at its present day level, let alone future ones. Both the newspapers comment on the need to spend more resources on the development and the social sector.

• Sources

The sources of information used by a newspaper give a good indication as to the orientation of the newspaper or journalist, as the kind of source used creates a certain perspective to a story. From a journalistic point of view, it is necessary to get information from as many diverse sources as possible, so that the reader has access to many different perspectives. Another important aspect that needs to be looked into is verification of information.

Newspaper reports pertaining to the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight IC 814 from Kathmandu in December 1999 were studied for the purpose of determining the kind of sources used in the Indian and the Pakistani press.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*: Out of 11 stories, there was one editorial, one column and 9 articles. 5 of the 9 (55%) were statements by the Foreign Office spokesman or the Home Secretary. All five of the statements were refuting charges made by the Indian media or Indian leaders.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, January 4th 2000, “Islamabad says Delhi’s stance is prejudiced: Indian charge on hijacking rejected”.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, January 7th 2000, “India to provide US with direct evidence” reports on the Indian Ambassador to the US, Naresh Chandra’s speech at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. It is the only article out of those surveyed in *The Dawn* that was exclusively given to the Indian point of view on the hijacking.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, January 14th 2000, “Hijack drama, Indian attitude may harm relations: FO”.

In most cases, emphasis in *The Dawn* is given on the statements made by the Pakistani establishment and there is a passing mention of statements made by the Indian establishment, as reported by the Indian media.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Indian Express*: out of 7 articles seen for this study, 5 (71%) quote official sources, either press conferences held by the Prime Minister, other leaders or other government sources.
- ✓ *The Indian Express*, January 3rd 2000, “Pak Doublespeak on hijackers” also mentions what the Pakistani leaders have to say.

The hijack episode created a propaganda war between India and Pakistan, with allegations and counter allegations filling the newspapers of both countries. Content analyses of newspapers from India and Pakistan during this period show that:

- **There is a heavy emphasis on the official statements given out by their respective governments on both the sides**
- **There is no verification of the facts from people outside the government machinery**
- **There is very little coverage given to the news from the other side, except where it is used to explain the context of a particular official statement**
- **There is no attempt by the media to reduce tensions between the countries at a time when there is a crisis between the two countries. In fact, the media plays a role in increasing tension and lends itself as a dummy in the propaganda war.**

The sources of information were also analysed for another incident, in case the hijacking incident was an aberration on the part of the media of both sides. On the day President Clinton arrived in New Delhi, 35 Sikhs were gunned down in Indian Kashmir. This was the first time that the Sikh community had been singled out. Indian and Pakistani papers both reported the incident, each side accusing the other of playing a part in the massacre.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 22nd 2000, carried 3 articles on the massacre of the Sikhs. “India blames the Mujahidden” quotes Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra, “Pakistan demands inquiry” quotes Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, while a report on the incident “36 Sikhs gunned down in Valley”, quotes the Kashmir police chief, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and eye witnesses to the incident.
- ✓ *The Frontier Post*, editorial, March 23rd 2000, “The Kashmir massacre”, says “But as usual, the Indian establishment has jumped to implicate Pakistan in this contemptible act.”
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 24th 2000, “RAW accused of Sikh’s genocide” quotes the President of Nankana Sahib Foundation of USA and Pakistan.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 24th 2000, “Killings to depopulate Valley, says report” quotes an op-ed piece written by Indian author Pankaj Mishra in *The New York Times*. It chides the Indian media for not reporting accurately on the human rights situation in Kashmir and notes that the “Indian news media which are deeply nationalistic, are much less likely to report violence inflicted by the Indian State in Kashmir. The one-sidedness cannot but have disturbing consequences in a poor, semi-literate country where national greatness has become dangerously confused with nuclear bombs and military strength, where rivalries of class, caste, region and religion have enfeebled democratic institutions in recent years.”

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Tribune*, March 22nd 2000, “Tohra suspects pro-govt groups” quotes former Union Minister Surjit Singh Barnala and senior Akali leader Gurcharan Singh Tohra.
- ✓ *The Times of India*, March 29th 2000, “Mirwaiz, Shabir appeal to Sikhs not to leave valley” quotes Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Shabir Shah of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party.
- ✓ *The Tribune*, March 30th 2000, “Six more involved in carnage shot dead” quotes a defence ministry spokesman.

Looking at articles in the Indian and the Pakistani newspapers, it is seen that both use their own officials as the primary sources of information. Where the officials from the other side are quoted, there is also a response from their own side. The issue of Kashmir and human rights violations in Kashmir, whether perpetrated by militants (mujahideen in the Pakistani press) or the armed forces, is one that goes to the core of the nationalistic feelings of the press. What Pankaj Mishra has observed about the Indian press and its reportage on the Kashmir issue in *The Dawn* of 24th March 2000 (quoted above), is equally true of the Pakistani press reporting on the Kashmir issue.

Interestingly, looking at the reportage on the Amarnath massacre of 1st August 2000 (referred to earlier), it was found that apart from official press statements made by the establishments, other sources used are very different. Both sides use sources that blame the other side for the Amarnath massacre and there is no reporting as to what is being said by the newspapers on the other side.

In August 2000, the Hizbul Mujahideen announced a cease-fire in Kashmir. It was widely reported in the press. It is interesting to examine the sources of information used for this story as for the first time the Hizbul Mujahideen were given a voice in the Indian newspapers. Referring to coverage of the issue in the Pakistani press, Ghazi Salahuddin says in *The News International*, 1st August 2000, “Intimations of peace”, “there has usually been a touch of obsession about how this conflict is argued in the official media and how the events are presented in the news bulletins. Apparently, the Hizb declaration did not make the Khabarnama when it was announced. The voice of the peace movement,

which may have played a significant role in setting the stage for the present developments, is intently suppressed.”

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Times of India*: We noticed 41 articles on the Hizbul Mujahideen cease-fire and the events following it. Solely Indian official sources accounted for 12 of the articles. These sources included statements from the Prime Minister, Home Minister and other officials, as well as army and police sources in Srinagar. One of the articles quoted leaders of different political parties. There is no article quoting solely official Pakistani sources, though one article quotes Chief Executive General Musharraf as well as Indian officials and the Hizbul Mujahideen. Interestingly some of the editorials advocate that India starts a dialogue with Pakistan, something that is not in line with the official Indian position.
- ✓ *The Indian Express*: We noticed 46 articles, editorials and columns on the cease-fire offered by the Hizbul Mujahideen to the Indian government and the events following it. Eleven of the 29 articles quoted Indian officials. Only one of the articles quoted Indian officials and the Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman together, while 8 quoted the Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman, 2 quoted other Mujahideen groups and one quoted the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. One of the articles quoted Pakistan official sources and the Hizb spokesman, while 2 quoted US officials. Jawans from the Indian army, citizens of Srinagar and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad spokesman were quoted in one article each.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The News International*: We noticed 50 articles on the cease-fire issue between 25th July and 10th August. Indian government sources were quoted in 8 articles, out of which the All Parties Hurriyat Conference was also quoted in one article. The Pakistan official machinery was quoted in 13 articles, the Hizbul Mujahideen in 8, other Mujahideen groups in 5, 3 of which also had input from the Hizbul Mujahideen. Indian officials and the Hizbul Mujahideen together were quoted in 5 articles, one of which had input from the Lashkar-e-Toiba. The Jamaat-e-Islami was used as a source of information in 5 articles while the All Parties Hurriyat Conference was used twice. US officials were quoted in 2 articles, former ISI Chief Hamid Gul, Pakistani political parties and *The New York Times* in one article each.

It is worthwhile to note that the newspapers in both India and Pakistan took the official line as far as the cease-fire went. The Indian papers quoted Indian official sources predominantly, and the Pakistani papers quoted the Pakistani official sources predominantly, though Indian sources were also quoted. **For the first time, Mujahideen groups were given a lot of prominence in the Indian papers, specially the Hizbul Mujahideen, thus giving them space along with the mainstream. But this was done at a time when both the Indian Government and the Hizbul Mujahideen were seen to be on the same side. As soon as the talks broke down, the Hizbul Mujahideen were once again not given any significant coverage. Pakistani newspapers meanwhile gave a lot of coverage to the other Mujahideen groups and political groups who were opposed to the cease-fire. Indian papers gave more coverage to those in favour of the cease-fire.**

Thus it is clear that even when alternate sources are quoted, it is only as long as they are on the same side as the government on a particular issue. Another example of this fact is given below.

The Dawn carried a number of articles on the views of other countries or visitors from other countries on the Kashmir problem. In all cases the views mentioned were pro-Pakistan and anti-Indian or reflected the Pakistani line of thinking on Kashmir.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*, February 18th 2000, “Chief Executive for just solution of Kashmir issue” reports on General Musharraf’s meeting with a Japanese dignitary visiting Pakistan.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 2nd 2000, “UK official condemns India for AJK killings”.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 4th 2000, “Kashmir Issue: Annan renews mediation offer” reports on a meeting between the Pakistani envoy to the United Nations and the UN Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 10th 2000, “UK team back Kashmir cause”, reports on a delegation from Britain that visited Muzaffarabad.
- ✓ *The Dawn*, March 25th 2000, “UN Council Chief for solution to Kashmir issue” quoted Bangladesh’s permanent representative to the UN.

Similarly Indian newspapers also publish the views of the foreign visitors on Kashmir that are pro-Indian and anti-Pakistani.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Hindu*, February 2nd 2000, “Four European Envoys visit Kashmir” says that the group of European envoys were “by and large” satisfied by the situation in Jammu & Kashmir.”

Thus, even when other sources, i.e. non-official sources, are used, there are no divergent views reported. In no case were the local people asked what they thought and if they had any ideas as to what should be the future steps to be taken.

Verification of information is another important aspect to be examined. When verification is not done, it leads to startlingly different reports in different publications. An example is an event that was reported in both *The Navbharat Times* (Indian) and *The Jang* (Pakistani). The report in *The Jang* reads – “Indians massacred in Pahalgam: Bullets of police recovered, Postmortem exposes the truth” (9th August 2000). The report carries comments on the internal politics of India and the judicial probe into the massacre. It states that “...hand of Indian Jammu and Kashmir police personnel may be behind the murder of more than 100 people including 26 pilgrims.” Before one makes a comment on the contents of this report it is first noteworthy to compare the number of people killed in the massacre. *The Navbharat Times* says 21 people were killed whereas *The Jang* states that more than a 100 people were killed. *The Navbharat Times* also mentions the murder of an ex-commander of the Hizbul group – Maulvi Firoz. The same is not mentioned in *The Jang*. The discrepancy in reportage in both the newspapers is obvious.

Analysis of newspaper articles in India and Pakistan during the fake currency crisis in early 2000 and the two rounds of expulsions of diplomats that followed, shows that in all cases, the primary source of information, was the foreign office or the mission of that same country. No instance was seen where the facts were confirmed by the mission or officials of the other country.

- **Enemy Images and Provocative Language**

Enemy images used in the media leads to stereotyping of the people and country across the border. This is dangerous as it plays a role in creating legitimacy for hatred and leads to irrationality of thought and action. In the regional language press, labelling, stereotyping and varying degrees of prejudice were noticed, especially in the Pakistani press.

The Jang, an Urdu paper from Pakistan uses different terminology while referring to the two sides in the Kashmir conflict. While reporting on deaths on the Pakistani side or of the Mujahideen, the term “*shahid*” is used. This implies that they were martyred for a righteous cause. While reporting on Indian deaths, the term “*halaq*” or “*mare gaye*” is used, meaning that they were killed. Similarly, when reporting on Pakistani initiated advances, the words “*fire kiya*”, “*gole dale*” and “*golabari*” are used. They “*tabah*” (destroy) their targets and structures. Reporting on Indian attacks, the paper uses the words “*jabardast hamla kiya*” (ferocious assault), and “*uda diya*”. Attacks made by the Mujahideen are often termed as “*kamiyab*” (successful).

The following terms were also used in *The Jang*:

- ✓ “*Kathputli wazire aala*” (Puppet Chief Minister) to describe Mr. Farooq Abdullah, the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, August 2nd 2000.
- ✓ “*Mazmoom mukasid*” (target of hate) to describe attitude of Indian government towards Muslims, August 7th 2000.
- ✓ “...although Hizbul Mujahideen declared cease-fire hurriedly...”, August 9th 2000. The report is a quote from the All Party Huriyat Conference Chairman, Mr. Sayeed Ali Gilani. The word ‘hurriedly’ reveals Pakistan’s reservations towards the declaration of the cease-fire.
- ✓ “*Dohre Maiyyar*” (Double standards) to describe India’s attitude in solving the Kashmir problem, August 9th 2000.

Some Indian newspapers assume that all Pakistani religious schools are the centres of terrorism. It is true that in recent years, some people have used these religious schools for their own motives, but there are thousands of religious schools that are not centres of terrorism. The dominating faction of Pakistani Muslims are called Hanfi (Brialvi) and they have thousands of Madrassas (religious schools) in Pakistan. It may be noted that not a single school of the Hanfi (Brialvi) is used as a training camp in arms and ammunition.

A typical editorial from an English newspaper in India reads, “these schools train young men for jihad in places like Kashmir and Chechnya”, leading to the creation of an image of all religious schools as the centres of terrorism.

Looking at the regional language press, reports that appear in the Pakistani Urdu press on the torture of women and children by the Indian army do not appear in the Indian Hindi papers. For example, a report dated 14th June 2000, in *The Jang* reports on three women injured in ‘provocative’ firing by the Indian army in the valley Lapsa. A 10th June 2000, report in *The Jang*, states that an Imam of a mosque was subjected to third degree torture during a search operation by Indian army. There is no mention of these events in the Hindi press.

In *The Jang*, deaths caused by an Indian attack are given in graphic detail and the names and families of the persons killed are also mentioned. For example, on 2nd June 2000, the names of 4 people killed in Indian firing are mentioned. Similar stories appear on 7th June, 12th June and 14th June 2000. When the Pakistani side attacks, only the number of killed are given. Thus, by adding details about the casualties caused by the Indian side, the Indians are made out to be the brutal aggressors.

The English press also shows a wide variation in the type of language, wording and style of reports on Indo-Pak issues. This variation is seen from issue to issue and report to report, rather than in terms of the Indian press versus the Pakistani press. Sometimes they appear to be rather menacing. Following are a few examples of the terminology used by the Indian and Pakistan newspapers:

Kashmir: In the Indian press it is referred to as Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). In the Pakistani press, it is referred to as Occupied Kashmir or Held Kashmir and Azad Kashmir.

Barbarians: In a few reports in the Pakistani papers the Indian army and security forces are portrayed as barbarians. For example, an article carried in *The News International* on 17th March 2000 says, “Kargil was a classic example of the fact that as a reaction to the cruelty and barbarism shown by the Indian troops against the people of Kashmir, the Mujahideen reacted only by launching a campaign to engage armed Indian troops.” The source for the article is given as “analysts”.

Savage: An Editorial titled “Savage Attack in Azad Kashmir”, in *The News International* on 27th February 2000 talks about the “savagery of men in Indian army uniform.”

Apartheid victims: This term used to describe the Dalits in India in *The News International* of 15th March 2000 – “the Dalits in India are the classic wretched of the earth.”

Thus, hate terms are very much used in the Pakistani press, both English as well as Urdu.

Apart from hate images and specific terms used in the media to denigrate the other, language used in some of the articles is found to be provocative.

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Asian Age*, June 6th 2000, “Kick them where it hurts the most” says Sharief should be told exactly where he stands in a language that barbarians can understand.”
- ✓ *The Indian Express*, January 5th 2000, “The Near Abroad”, states, “is it not an established fact that for Pakistan’s rulers, India is not just an enemy, it is a magnificent obsession?”
- ✓ *The Indian Express*, May 27th 2000, “Intrusive neighbours” says, “Pakistan will have to pay a price for its misadventure”.
- ✓ *The Pioneer*, January 29th 2000, “General failure in Pakistan” is rabidly against General Musharraf. It comments on the judicial shake up in Pakistan and the “suspect nature” of the military regime. It says, “to press home this megalomaniac determination, Gen. Musharraf on Wednesday resorted to the

shocking, though hardly surprising move of clipping the wings of a constitutional authority which was showing visible signs of challenging his legitimacy- the country's Supreme Court."

It is clear that when events taking place in the other country are reported on, often very strong and harsh language is used. In no case is the benefit of the doubt given to the opposite side. An example of this is in the editorial mentioned above "Apartheid victims", where the prompt response from the authorities to a brutal crime is attributed to "perhaps the upcoming Clinton visit, which has lead to a gearing up of the administration." It goes on to say that "normally the underdogs are not so lucky to catch the governments attention, no matter how outrageous is the wrong done to them." This kind of a skewered reasoning and harsh language is not used only in the Pakistani papers, but in the Indian newspapers as well.

• War Hysteria

Often the media plays a role in legitimising irrational claims and nationalistic positions of their countries. An example of this was the "manufactured" conflict between Turkey and Greece in 1996, when a Greek local politician placed a Greek flag on an uninhabited rock island that was removed by Turkish journalists. This incident was played up by the media in both countries bringing them to the brink of war. It suited the convenience of politicians like Turkish Prime Minister Ciller, who was willing to divert public attention from scandals that she was accused of. When the media plays a role in manufacturing consent for war, if a war does take place, the public opinion in both countries would be willing to support it. This is a very dangerous kind of a situation – one that is observed in the South Asian region as well, where relations between India and Pakistan have been very tense at certain times.

The press in the region has played a significant role in building up war hysteria.

Pakistani Press:

- ✓ *The Dawn*, column, "No let up in war hysteria" by Lt General (retd) Talat Masood emphasises the need for both sides to develop a political will. Gen Masood writes, "Public statements of the leaders of both countries are most unhelpful".
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, January 19th 2000, "Wasti warns against India's nefarious designs".
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, January 22nd 2000, "Qazi fears war with India".
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, February 9th 2000, "Imran fears India planning attack".
- ✓ *The Dawn*, editorial, February 12th 2000, "Vajpayee's bellicose stance" is critical of India and comments on the provocative language used by Prime Minister Vajpayee. It says that India is not interested in genuine dialogue with Pakistan.
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, February 14th 2000, "India can no longer mislead the world: Sultan".
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, March 6th 2000, "India plans to attack Pakistan says AJK Prime Minister".
- ✓ *Frontier Post*, March 10th 2000, "Sattar slams India's aggressive designs".

Indian Press:

- ✓ *The Pioneer*, January 10th 2000, talks about the need for India to equip itself and to deal with Pakistan on a firm footing.
- ✓ *The Pioneer*, January 14th 2000, "The threat from Pakistan", comments on the threats that India faces to its integrity from Pakistan.

- ✓ *The Hindustan Times*, February 2nd 2000, J N Dixit, “In the General's own words” talks about the difficulties on taking General Musharraf at face value.
- ✓ *The Pioneer*, February 4th 2000, S K Dutta, “Rogue machinations” says that as Pakistan’s internal situation deteriorates, India should expect more trouble from General Musharraf.
- ✓ *The Hindustan Times*, March 17th 2000, by Bharat Bhushan, “Paki bashing as a policy” is critical of the Indian position on talks and does not agree with the reactive Indian policy towards Pakistan. This was the only article that was seen to be critical of Indian policy.

It is interesting to note that both the Indian and the Pakistani newspapers almost unanimously put the blame for the escalating tensions between the countries on the other.

Many examples of the use of very harsh language while describing the other country, its leaders and its people, are seen in both Indian and Pakistani press. Given the animosity that exists between the two countries, this just serves to strengthen it and create rumours of a war between the two. The press must be very careful about the kind of words that are used to describe each other and the internal situation in the other country.

Part III: Good Intentions, Small Results:

The role of print media in India and Pakistan has been discussed from different perspectives. The fact that newspapers of both countries played an important role in enhancing tension, was recognised soon after the division of the sub-continent and led to the Premier's of both countries, India and Pakistan, signing a joint communiqué on 20th September 1947.

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

It was pointed out that certain newspapers were giving publicity to completely false reports and writing editorial matter of a highly inflammatory nature, likely to lead to deterioration of the existing situation.

It was agreed that the governments concerned should take steps to prevent the publication of such false and inflammatory material.

Jawaharlal Nehru Prime Minister of India
Liaquat Ali Khan Prime Minister of Pakistan
New Delhi, 19-20, September 1947

Apart from this joint communiqué signed in 1947, the Tashkent Declaration's (1966) article IV states, "both sides will discourage any propaganda directed against the other country, and will encourage propaganda which promotes the development of friendly relations between the two countries," Similarly article VI noted that Pakistan and India had agreed to consider measures towards the restoration of communications. Later on, the Simla Accord (1972) re-affirmed a commitment to promote "friendly and harmonious relationship".

There are a number of organisations in South Asia that have tried to address the problems faced by journalists in the region trying to cover issues relating to the region. Besides the organisations mentioned below, some journalists in their individual capacity have participated in regional confidence building projects.

- **South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC)**

The first ever conference of Ministers of Information of the SAARC countries, that was held in Dhaka in April 1998 underlined the need for greater co-operation on information on SAARC both within and outside the region. An 18-point plan of action was outlined at the conference. A number of points are relevant to the issues discussed in this paper.

They include:

1. Ensure free flow of information, newspapers, periodicals, books and other publications.
2. Increase co-operation amongst news agencies of SAARC countries.
3. Facilitate easier travel for media persons within the region.
4. Work towards a SAARC recognised Regional Media Forum.
5. Hold an annual conference of editors and working journalists from SAARC countries.

6. Create a web page for exchange of news amongst news agencies of SAARC countries.
7. Enhance exchange of data through e-mail and internet.
8. Arrange training for media persons of SAARC countries.
9. Include SAARC orientation modules in the syllabi of national media training institutes.
10. Explore the feasibility of setting up a SAARC Information Centre with media production, research and training units, as well as a SAARC Media Development Fund.
11. Discourage negative projection of the member countries by media in SAARC countries.

At the Tenth SAARC Summit on 29-31 July 1998 held in Colombo, the Heads of State and Government welcomed the recommendations of the First Meeting of SAARC Information Ministers held in Dhaka in April 1998. They called for concerted endeavours for the promotion of practical programmes among South Asian countries in the field of information and media exchanges, benefiting from technological advances. These measures, if followed up properly, could affect the way conflict is reported in South Asian countries. Unfortunately, there has been no action on this front yet.

- **The South Asian Media Association**

A pioneer organisation in this field has been the South Asian Media Association (SAMA) that was set up in 1991 as a voluntary association of media practitioners and academics from SAARC countries. SAMA has a number of objectives, including exchange of journals and periodicals, development of media training networks and to provide members with basic information service and a data base on media matters of common interest and concern. A “Media Charter and Agenda for South Asia:1995-2000” was prepared by SAMA and submitted to Governments of member states of SAARC. This comprises of the following five principles:

1. The free, unfettered flow of information between member states of SAARC.
2. The exchange of newspapers, journals, books, films, TV programmes and other media material and the removal of procedural obstacles.
3. Unrestricted travel across frontiers by journalists and media specialists of the region.
4. Support of the establishment and growth of regional media organisations, representative bodies, research centres and collaborative processes to enable increased co-operation.
5. The need for the formation of an independent commission on the media in South Asia to undertake a study and to make recommendations for action.

Since its conception SAMA has organised over 50 events in the region, mainly in the field of training. It has also organised some dialogues for journalists from the region to facilitate interaction between them.

Since July 2000, an effort is being made to launch **South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA)**. A massive conference of more than 100 journalists was organised at Islamabad in July 2000. It is intended to organise another conference at New Delhi in

September 2001. The objective of this initiative is to promote freedom of press and harmonise laws for free press in South Asian countries. The initiative has come from *The News* group in Pakistan.

- **South Asian Editors Forum (SAEF)**

In June 1999, organisations from South Asia came together to organise the first ever workshop for the editors of the indigenous language press from South Asia. They included the International Centre for Peace Initiatives, Mumbai; SAMA, Colombo and the Citizens Media Commission, Karachi. At the workshop, editors and owners of newspapers from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka agreed on steps such as establishment of South Asian Editors Forum, introduction of the Guidelines for Promoting a South Asian Ethos, and exchange of columns. A second workshop was organised in Kathmandu in November of the same year. Here the South Asian Editors Forum was formally launched. Some of the Guidelines for promoting a South Asian Ethos in the press were also discussed. These included:

1. Increase textual coverage of developmental news of (other) South Asian countries in the indigenous and national language press of each country.
2. Increase visual coverage of non-conflictual and developmental themes and events.
3. Refrain from using extremities of hate and conflict in the headlines and text of published material.
4. Secure commercial or corporate sources of sponsorship and support for increased coverage of developmental news and material about South Asia.
5. Use translated material about developmental and non-conflictual material from newspapers and journals of other South Asian countries and in this connection introduce, expand and improve translations facilities.
6. Access web-sites and use material from such web-sites of indigenous and national language newspapers from other South Asian countries more frequently.
7. Prepare and publish jointly researched and written reports in which individual journalists from two or more South Asian countries work together.
8. Be accurate, be responsible, be responsive, be professional, be socially sensitive and be ethical in all aspects of reporting on South Asia.

There was also agreement on the need to exchange journalists and columns. So far, only one Indian column has resulted from this exchange, in the Urdu magazine *Dastak*, published from Karachi and no Pakistani column in any Indian publication. This joint paper is also a result of the Kathmandu workshop. The third workshop of the SAEF was held in the Maldives in April 2001, where an ambitious action plan was formulated. It is too early to say whether or not the South Asian Editors Forum will be able to play a concrete role in changing the way issues of conflict and co-operation are reported in newspapers in South Asian countries.

Looking beyond South Asia, there have also been workshops organised to bring together journalists from countries such as India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, the

Philippines, Singapore and Sri Lanka. A workshop held in December 2000 in Manila organised by the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore and the Global Society for Peace and Development, Manila brought together the media to promote a culture of peace and focussed on the positive role that the media could assume in conflict resolution. A concrete proposal to establish an Asian peace network- PeaceNet Asia was recommended and accepted.

Part IV: Pro-peace Options:

Peace journalism and peace building through the media have recently emerged as new subjects for study in the West. Peace journalism is, according to McGoldrick and Lynch of the Conflict and Peace Forum, a broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on insights of conflict analysis and transformation. Peace Journalism approach provides a new road map for tracing connections between journalists, their sources, their stories and the consequences of their reporting. McGoldrick and Lynch have collaborated with journalists in South Africa, as well as Indonesia, in implementing standards of peace journalism to reporting conflicts in those regions.

However, most studies on media and its role in reporting and resolving conflicts have concentrated on the Western media covering conflicts in developing countries. Examples of such studies include Nik Gowing's *Media Coverage: Help or Hindrance in Conflict Prevention* (1997) published by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict that looks at the role of international media in political and military conflict prevention and management in different parts of the world. Another study, by Tom Gjelten *Professionalism in War Reporting* (1998) speaks from the standpoint of a US journalist reporting on the war in Bosnia. *Internews* has developed an emergency response team using journalists to alert the international community to potential conflict situations before they erupt in violence.

The emphasis in Western studies has been on foreign correspondents covering wars and conflicts in remote regions of the world, rather than on the local media covering local events. In most cases, the emphasis is on television and radio and not on print. There are some very fundamental differences in these two approaches. Foreign correspondents often go into a conflict with neutral views. Events and circumstances colour their views and they begin to favour a particular side. An Indian or a Pakistani journalist covering bilateral conflicts between them does not begin by being neutral; his views stem from personal belief and experience. Since he is a national of a country that is party to the conflict, he firmly believes in the rightness of one side. It is difficult for the journalist to be neutral, even if he wants to be. Pressure from the government and the environment constantly act upon him in direct and indirect ways. A foreign correspondent can leave the conflict arena and go on to live in and report on other parts of the world. A local journalist is a part of the conflict arena or at least a national of the conflicting country, in which he continues to reside in, even if he stops reporting on the conflict.

Despite the inherent problems that an Indian or a Pakistani journalist faces while reporting on bilateral issues between the countries, there are some steps that could improve the quality of reportage that we see. A number of practices, that if implemented in the press in India and Pakistan, could go a long way in sorting out some of misconceptions that are prevalent in these countries about the other. These practices are such that they can be adopted by individual journalists or newspapers on a unilateral basis. Unfortunately, in most cases so far, they have not been followed.

An interesting lesson that can be learnt is from the Korean experience. Earlier, any journalist in South Korea who had a good word for North Korea ran the risk of being jailed. After the June 2000 summit between the leaders of the two Korean nations, there has been a marked shift in the policy of South Korean newspapers and television reporters. They agreed not to "slander" or "defame" North Korea during a visit to Pyongyang in August 2000. But were are conscious that they worked in a democracy that claims to have freedom of speech, and said that this did not mean that they would not "criticise" the North. Thus, they seem to have found some means of reporting objectively on the other country.

Some specific recommendations from the peace-building perspective for the print media in India and Pakistan are as follows:

- **Call people and groups by the names that they give themselves**

This calls for rejection of sloganising and insistence on calling people and groups by the names that they give themselves. Obviously, no one calls themselves "terrorist" or "fundamentalist" or "extremist". It is important to use terminology that does not reflect double standards and prejudices.

- **Construct a sense of identity from many different perspectives**

It is only when we have a common framework for reporting issues of conflict that the real picture of what is happening will begin to emerge. When the "Self" is threatened, it prefers to understand itself as one-dimensional, consisting entirely of military/strategic perspectives. When different standards are applied to the "other" and the "self" we get widely different stories in the press, depending on from whose perspective it is written. Views on issues of war and conflict should not limited to politicians or military strategic experts. There should be a wide range of people consulted for their views, insights and opinions. There is no point in limiting this just to experts, many of whom echo the "official" point of view.

It is important to use psychologists, peace and conflict researchers, professional mediators, players in the track two processes for analysis of information. While it is important to report on the views of think-tanks and policy circles associated with the government, it is equally vital to give alternative policy options as seen by independent think-tanks and the NGO community. It is also important to consult and reflect views of economists and human development scholars. Conflicts have maximum impact in terms of economic costs and human development. A comprehensive view should give as much attention to the implications of conflict for human progress, as to the strategic aspects of an event called war or exchange of artillery shells.

- **Look beyond your own victims**

Elie Wiesle, Nobel Laureate says, "*A journalist should be objective, but a journalist can not be neutral. Neutrality never harms the torturer, always the victim. We cannot ask journalists to cease to be human to do their job well.*" Many of the most powerful pieces of journalism are human-interest stories. There is at times tendency to obscure proper analysis by playing on the emotions. Prof. Johan Galtung calls on peace journalists to

“focus on suffering on all sides and on women, the aged and children.” Editor of *LM Magazine* Mick Hume writes, “Human suffering among victims is not hard to find in any war zone. It can make moving eyewitness news reports. The trouble is, however, that it cannot allow the journalist or his/her audience to make sense of what is happening, specially if the suffering is only reported from one side of the conflict.” Victims are victims whether they belong to “us” or “them”. It is not fair press to emphasise on our victims pretending that nobody got hurt on the other side.

- **Report on the consequences of an action**

While reporting on any event, it is important to analyse and forecast the possible consequences of it. Where possible, alternate scenarios can be constructed depending on the prevailing circumstances. While reporting on the costs of conflict such as military spending and weaponry, it is important to reflect on issues such as social and developmental costs.

- **Look beyond official sources and alternatives to government resources**

Information from elite or official sources comes with a readymade framework of understanding. It is important to bring people from outside the elite and focus on their agenda for change. The influence of the actions of the people on the ground and change in the real world can only be examined by giving them equality in terms of coverage.

- **Verify stories from other side’s official sources/ embassies**

When verification is not done, it leads to startlingly different reports in different publications. If journalists writing a story on the other country do not have access to first hand information, they can make use of the embassies and foreign missions to verify their information. Also, with the progress of technology, it is possible to check views of the other side on the internet or to contact experts in the other country without much difficulty. In a domestic story, responsible journalists interview representatives of all sides of a given case. The same approach should apply to stories of bilateral conflict, though it may not be possible to pursue this to perfection due to communication barriers.

- **Convert “events” into “processes”**

The media’s emphasis on immediacy is exemplified by its ability to deal only with events and not processes. Because the basic work of peace is long and boring and often complicated and secret, it makes it hard for the press to report on it in a manner that would satisfy the readers need for drama, immediacy and entertainment. Therefore, it is easier for the press to focus on “today’s story”. But there is a larger frame in which the events are taking place. It is only when these are adequately covered, that an analyses of the root causes behind the event can emerge. An aggressive action of today may be condoned or justified, but it may appear differently if the some of the historical factors are taken into consideration.

- **Invite activists to consider the process by which real change may realistically result from their actions**

It is not enough to transcend victim journalism. It is important to get input from people who are involved in thinking of solutions and the way forward. A clergyman and former radio producer in Northern Ireland conducted an interesting experiment at a time when politicians were involved in negotiations. The Reverend Trevor Williams of Belfast convened a series of forums which brought people together to address two important questions: “what do you want from the talks?” and more crucially, “what could you live with, given that others in the community hail from different traditions than your own?” The community took this step in response to the inadequacy of existing debates in the media, modelled on the well know formula of hearing only from the elites of the two sides and the grassroots only as victims. This is something that should be seriously considered by the media in India and Pakistan.

- **Write about co-operation, however small**

With tensions as high as they are between India and Pakistan, it is important for the press to report on co-operation and potential co-operation whenever possible. Unfortunately, news about co-operation between India and Pakistan is few and far between in the press of the region. Seminars and workshops are often the venue of discussions on peace and co-operation between the two neighbours. These could be a good source for subjects of potential co-operation between the two countries. There is a need to build a positive image of the other country and the potential benefits of co-operation need to be highlighted.

- **Don't use harsh language**

Many examples of the use of very harsh language while describing the other country, its people and its leaders, are seen in both India and Pakistan. Given the animosity that exists between the two countries, this just serves to strengthen it. The press must be very careful about the kind of words that are used to describe each other and the internal situation in the other country.

- **Network with the purpose of sharing articles and ideas**

It is important that journalists from India and Pakistan have opportunities for interaction with each other. As has been mentioned earlier, there have been some initiatives in the past that have brought journalists together, but it is important to have many different networks where an exchange of articles and ideas can take place. Workshops for journalists, co-ordinated publications in both countries, joint articles, media fellowships to spend time in a publication in the other country and other such projects can bring this about.

- **Build capacity of journalists**

Senior journalists and editors do have some opportunities for interaction with one another and therefore have sources in different countries to verify stories and information. This is often not available to the junior and middle level journalists. It is important to build the capacity of journalists, especially those covering bilateral issues and conflicts so that they can cover events in a manner that would bring about peace rather than further escalate tensions. While the spread of information technology and the internet has made it easier, it cannot replace the benefits of personal exposure and interactions.

- **Don't behave like Winners or Losers instead of telling the truth**

War journalism requires clear winners and losers, which is a usual attitude of Indian and Pakistani newspapers, whether reporting on a war or a cricket match. During the Kargil war, the print media of both the countries accused each other, and tried to prove the other responsible for the situation. Reports on this issue, especially in indigenous Pakistani press were greatly exaggerated. At the end of the Kargil episode, Indian press reported the return of the Mujahideen as a victory.

- **De-escalate the conflict**

It should also be kept in mind that while the media plays a vital role in provoking conflict, it can also contribute to conflict de-escalation. Many people believe that the media coverage of the conflict in Vietnam, played a key role in turning U.S. public opinion against the war. Lack of popular support eventually forced the United States to withdraw from that conflict.

- **Say goodbye to self-censorship**

In some cases, Indian and Pakistani press have become accustomed to self-censorship. Instead of involving themselves in any conflict with the government, they prefer promoting only that part of the truth, which does not affect their image. The only way forward in the peace process is by projecting the true picture of difficulties, advantages and disadvantages, success and losses, resources and problems of the two parties being affected by the news.

- **Discourage publication of repeated confrontational statements of officials and hawkish politicians**

Print media, especially the indigenous press of both the countries, continuously publish controversial news and statements regardless of the consequences, in order to increase their circulation. Statements that promote hatred should be avoided. For instance Pakistani press gives a lot of coverage to Indian political leader Bal Thackeray. It is important for the newspapers to have a firm editorial policy on this issue and decide where to draw the line between publishing confrontational statements and giving them wider coverage.

Specifically, looking at the media in India and Pakistan, the following recommendations would also go a long way towards improving the reporting on various bilateral issues between the countries:

- **Emphasize the track record of agreements between India and Pakistan and the confidence building arrangements already in place**
- **Establish an Indo-Pak feature service covering human stories to strengthen ties between people**
- **Create awareness through the media about the horrifying consequences of nuclear war**

- **Establish an Indo-Pak media group for conflict resolution or conflict transformation**
- **Build alliances with NGOs and other components of civil society to embark on creative initiatives**
- **Give importance to magazine sections of newspapers for detailed discourse on peace issues.**

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International Centre for Peace Initiatives

International Centre for Peace Initiatives (ICPI) was established in Mumbai, India in 1990 to conceptualize, develop and promote innovative approaches to peace at global, regional and national levels. It acts as a catalyst in partnership with like-minded institutions. It sees its role as a social entrepreneur on the leading edge of the South Asian public policy agenda.

The Centre has often been the first to conceptualize new approaches to peace-making in South Asia. In the early 1990s, it brought together eminent world leaders to identify innovative options for global security architecture. In the mid-1990s, it pioneered an initiative to engage active political leaders in South Asia in conflict resolution processes. In the late 1990s, it introduced exercises to involve owners and editors of indigenous language and regional media for confidence building between disputing countries.

In 2000-2001, ICPI brought out several joint research papers by experts from India and Pakistan with a specific objective of identifying forward looking and jointly owned solutions to conflicts between the two countries. In 2002, it plans to launch a future security programme to encourage South Asian leaders to look ahead and assess costs and benefits of alternative future scenarios. Also, on occasion, ICPI has participated in high-level unofficial diplomatic initiatives to reduce tensions and find common ground. While the Centre addresses a range of issues of relevance to security in South Asia, it particularly takes interest in the Kashmir conflict.

The Centre endorses the journal *Peace Initiatives*, published by a private publishing firm in New Delhi.

The work of ICPI has attracted the participation of Nobel laureates, serving and former heads of government, legislators and distinguished scholars from all parts of the world.

[Website: www.peaceinitiatives.org]

Box 1
Is it Peace Journalism or is it War Journalism?

Prof Johan Galtung, author of over 100 books on peace and conflict, says that peace journalism is that which focuses on conflict transformation, so that opportunities take the upper hand. Peace journalism is not truth journalism alone. Using Prof. Galtung's indicators for War and Peace Journalism, it is interesting to see where the press in India and Pakistan stand.

<i>Peace Journalism</i>	<i>War Journalism</i>	<i>Press in India and Pakistan</i>
PEACE/CONFLICT ORIENTED Explores conflict	WAR/VIOLENCE ORIENTED Focus on conflict arena	Focus on conflict arena
Causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history/culture	Causes and exists in arena, who threw the first stone	Blame on the other
Making conflicts transparent	Making wars opaque/secret	Make conflict opaque with selected reporting and use of select sources
Gives voice to all parties	Us-Them journalism, propaganda, voice for "us"	Propaganda based Very little of the other side
Sees conflict/war as the problem, focus on conflict creatively	Sees "them" as the problem, focus on who prevails in war	Both sides sees the other as the problem
Humanization of all sides	Dehumanization of "them"	Dehumanization of "them"
Proactive: prevention before any violence/war occurs	Reactive: waiting for violence before reporting	Reactive
Focus on invisible effects of violence (trauma, glory, damage to structure and culture)	Focus only on visible effects of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)	Focus on visible effects of violence
TRUTH ORIENTED Expose untruths on all sides	PROPAGANDA ORIENTED Expose "their" untruths	Expose "their" untruths
PEOPLE ORIENTED Focus on suffering all over, on women, aged, children, giving a voice to the voiceless	ELITE ORIENTED Focus on "our" suffering, on able bodied elite males, being their mouthpiece	Focus is on "our" suffering, but not only of the elites
Focus on people as peace-makers	Focus on the elite as peace-makers	Focus on the elite as peace-makers
SOLUTION ORIENTED Peace = Non-violence + Creativity	VICTORY ORIENTED Peace = Victory + Cease-fire	Peace = Victory + Cease-fire
Focus on structure, culture	Focus on treaty, institutions	Official focus on decisions

and peaceful society	and controlled society	
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(adapted from Peace Journalism by Johan Galtung, Professor of Peace Studies, Granada)

Box 2**The Weapons of War or the Purveyors of Peace**

“Media in Pakistan and India eloquently express the duality of the relationship between the two countries. The independent vernacular press with a few exceptions and the Government controlled electronic media of radio and TV accurately reflect the polarisation of respective viewpoints on the core issue of Kashmir and nuclear policy: they also transmit the hostility and mistrust that characterise the formal official attitude towards each other.

In the 46 years of history, media have helped reinforce both the nastiness, as well as the nostalgia. On one level, they may be merely mirrors of reality. On another level, they are the microscopes of reality: focussing exclusively concentrated attention on particular aspects, to the exclusion of other facets, thereby losing the vision of the larger picture.

There is an inherently distortive dimension in the nature of the media: subjective, selective, sensational. In the Pakistan-India context, the distortion often appears now to be embedded in the fundamental conceptual stages of observation rather than as a part of the descriptive and reporting function of the media.

If a self-conscious patriotism may be said to be the last refuge of the scoundrel, then the scoundrels in Pakistan and India find that the place of refuge is already occupied by the media.

A minimal residual national chauvinism is an essential component of the contemporary working persona: with it, a media analyst is like a person adrift on the ocean of identity. When even prophets need passports, so do media practitioners.

*Media are full blooded protagonists in the blood and the dust, the beauty and the lust of the paradoxical relationship of conflict and convergence that marks Pakistan and India. The media are not cool, detached observers, mechanically recording events and incidents. In our context, the media are **weapons of war, not the purveyors of peace.**”*

Javed Jabbar, *The Global City***Box 3**

To train or not to train?

There is a debate going on internationally whether a journalist needs training or not. Roy Gutman, Diplomatic Correspondent of *Newsday*, has this to say, “My instinct when I hear the word training is to recoil, to get out of town, to go the other way. I think it’s a typical journalistic instinct, because we tend to feel that we are self- training people. That we go in with naïve questions and the deliberate aim of educating ourselves and at the end of the day, we hope to figure it out”.

Anne Nelson, Director of the International Program at the Columbia School of Journalism believes that training is important. In order to be able to prepare for going out into the field to cover a conflict, she has prepared a “wish list” to cover the kind of preparation that would be appropriate. This list includes:

- ✓ Journalists should know something about that region and that conflict, in particular they should have some linguistic proficiency.
- ✓ They should have some understanding of geopolitics and diplomacy.
- ✓ They should have background knowledge of military conflicts; this would ideally include details such as how landmines are used, what bombardment strategies function and which don’t, what kinds of rifles exist and how they are used, etc.
- ✓ They should have a working knowledge of international law, what the laws of war are, which would help them sort out such issues as the legal definition of a civilian, etc.
- ✓ They should know how to function safely in a field of conflict (how to avoid landmines, what kind of license plates one should put on their car, etc).
- ✓ They need training in technology (such as satellite phone) and logistics in order to be able to file their stories reliably.

The above would require training that would mean both time and money. At a minimum, journalists must have the skills to report who is doing what to whom, as well as the analytical capacity in order to say who are the players and what are their motivations. They should also be able to work with compassion, understanding and analytical capability.

Box 4

Michael Ignatieff, Author, *The Warrior's Honour and the Modern Conscience*, talks about 6 main rules or injunctions that he has formulated for himself over his long journalistic career that guided him when he ran across ethical dilemmas in conflict coverage. These are as relevant while reporting on the India – Pakistan conflict, as the conflict in the Balkans, for which they were framed.

- *Stick to what you know*

This is specially important in the case of journalists interviewing journalists. They must constantly ask themselves: What do they really know? Are they just repeating something that they read?

- *Don't demonise the enemy*

Demonisation is dangerous because it allows decision makers to critically misperceive the situation.

- *Don't believe anyone, not even the victims*

Every testimony, including that of victims, must be subject to skeptical review. Ignatieff refers to interviews that he conducted of refugees during a trip to Macedonia. The refugees, instead of telling exactly what they saw, “were giving us exactly what we wanted. They are not stupid...” One must, be on guard against being overtly credulous of horrific accounts.

- *Your first loyalty in ethical terms is always to yourself*

One must be able to look in the mirror and know that what one has said is as accurate and faithful to what was seen, as can be reported. Ultimately, no one else will know if the reporter slightly alters a quote or cuts a statement to make it reflect something that was not meant by the speaker.

- *Do not trade independence for access*

A journalist should not accept tacit bargains that leave them indebted to anyone. No one should expect slanted treatment in return for the granting of access to a source of information.

- *Do not confuse fairness and impartiality*

Be fair without pretending to be impartial. Journalists should never stop asking questions, tough questions to all sides.

In conclusion, Ignatieff says that the two qualities most necessary for journalists to deal with ethical issues in conflict coverage are moral passion and intelligence.

Box 5**The Insider's Burden**

.....But before this begins to sound all too self-righteous, before it begins to stink of super-heated virtue, could we pause yet again to ponder another little point? Aren't we ourselves to blame for some of this? Hasn't the media been only too happy to collaborate in its co-optation by government, so much so that the powers almost assume today's journalists to be their allies, if not their adjuncts? Feudal, even imperial mores are a genetic flaw with our governments; they work on a system of rewards, dropping crumbs from the table and opening access to those that rush to pick them up: foreign junkets, wine and cheese parties, a harmless little exclusive story, an appointment that your peers won't get. All these on the condition that the story the government does not want told shall not be told.

We are, more and more, part of such convivial clubs. We have bartered away the essence of our calling for seductions of an exaggerated, if false, sense of power. We have allowed ourselves to be sucked by the Establishment and its ways. We know the inside story but we have become so much the Insiders ourselves that we cannot tell that story. We revel in carrying secret messages from this VIP to that, not in revealing them. We are no longer content being reporters reporting on games people play; we want to become players. We don't want to be in the Press Gallery of Parliament; we aspire to sit in the House. Look at the number of journalists there are in parliament today; a Rajya Sabha seat has become an apogee of journalistic ambition, not the weight of your by-line or the story that hangs from it.

There was a time a journalist's worth was measured by how much awe he inspired in the Establishment; today stature is about much part of the Establishment he or she is, how trusted a message carrier, how obedient a lackey. Partisanship, in its narrowest sense, isn't a vice that stains careers, it's a certificate of virtue. Its price is our vocation. If Masood Malik has made us feel fortunate, he should also shame us a little. He didn't have a democracy to protect him, but still did the right thing of asking the wrong question. We have a democracy and its tested protections; we still do the wrong things and ask the right questions. Perhaps the Establishment's expectations aren't all unfounded.

Sankarshan Thakur
The Indian Express, 27th July 2001

Box 6

“If there is strong journalism in the country, the leaders tend to follow that.”

Franco-German Model of Conflict Resolution: Lessons for Pakistani and Indian Journalists

During the last fifty years, a number of animosity ridden neighbouring countries have said goodbye to their mutual disputes, have stopped demonizing each other and have earned the dividend of peace. One such example is improvement in Franco-German relations. Their relations have improved to the extent that the worst enemies of 1940s are today the best trading partners. Are there any lessons for Pakistan and India in this model?

The history of the First and the Second World War and German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine (France) portray that both countries had aggressive designs and used to fan hatred about each other. People of both countries were also prisoners of stereotypes. France and Germany waged three wars in a century, but within 50 years they embarked on an unprecedented reconciliation process. Their relations are today described as the driving force in Europe. Both countries were lucky to have leaders, who after 1948 had the courage to take visionary decisions and steps. In that process, trade served as the most effective instrument for cordiality. However, numerous cultural, educational exchanges and co-operation among journalists and youth served as the catalyst.

The most inspiring part of the story is that the peace process between Germany and France was started by a group of 15 journalists who met in a small town, Aachen (Germany) in April 1946 after the end of World War II. It was their creative journalism that forced the two adversaries to sit on the negotiation table. These journalists, through their writings started a process that changed the perceptions of the people in both countries. They refused to publish reports of vested interests and instead of interest groups, they opted to talk to different people. Gradually through such information, the people were able to decide that they wanted peace instead of war.

Similarly, in 1955, the German army pushed to nuclearize the country, as it was then technically capable of doing so. The same group of journalists published half page photographs of devastation caused by atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki for two weeks. Along with that they extended rational and emotional arguments against the nuclear option. Finally, there was sizeable citizens pressure on the country to refrain from embarking on nuclearization. Interestingly, the journalists who decided to adhere to this tradition of creative journalism were from local newspapers and one can say, “If there is strong journalism in the country, the leaders tend to follow that.”

There may be some lessons for Pakistan and India in this model. But finally there will be the people of these countries, who will come forward with their creative and workable indigenous model, to pave the way for peace in South Asia.

Arno Keller