

# MEDIA AND NATIONAL SECURITY

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RHEA ABRAHAM

*Introduction by*

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# INTRODUCTION

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I feel privileged to introduce the reader to this series of **New Delhi Papers** which contain focused research on one or two issues concerning India's national security and interests. It is also a matter of satisfaction that these objective studies have been carried out mostly by young academic and military scholars (normally below 30 years age) affiliated to this Centre on a 9-month "Non-Resident Fellowship" programme. The details of this programme are to be found at the end of this paper.

National security is a multidisciplinary subject ranging from core values, theory, security interests, challenges, options for management and other aspects covering almost all areas of national enterprise like defence, internal security, economic and technological security etc. all linked in a holistic manner. But unfortunately this is absent in our education system at the hundreds of universities and other teaching establishments. Without adequate education and understanding of national security India's multi-cultural diversity within the liberal democratic freedoms, therefore, tends to only progressively strengthen regionalism and parochialism with far reaching consequences. Hence this modest attempt to fill a serious vacuum in our education system which for three centuries has remained mired in Lord Macaulay's educational model leading to narrowly conceived approach to national imperatives which, by definition, require a broader *national* approach.

I am confident you will enjoy reading this paper and you are welcome to raise comments and critique so that we can improve future efforts. The views expressed in the study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Centre or any other institution.



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# 1. NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE INDIAN MEDIA: A CONTEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

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The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power, because they control the minds of the masses.

— Malcolm X<sup>1</sup>, an African American  
Human Rights Activist (1925-65)

National Security, as a concept in the contemporary structure of a Nation State, is highly entwined with the facilitation of governance, which is the effective management of national affairs of a country at all levels of its functioning and execution, aimed at maintaining the integrity of the nation and the security of its people. To achieve good governance, it becomes essential for the authorities to exercise political, economic and judicial procedures in a manner, which ensures that the people are given their freedom to fulfil their duties, and resolve their disputes as is allowed in the written constitution.<sup>2</sup> Similarly for India, the preamble to the Indian Constitution provides the key to its national security policy, where it enshrines the sovereignty of the people in a socialist, secular, democratic republic based on the pillars of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The safeguarding of national security, thus, encompasses dedication and timely awareness to counter any threat or external force that hampers the well being of the Indian State in a successful manner as is advised by the Rule of Law.<sup>3</sup>

For a country like India, the backbone of its democracy and the propagator of its national interests remains the access to information and expression, which helps its citizens to make responsible and objective choices, to promote accountability by its officials, to provide solutions to conflict resolution, and also to encourage diverse views of its diverse people.<sup>4</sup> This access of information has, in turn, allowed the Indian media to play the role of the fourth estate and watchdog that holds the Government accountable in all its activities, and also functions as the

only mode of expression for its people. Our Constitution emphasises an active and independent media which is highly maintained on the ideals of freedom of speech and expression as contained in Article 19 of the Indian framework, and which allows the Indian journalists to be spontaneous activists in the overall governance of the country. Abiding by the fundamentals enshrined by the architects of sovereign India through the years, the Indian media has been allowed to grow and transcend from an active disseminator of information to an omnipresent unit of the society. It has not only helped in building, shaping or transforming an individual's perceptions, but has also been given the power to challenge the Government, the Judiciary, and other institutions of the country that form part of the larger policymaking system.<sup>5</sup> The increasing reach of regional and global communication systems and sophisticated technology has made media in India, an autonomous tool of statecraft.<sup>6</sup> The Indian media also continues to provide channels of communication, helping to educate, inform and exchange information between the public and its Government. Thus, the ability to influence the attitudes and behaviour of countries and their policies has helped the Government to initiate its national strategic goals through an integrated, coordinated and combined media that acts as a tool and channel for information dissemination and enlightenment.<sup>7</sup>

However, to the extent that the Indian media continues to play the role of an information activist for an informed public and responsible Government, it deserves much deeper and sustained study by promoters, actors and facilitators of democracy and good governance. In consonance with this requirement, the subsequent chapters of the occasional paper aim to highlight the expansion of the new generation media as an entity into the security domain of every country. The first chapter introduces a contextual framework to help understand the complexity of the relationship between the media and the realm of national security. The study consequently tries to analyse the importance of the understanding of India's national security needs by its media, and the role it can play in maintaining a steady and efficient Government. Focusing on the functioning of the Indian print and broadcast media only, the paper tries to dissect media behaviour with case studies that help to put forward need for an effective cooperation between the State and the media in India to counter national security threats in a phased manner. While dealing with national security, it has become inevitable to dismiss the relationship that any media has with the facilitation of terrorism. Thus, the paper also broadly underlines the tryst of Indian media with its contemporary security challenge and the role it plays in counter-terrorism strategies, making the task of incorporating media



in the national security strategy even more unavoidable. The study not only aims to theoretically analyse the role of the Indian media in conflict resolution through the theoretical basis of journalism but proposes to lay a practical and implementable outline for the State and policy guides to actively involve the media in maintaining security, peace and stability in the region.

## **Understanding National Security**

### *Theories and Strategies*

In 1948, academician Hans Morgenthau in his book 'Politics among Nations' defined national security as 'the integrity of national territory and its institutions'<sup>8</sup> while providing impetus to the concept of national security in the Cold War era as restricted to the security of the State and its boundaries and focusing on the role of the Defence and the security forces. In the contemporary age, however, national security has branched from national defence, and has broadened to incorporate different aspects of a globalised world, in terms of human, economic, energy, cultural and political security. Though still heavily influenced and defined by the Government, the concept of national security has now entered the public domain, and is being framed by most scholars as 'the creation of conditions that contribute to the nation's political, social and economic consolidation and ensure territorial integrity of the country, acquisition of capabilities to sustain these conditions, safeguard freedom of options and capabilities to survive in a volatile security environment'.<sup>9</sup>

Defining the concept of national security continues to be an extremely challenging task as various factors identify its capacity at all levels of perception, and thus, cannot be restricted to a single definition due to its changing nature from State to State.<sup>10</sup> Some definitions equate the concept of national security to the State and centre all related policies revolving around the Nation State, while others factor the State and individuals as the constituents of national security. There has been a change in the school of thought of strategists, where the concept of security has changed merely from the security of the State to the security of the citizens<sup>11</sup>. The need to safeguard ideology, the political system, society and its people has also become important to the overall national security architecture.<sup>12</sup> The sacred concept of national security is now being theorised into two broad classifications: (1) the recognition and preservation of State security based on territory, and (2)

societal security based on identity. Both these remain symbiotic in nature, and are mainly required to protect the boundaries of the State, foreign policy, rights of citizens and the Diaspora from threats posed by another State, radical elements and non-state actors.<sup>13</sup>

National security also encompasses the expected behaviour of a democratic nation – as in the case of India – by focusing on providing the right to life and liberty to its citizens; equality in all spheres of activity; cooperation between the public and private sector operating in the State; preservation of territorial sovereignty and integrity; maintaining a flexible civil and military relation; robust economic development and a proactive and independent media.<sup>14</sup> National security remains dynamic, fluid and multi-directional, and is considered the survival of the Nation-State. It embodies external security (safeguarding the nation from foreign threats), and internal security (within the State). It also highlights the maintenance of economic, military, political and diplomatic power over its peers and neighbouring countries.<sup>15</sup> We can thereby summarise that in the current security environment, national security cannot be interlinked with national defence only; as it covers a wide range of aspects that require the cooperation and understanding of the State, its forces, institutions and the public.

### ***Challenges to National Security***

In the age of globalisation and inter-dependence, security threats to national interests, not only involve conventional threats such as other Nation States but also non-state actors such as terrorist organisations, drug and arms dealers and multinational corporations.<sup>16</sup> Traditional threats to national security have been bypassed into an era where the security challenges cannot be eliminated by the military forces alone; they require the cooperation and collaboration of security forces with organisations that are State or Non-State, for support and expertise to diminish and eradicate the threat either completely or to a minimum level. The measures adopted to maintain national security in the face of these threats have also led to an ongoing debate among countries of the world, on the use and role of governance,<sup>17</sup> which can be enhanced through science and technology and also through private organisations. The contemporary concern regarding national security and governance also centres on the exercise of national security laws and strategy which, if not subjected to good governance, may simply serve as a reason for<sup>18</sup> tensions between the preservation and sovereignty of the State and the rights and freedoms of its citizens in order to maintain peace and stability.

Though common domestic failures such as corruption, poverty, crime, insurgency and home-grown terrorism continue to initiate concerns for the national security of any country including India, external threats such as global terrorism, use of nuclear weapons by State or Non-State actors, border disputes, and environmental calamities have emerged as severing the nation's security and strength. One common challenge to the national security of any State, regardless of the geographic location, remains the threat of terrorism which has crossed national borders into international territories, and has become part of a global threat to the security of the world system. Mainly for a country like India, situated in the heart of the Southern Asian subcontinent, the factor of terrorism continues to plague the nation's security perceptions. Thus, keeping the relevance of the threat intact, the paper tries to streamline India's immediate national security threat as terrorism, and debate counter-strategies that require attention from the State and its organisations, in order to curb the spreading violence timely and effectively.

## **National Security in India**

### ***India's National Security Threats***

India remains the world's largest democracy and one of the fastest growing economies in the 21st century. The country is being recognised for its middle-class educated professionals, its cultural influence, Diaspora, economic growth and global expertise. A 2010 joint study by the US National Intelligence Council and the EU declared India to be the world's third most powerful nation in terms of influence and growth.<sup>19</sup> India also represents cultural and geographical diversity, socio-religious traditions (dating back to more than 4,000 years), and multi-racial, multi-religious and multi-lingual societies.<sup>20</sup> Every major religion in the world is practiced in India, and the roots of its secular and cultural traditions are embedded deep in India's glorified past. India's national security problems thus emerge through the influence of a number of existing factors such as its history, geography, colonial legacy, socio-cultural and ethno-religious traditions, population, and social and economic disparities.<sup>21</sup>

India's growth is expanding with her economic, technological and political developments, and advancements in Asia and the rest of the world. With the emergence of China in the East and the slow declining mode of the US, the country is facing challenges from the consequences of a possible strategic change in the international security order.<sup>22</sup> Developments that are continuously

shaping India's national security environment are happening globally, regionally and domestically. In regard to this, India's national security policy objectives that were framed to meet the emerging challenges were summarised by the Indian Prime Minister in 1995, highlighting a broad concept which enshrined the defence of national territory over land, sea, and air, and included the inviolability of land borders, land territories, offshore assets, and maritime trade routes; internal security against threats to unity or progress from religious, language, ethnic, or socio-economic conflict; the ability to influence other regional countries to promote harmonious relationships that support Indian national interests; and the ability to execute out-of-area operations to contribute to international stability.<sup>23</sup>

India's security requirements and challenges have been traditionally thought about in terms of domestic, regional, continental and systemic security.<sup>24</sup> Domestically, India's security is threatened primarily by insurgencies, naxal movements, terrorism, separatist tendencies by States and corruption among its bureaucrats. At the regional level, the greatest threat to India is from terrorism. Where its neighbours China and Pakistan are concerned, due to continuing political instability and regional changes, possession of nuclear weapons by both these countries and the prevalent border disputes, have significantly affected India's relations with these countries. Continentally, the rise of China is a concern for India and also for other States of the Southern Asian subcontinent as it may hamper the involvement of India in the region.

### ***Terrorism and Insurgency in India***

From 1947, the country has been facing various internal security problems, most of the threats emanating from Pakistan, its efforts to seize Jammu and Kashmir, and to create chaos and disorder in order to destabilise India. The country has fought four wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999. Disputes between the two nations have been centred on territory, refugees and natural resources including the distribution of the water of River Indus, which has been largely resolved due to the effective agreement of the treaty signed by both the nations in 1960. India has been facing increasing internal security threats in the past years and in the current context, about 50 per cent of the districts are seriously affected by insurgencies, terrorist activities or political extremism.<sup>25</sup> In the early 1980s, there had been terrorist activities in Punjab, which caused enormous human and economic losses; these destructive

activities lasted for a decade. In the North-Eastern region, several States have continued to face unending insurgencies and struggle. The illegal immigration from Bangladesh has also led to an imbalance in demographics and initiated communal, political, social and economic tensions, and instability in the North-Eastern region of India. There has also been a steady increase in the growth of Islamic militant outfits, who have been preaching fundamentalism and spreading violence and fear among people. Over the years, the reach of the hard-line Wahhabi fundamental networks have spread to areas in Central and South India.

The Left wing extremist groups, especially the Naxalite movement, with covert backing of the Maoist members of China, have also been continuing to engage in violent activities, and have spread to vast tribal areas in several States of Eastern India. This uprising, which overtly calls for the overthrow of the State and its security forces, is repeatedly labelled by the Government of India as the country's greatest internal security threat in the 21st century,<sup>26</sup> other than home-grown terrorism. It has claimed hundreds of lives in 2009, many of whom are security forces and members of law enforcement. These include the attacks on paramilitary forces and the violent attacks on passenger trains, also seen in 2011. Started as a pro-peasant movement, the insurgency has spread across more than a third of around 600 districts, concentrating itself into India's resource rich Central and Eastern regions.<sup>27</sup> A number of organisations and groups have also been fighting for separation of various States such as Telangana in Andhra Pradesh, and Gorkhaland in West Bengal. The Government, however, has been negotiating with these security threats to a large extent.

India's primary security challenges are mainly regional; several organised crime and mafia groups have also linked up with the Pakistan-supported terrorist networks and extended their criminal and communal activities into India.<sup>28</sup> The enormous funds generated by the unlawful activities of the drug and arms dealers have been utilised for spreading Islamic fundamentalism, creating violence and carrying out terrorist activities. Islamic extremists have also been created indigenously with the support of Pakistani funding such as the Indian Mujahedeen, who have unleashed attacks in Indian cities nationwide. The Indian Mujahedeen sparked a bombing episode in 2008, killing about 140 people across Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, and New Delhi. A high level terrorist attack also ripped through the heart of Mumbai in the same year, claimed to be the handiwork of Pakistan-backed terrorists, the trial of which is still underway.

Levels of violence in India remained high in 2009 and 2010, though they have eased since 2008. According to the US Counterterrorism Centre's annual global terrorism reports, the number of terrorism fatalities in India has decreased between 2007 and 2009.<sup>29</sup> However, an unclaimed terrorist attack struck the heart of Mumbai and Delhi in 2011, once again leaving India crippling with the fear of increasing insecurity and terrorism. Therefore, a national security strategy for India cannot afford to ignore these traditional security challenges, which can affect territorial integrity of the country to a large extent, also keeping in mind the need of a robust national political and social life, economic development and a balance of power in the region.<sup>30</sup>

### ***India's Strategy for National Security***

The National Security strategy, as such, is widely studied in Western countries as the use of a nation's various resources for the purposes of securing the State, where security is understood as the protection of territory and the political and social way of life within that territory, the promotion of economic well-being, and a balance of power in comparison to other neighbouring and powerful States.<sup>31</sup> The term 'national security strategy' is, however, new to the Indian State and policy dictionary, as there is a lack of a detailed outline of the country's national security interests and ambitions for public viewing.

India's national security objectives have, however, been evolved against a milieu of India's core values – democracy, secularism and peaceful co-existence, and overall social and economic development in the region.<sup>32</sup> In the context of national security, India has highlighted its ambitions and national interests in the form of a declaratory policy, rather than a written one, which focuses on defending the country's borders as defined by law and enshrined in the Constitution. These include protecting the lives and property of its citizens against war, terrorism, nuclear threats and militant activities; protecting the country from, instability and religious and other forms of radicalism and extremism emanating from neighbouring States; securing the country against the use or the threat of use of WMD; development of material, equipment and technology that influence India's Security, particularly its defence preparedness through indigenous research, development and production; promoting further co-operation and understanding with neighbouring countries and implementing mutually agreed confidence building measures and pursuing security and strategic dialogue with major powers and key partners.<sup>33</sup>

Over the years, India has also been involved in a number of international initiatives, both humanitarian and economic. It has maintained effective diplomatic and peacekeeping operations to counter any menace that has threatened its territories or its extended neighbourhood. Such initiatives have been viewed by the region and major powers as an extension of India's overall national security strategy,<sup>34</sup> and has helped project its national security policy as not restricted to a conceptual framework as that of the US but one which seeks to incorporate a number of rising factors over the years. India does lack in a well defined national security strategy; though it has encompassed a number of broader definitions to enlighten itself and the world on its objectives.<sup>35</sup> The effective functioning of the National Security Council headed by the National Security Advisor, which was created in 1998 to attend to India's security needs, seeks to achieve a more strategic oriented and transparent institutional framework in the coming years. A debate is currently persistent among policymakers, academicians and journalists on evolving a robust and effective national security strategy for India that should be re-evaluated and revised every year.

## **Media and National Security: The Correlation**

### ***National Security, Media and Conflict Resolution***

As emphasised through the chapter, national security remains the foundation of good governance, social welfare and economic development of a country and its people. National security in the contemporary environment of a Nation State adopts to incorporate human and societal security as a priority apart from national defence, thereby centering the fundamentals of security on the maintenance of peace and the eradication of conflict.<sup>36</sup> Since the end of the Cold War and the emergence of globalisation and technology, several conceptual frameworks have been introduced to demonstrate different uses of conflict resolution strategies around the world.<sup>37</sup> Military and non-military approaches, development and governance approaches, and preventive diplomacy, are being elaborated upon as different policy options for peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. These new subfields have been able to cut across the domains of security and peace studies, and are establishing the emergence of non-government and private organisations as key players in conflict resolution, along with the State. Similarly, during the Cold War, analysts working in peace and security studies examined the role of mass media and practices of socialisation as working essentially to resolve differences and being successful in maintaining a sense of security

and stability in conflict affected regions;<sup>38</sup> thereby, initiating an international discourse and policy change by nations around the world to integrate the mass media as a major contributor to conflict resolution in the State.

### ***The Indian Media in National Security Strategy***

Apart from the relevance and acceptance of the Indian media as an entity into the maintenance of governance in the country in the current security environment, India's media continues to remain unique because of the culturally diverse nature of the country. On the one hand, India is politically and technologically advanced, upholding its strength in economy, democracy, and culture, and on the other hand, the majority of India remains a developing country with strong religious and conservative patriarchal systems isolated from the ideologies and advancements of modern and technological life. The mainstream Indian media reflects the distinct differences of its people and thoughts by supporting and catering to two types of media outlets and audience: the English language media and the non-English language media, including various newspapers, magazines and television channels, thereby upholding the difference in expression and perspectives of its multi-cultural population, and showcasing the true essence of India.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, media remains an important component of statecraft, not only for India but even for the rest of the world, as it helps the States attain their goals and objectives,<sup>40</sup> mainly due to the effect that media has on opinion-building of the public. However, in terms of matters of national security, media of any country including that of India follows a nationalistic approach, even though the dynamics of media are different and diverse in different countries. Sometimes, the States use media to create fear or hatred among countries, and sometimes prolong diplomatic ties. In the contemporary strategic environment, media and the Government have a very strong and symbiotic relationship,<sup>41</sup> which is believed to be evolving as even political actors have started working in the environment set or prescribed by the media for undertaking their duties. Thus, not only are the perceptions of the public set by the media in this modern world, but also that of the authorities and leaders, which in turn help them to set up policies in tune with the demands of the people.

### ***Role of the Indian Media in Security Issues***

To further elaborate on the relation between media and its role in safeguarding national security there are a number of examples where Indian media has



portrayed an effective role in providing information to the public, and confirming the actions of the government on the issues of national security. In August 1999, Pakistan Navy's Naval Air Arm Breguet Atlantique patrol plane was shot down by the Indian Air force for violating Indian air space as it was flying close to the Indian border off the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.<sup>42</sup> The issue flared tensions between the two countries as the Kargil War had just ended, and there was a destabilisation of ongoing peace negotiations between India and Pakistan. Though claims were rebuked by the Pakistani authorities as the part of a training mission, questions were raised as to why the plane was flying so close to the international border between the two nations. Pakistan even took the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for resolution, as it condemned the shooting down of its plane by the Indian Air force. However, the Indian media's support for its country and the timely information that it provided to the domestic and international audience, helped not only the Indian public but also the foreign media grasp the ground situation, which in turn, influenced the judgment of the ICJ. The verdict thus given helped question Pakistan's credibility on the issue, and also urged both the countries to resolve their disputes bilaterally.

Similarly, but in different circumstances, the Indian media was also used by the Government as a tool to rightly inform and replace misinformation that could have hampered India's relations with its neighbouring countries mainly Pakistan. On January 24, 2010, a signal of a 'flying object' was picked up by the radar of the Indian Air force at Nalia base in the Rann of Kutch.<sup>43</sup> Claimed to be an intrusion at first, the Government identified it to be one of the planes of the Indian Air force and confirmed a 'no threat' situation. In this matter, the Indian media was used by the government to clarify the event not only to its people but also to the international audience. The editors and journalists of media organisations in India were called upon by military and Government officials where they were shown the details of the plane, and were requested to convince the national audience that the radar picked up signal of an Indian plane, and that they help diminish any claims of outside intervention.<sup>44</sup> The role played by the media during this time helped decrease the tension that existed between India and Pakistan, as there were reports earlier of a possible terrorist threat and disruption during India's Republic Day celebration, which was to be held two days later. Examples of the tremendous and radical change in technology of the Indian media and their repercussions thus continue to be numerous and in terms of national security, the impact of the media evidently has clear strategic implications.

**A Task Put Forward: Expanding the Role of Information in Security**

The capacity of the global media to transmit information and images throughout the world with uninterrupted speed and the nature of communication today has transcended all boundaries to become transnational and international, thereby helping the State reach to its public, both domestic and foreign, and also become a lethal weapon against the enemy. As the world's largest democratic nation; this growth in information communication and technology, its effective use and increasing economic and social development, is encouraging the Indian media to pursue the role of an independent overseer.<sup>45</sup> The Indian media's role in influencing national and international public opinion by analysing and providing coverage of worldwide events has grown immensely due to the 24x7 concept. It has helped the media and journalists to play a greater role in influencing high level national and international decision-making. The role of the media during war or crisis situations is being understood not only to protect the developing activities in a particular area but to offer a comprehensive picture encompassing all policies of the State, helping the whole nation get engaged with the Government and the military in the economic, scientific, political and social aspects of policymaking.

In the 21st century, the States need to deal with other States and a variety of supranational and Non-State actors. Diplomacy in a connected world, thus, becomes far more different and complex in its conduct than in the earlier times of a Nation State as it becomes necessary to use the help of information tools. As stated by strategist, Gregory R Copley, information as an instrument of soft power becomes a strategic instrument within the context of grand strategy<sup>46</sup> because the media and the security sphere are dependent on one another, and security institutions like governments depend on public support for their activities and opinion building. In a democracy like India, the media has a responsibility to bring in public scrutiny to political leaders and security elites in order to question their policies. It is, thereby, important that the media and the institutions of security work together to educate the public, to understand the national security policy, and also hold policymakers to account. An independent and transparent media facilitates democratic ideals and functions at its maximum capability, to help the Government and the officials uphold accountability, accuracy in judgment, and also provide good governance to the public.

A nation that is not motivated cannot preserve its freedom and ideology for long as threat to any element of national power creates security concerns. The unique coverage and impact of the media can, thereby, be accelerated

to promote and expand security awareness among the people and used for moral building. In conflict, psychological operation is not the only function which the media can perform in context of national security<sup>47</sup> but it also acts as a bridge between the Government and the people. It thereby requires strategists to understand the behavioural patterns of the media and engage in its overall functioning.

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## 2. UNDERSTANDING THE MEDIA, ITS THEORY AND PRACTICES

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The force of the newspaper is the greatest force in civilization. Under republican government, newspapers form and express public opinion. They suggest and control legislation. They declare wars. They punish criminals, especially the powerful. They reward with approving publicity the good deeds of citizens everywhere. The Newspapers control the nation because they represent the people.<sup>1</sup>

— William Randolph Hearst,  
American newspaper publisher (1863-1951)

Journalism, as a broader subject, can be defined as the narration of each passing moment of human history in all its varied manifestation.<sup>2</sup> Providing meaning to events and reiterating words, journalism lends credibility to the concepts and ideologies drawn from various texts and sources, spoken, read and collected across continents. Finally along with the emerging structure and ownership styles that control the media organisations, a colourful pattern is lent by journalism to the quality and content of reporting in the contemporary news environment. World's leading media critics and analysts, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky stated in their work titled 'The Propaganda Model' that news from the media is, often than not, shaped by five production filters, which influence the content to a large extent – (1) business interests of media corporations and publishers; (2) dependence on advertising and commercialisation for a substantial proportion of revenue; (3) professional routines and excessive reliance on official sources; (4) fear of flak or the punishment that news sources put on the journalists in case they are exposed, and (5) an ideological consensus between powerful sources, media owners and journalists.<sup>3</sup> Keeping these constraints in mind, journalism also thrives to uphold the ideals of truth, human dignity and social justice that are mainly enshrined in the work ethics of any reporter or correspondent, making the task of news reporting even more complex and enterprising.

This chapter, thus, tries to conceptualise on the communication strategies that help us understand how the media of today functions, and the influence it

has on public minds and decision-making. A theoretical characterisation of the media is presented to align the readers mind to a journalistic perspective. Such a comparison also becomes important to help create a framework that can extract the benefits of the media from its drawbacks. An effort is also made to present a detailed outline to correlate the evolution and conduct of the Indian media and its role in the democratic setup of the country, and its inclusion into national security related issues.

## **Theories of Media Behaviour**

### ***Media and the Soft Power of Information***

In the era of globalisation and interdependence, various elements of power, mainly the military and economic sphere, have been narrowed substantially to accommodate a comparatively significant aspect of national power, that is, the advancement in information and communication technology. Since the 1990s, many political scientists, thinkers and strategists have recognised and acknowledged information as the fourth element of power and have identified it as a growing and demanding sphere.<sup>4</sup> This power remains important in the contemporary era and aims to help and alter the relative utility of the other three elements – economic, diplomatic and military power. In his book published in 1990 named *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, Harvard University Professor, Joseph Nye, highlighted on the emergence and importance of the aspect of soft power, arguing that the notion of power was fast-changing in the world politics and international relations. He defined soft power as the ability to obtain the outcome one wants by attraction and persuasion rather than by coercion.<sup>5</sup> The concept itself emerged with the development of Information Technology, neoliberal theory and globalisation in International Relations, and deeply entwined communication as an ideal tool of soft power. He argued that displays of power did not reside in worldly resources but in the ability to change the behaviour of the States and the people, and to be able to control the political environment through such mediation.<sup>6</sup> He stated power as becoming less coercive as both military and economic power had their limitations due to factors including cost, time and place. Rather than using force to deliberate other countries to act in the manner one wants, soft power was required to shape beliefs and preferences of other countries based on the attractiveness of culture and ideology.<sup>7</sup> Thus, for the effective use of the concept of soft power,



it became important for the State to use information and communication to deliver its message and intent to its own public, its neighbours and the world in general. Media formed the integral part of this tool, which helped disseminate information in a faster and effective method, helping nations interact and also integrate, and continues to play a significant role as a soft power in today's world to help build and manage perception.<sup>8</sup>

Information, as an element of soft power, is therefore used as a strategic tool by countries to further their interests and prolong their presence in world affairs.<sup>9</sup>

As a strategic instrument, information through media heavily relies on the understanding of the historical, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethical issues of any nation, which may have an effect on its individuals and population located within the boundaries of the strategic environment.<sup>10</sup> Also, information as an element of power disseminated through media is a psychological dimension that can be effectively used for winning a war or conflict.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Understanding the Media-News Concept***

In context to issues of national security relevance, it becomes important to understand how media perceives news and information. Media events are seen not only as transmission of original events but also as autonomous symbolic rituals as in the case of coverage of terrorism.<sup>12</sup> In the theories of mass communication, for an event to qualify for media attention, it must highlight three aspects as studied by media theoreticians in detail – coronation, conquests and contests. These story forms influence the relevance of any news event, and how they are to be placed in order of their importance and presentation to the audience.<sup>13</sup> Coronation deals with intricate ritual displays and televised symbolism, which is mainly ceremonial; whereas, contest is the uncertainty and competition of any event ranging from politics, economics to sports; and conquest is the taking place of an historical event.<sup>14</sup> Combining the three, one can highlight that any news event needs to be qualified as different or relevant to be categorised as a major turn of events for it to be given any media attention or consideration. These three factors have different dimensions and greatly influence how media events are covered and presented.

News observed by the media thus takes a complete change and make over in the hands of the journalists, and is presented to the audience through various techniques, to inform and influence. One of the main mechanisms used by the media, mainly the process of agenda setting, helps in prioritising

issues and events and the significance of the news as put forward to the public. The agenda setting nature of the media helps and influences the public's thought process in a large manner and decides for the individual as to what to think and not to think.<sup>15</sup> The first level agenda setting by the media decides the importance and rank of different news makers and issues on the minds of the public, whereas the second level agenda setting helps the public to think how to react and create a sense of empathy with the news story.<sup>16</sup> For example, if the media portrays the negativity of any nation to the public mind, it easily connects to the nation as being a bad State and creates a sense of angst against that particular nation. Decision-making of the public is also influenced in the process and it highly influences attitude and the opinion of the public. The agenda setting of any news organisation is understood by considering its reports on public issues over a period of time<sup>17</sup> but one cannot confirm that a media organisation always follows a particular agenda as its pre-defined goal. The main concept associated with the agenda setting capacity of the media is the gate-keeping mechanism,<sup>18</sup> whereby the content of news stories and issues are selected and controlled to fit into the frame of newsworthiness. Agenda setting also goes hand in hand with the cultivation theory that is commonly used by the media industry to expose a message frequently to the public in order to create a certain perception and situation of reality.<sup>19</sup>

The second mechanism, that is, frame-building by the media, is used to provide and store information and facts in the minds of the public, so as to promote a particular solution.<sup>20</sup> Frames may not always be truthful but are usually congruent. The frames used are the ones that are common and culturally acceptable where the public refuses to defer from the suggestions of the media as it lines up with the culture and importance of the society.<sup>21</sup> Frames help set and provide different perspectives on a single news story. For example, common or similar issues between India and Pakistan may be presented and interpreted by the respective media houses differently based on their interests or perceptions. Priming by the media also helps in letting the public understand that a particular news story is what the media wants the public to consider important or to focus upon.<sup>22</sup> Thus, during a crisis, the public urge to know about any extensive information increases, which helps to bring in the role of the media to reduce the uncertainty of the crisis and provide extra information to the public to support their needs.

### ***Media in the World Today***

The media, with the help of modern techniques and tools of communication technology and direct access to the front line of any situation, has stabilised the emergence of live and 24 hours news coverage. Such news reporting and in depth analysis by the journalists and reporters has made decision-makers and their public acutely aware of the raw situations presented in real time. These events, which may or may not contain any form of justification, provide a platform for the deliberation of the rationale behind the event and for which opinions and decisions are developed.<sup>23</sup> The media is a strong instrument of national power. It is able to influence the hearts and minds of its own public and at the same time, specify its country's intent and capability to the public and Government of another country, including its adversary. The MacBride report of 1980, a publication titled *Many Voices One World*<sup>24</sup> and developed by the International Commission for the study of communication problems under the guidance of UNESCO, presented a report that aimed at analysing the technologies and communication of the modern society and the problems faced by the mass media in the dissemination of information. A recommendation for a New International Information Order was established, which helped to allow the media further peace, societal and human development. It aimed to democratise national media and expand its influence, and diminish its dependence on external sources.<sup>25</sup> The vision enshrined in the report got international support and is still being studied by countries around the world to engage their media in a positive manner and to help in the domestic policy making.

While the principles of truth telling, freedom, fairness and justice, good responsible citizenship and commitment to the social good all stand as ethics of media reporting,<sup>26</sup> journalism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that is successful and effective cannot survive, develop or flourish unless it is practical and commercially successful.<sup>27</sup> Operating as a participant in a democracy and also as commercial enterprises, it becomes important for news channels to focus on controversies that will ensure more market and audience. In this era, the objectives of news agencies and organisations may not always collide with that of the audiences; as news has also become a representation of authority.<sup>28</sup> Government remains a credible source of information for the media even though they have to be critical of them. In the area of foreign policy and national security issues, the media relies overwhelmingly on prominent government and ex-government officials as sources of information; and coverage of related issues may contain restricted publication, due to the sensitivity of the event. In such a scenario,

media emanates under the invention and proliferation of pseudo events, at times manipulated by State, thereby forcing itself to have its head in politics and feet in commerce.<sup>29</sup>

## **Media and State: Intensifying Relations**

### ***Watchdog Journalism in Democracy***

The media has historically been government watchdogs. Though the textbook definition is to educate, inform and entertain,<sup>30</sup> the overreaching approach of the media embodies a wide range of issues. Media organisations of various forms from print, broadcast to new and social media play an impact in varied roles and restrictions. Television has expanded the reach and range of access of mass communication and has led to an impact with regard to perception of news with audio visual imagery. Before 24 hours reporting through live broadcast came, news stories went through a professional cycle of events and were constrained by the time and space factor.<sup>31</sup> However, television even today is used only for creating an impact, whereas print media continues to go beyond impact into further understanding and opinion building for its public.

The explanation of media as a ‘watchdog’ originated with Edmund Burke, an Irish statesman and author in the 17<sup>th</sup> century England when he stated that the press had become a third estate in parliament.<sup>32</sup> The term came to stand and was being signified for a press that questioned official sources, filtered news stories through contacts and brought issues and information to the people. The concept of watchdog was mainly constituted for a society that gives freedom to the media to grow and expand, as the watchdog press is expected to keep a check on the routine activities of the authorities and help the citizens assess the efficiency of the Government.<sup>33</sup> The information provided by the media to the public, thus, empowers them with a sense of responsibility to demand reforms from the Government. Such a watchdog press helps keep the Government accountable to good governance. However, in conflict reporting, journalists face an inner dilemma which manifests as a clash between their professional responsibility to report the truth no matter how it reflects on one’s country and a citizen’s commitment to patriotism and nationalism.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the media must also be capable of not criticising the Government or the authorities to such an extent that it demoralises them or desensitises issues that need public attention.

### ***Linking the State and the Media***

It is said that the media can never be free of any restrictions because it is either under the pressure of the State or the publisher and financier. Based on these factors, the media and the State share three kinds of relations<sup>35</sup> – (1) in an Authoritarian system, Government controls the media, which is only used to support and advance the policies of the Government and no criticism or freedom is allowed to the media, as in the case of China; (2) in a Libertarian system, media is owned by the economically superior, to inform, discover truth and also verify the accountability of the Government, as in the case of the US, and (3) in a Social responsibility system, media is not owned but used and controlled by everyone who wants to inform, entertain and discuss; a good example can be the Indian media. However, democracies are faced with the challenge of balancing traditional commitments to the secrecy of information that is needed for national security reasons, and at the same time, giving access to information to the media and the right to publish without fear of persecution.<sup>36</sup>

The States do restrict the media to an extent but the process of interaction between the two are evolving and intensifying. The State creates an interdependent environment for the media, where speech and information cannot be limited within the State but is allowed to flow to and from Non-State actors.<sup>37</sup> Such a relation helps in the evolution of a local system as part of a global infrastructure, as decisions on a State's information space have external repercussions on local and global security.<sup>38</sup> The Government needs to use information through the media for generating peace as a significant tool of soft power over its public and other countries, and to supplement or substitute for any kind of hard power that is mainly restricted to military agendas. Media influences public agenda by providing attention and authority, and helps in the formation of policies by the Government. An environment of openness and accountability is an essential requirement for citizens in a democracy as they can make decisions and participate only if they are fully informed;<sup>39</sup> at the same time, providing adequate information about current issues and serving the public's right to know.

### ***Policy and Propaganda***

A geopolitical perception of media by a contemporary State is seen as an instrument that follows and affects the shifting balance of power, mainly as an overseer of the policies of the Government. There is a constellation of change in the relationship between the freedom to receive and impart information and the needs of national security, thereby bringing the media closer to the functioning

of the State.<sup>40</sup> The mainstream media is generally seen as a propaganda instrument of various national security interests and it is becoming necessary for the State to make decisions solely keeping in mind the media because if they are embedded the media can play as a potential instrument to develop and maintain any strategy.<sup>41</sup> The media is used to generate political action and is also an apparatus of national security regime. For the State and the media, propaganda is understood as ‘the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist’.<sup>42</sup> News presented by the media becomes the ideal vehicle for the desired propaganda by the State as it weaves ideas, policies, aims and information into a web of facts, easily understood by the public.

The media also helps frame public opinion and influences foreign policy making to a large extent. It is regarded as an institution that can debate and question a country’s foreign policy and in turn influence an individual’s foreign policy preferences.<sup>43</sup> A good and effective foreign policy must always be made with the support of the public and in terms with the international system. The influence however remains restricted to two factors – for creating domestic consensus or disagreement on any issue of foreign policy, and maintaining relationship with the government on international affairs.<sup>44</sup> An example of Indian media influencing foreign policy relations of the country was seen in the role played by the newspapers and news channels in 1996 during the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Though India advocated the need for a CTBT, if ratified by India, would have negative ramifications for growing India due to its biased approach and linking to the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty. The Indian media, through its editorials and opinion pages, helped the indecisive policymakers to understand the pulse of the nation and refused to sign the CTBT for India’s effective nuclear future.<sup>45</sup> Finally, the media as a watchdog holds the Government accountable and involves the masses in governance. It helps sustain the economy and the society by helping masses make decisions and exercise their rights effectively. The media, however, hesitates to question the legitimacy of the boundaries set by the rules of national security and national interest in terms of political change, information warfare, decision-making and strategy formulation.<sup>46</sup>

The 1978 UNESCO Declaration on the role of the media states that:<sup>47</sup>

The strengthening of peace and international understanding, the promotion of human rights and the countering of racialism, apartheid and incitement to war demand a free flow and a wider and better balanced dissemination of information. To this end, the mass media have a leading, contribution to make. This contribution will be more effective to the extent that the information reflects the different aspects of the subject dealt with. Going by this statement, the contribution by the media in times of crisis can only be made if it is able to survive in an environment that allows it to strive for the truth and also perceive events from all sides, giving the public an unbiased and real image of the news story. News organisations around the world have the human and material resources and the democratic right to investigate claims of truth, if any, by the State regarding national security, and can question the Government policies without any external limitations. Such a media will be able to provide for a free flow of ideas that allows citizens to debate alternatives, question the integrity of the State and make the Government accountable.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Media and Public Opinion**

Television news conveys unusual and distinctive views of political views that eventually become our own.<sup>49</sup>

—Shanto Iyengar and Donald R Kinder,  
American communication theory scholar (1987)

Media, as a tool of globalisation as propounded by Roland Robertson, sociologist and theorist, stands to embody a compressed world that is brought about by the phenomenon and helps to intensify consciousness of the world as a whole.<sup>50</sup> The fourth estate of a democratic country is the media because it holds the pillars of the constitution firmly as a ground to base the rights of every citizen and also provide a medium for the people to reach the higher authority. The media plays an important role as it can influence both agenda setting and power of representation.<sup>51</sup> As it has become necessary for policymakers to incorporate public opinion while framing a policy, the media has started playing an inseparable role in helping these policymakers make the right decision and in doing so, they fulfil their duty in providing a platform for the public in gathering information and also as a base for introspection.

### ***Building Opinion***

The media is the main conduit between the public and policymakers as it provides the public, information on what the policymakers are doing and the policymakers in turn follow media reports on public opinion as it is being formed.<sup>52</sup> In the matter of public opinion, Article 19 of the UN declaration of Human Rights of 1948 declares: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.<sup>53</sup> The media, thus, has a tremendous impact on policy and an enhanced public responsiveness to any events that are covered by them. Through the media, the Government is able to mobilise the public, build an opinion on any issue of relevance and create a significant space for engagement.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, the potential of the public to become informed and to make its voice heard in response to events portrayed in the media is increasing significantly, but it must pass through the filter of public interest, that is permissible by the Government in terms of safeguarding national interest of the country.

The influence of media in the form of public opinion was first understood by Walter Lippmann in 1922 in his book *Public Opinion*.<sup>55</sup> In the book he states that public affairs remain a world untouched by the general people, and that media forms an entrance for them to reach out to the world of policy affairs, thereby helping in framing their minds on related issues.<sup>56</sup> For creating public opinion, media exerts influence through two channels, direct and personal; and indirect and collective.<sup>57</sup> The direct and personal aspect is difficult to investigate as it is highly subjective and may be criticised for negative repercussions. The indirect and collective which is commonly used by the media and the Government remains the realm of public opinion, which helps shape the battleground of politics in the democratic societies.<sup>58</sup> Through this, the media helps in focusing the attention of the public on a particular issue, and then helps frame and construct an understanding and perspective on the subject. The factor of orientation plays an important role in creating public opinion, where the role of uncertainty and relevance is able to influence the audience to process the information and take an action.

### ***Extent of Influence***

Though it is understood and ascertained through studies and research that the media influences public opinion, the arguments in the current academic



circle revolve around how much and in what way the media helps gather public opinion. As indicated, the media is able to bring together the public mind to focus on certain issues of policy relevance, put forward mainly by the authority and the State, in order to achieve a particular goal or agenda because media is able to provide a number of cues for the public to attach or understand a particular event or policy.<sup>59</sup> However, it is also understood that media is not the only factor to influence the public regarding an issue and other factors such as personal agendas, people and institutions also help in framing a perception. Media is only successful in setting an agenda in the minds of the public if they perceive the news story as relevant and is able to capture their attention.<sup>60</sup> Additional research in media schools is thus being initiated into how much information, presented in what format, under what conditions is likely to influence the public to act in a particular manner,<sup>61</sup> as opinion shifts are the only indicator of the public action but requires certain other personal and societal characteristics.

## **Understanding the Indian Media**

### ***Rise of the Indian Media***

Opening of the economy in India in the early 1990s led to the commercialisation of media, which critics claim, further led to a hindering in the quality of traditional journalism in the country, as market and television rating points became important,<sup>62</sup> and media channels started to provide the same information under different banners and time slots. Competition, instant information and entertainment became part and parcel of media reporting<sup>63</sup> including news channels. The economics of newspaper got correlated with the advertisement revenue and the maximisation of this revenue determined the activities undertaken by the media organisations. In today's world, the Indian newspapers are surviving by pivoting around the management houses and their media management techniques, descending journalism into a pure capitalist enterprise. While taking such facts into account to understand the functioning of the Indian media, one can state that it is in a period of transition not compatible with the complexities of a changing world and is in continuous flux with itself, its traditions, environment and ethics,<sup>64</sup> which provide for conflicts within and outside the media infrastructure.

According to the figures provided by the Indian Statisticians Association in 2010,<sup>65</sup> India consumed around 90 million copies of newspapers, making it

the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest market for newspapers in the world. By 2009, India had a total of 8,10,00,000 registered Internet users, making it the 11th largest country in the world in terms of broadband Internet users. By 2009, India became the 4th largest television broadcast stations in the world with nearly 1,400 stations. The Indian news sector accounts to 4 per cent of national viewership and 11 per cent of the advertisement revenue.<sup>66</sup> There are around 150, 24-hour news channels in the country that concentrate on a wide ambit of issues and genre. There are a number of news channels that exist in English and Hindi as well as in a variety of regional languages across India. Almost every major state has more than three or four news channels broadcast in the regional language of the district and these channels are accessible nationwide and even worldwide. Also, ownership of the Indian media houses is distributed among the public and private sector with a number of news channels and newspapers being owned and propagated by businesses, companies, organisations and even political parties. Though some of these media houses adhere to their policies, like elsewhere, news media in India has become a powerful medium that helps shape public opinion, not merely as sources of information, but also as vehicles for entertainment and lifestyle.<sup>67</sup>

### **Press Laws and the Media**

In reference to the Indian media's growth, the rights and responsibilities of the media are not directly enshrined in the written Constitution; however, Article 19 of the Indian Constitution dealing with the freedom of speech and expression broadly highlights the powers and functions of the media as a body of information. This article forms part of the foundation of a democratic country, giving its people and the free press rights and duties to engage in their political will and functioning of the Government. Articles 105(2) and 194(2) allow the Indian Press to publish or report the proceedings of the parliament and the state legislatures, whereas a number of press laws such as the Press Council Act of 1978 that nominates bodies to govern press functioning in India and the National Security Act of 1980 puts restrictions on the Indian press while reporting on issues that may need to be confidential and whose exposure may threaten the stability of the nation. The Indian media is also governed by a number of rules for broadcasting and commercial advertisement in television and radio that helps in the daily functioning of the media without causing any exploitation of the public and the media organisation.

The Government has been able to restrict the media during emergencies and has imposed laws that diminish its freedom in a limited manner mainly to deal with national security related issues. Some examples include:

Defence of India Act, 1962<sup>68</sup> – it came into force during the Emergency declared in 1962 – the Sino India war. This Act aimed at restricting the Freedom of the Press to a large extent and in turn empowered the Central Government to issue rules with regard to prohibition of publication or communication which would undermine or threaten civil defence/military operations, and also prevent prejudicial reports and prohibition of printing or publishing any matter in any newspaper that may contain such content.

Civil Defence Act, 1968<sup>69</sup> – It allows the Government to make rules for the prohibition of printing and publication of any book, newspaper or other document damaging to the civil defence of the country and its people.

The Broadcasting Code<sup>70</sup> – It was adopted by the Fourth Asian Broadcasting Conference in 1962, highlighting major principles to be followed by the electronic media. The Broadcast Code was set up to govern the All India Radio, but the following key principles have also been followed by all Indian Broadcasting Organisations. The principles include:

- ensuring the objective presentation of news and fair and unbiased comment, to promote the advancement of education and culture.
- raising and maintain high standards of decency and decorum in all programmes.
- providing programmes for the young which, by variety and content, will inculcate the principles of good citizenship.
- promoting communal harmony, religious tolerance and international understanding.
- treating controversial public issues in an impartial and dispassionate manner.
- respecting human rights and dignity.

The Indian Broadcasting Foundation has also released ‘Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News and Current Affairs Television Channels’, after the critical broadcasting of the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008 that brought in media experts and journalists to review the coverage and revise the content of the Indian media.<sup>71</sup>

However, in the era of globalisation, the Indian Government has been limiting its restriction on the Indian media and realising its importance as a tool

of public diplomacy. This has helped in expanding the sphere of influence of the media, which in turn, has helped the government reach out to the public even in matters of national security.

## **Indian Media and National Security in the Contemporary Era**

### ***Experiencing India's First Media War***

Kargil denoted bravery and betrayal, pique and pride, sacrifice and sacrilege, an immense variety of emotions and visions created by an inveterate band of journalists who covered their first real war.<sup>72</sup>

— Ajai K. Rai, Indian journalist in his publication on  
'The Kargil War and the role of the Indian media' (2001)

Kargil war, code named 'Operation Vijay', was a limited war fought between India and Pakistan in 1999, after a series of three gruesome wars. The media at this time was well equipped, due to the advent of information, communication and technology and the rise of broadcast media; and thus was able to play an active role in informing and gathering public support. The media was able to project the war at an unprecedented scale with live coverage and 24-hour reporting. Journalists entered battle spaces and battlefronts and tasted the flavour of war being fought right before their eyes.<sup>73</sup> A real time experience but with a limited front led to the beginning of a media-military complex in the country, where soldiers had to fight alongside information thirsty journalists who were equipped with cameras and satellite phones at all times. The media brought Kargil to the viewers through reports that attributed to its significance on the map and also presented written well documented books with extensive and close coverage. Earlier, war reporting carried news information that was a day old and was briefed mainly by defence personnel, journalists seldom had access to battle zones and the war was usually covered from a distance.<sup>74</sup> However, with the success of Indian media during the Kargil conflict, the Kargil Review Committee highlighted the importance of the media in covering the war and the extent to which it was able to rally support for India as it further stated that 'Kargil knit the country together as never before'.<sup>75</sup> The media took the war into the private spaces of homes and offices and also reached the barracks of soldiers involved in the war and connected them to the rest of the country. The television channels were more effective than the print media and highlighted the real meaning of

war, as it was able to create a national upsurge. It aroused curiosity among the public about the war, the conditions of soldiers and a country's national security. The dawn of the information age mainly television led the mass media revolution in India to a large extent.

### ***Keeping Security Away***

It is interesting to note that though Indian media was able to coordinate with the Government during the Kargil crisis; national security issues in general are treated differently from other policy issues and may be subjected to a certain degree of insulation from media impact. In matters of national security, the Indian Government continues to the advantage of secrecy and cannot be forced into revealing or compromising details unless required<sup>76</sup> through legal procedures. The privacy of national security is not restricted to any particular State system but even in developed western democracies, national security and its institutional apparatus has traditionally existed as a domain of official and authoritative privilege which is highly secretive and contains non transparent content.<sup>77</sup> The interaction between Indian media and security policy-makers and authorities' remains restricted to many points of tension. Journalists face challenges when reporting on national security related issues, that includes limited or restricted access to information as it is considered sensitive; heavy reliance on official sources; situations where news organisations are not willing to risk their resources in attaining complex information on issues related to security or sacrificing their freedom for getting the security related information.<sup>78</sup> The Government and security officials may also limit, manipulate or restrict information, try to influence journalists through a wide variety of means including bribe or threat and create a condition for dependence of journalists in attaining such information from the only source to national security issues; however, such a scenario is restricted to information that may risk the nation's security or an official's public image.

In a bureaucratic country like India, the security institutions dispatch official documents and information to the public domain but often keep sensitive components of their work hidden or secretive, mainly when that information could result in a situation that is politically damaging or questionable to the institution, and at such times, the Indian media may be adamant to seek transparency and exposure regarding that information, resulting in a war of words with the Government<sup>79</sup> as is seen in a number of scandals involving politicians and policymakers in India. It also helps us draw a difference between

the goals of the media and security organisations while dealing with national security-related issues – the journalists seek to communicate a story that is of news value and will get public interest, whereas those involved in the security institutions seek to protect the same information of national security according to the objectives and regulations set out by the policymakers and authorities.<sup>80</sup> It further leads to an understanding of national security information and the extent to which it can and should not be disclosed. Another element of the Indian media-security sector relationship is the impact media continues to have on public opinion and policy-making. For example, Indian media is being accused of underplaying society and calamities in Pakistan, but when it comes to reporting on terrorism in Pakistan, there is much rigour, which has in turn had an effect on Indo-Pak confidence building measures. In the same situation, if the Indian media instead of downplaying relations with the Pakistanis focuses on calamities and social issues in the region and provides coverage that can help provide more aid and publicity, it will only enhance policymaking on issues related to Pakistan and help in fostering public support of the people of the two countries. Such a change was initiated by the Times of India with the Pakistani media Jang Group, ‘Aman Ki Asha’, which helped play a significant step in track-two diplomacy between the two countries.

### **New Trends for National Security and Media**

There has been a change in news reporting and information handling with an increase in the media pressure on State, to extract and attain information on security related issues of public relevance, mainly from the officials and the Government. This has, in turn, played an impact upon national security decision-making depending on its relevance and sensitivity,<sup>81</sup> and creating an impact that resonates with the public mood. Reports regarding national security have also forced the administration to react to the reports published in the newspaper or broadcasted in the television channels, receiving positive or negative support by the media and the public depending on the actions taken by the authorities. It has become important for the officials to provide information on national security to the media because along with independent civil society actors, the media plays an important role in monitoring security institutions and helps to ensure their effective functioning and accountability to the public.<sup>82</sup> They remain vital elements in shaping the public debate on security policy and decision-making and helps in educating the general public on national security and related policies. Many official services such as the Defence and the Police in India

have also established media relations offices, similar to the West, as a realisation of the need to constructively engage and manage their relationships with the media and to communicate more freely with the journalists. However, the need of the hour is to strike a careful balance between the media and the security institutions. Limited and false coverage of national security and policy issues will only ineffectually educate citizens to act in a crisis situation, but if media coverage is specialised and detailed with official and expert reports, it will help the public be more prepared and knowledgeable. To get a broader understanding of the relation between media coverage and national security, the next chapter draws a comparison between terrorism and media and the role the Indian media plays in covering issues of contemporary threats of national security mainly terrorism and insurgency that affect the country to a large extent.

Without expression, there is no society as communication is the essence of social life and not the sole aim.<sup>83</sup> Thus, to summarise the chapter, we must underline the fact that certain mechanisms are embedded into the behaviour of any media organisation that largely control its functioning and influence. However, a free and independent media that restricts itself from the commercial aspects of today's world is considered a key element in democracies, where they can perform a vital role as a bridge between society and the Government. By providing complete and reliable information and providing impetus to a diversity of views and opinions, the media does facilitate informed discussion and critical assessment of the Government's action; and by giving the audience the real story and what is actually happening, the media helps to question the claims and actions of a Government to public scrutiny and helps to hold the Government and the policymakers accountable.<sup>84</sup> Through this, the media performs the role of monitoring power of the Government and giving the public the choice to favour or negate the actions.

Thus it remains important to understand the media in a wider sociological environment and the power it possesses, as it can allow the policymaker and the strategist make much more informed decisions by including the media as a critical element of power.<sup>85</sup> Also the media, mainly the Indian media, must have an understanding of the strategic environment and vision of the executive and legislature and communicate it to the citizens and be able to contribute to the protection and promotion of the core ideals of our national security. However, the Indian media must also be careful on such situations, as critical reporting of government actions and questioning ideologies, certain groups or individuals may result in the media organisation or the individual journalist

being banned from writing, losing accreditation, provided restricted access in future reporting and in some cases subjected to physical scrutiny.<sup>86</sup>

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### 3. INDIAN MEDIA AND TERRORISM

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When terror struck on the soils of the ‘Global Superpower’, the whole concept of terrorism got re-evaluated. It got a new dimension and with intensive and thorough research prior 9/11, the US Department of Defense brought in a holistic approach to the term, defining it as ‘the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear, intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious or ideological’.<sup>1</sup> Terrorism became an integral and persistent core of the international security system and foreign policy agenda of every nation, and emerged as one of the most threatening national security risks. Even for a country like India, which has been battling terrorism on its borders since independence, this local and global menace continues to challenge its rise and negates its development in the region.

In this age of technology, a number of changes have broadened the scope of terrorism. It has become international in character, more focused on the impact it has on the people (mainly the civilians), targeting of constitutional democracies and becoming highly effective in regions where publicity and propaganda can play a role.<sup>2</sup> It also becomes important to understand that conflict brings out a tendency to interpret events emotionally, rather than based on a rational assessment of the situation, thereby urging the media to report on incidents of terrorist acts as they are mostly unique, unexpected, and politically effective.<sup>3</sup> Also, keeping in mind the velocity of change, and the emergence of media, private organisations and non state actors into the security domain, it becomes essential to review the concept of terrorism and insurgency in relation with the foundation of a robust national security strategy. The focus of the chapter, thus, remains to expound on the effects of terrorism in detail by propounding on its strategies and functioning in terms of a global concern. Most importantly, asserting the need for reformed security in this challenging complex global system, the study helps to analyse the relationship that media coverage shares with the impact of any terrorist action in the country, its impact on maintenance of national security and the readiness of the State, and the media organisation to deal with such an explosive activity. The study aims to restrict itself to the Indian print and broadcast media as per the objectives enshrined in the paper.

## **The War of the Century: Understanding Terrorism**

The guerrilla fighter's war is political and social, his means are at least as political as they are military, his purpose almost entirely so. Thus we may paraphrase Clausewitz: Guerrilla war is the extension of politics by means of armed conflict.

— Robert D Taber, American academician and author of  
'War of the Flea: the Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare' (1965)

### ***Irregular Warfare: Differentiating Terrorism and Insurgency***

Irregular or guerrilla warfare of the contemporary era, which is a completely different form of warfare from the old battles and fatalities, describes a whole new set of violence that is conducted by non-state actors mainly against the State and the public. It encompasses asymmetric methods and guerrilla tactics of uncertainty and indirectness that are broadly aimed to inflict fear and pain in the minds of people that include the acts of terrorism and insurgency.<sup>4</sup> Developed over the years with the aid of information and technology, irregular warfare is viewed as a form of 'dirty war' by strategists and policymakers, mainly because the distinction between combatants and non-combatants and their objectives remain unclear, and engaging in such activities blurs the timeline for victory.<sup>5</sup> The dimension of conflict has undergone a drastic change, as a number of threats have emerged against the State including societal conflict, economy and information war, psychological and cyber war and nuclear war. The emergence of low intensity conflicts have also altered the concept of traditional warfare and have given a new face to the way conflicts emerge and are fought. For any sort of academic or policy research, there lies a clear distinction between the understanding of the concept of terrorism and insurgency. Much of the confusion associated with terrorism and insurgency comes from the use of value laden or emotive language used either by terrorists, strategists, Government officials or the media.<sup>6</sup>

Militant tactics employed in insurgency have political objectives that want the overthrow of an established Government or the break away from a constituted Government.<sup>7</sup> Insurgency is not conventional war-like terrorism; it shares the use of force to achieve a political end as the result. The main difference between insurgency and terrorism remains the scope and scale of the violence undertaken by the combatant.<sup>8</sup> Terrorist activity rarely results in political change while

insurgency attempts to bring about a complete change in the political scenario, through use and force of arms. In an insurgency, the adversaries are asymmetric and the weaker non-state actors want to bring about a political change by fighting against the Government through the use of guerrilla tactics, which are usually hit-and-run actions against the local security forces. Insurgency is characterised by the support and recruitment of a particular part of the population which has common wants and is attracted through common ideologies. External and moral public support is heavily needed for an insurgency to thrive or even take form. Insurgencies differ amongst themselves in terms of social, cultural, and economic aspects; and revolutionary, partisan, guerrilla, liberation, or civil types of war. However, the desired outcome of all insurgencies remains to obtain power and political control from the State. Example of insurgency in India includes the activities of the United Liberation Front of Assam and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, who have demanded supremacy in their respective States.

On the other hand, most people usually have a vague understanding of terrorism which may not be precise, concrete and explanatory enough to help in the overall framing of the concept, as people may focus on the cause rather than the mode of action, supporting either the Government or the terrorists in such activities.<sup>9</sup> In general terms, terrorism is defined as ‘the sustained use of violence against symbolic or civilian targets by small groups for political and social purposes, such as inspiring fear, drawing widespread attention to a political grievance, or provoking unsustainable response’.<sup>10</sup> Terrorism aims at inculcating fear among adversaries and intimidating third persons who may or may not be direct targets.<sup>11</sup> It may have a political, ideological or religious motivation or a combination of the three strategies. The term ‘terrorism’ is derived from the Latin word ‘terrere’, which means ‘to frighten’. Employed for the first time in the English language in 1528, it is also broadly understood as the use of violence and objectives with the intention of sowing fear in a target population.<sup>12</sup> Terrorists work in small units or sleeper cells that help the networking and carrying out of attacks across different target regions. International Encyclopaedia of terrorism propounds the concept as ‘the selective or indiscriminate use of violence in order to bring about a political or social change by inducing fear’.<sup>13</sup>

By provoking a response, terrorists hope that their opponent will overreact and come into a conflict with them, in order to help them put forward their demands. What separates terrorism from other forms of violence is that the acts committed are legitimised to a degree by their political or religious nature.<sup>14</sup>

Hijacking, suicide bombing and assassination are criminal acts but it can be legitimised by supporters or even the State, if the violence is carried out for a recognised political or religious cause by any recognised person. According to studies, some common factors causing the terrorists to resort to such violent activities of terrorism include humiliation of the terrorists and their masses, unstable population growth, illiteracy, deprivation of the basic human rights, political frustration, regional disparities, widening of inequalities, intervention into religious, social and personal liberties, extreme poverty, foreign intervention, need for publicity and protest against the policies of the Government.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Greatest Threat to National Security***

Terrorism is not a new concept in the world system but has been evolved tremendously only in the recent decades. The fear and threat of terrorism has always been alive and felt across countries around the world as early as 70 AD.<sup>16</sup> The study of terrorism was, however, restricted and did not evolve much debate and discussion till 2001, where the problem became international. In practice, terrorism is intended to influence a larger audience, disseminate a specific message for publicising a political or religious cause; demonstrate the weakness of a government; and ensure public and media overreactions purposefully.<sup>17</sup> Scholar Brian Jenkins, an expert on the study of terrorism, was once quoted in his work on the relation between publicity and terrorism, that ‘terrorist want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead’.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, terrorism becomes a calculated violence usually against symbolic targets, designed to deliver a political or religious message. Goals of the terrorists include winning popular support; provoking the attacked country to act rashly; attracting recruits; polarising the public opinion, demonstrating their ability to cause pain, or undermining Governments.<sup>19</sup>

In the contemporary global system, terrorism has been essentially trying to negate the existence of any political or alternate power and poses significant challenge to the political system and state authority.<sup>20</sup> Terrorism is challenging the legitimacy of the political authority by resorting to fear, surprise, violence or threat of violence to achieve their goals through coercion, illegal and immoral use of force, transnational violence and internationalisation of a conflict or demand along with the covert use or coverage by the media.<sup>21</sup> A terrorist act may create media attention for a long time, but are mainly planned out in secrecy and are aimed to bring about legitimacy of their acts and grievances by publicly bargaining for a negotiation with the Government.<sup>22</sup>



## Media and Terrorism

As in all forms of strategy, insurgencies or terrorist campaigns are dialectical struggles between competing adversaries; outcomes are determined by the interaction between opponents.<sup>23</sup>

— Colin S. Fray, British American Strategist and Director,  
Center for Strategic Studies, University of Reading

### *Oxygen of Survival*

Media scholar and researcher, Brigitte Nacos, described mass mediated terrorism as ‘a political violence against non combatants or symbolic targets designed to communicate a message to the broader audience’.<sup>24</sup> To create an environment for any irregular warfare including terrorism to thrive, it becomes important for the terrorist organisation to have a public backing and support for its cause and ideology. Strategist Carl Von Clausewitz suggested that this support, in the form of public opinion, was one of the centres of gravity of any popular uprising and was important for any activity to exist successfully.<sup>25</sup> Regardless of the time and space available, terrorist may fail if it cannot attract substantial domestic or international support, mainly because violence conducted without a comprehensible political or religious purpose will generate little popular support. Without that support, terrorists will only succumb to any efforts by the State.

Terrorists mainly have four media dependent goals which include capturing the attention of the audience inside and outside their target societies, seek recognition for their motives, seek respect and sympathy of those whose interest they claim to act for and seek quasi-legitimate status to receive attention from media.<sup>26</sup> While publicity has been a central goal of most terrorists throughout history, the means of communication have advanced from accounts by witnesses to news reporting in the press, radio, television and the internet, which has greatly enhanced a terrorist’s propaganda capabilities. More recently, the internet has emerged as a new and perhaps the most potent propaganda vehicle for terrorist groups to pull out prospective candidates and victims for terrorist activities. Terrorists need to convey the reason for their actions to obtain sympathy for their cause. They often seek to legitimise their use of violence through the media and aim to attain support for their cause by demonstrating moral superiority over those who represent the State by underestimating the State’s functions and

spread a persuasive message.<sup>27</sup> Terrorist organisations use the media as a conduit for their message to be heard by the target audience, at the same time catering ‘exciting news’ for the media.

Keeping in view the media, the terrorists have their own incentives to help tell the news channels how to report major terrorist incidents. They are able to tailor their activities in a manner, which would help them in getting maximum amount of publicity, and dissipate their message through all the communication channels available.<sup>28</sup> The media gets used by them to create publicity for terrorist acts that have no motivation except violence and national disturbance.<sup>29</sup> The terrorists also use the media to know about the way the Government will react and what precautionary measures are being taken against them. This gives them more time and incentives to find a retaliatory solution to counter the State. Terrorist organisations have also been accepting their activities by reaching out to the media outlets through phone calls or emails as was the scene in the Delhi High Court blasts in September 2011. Terrorists are in a short of time and want to transmit information as fast as possible, thereby using the channels to communicate faster and effectively,<sup>30</sup> and is mainly aimed at inflicting fear in the people watching rather than the victims.<sup>31</sup>

The first televised terrorist action was the kidnapping of Israeli athletes during the 1972 Olympics, held in Munich.<sup>32</sup> Despite tense situations between the Palestinian terrorist and the West German authorities, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) streamed live and uninterrupted coverage. The sports correspondents present there reported the situation for sixteen hours and Peter Jennings, ABC’s young Middle East correspondent, sneaked into the Italian athletes’ quarters and reported by phone.<sup>33</sup> The amazing footage by the American media had a tremendous impact on the US as well as all those countries which were watching the live reportage and helped ABC win 29 Emmys for its reporting at Munich.<sup>34</sup> The international media community that was present there to watch the Olympics Games provided an incredibly large unprecedented audience for the Palestinian terrorists’ activities that gave them an opportunity to draw public attention to their cause and usher in debates for the Israel-Palestinian peace process. There are also a number of examples of media facilitating terrorist actions which include the 1984 bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), and the Bali bombing in Indonesia in 2002 by Je’maah Islamiya. Similarly, a number of terrorist organisations have expanded and introduced their own media outlets to disseminate their news and propaganda. The Al Qaeda’s media outlet is called

the Al Sahab Media foundation and has successfully voiced the views of the terrorists to the outside world. Through this we can highlight that present day terrorists understand the capacity of the modern media to disseminate information through digital technology and the satellite, and to present live events that may cater to even the global audience. This instantaneous media exposure facilitates them in garnering larger audience to bring forward their grievances.<sup>35</sup>

### ***Adding Fuel to the Fire: Media's Interest in Terrorism***

Analysing the importance of media and communication for terrorists, it has been noted that the interest of global and national media in terrorism has also exploded post 9/11. The media, which captured the falling of the World Trade Center in 2001, now seeks to be one of the fore fronts for coverage and investigation of any terrorist activity around the world. Media has become more interested in covering terrorist activities as they are able to fulfil their conventional requirements of news broadcasts and news value, which include emotion and drama, uncertainty, limitation of time and space and the coronation of personalities,<sup>36</sup> and also complies with the routines and news judgments of media.<sup>37</sup> For public viewers, media becomes a gateway to the world of conflict and a frontline to the scene of action.

The use of narratives by the media is highly significant in attracting public attention towards the terrorists. The media primes and frames our attitudes and perceptions regarding the issue of terrorism, which are usually limited to violent and horrifying imagery. Media coverage provides the contagion effect of furthering undue coverage to a terrorist act and providing overexposed publicity to the terrorist.<sup>38</sup> On the same line, the media accentuates the act of terrorism by raising general information about their cause, provoking policy debates, building sympathetic international environment, and providing greater attention to the terrorist outfits.<sup>39</sup> Media broadcasts interviews of the terrorist leaders giving them a platform to voice their requirements.<sup>40</sup> As quoted in the Economist in an article published in 2007, it spoke about a fundamentalist magazine that advised all jihadis to actively involve themselves through the media. It read,

Film everything; this is great advice for all mujahedeens. You should be aware that every frame you take is as good as a missile fired at the crusader enemy and his puppets.<sup>41</sup>

Relation between media and terrorism are symbiotic and can be of three types: 1) after an act has been committed, the terrorist waits for the media's reactions; 2) the terrorists are able to give information to the media directly, 3) and the last more important mechanism used by the terrorists is that they are able to influence and control the media in a way that favours their cause.<sup>42</sup> The terrorists are able to gain media attention by making themselves available to the media for communication and first hand information. Thereby using these mechanisms, impact of media reporting on terrorism can be two types: one plays to the facilitation of terrorism as it propagates the terrorists view point, while the other may negate terrorist activity and help the Government to react swiftly and positively. Motives of the terrorists through the media remain to provoke loss of faith of the public in their Governments and attain recognition and legitimacy.<sup>43</sup>

However, a clear margin must also be made between the understanding of media facilitating terrorist activities and the extent to which public may support or rebuke these acts. Media does bring into notice lapses in Government actions on safeguarding national security and crisis management; and forces restructuring of counter terrorism mechanisms while covering reports on terrorism.<sup>44</sup> Analysing through studies, we can understand that media coverage does have an impact on public opinion, the Government's actions on terrorism and the management of public threat perception; but must take into account that media may only facilitate terrorism as it is not the propagator of the cause or instigator for the reason of the terrorist behaviour. Media does not affect the frequency of terrorism but impacts the form of political violence.<sup>45</sup> Media normally has a lack of definitional precision and politicises the term. Terrorists through the media use persuasive communication<sup>46</sup> to create terror not only to a restricted audience but to a larger region and in turn help themselves intimidate the Government and the international community. Thus, gaining publicity becomes important for prolonging any terrorist strategy. Terrorists help create through media a curiosity in the minds of the public and the reason for their activities, thereby bringing to forefront the grievances and causes of the terrorist. These activities may gain supporters; at the same time, can be rebuked by a large number, depending on the impact it has on the political institutions.

## *Media and Language*

...if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.

A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should know better.

— George Orwell, English author and journalist<sup>47</sup>

While understanding the relation between media and terrorism, it also becomes important to understand the language used by journalists while covering related issues, as different definitions of terrorism have been prescribed by different writers and reporters over the course of time. Even the definitions of the different National Governments and international organisations have not been able to agree upon one common definition, thereby creating a broader concept for the media to elaborate upon.<sup>48</sup> The terminology and phraseology used by the terrorists and Government officials are generally from extreme point of views, forcing the media to adopt one or the other's terms which, in turn, generally becomes the accepted way to express terrorism in the public domain.<sup>49</sup> The language used by the media becomes evaluative as serving the purpose of priming and constructing a version of restricted reality to the public. The media helps in labelling terrorists and framing attitudes of people towards the terrorists and their activities. The range of discourses about terrorism gets limited by this labelling that leads to a narrow approach of stereotyping of terrorism. The media organisations, through their language and visual imagery, in turn, exploit terrorism as infotainment for their own imperatives. However, there exist tensions in the media between the professional duty to report the news objectively and the need of the terrorists to use the media for promoting their goals.<sup>50</sup>

## *Complex Interdependence*

Therefore we can understand that though the relation between terrorism and media is complex yet deductable, terrorists mainly want the media to help them spread details of their identity, provide favourable understanding of their causes among the masses, promote sympathetic personnel in media organisations, and create legitimacy to their ideology and the view points of non-governmental organisations, thereby incurring damage to the public images of their enemies in the Government and the society.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, the Government who also uses the media wants to advance its own agenda against the terrorists through the news channels and newspapers. Government wants the media to present the terrorists as criminals in the

society, provide information to the civil and military authorities about them, help in diffusing the tensions, strictly avoid emotional presentations of stories linked to the terrorists and their past and families, restrict the access of valuable information to the terrorists; reveal the policies of the Government, publicise the political and military operations against the terrorists, cooperate in neutralising the immediate threats, and boost the image of the Governmental agencies in fighting the terrorists.<sup>52</sup>

From the perspective of journalists and reporters there exists a number of threats or challenges associated with media reporting on terrorism. Sometimes journalists or reporters seeking coverage or interaction with terrorist face a risk to their life and are forced to restrain or influence reporting based on the terrorist's preferences such as the killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl by the Taliban in 2002. Secondly, some news stories covered by the reporters on issues of terrorism may not be published or broadcasted due to its less newsworthiness or dramatic effect; thirdly, there is a lack of specialists existing in media who know the inside and outside of terrorism and can cater to the requirements of effective coverage and expertise.<sup>53</sup> Sometimes, information provided by official sources may be changed for personal benefits and the media is forced to restrict its reporting or flavour it to suit the sources needs. The media also risks security measures by aiding terrorists through coverage given on rescue operations or Government activities, which may require intervention by the authorities and censorship on the media. Also, sensationalisation by the media becomes a problem during coverage.<sup>54</sup>

Thus, terrorists need publicity in order to gain attention, inspire fear, respect for their cause and secure favourable understanding of their cause, while Governments must have public cooperation and understanding in efforts to inhibit terrorists from harming the society and also to punish the people involved in terrorist activities.<sup>55</sup> Playing in this field of complex interdependence, it also becomes important that the media limits the exploitation of modern communication systems by the terrorist organisations and refrains from censoring the news about terrorists; retains the right to information of the people; avoids the risk of becoming a 'tool' in the hands of either the Government or the terrorists, and restrains from presenting too much about the terrorists.<sup>56</sup> Thus, the importance of the triangular relationship between terrorism and Government makes way for newer trends in media activities and governance.

## Indian Media and Reporting on Terrorism

### *Terrorism Laws in India*

Conflict has always been of news value for media due to its public importance and its implications on the security situation of a country. The involvement of media and journalists in 'our war' and 'our conflict' situation has always been tremendous and enthusiastic.<sup>57</sup> India has a long history of facing terrorist threats and acts, mainly in Kashmir, and the Indian media over the years has been able to play a major role in trying to ensure that the focus of the campaign remains on terrorism and role of the Government in resolving the problems responsible for the growth of terrorism. In response to heightened national security concerns, the Indian Government introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO), a modified version of the previous Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) of 1987. The POTO was signed into law on October 24, 2001. It was introduced as a bill in the Parliament and was passed on March 27, 2002. The need for a new law was under way because TADA allegedly forced politically motivated detentions, torture and other human rights violations committed against minorities, trade union activists and political opponents in the late 1980s and early 1990s. TADA was ended in 1995 with mounting opposition for the act.

Civil rights groups, journalists, minority rights groups and the National Human Rights Commission also condemned POTO due to the discriminatory and violative power it provided, similar to that of TADA. However, a new law was introduced in the Parliament in 2002 – the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) – which set forth a broad definition of terrorism that included acts of violence or disruption of essential services carried out with 'intent to threaten the unity and integrity of India or to strike terror in any part of the people'<sup>58</sup> and aimed to punish all guilty without any sort of discrimination. The POTA was also repealed by the Indian Government for its draconian laws and now the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act amended in 2008, and the National Security Act are being strengthened to meet the security needs of the country. The Indian media had been supportive of the POTA, and is being actively involved in covering issues related to terrorism, both domestic and international set within the legal framework.<sup>59</sup> The Indian media is also aware that terrorism in India is connected to global terrorism and needs hard power to effectively fight the terrorist forces.

### ***Indian Media Coverage of Contemporary Warfare***

The Indian media's tryst with terrorism started in the 1980s with the Khalistan movement. The media coverage limited to the praising of its founder, Jarnail Singh Bhindranewala in the early 1970s, portrayed an unaware Indian media, which went ahead in naming Bhindranewala as the 'Saint' of the new Sikh movement.<sup>60</sup> As a consequence, the emergency declared in 1975-77 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stripped the Indian media of all its power and freedom of dissemination. However the 'terrorisation' of the movement and its consequences helped the Indian media understand the gravity of the situation. During 'Operation Blue Star' in 1984, the Indian media which got re-activated, and mainly the regional newspapers such as the Punjab Tribune, supported the counter-terrorism operations of the Indian Army and the Government to a large extent. The newspapers in the country helped to provide information to the local people and even published grievances of the victims in the riots.

The Indian media's role in covering the Kandahar hijack of 1999 is not only commendable but also questionable. Though the media was able to create an upsurge in national support for releasing the Pakistani prisoners and terrorists in exchange for the lives of the Indian hostages, it failed to understand the future complexity and unwarranted pressure in releasing the Pakistani terrorist Masood Azhar who later masterminded a number of terrorist attacks on India. The media was too late in realising its dramatic reporting and criticised itself briefly in playing into the hands of the terrorists and further disheartening the Government from boldly negotiating. Over the years, the Indian newspapers and television channels have also covered a number of attacks on the Indian soil by foreign and domestic terrorists including the attacks on the legislative assembly in Jammu and Kashmir and the attacks on the Indian Parliament, both in 2001. The Indian media has been able to provide coverage to the accused as well as question the structural setup of the Government to punish these terrorists.

The Indian media has also actively covered news of the menace of Naxal insurgency, one of the crippling national security threats in India. The sensitivity of the issue has prompted regional newspapers to even sideline with the demands of the insurgents. This has impacted ideologically and helped increase sympathisers within the country. From 2007, there has been a steady increase in the number of articles reported on the problem of Naxalism in India. The regional channels mainly in the North East and eastern part of India have interviewed the insurgent leaders and aired the coverage to a large audience, mainly focussing on the failure of the Government to react promptly. However,



not much expertise on national security or strategic studies exists in Indian media and the coverage of related national security issues but stringent laws have been put into place for effective reporting.

### *The Coverage of 26/11: A Case Study*

In the contemporary era, terrorism has gone beyond boundaries and its traditional scope to expand into cities where both the urban middle class and rich are falling targets to the terrorist activities. Mumbai, in western India has always been a hub of most anti national activities including terrorism, smuggling and drug trafficking, mainly due to its large population and proximity to the sea. The hugely populated metropolitan city and commercial capital became a victim to terrorism for the first time in 1993. The Gateway of India bomb blasts, according to evidences, were caused and planned by domestic factors and mafia groups within India, who operated from other countries. Though Mumbai has often fallen prey to illegal and terrorist activities due to its location, the terrorist attack on Mumbai on November 26, 2008 brought the world to a standstill and challenged India's national security strategy, thereby questioning its pledge against regional and global terrorism. 26/11 also made a radical transformation in the minds of the Indian media who profoundly linked the terrorist activities to foreign hands<sup>61</sup> and became crusaders of national identity.

As the Mumbai terror attacks was studied in detail by analysts, it was learnt that a group of heavily armed men, ten in number alleged to be backed by Pakistani terrorist groups including the Lashkar-e-Toiba, attacked multiple targets, starting from Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus (the main railway terminus in Mumbai); Cafe Leopold (in the Colaba locality) frequented by foreigners; the Nariman House Jewish Centre (in the same neighbourhood), to two seven star hotels, the Oberoi Trident and the Taj Mahal Palace. This high profile terrorist act was commandeered through maritime facilities including a small fishing boat caught off the coast of the Arabian Sea. The firing and bomb blasts lead to casualties numbering 164 dead and 308 injured. 26 of those dead were foreigners of different nationalities.<sup>62</sup> The operation between the terrorists and the security officials took more than 60 hours and was captured by the media live, relaying it to the domestic and international audience as well as the terrorist leaders behind the whole operation. The national security guards came at the site of attack within hours and were finally successful on November 29, 2008 in completely terminating the attack by killing all the nine terrorists and capturing one terrorist alive, Ajmal Kasab for further interrogations.

### ***Indian Media's 24X7 War***

The case study of the coverage of 26/11 becomes important in this paper to understand the role of Indian media in national security and the power it possesses in shaping public minds. Though a number of research has been conducted post-2008 interrogating the Indian media's reporting of the terrorist attacks, the event provides scope for further inspection and also helps develop methods to improve the commercially active Indian media in the context of an unstable, constantly changing security needs. The various national dailies including the Hindu, the New Indian Express and the Times of India carried headlines of the incident on November 27, 2008 while broadcasting channels such as CNN-IBN and NDTV were able to cover the live telecast of the whole rescue operation. The Mumbai terror attacks were covered every inch by the energetic and wholesome Indian broadcast media which took it upon itself a task similar to the American media's coverage of the Iraq war of 2003. Most dailies compared the situation to a war zone and concentrated on Mumbai becoming a playground of war between India and Pakistan. Headlines in the Indian media flashed 'Breaking News' that announced war in Mumbai. The newspapers also covered human interest stories that focused on families that had fallen victim to the attacks.<sup>63</sup> The national news channels covered the live rescue operations which unfortunately helped terrorists to locate and understand the action being taken by the Government and the chance to act against it successfully. The news channels were present at the scene, running around with the rescue teams, at the same time covering the victims. Some channels even got to interact with the terrorist thereby giving them free publicity.

International newspapers and news channels reported on Indian media's failure of over-exploding the situation and questioned the credibility of the Indian newspapers and channels. As reported in the Los Angeles times on January 18, 2009,

one thing that sparked criticism of the Mumbai attack news coverage was the live broadcast of a commando helicopter assault on the roof of the Nariman House Jewish Centre, which detractors say eliminated the element of surprise and undercut the operation.<sup>64</sup>

The Indian media gave expertise commentary on the lack of coordination by the Government in rescue operation whilst covering them, which brought an element of unpreparedness in the public mind. There was a hysterical portrayal by the media who were excited to involve themselves in a real time

conflict and orchestrated anger against the political class who they blamed were incapable of protecting the country. The impact of the media was felt in the details and duration of coverage which lasted for days. The number of sources which the media kept on highlighting during the operations helped create a battleground situation.

The critics around the country stated that the Mumbai attacks and its coverage was TV terror involved in gory violent visual imagery. The media was sensationalist, overdramatic and quick to respond to unconfirmed information.<sup>65</sup> Coverage of the Mumbai attacks showed how national interest and security can be betrayed and human lives jeopardised by indiscreet and unguided reporting as even rescue operations were not treated to its gravity by the media. The Indian news channels were unprepared with a code of conduct for such situations, but more importantly, the Government was as clueless about the consequences of live coverage and indiscreet information volunteered by its officers.<sup>66</sup> The coverage also saw competition between media houses for Prime Time and Television Rating Points, without understanding the seriousness of the issue they were covering. In the days following the attacks, the Indian flag was often used by broadcasters as a visual backdrop with viewers' text messages expressing anger at politicians or at Pakistan, which were continuously scrolling at the bottom of the screen. Film director Mahesh Bhatt criticised the CNN-IBN news channel of encroaching on his territory after the channel played Bollywood songs from movies about wars between India and Pakistan during news updates,<sup>67</sup> and Indian film actors were given airtime to provide their analysis on the issue. They even made statements that were provocative, and mainly intended to create a grim situation with Pakistan.

Both the Indian and Pakistani media were involved in war of words which was brought forward by the international media such as the New York Times. The papers portrayed these two media as threatening national security of their respective countries by provoking each other and calling the situation a war and pushing towards a military confrontation. The Indian media, which was criticised for over misusing its freedom of speech and expression, accepted incendiary language against Pakistan. Most national news channels in India played martial music during updates that revealed commandos operations and location of hostages. One news channel, India TV, aired telephone conversations with one of the 10 gunmen and provoked anger amongst the masses. Media analyst Daya Thussu wrote in detail about the Indian media coverage and stated that the Indian media referred 26/11 as India's 9/11, thereby creating the hype

and comparison to the American media's coverage of terrorism.<sup>68</sup> There was a sense of war mongering by the camerapersons and reporters who lay prostrated outside the Taj Palace hotel for hours. In all, he called the coverage as 'non-stop news generated soap opera'.

Reporting of 26/11 was thus theatrical and extensive, urging the government for a war with Pakistan. The newspapers reported on the intelligence failure and lack of efficiency of the police forces. The Urdu press mainly focused on domestic factors being responsible for the terrorist acts which further destabilised peace talks between the two countries. They linked Mumbai blasts with the Malegaon blasts, bringing a connection between the blasts and domestic politics.<sup>69</sup> The Indian media, both national and regional, failed miserably in understanding its role in coverage of national security issues and the Government also failed to handle the media in such tight situations.

Post the incident, the public and the NGOs complained of adverse effects of the coverage mainly on children and brought it to the Government's notice. At the same time live reporting by the Indian media came under scrutiny in the Parliament which was later sent as a complaint to the Supreme Court. The media reacted harshly to the criticism but came to comply that it had conducted grave coverage which was against the ethics of reporting.

### ***Criticism and Actions Taken***

After the coverage and the operations of the attack was over, the South Asia Media Commission (SAMC) in its report 'South Asia Media Monitor 2008, slammed the media (both in India and Pakistan) for promoting hysteria among the people.<sup>70</sup> The broadcast media was not abiding by the self-regulatory code of ethics and standards adopted by the New Broadcasters Association, an association of 14 networks operating across India in September 2008. The print and broadcast media were seen as immature and not self-restrained in a highly explosive environment. The absence of a concerted media management by the authorities was seen as contributing to the chaotic nature of reporting. Besides irresponsible reporting, TV stations were also seen as elitist in their reporting where they concentrated on the hostages at the Taj Mahal Palace and Trident-Oberoi hotels, which are the domains of the country's wealthy and ruling class, whilst largely ignoring Chatrapati Shivaji train terminus which was the site of the largest number of casualties and where a total of 58 people were gunned down by the terrorists. These claims however focussed on the media's limitation in accessibility of coverage.

On the other hand, the Indian media felt that the authorities did not have proper protocols in place to help them report on emergency situations. They criticised the Government for failing to keep up with the developments in the media industry and not being proactive in creating a procedure for the coverage of national emergencies.<sup>71</sup> The authorities were seen as lacking a clear information and communication management strategy. The lack of orchestration in feeding information to the media was raised as another important factor that led to uncontrolled and chaotic reporting. In the post-event discussions about the role of the media, it was pointed out that the authorities themselves fed details to the media without restraint. In addition to this, different authorities gave separate and contradictory accounts and versions to the news organisations. The media on its part felt that the authorities needed to coordinate amongst themselves and the different news organisations while covering issues of national security and provide timely briefing to involve the media effectively.

Post 26/11, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, mooted a proposal to amend the existing Programme Code under the Cable Television Rules of 1994 and introduced 19 new amendments. These included proposals to introduce restrictions on live coverage of war or violent law and order situations, disclosures about security operations, live interviews with victims, security personnel or perpetrators of crime.<sup>72</sup> As per the guidelines, the media is required not to patronise terrorists. The National Broadcaster's Association also announced a new set of rules for the Indian media industry in December 2008.

### **Any Lessons Learnt?**

The function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act.

— Walter Lippmann, American writer and media expert<sup>73</sup>

While analysing the Indian media's reporting on terrorism, mainly the reporting on 26/11 we can highlight that the media became a participant and not an observer, which limited its ability to report objectively and effectively.<sup>74</sup> In addition, while most electronic journalists are generalists, print media often has the luxury of developing staff specialists on topics, which helps to provide more accurate and in-depth information during a disaster, but the Indian newspapers got entangled in covering real time information for more public viewing and

forgot to create a positive and less sensationalised reporting.<sup>75</sup> The media in India has the privilege and authority to report issues on national security but chose not to provide responsibility and accountability to the State and its people, who are direct consumers of the media reports.<sup>76</sup>

### **26/11 vs. 13/7**

However, building up on Indian media coverage in the present security environment, we can note that due to the cautious regulations taken by the Indian Government and the media, coverage of the recent terror attacks in Mumbai on July 13, 2011 was more restrained. The attack comprising of bomb blasts ripping through three points in the State, crippled the middle-class community of the city. This time around, the media was self-controlled due to the lessons learnt from the 26/11 attacks and the subsequent restrictions imposed by the Government.<sup>77</sup> Providing a comparative analysis the reporting was more moderate as there was no live coverage of the rescue operations but only broadcast videos that showed the blast. The news channels streamed help lines and restricted its viewing of gruesome videos. There was no one to blame for the attacks and thus there was a discussion that the blasts may have been by home-grown terrorists. Their coverage was cautious, non speculative and disciplined. The Indian newspapers covered stories on India's failed national security and the need to revamp the security system. The national dailies and channels were mostly restrained and informed viewers on the effects of any violent images that were being shown on television during the coverage; as a precaution. However, some regional news channels did show dramatic imagery and soundtrack during their broadcasts. The national dailies focused on Maharashtra Government's incapability in coordinating with the Central Government on intelligence and effective counter terrorism strategies. However, there were some discussions on India-Pakistan relations which associated the attacks to foreign hands. The Indian media also failed to continue the discussion on the terror attacks and focused more on domestic issues of politics and compartmentalised terrorism into a blame game.

### **Changing Media Behaviour**

The new guidelines issued post 26/11 did create a structure to ban broadcasting of footage that would reveal security operations and live contact with hostages or attackers.<sup>78</sup> The guidelines request broadcasters to avoid unnecessary repetition of archival footage which might agitate viewers and also emphasise

on self-regulation by the media. Many of these guidelines still hinge on self-regulation as the guiding principle. However, it binds only broadcasters who are willing to be part of the association or submit to its jurisdiction; and it may not be able to restrict information available or put on the internet, or coverage of issues by citizen journalists.<sup>79</sup> Thus, there was not the lack of laws but the deficit of a well established Media-Government cooperation and regulation in crisis situations. The reporting of the 26/11 attacks clearly showed the difference of interests between the Government and the Indian media and the sort of cooperation and understanding between the two. The international media mainly the British Broadcasting Corporation has already laid down guidelines for its coverage during its early years, which has helped effective reporting by the BBC in a number of issues and helped sustain its presence as one of the world's best news channels and source of information.<sup>80</sup> The Indian news channels also need to have such guidelines in place while dealing with national emergency situations, such that mistakes while reporting can be averted. It is also becomes important that the Government does not negate the reporting of news channels and vice versa. The need of a strong Media-Government complex is highly essential for securing the nation during any national security threat. The News Broadcasting standards dispute redressal authority is also required to continuously check the coverage by Indian media. Coverage of national security needs no crackdown but a self regulated media.

Thus, we can summarise that though effective regulations were imposed on the Indian media post 26/11, it did not completely succeed in playing an effective role in highlighting the sensitivity of the issue of terrorism in India and bringing forward the lack of counter terrorism mechanisms in the country. Another terrorist attack occurred outside Delhi High Court on September 07, 2011 which was given temporary memory space by the Indian media and no extensive discussions have been continuing on the lack of security measures in the country. Such a comparison becomes relevant because counter terrorism laws can be essentially enacted and driven through a response based on a country's security needs, which are greatly enhanced by the information obtained by the media and conveyed to the public. This information portrayed to the public is not merely controlled by law but is woven by secrecy and trust and its control in turn becomes essential for national security policy making.<sup>81</sup> Though it becomes effective in analysing the role of the media in safeguarding a country's national security needs in theoretical framework, it also becomes

important that a practical groundwork is laid for its positive involvement. Such an understanding also becomes essential to the Indian Government and the Indian media, to help accelerate the need for both institutions to cooperate and coordinate efficiently at all levels as part of the larger national security strategy of our country.

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## 4. THE MEDIA OF THE 21ST CENTURY: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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The first Gulf War of 1991 was a turning point for the US Cable News Network (CNN), as it helped create public profile for the channel. The ecstatic coverage of Peter Arnett, CNN's reporter, from the roof of his hotel in downtown Baghdad created the hype that has given CNN the power it has today.<sup>1</sup> He also created what is known as the 'CNN Effect', the synonym of policymakers and authorities witnessing what is happening live on television and telephoning operational guidance to the security officials on the ground.<sup>2</sup> This example through its technique shows us that the media of today has successfully pushed further the process of increased globalisation and has summarised foreign policy and international relations to a compact world structure that has become dependent on information as a major resource for building a secure global environment.<sup>3</sup>

In the course of sufficient analysis, one can conclude through the earlier chapters that the media of the current world system plays an important role in Nation building and public engagement. In the same context, the media has emerged as a key source of information to the State and the global system and encompasses the potential to influence and change the global structure, both positively and negatively. Even for a country's national security, the media plays a vital role in securing and promoting the interests that help safeguard the people and the institutions. Contemporary challenges such as terrorism and insurgency also require the media to play a common and active role alongside the Government to effectively counter the emerging threats and diminish their influence on the minds of the people. On a broader concept, however, the media's role still remains to educate people on the functions and objectives of the Government and to inform them about their rights and responsibilities. They remain the bridge between the Government and the people, and act as a check point that ensures the Government is working within its mandate in terms of meeting the challenges of national security and preparing itself to face any crisis.

Even for the world's largest democracy India, its media acts as a vital tool for national integration and stability and in most cases, has the freedom to even question the Government's policies on a number of issues. A correlation has

also been established on the role of media on national security issues and its ability to safeguard Government policies in the previous chapters and a broad understanding has been provided to analyse media reporting as ‘sides of a single coin’. Through benefits and shortcomings, this concluding chapter aims to understand how the role of national print and broadcast media, mainly in India, in all its background, can be incorporated for serving the purposes of our national security and allowing both the Government and the Indian media to effectively understand each other’s limitations and cooperate accordingly.

## **Analyzing the Actions of the Indian Media**

### ***Promoter of National Security***

As was explained in the previous chapter on the compatibility between media and terrorism, the terrorists need the media to spread fear among the State and its people in order to achieve their agenda, and the media in turn utilises the dramatic characteristics of terrorist acts to attain extra public space.<sup>4</sup> However, we must understand that terrorists do not actually support openness, and thereby, fear new ideas, perceiving the modern world as a threat and not as an opportunity. This openness in society can be accelerated mainly through the media, which in turn, forces the terrorist in not using the media for spreading its propaganda, as the media would have already cautioned the public about the narrow scope of any terrorist plan and thus their act would have no effects on the public mind.<sup>5</sup> One must, thus, highlight that the presence of a free and independent press or news organisation, not only confined to factual reporting in terms of national security issues, is often a guarantee against any kind of terrorism including State-sponsored terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

Building on the same concept, it becomes important to understand that in a free and democratic country like India, the role of media can be enhanced significantly with the right tools needed to safeguard our national interests, and secure the nation from crisis situations, unlike authoritarian countries like China who often put their journalists behind bars for seeking information on national security or even questioning the authorities.<sup>7</sup> This key instrument that India possesses in the form of a free and moderately fair media can be used tremendously to the country’s advantages and advancements in security. Supporting this, the first chapter highlights the positive impact of the Indian media in decisions taken on national security and how it gets passed on to the domestic and international audience. An optimistic approach is drawn to the

role the Indian media plays in the country and the future it can play in upholding the framework of effective governance. However, the Indian media also has its drawbacks and crippling characteristics, which make it even more complicated for the Government to conform to the ever-changing demands and roles of the Indian newspapers and news channels.

### ***Obstructor to National Security***

As was indicated in the chapter on 'Indian Media and Terrorism', the Indian media was highly criticised for its uncontrolled reporting of ground situations of the Mumbai terror attacks on November 26, 2011. Although not restricted to terrorism reporting, another example of the effect of crisis reporting by the media if ill briefed was underlined through the Indian news channels which ran anti-China bulletins in 2009. These reports began on 09 August, of Chinese offensive into the western sector of the Line of Actual Control. On 30 August, it was reported that Chinese helicopters entered Leh and airdropped canned food well beyond their expiry date.<sup>8</sup> Chinese helicopters were also reported to have crossed over into the Indian territory of the Pangong Lake. On 06 September, news channels reported that Chinese troops had entered Indian Territory near Mount Gaya in the Chumar sector, and painted boulders and rocks in Cantonese<sup>9</sup>, which was even shown on the news channels. There were regular reports of transgressions in Sikkim and in September 2009, the Indian newspapers reported that Chinese incursions in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir had left two<sup>10</sup> Indo-Tibetan Border Police jawans injured from the firing from across the Line of Actual Control, which both the Indian Foreign Ministry and the Chinese government denied. Some of the Urdu press also reported of Chinese soldiers beating up Indian shepherds near the Aksai Chin area.<sup>11</sup>

However, all these incidents were denied outrightly by the Government and security officials from both the concerned countries. Even the media channels and newspapers which ran these stories were short of evidences and facts to support their claims. In the midst of such melodrama, the National Security Advisory Council of India convened a meeting in September 2009 to discuss the war like hysteria that the Indian media was creating and proposed strong measures that were needed to control the media.<sup>12</sup> The International news channels such as the BBC picked this issue as 'Chinese bashing in Indian media',<sup>13</sup> and criticised such an approach as a market strategy. They even stated that the Indian media was creating threat to India-China relationship and was being received negatively by the Chinese Government as representing the views of the Government in New

Delhi. The Indian diplomats in turn harshly responded that China lacked the inability to differentiate between Indian media and the Indian Government and that both were independent of each other.<sup>14</sup> The Indian Government remained reluctant to allow matters to escalate between the neighbours but the Chinese Government representatives and state media reacted strongly against the Indian media, reducing the Indian officials to a spectator role. However, as was stated by an Indian diplomat posted in Beijing at the time, the international community criticised Chinese reactions:

As long as it was anger in the Indian media, China saw it as a provocation by India but not a public relations issue. But then the Western media – American, European and Australian newspapers and networks – began to pick up the story from the Indian newspapers and news channels. And suddenly China seemed to be bullying another neighbour.<sup>15</sup>

Though the Indian and Chinese Governments were able to calm the situation that was flared unnecessarily by the Indian media as a provocation to involve Sino-India talks, the unrestrained meddling by the Indian media questioned its capacity to be engaged in future by the Government, in positive enhancement of security related issues. Secondly, these incidents clearly indicated how media can affect controversies between countries and neighbours and affect national security strategy of the involved nations. Thus, we can infer that the Indian media continues to remain a pendulum that fluctuates between promoting or obstructing threats to national security if not well guided and enhanced. The Indian media is also in a shift in mimicking the role of the western media in national security and often misuses its power without proper understanding of strategic depth. Therefore, it becomes important that States and journalists cooperate and understand each other to help minimise the vulnerability of the media to ebb and flow, and help to bring it to a constant level of constructive engagement and stable governance.

## **Media-State Relations in Conflict Reporting**

### ***Understanding Fault Lines in India***

The relation between State and its media becomes relevant and essential mainly while dealing with the security of the State and its people. As the previous chapters highlight, the media plays a major role in implementing the policies



of the Government and attains public support for effective governance. Thus, it becomes highly essential for any Government not to ignore the media institutions playing inside its territory and engage them in all aspects of development and sustenance. It is also important to understand that national security goals of any State are strategic, long-term and involve both foreign and domestic policies.<sup>16</sup> It is wider and complex, and meets both military and non-military aspects, and thus, involves a holistic approach to employ all major institutions active in the State.

In the context of India, there remains lack of interest in the understanding of national security by the political community and in turn a lack of adequate interest by the media.<sup>17</sup> Space on international relations, foreign policy and national security has decreased in print media with the coming of entertainment news. No enlightenment on strategic issues and full hour long expert discussions are presented on the television unless and until a crisis occurs,<sup>18</sup> thereby bringing a discontinuity in analysing any serious threats. News channels are also being privatised and mostly devoted to entertainment, thereby creating vacuum for the rural audience to connect with the government's policies. There exist limited magazines and journals on strategic issues and national security in India, which are not always available to the general audience due to inadequate readership and most articles seem to be based on ideological orientation of the writer.<sup>19</sup> The strategic community also lacks in understanding the media and cooperating with them on issues of national security relevance. In the Western countries, mainly the US, analytical newspaper articles on issues of national security are the result of intense interaction between journalists and officials in the Government,<sup>20</sup> as it is part of their effective governance to provide information to journalists for their own analysis and conclusions.

### **Setting Patterns of Change: Role of Indian Media Organisations**

A great challenge for the Indian Media-State relations remains to report conflicts in ways that prompt constructive public consideration of possibilities that avoid any violent reactions in times of crisis mainly during terrorist activities.<sup>21</sup> While implementing effective measures through the State, the media can help in provoking new ideas and approaches to problems by involving experts and strategists who can also help ensure factual and accurate reporting during crisis situations.<sup>22</sup> The media in India should develop standards of conduct in crisis coverage that include giving adequate attention to serious efforts taken by the Government to defuse and resolve the conflicts, without exposing or

compromising any sort of rescue operations, as was done in the coverage of 26/11 terror attacks. A news media council, consisting of professional journalists, could help in monitoring and enforcing acceptable professional practices and bring professional peer pressure on editors who have sent reporters into conflict areas, for increasing rapid reaction capability.<sup>23</sup> In addition, the major networks should develop ways to expose public to the conditions and issues that could give rise to mass violence through regular public service programming that focuses on 'hot spots' of terrorist or insurgent indoctrination. Such a service should include international media experts and also made available to schools and other educational institutions at the national and regional level.<sup>24</sup> Though models of professional standards for media in reporting on conflicts and terrorism such as the 'Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News and Current Affairs Television Channels' have recently been created, its proper implementation still lacks coherence by the Government as the initiative was pressurised into action by the editors and not the policymakers,<sup>25</sup> thereby creating a divide.

There is also a need for journalists to conceptualise and contextualise terrorism and present the issue before the public and help them deliberate with a better perspective.<sup>26</sup> Media must engage in interpretative representation of violent events so that the public does not misunderstand the intentions and picturisation portrayed in the news channels. Another aspect that the media can use to counter threats emanating from Non-State actors is the use of psychology, mainly from the fields of stress and cognitive psychology that can offer the media power to counter-terrorism rather let terrorism use the media to promote its own ends.<sup>27</sup> Cognitive psychology areas like persuasion, influence, and message framing have great relevance for media in buffering effects of terrorism. In the aftermath of a terrorist attack, the need for intelligent and balanced reporting becomes even more important. Since the purpose of terrorism is 'to terrify',<sup>28</sup> the journalists have the choice of furthering the terrorist cause or of providing balanced, safety-oriented stories to calm the public.

While reporting issues of national security relevance, reporters should not expect officials to teach them about public administration, geography, and disaster mechanisms while they are trying to manage an emergency and should provide vital safety information to the public. When a disaster occurs, the reporter should review the collected data and verify it. Also, the media conferences during peaceful times provide an opportunity for observant reporters to obtain useful information and unique details for their stories. A reporter who has laid the groundwork can ask questions that the public would ask, going beyond prepared press releases and

remarks, to the centre of the society's concerns during the crisis. A mutual approach between journalists and officials in such an interactive setting will help produce effective answers. A properly developed media strategy for conflict reporting by the Government also provides a common base for operations for both journalists and those who meet their needs. The media centre like the Press Council of India would be a place where pre-arranged interviews with security officials and pool coverage can be done.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Setting Patterns of Change: Role of the Indian Government***

There is a belief that the journalists just report facts, which in turn gives the State a chance to create and tailor information for journalists to report. They also think that it is part of the media strategy to simply state their actions and statements to the reporters and build public opinion through the facts they establish. This indirectly helps the State, in providing the pattern of future behaviour and influencing parties in a conflict. There have also been numerous attempts to manipulate the media by Governments, by creating undue pressure on journalists which is actually damaging to the quality of coverage of the conflict. However, in the context of terrorism, the States must encourage strategies that do not promote fear, ignorance and intolerance among the people and the media.<sup>30</sup> Journalists must be free to work without being subjected or scrutinised under Governmental definitions of 'patriotism' or 'national interest'. To uphold the ideals of national security; the journalists must also be able to include information excluded by Government officials, to the public, which will not harm national security in any ways.

At the same time, there has been a debate that Governments and politicians have been developing counter-terrorism strategies, which may damage existing laws and threaten standards of personal and press freedom.<sup>31</sup> There also remains a tendency for security officials involved in crisis management to disregard journalists and marginalise them, largely based on fear of the manipulative power and influence of the media.<sup>32</sup> The public relations offices of these institutions continue to be ill-prepared to deal with the media during crisis situations.<sup>33</sup> Restricting freedom of the press will only force the Government and the public succumb to the terrorist's propaganda of controlling an informed world. They may also try to escalate violence so that it is unavoidable for the media and the Government not to cover or respond to it.<sup>34</sup> We must understand that a country like India, situated in a volatile environment of instability and contemporary threats of irregular warfare, is vulnerable to hostage-taking or any kind of attack,

and it becomes important for its Government and security authorities to adopt an aggressive media relations strategy that capitalises on its media's reach and impact, and one that begins before any terrorist event happens and is sustained even when there is no event envisaged.<sup>35</sup>

The Government must be able to present a political message through the media to the terrorists, whether foreign or home-grown and must be accompanied by effective actions to show that the State will and can respond powerfully.<sup>36</sup> The terrorists 'propaganda of the deed' must be diffused by the Government through a firm and lawful response, which can range from enforcing a 'no negotiations with terrorists' policy by the media to providing basic necessities like security,<sup>37</sup> and ensuring the public their basic safety. The State through its media should be able to prove that they are morally superior to the terrorists and will provide for the needs of their citizens, including those who are supporting such anti-national sentiments. There is also a need for financing joint media and Government training exercises; establishing a Government terrorism information response centre similar to the media centre in Sri Lanka with staff that are experienced and willing to meet the needs of the reporters and photo and video journalists during any situation promoting use of media pools voluntary press coverage guidelines and monitoring terrorism against the media.<sup>38</sup>

Dealing with the media in an insurgent environment should be well defined to avoid any last minute blame game. The programmes to expose the media to conditions of live counter conflict operations and near combat situations by embedding them in selected operations must be resorted to. There must be regular conferences and briefing on issues of national security relevance by the authorities and strategists, in order to build a mechanism of trust and compatibility between the officials and the journalists. If reporters are to interview the officials properly, the officials, in turn, must prepare to participate actively. Though the Government has a cadre of trained media relations specialists to develop relationships with the journalists, the officials must be prepared to accept guidance from their public information specialists, and remain open to requests for media contact, because most reporters want to speak with official sources for national security issues. Thus, the authorities need to accept interaction with the media as an important part of their jobs.

### ***Combining Efforts***

Whether or not the media can rightly be portrayed as entirely independent entities, their influence as a whole is enormous for any State, as the media's

interpretive representation of violent events has a wide and powerful impact on the public.<sup>39</sup> It becomes important to encourage the constructive use of the media to promote understanding, problem solving and intergroup relations, even if the issues are not always under the heading of 'Breaking News'.<sup>40</sup> In this contemporary situation, the journalists have also become political actors, and are not restricted to only neutral observers. Interpretation and judgment have thus become inherent in all reporting on conflict. As was indicated by former President of India, Mr. M. K. Narayanan, the Indian journalists must be trained in seven aspects by the Government which include a messenger approach with objectivity, not being complacent, to report both facts and probabilities, self-restraint, to publish an unpalatable point of view, not to comment on suspect facts, and to be able to tune high technology to social conditions.<sup>41</sup>

Also, the Government of India as part of initiating a strategic culture in the country amidst debates created an expert committee on January 10, 2011 to review the functioning of defence and strategic studies in universities in India.<sup>42</sup> The committee which aims to review the functioning of institutions in India and their contribution to the study and understanding of national security needs of the country accelerates young scholars and researchers to develop faculty and research in consultation with policymakers, strategists and academicians. Through the committee it has been found that only 29 universities teach defence studies in India, mainly concentrating on military issues and there remains a lack of a national level academic expert council on strategic and security issues. Though the curriculum for such an implementation takes into view the needs of national security strategy of India and is a big step forward for Indian education as a whole, the syllabi lacks the study and research of media and national security, which is an urgent need of the hour. Because, unlike the West, only countable research and educational institutions conduct analysis and study on the role of Indian media in the broader policymaking and safeguarding of national security aspects of the country. Thus, there is a need for creating media and security experts and researchers in the country.

### ***Reporting on Terrorism***

There are also a number of precautions and regulations that media and the Government must follow while covering terrorism related issues. These include making deliberate attempts to balance coverage to counteract some of the negative effects of terrorism acknowledge that news tailoring is a fact of everyday news production and focus on reporting that might be expected

to lessen tensions and aid the negotiating process<sup>43</sup> accept that the media have an important role to play in public education and legitimate needs of law enforcement against terrorism or any anti national activities encompass a vigorous determination to investigate and report on the injustices in society which may be the cause of the acts of terrorism<sup>44</sup> paraphrase demands of the terrorist rather than directly report them<sup>45</sup> no broadcasting of live interview with terrorists during crisis situations, and avoid airing emotional reactions of public during rescue operations. The media and the State must remember that counter-terrorism has a lot to do with intelligence and law enforcement and must also take that into consideration. The Government must publicise useful material guidelines for journalists covering any crisis in order to promote better understanding of the issues involved and the need for professionalism; provide useful data on safety of journalists and risk awareness; promote the importance of tolerance and quality in journalism to counter negative interpretation or misunderstanding of any community or culture; and sponsor regional seminars and conferences on terrorism and the role of media with the support of appropriate international agencies and press freedom agencies,<sup>46</sup> as was conducted by the Supreme Court, the Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the National Law School Academy in 2011.

### **Media for Conflict Resolution**

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed.

— Preamble to the UNESCO constitution of 1945<sup>47</sup>

### **The Innovativeness of Peace Journalism**

The reporting of any conflict including the coverage by the Indian media restricts itself to the traditional coverage of wars and conflict termed as war journalism<sup>48</sup> whose study is well advanced in countries in both educational and research expertise. However contradictory, the study of peace journalism has only recently emerged, mainly developed in the 1970s,<sup>49</sup> and is being understood by western media as part of the larger framework of effective conflict reporting. Though redundant in Indian media, peace journalism is a fairer way to cover conflict, suggest ways to improve professional attitudes and performance, strengthen human, moral and ethical values in the media, widen scholarly and professional media horizons and provide better public service from the media.<sup>50</sup>

For a country like India, which has a number of conflicts in its regional vicinity, the concept of peace journalism in media outlets helps utilise our soft power in countering a number of threats including terrorism and reach out to the domestic and international audience. It is also coincidental that Gandhi himself developed the concept of peace beyond a mere political strategy into a philosophy of life.<sup>51</sup> Based on the study of Gandhian and peace studies that is prophesied by India in its educational institutions, the concept of peace journalism can help the media in serving its purported role of a watchdog, fourth estate and public domain. The concept of peace journalism seeks to minimise the existing tensions between opposing parties in any conflict by not repeating facts that demonise or set the stage for a conflict. It frames stories based on insights of conflict analysis and transformation and helps connect the journalists, their sources, their stories and the outcome of their reports.<sup>52</sup> A number of western media houses and centres have taken it upon themselves to initiate the concept of peace journalism around the international media community and help in the transition of peace in the areas of conflict.

As is suggested by the peace journalism scholars, Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick in their study of peace journalism for effective reporting of conflict situations and their repercussions on the public, a journalist should segregate two parties in the conflict into smaller groups pursuing many goals for creative potential outcomes; highlight the behaviour of the groups; create an impact of the conflict in future and also on people and places around it linking its consequences; understanding the long-term consequences of the conflict on the people and the State; connect to the people on the ground and how they view the conflict and what they want changed, helping empower parties to articulate their goals and make creative outcomes; try revealing areas that are common for both the State and complainant and suggest some goals that may be compatible; minimize reporting on who started a conflict but how problems are leading to several consequences; less focus on punishing the accused but provide grievances of both sides; less use of victimizing language which may limit the option for change; avoid imprecise use of emotive words to describe events and people; avoid demonizing adjectives that signify brutality and barbaric nature; avoiding labelling people as terrorists or fanatics; avoid concentrating on human rights abuses by only one side but name all wrongdoers; avoid making opinion or claim as an established fact but tell the sources; ceasefire may not necessarily mean peace, assign grounds to resolve the conflict further; and pick up and explore peace initiatives and assess peace perspectives.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Peace Journalism Techniques for India***

Peace journalism mainly focuses on journalism as a privileged, professional activity, which bases a political analysis of the media and its role in society.<sup>54</sup> Peace journalism stays in tune with the needs of the business driven media organisation as it seeks to incorporate an awareness of the possibilities of journalistic activities both within and outside the corporate media and as a part of a broader political project that helps to campaign for reforming traditional journalism. Especially for India's relations with Pakistan, the Indian media can use peace journalism to effectively reduce conflict, as an unbiased media can serve as an emergency relief in conflict areas and can provide information that can help stabilise a society.<sup>55</sup> We must remember that a biased and hate mongering media can further sabotage any peacekeeping initiatives and create unnecessary tensions between countries in case of crisis situations, that may have been caused by foreign intervention. According to study conducted by researchers, most of the Hindi and Urdu press have a tendency to report negatively on each other and create a lack of trust and confidence in any peace process between the two countries.<sup>56</sup>

For peace journalism to be effectively utilised by India mainly during crisis situations, the role of Doordarshan as the national television channel must also be enhanced to deal with national security issues and must be a role model for other channels and motivator for effective coverage. The Doordarshan must be expanded to conflict areas such as Jammu and Kashmir and insurgency ridden states of East India and the North East and journalists must be placed there without risk to their lives; to not propagate the views of the Government but in educating the public on the ill-effects of succumbing to terrorism or anti national activities, and helping the grievances of the local community to be met and extended out to the authorities and rest of India. It also becomes important that Indian journalists be provided with contextual and conceptual understanding of the theoretical framework of conflict, peace and violence by experts and also given the skills and tools to report on the conflicts. Examples of organisations providing field training to journalists for conflict situations are the Network of conflict resolution based at Canada, Dart Centre Europe in the UK, Media for Peace in Colombia, and Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development that is working on holding joint television productions between India and Pakistan.<sup>57</sup> Also curriculum for students of media must include practicality and theory of conflict analysis and resolution.



Thus, peace journalism becomes a symbolic approach, involving image branding to end untraceable and essentialist conflicts and helps in the professional improvement and widening of scholarly media interactions.<sup>58</sup> Peace journalism combines journalism with an external aim and portrays itself as a normative mode of responsible and meticulous media coverage of conflict that aims at contributing to peacemaking, sustaining peacekeeping and changing the attitudes of authorities and audiences towards war and peace.<sup>59</sup> Through peace journalism, the agenda of the media can be to promote peace and if the framing is done to achieve rapprochement, then public opinion can be shaped towards resolution or perception management of any conflict.<sup>60</sup> However, peace journalism is also being criticised mainly by realist journalists who call it an unorthodox transfer from traditional journalism and its professional norms.<sup>61</sup>

### **Strategic Engagement and Education**

All journalism is an intervention between the story originator and the audience.

— Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick<sup>62</sup>

#### ***The Ever-Changing Media***

It is well understood that the cost of global communication continues to decrease with the internet growing rapidly. Information is becoming more social and local and impacting traditional journalism with the changing and increasing market density. However in such a tight scenario, media needs to move away from the concept of audience as a passive consumer of a product to producers of their own content.<sup>63</sup> One must also understand that Internet journalism will never be able to sustain in depth investigation and authoritative feature writing as a newspaper because it only requires short attention spans and frequent updates.<sup>64</sup> Television remains bound by its demands of 24 hour news with constant deadlines and minor developments in running stories. Thus, it becomes important for the print media of India to take initiatives in reforming the strategic culture and thinking among journalists and help build expertise in national security related issues.

It is known that the journalists in India still lack the power and position to write lengthy policy analyses independent of information imparted to them by officials as policymaking is compartmentalised and there is no adequate debate within the bureaucracy and journalists to project a rich and insightful policy analysis.<sup>65</sup> The journalists still need to be well equipped and well read

on the background of the subject and the political class is still ignorant on the media's role in assessing public mood, shaping public opinion and formulating future plans.<sup>66</sup> The media is used as a tool by politicians for enhancing personal image mainly during elections and national security issues are restricted to interaction between senior journalists and policymakers.<sup>67</sup> Deep background briefings are lacking and necessary overall confidence in the media is still not present in the Government. The writings on India's strategic power are mainly from foreign writers and journalists. There is an absence of discussions on such themes in the media; as a result, there is poverty of strategic thought among the public. Writings in media about strategic issues reflect individual perceptions and conditioning and on international views, journalists borrow from western sources and journals.<sup>68</sup> There are also very few independent analyses on the several limitations of India and Pakistan to be engaging in war, which can help the public of both countries understand that engagement is more necessary than confrontation.

### ***Training Journalists for the Strategic Environment***

For Indian concerns, an independent and pluralistic media can clarify issues and help the public to understand national security needs. However, the Indian media needs to be acutely aware and insightful about the national security issues that it is covering and the inter linkages that shape the dynamics of the conflict. The media needs to develop a comprehensive understanding of the imperatives of strategic concerns of India while covering issues of national security relevance.<sup>69</sup> Media censorship and voluntary self restraint also helps in effectively covering national security issues. It is also necessary for the media to make a platform for the public to debate on national security issues.<sup>70</sup>

In a complex world, where information can influence a large section of society, religiously decisive speech by fundamentals, encouragement of violence, and violation of cultural norms by terrorists needs regulatory steps by both the media and the Government.<sup>71</sup> The media has a potential for reducing tensions between countries, and they can be used to improve understanding. For example, the Voice of America (VOA), part of the US Information Service, launched a Conflict Resolution Project in 1995, in Angola, Rwanda and Burundi.<sup>72</sup> The project produced special programmes to introduce its worldwide audience to the principles and practices of conflict resolution, including coverage of local efforts to resolve problems, social relations, and individual and group efforts for peace. A core series of 24 documentary programmes in several languages was

implemented, which included lecture series on media and conflict prevention, a workbook for journalists reporting in crisis situations and broadcasting on conflict resolution.<sup>73</sup>

Thus we can summarise by saying that it is vital to engage the media in broad and consistent campaign to educate the public with the understanding that in a democratic society the journalist is able to exercise duties as the highest form of citizenship by monitoring events in the community and making the public aware and examining the behaviour of people and institutions of power and encouraging forums for public debate.<sup>74</sup> Journalists working in the public interest are interdependent with the needs and hopes of the public and use this privilege to incorporate the public in larger decision-making process.

### **Viewing Media of the Future**

The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves, nor can they be safe with them without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.

— Thomas Jefferson<sup>75</sup>

Through the chapter, we have been able to provide suggestive mechanisms on utilising the resources of the media in the context of the Indian media, in positive engagement for policy framing and mainly national security related issues. The role of media in conflict resolution continues to remain dynamic and complex but it becomes essential that the state and its policymakers view media as several stages in the continuum of policy intervention that help analyse and append useful information for better policies rather than an obstruction, thereby helping in the proper use of media by officials and authorities in policymaking.<sup>76</sup>

### **Media in Conflict Reduction: A Summarisation**

The importance of conventional journalism also becomes necessary in the greater strategic thinking as this type of journalism deals with objectivity and neutralism, reporting facts and removing biases, and reporting without provoking any kind of harsh reactions either by the strategic community or the public.<sup>77</sup> This kind of journalism can also be facilitated through training and empowering media ethics and freedom. There must exist among journalists a sense of journalistic

responsibility that avoids sensationalisation and does not compromise sources for personal benefits. The authorities and editors need to sensitise the journalists and build an infrastructure for a free media through independent diverse sources. The Indian media must enhance its reporting capacity by telling stories of conflict and the people affected from a layman's point of view.<sup>78</sup> They must be able to report on terrorist activities not only terrorising one's own nation but also that of other countries.

There is a need of an independent self-critical media and an emphasis on the norms of professional ethics and objectivity. The journalists in India should be trained in reconciliation and conflict resolution, as is suggested in the earlier sub-topics. The State must be able to reach out to the local communities and help in peacemaking programmes, through the concept of peace journalism, and also reach out to people from all spheres of the society including children and crafting a message to foster peaceful resolution of a conflict. In incorporating peace journalism into India, the media and State requires numerous subtle and cumulative shifts in seeing, thinking, sourcing, narrating and financing the news.<sup>79</sup> The media is not only an important multiplier but also serves as a translator for the State. As the world is becoming more complex, people want simpler explanations and expert advice that can be provided through the media. In such an equation, development, democracy and dialogue go hand in hand; therefore, the free flow of information should not be hindered. On the contrary, the media should have all the necessary space to contribute in the dissemination of information and knowledge with the objective of developing inclusive knowledge societies.<sup>80</sup>

Also, when dealing with highly specialised subjects such as the Defence, Intelligence, national security, law enforcement and public security, journalists should receive some specialised training in the subjects, because the tendency to reproduce official statements and perspectives rather than subject them to critical examination is common in the security field in almost all countries including India. Knowledge of common subjects cannot always help the journalists cover issues of strategic importance. Similarly, in India, reporters are expected to cover a growing range of subjects, which gives incoherence in terms of understanding national security aspects of the country. With the exception of large media organisations such as the BBC, the major US networks, and other major national papers and networks, few newspapers or vernacular news organisations in India have strategic desk or strategic affairs editor with journalists specialised in different regions and issues.

### **Indian Media and Contemporary Adaptation**

Finally, we must understand that the continuously changing styles of warfare are forcing the media around the world to change and adapt accordingly. The warfare is not being restricted to the traditional warfare between nations but is a violent conflict among people within common borders, often between communities and tribes and other interests. In such a scenario, the news media, with its new technologies and wider reach, is increasingly a target for misinformation, manipulation or suppression by interests seeking to profit from the violent conflict including terrorism. The journalists are increasingly being targeted by the anti-national activists because of the media's potential to influence the course of conflict resolution.<sup>81</sup> However, one must also understand that the prevalent type of journalism in India was restricted to traditional journalism, which does not include the study of covering such violent conflicts as a social process.<sup>82</sup> The media was only a reliable provider of information and was not allowed to advocate any analysis or techniques for peaceful transition. The news media's traditional role was often said to be to serve the public interest by being a reliable information provider, a forum for free speech, a watchdog of the Government to provide credibility and influence in informing people who are to make changes themselves towards peaceful resolution of their conflicts.

Nevertheless, the Indian media in the 21st century has changed and so are the requirements of the world system. The contemporary challenges and threats have forced to explore potential of the news media to influence public opinion and behaviour towards non-violent conflict resolution.<sup>83</sup> Media education on non violence has moved beyond theories of political science and includes an understanding of epistemology, development and public journalism. Media are not passive observers anymore that restrict themselves to passing information to the public to make decisions but have become facilitators of ideas and behaviours.<sup>84</sup> In the US, the Hutchins Commission on the press in 1947 concluded that a major trouble with the US press was that it did not 'tell the truth about the facts'. In other words, it did not give enough analysis and context to its reporting.<sup>85</sup> However, keeping this in mind, the quality of the press all over the world has improved a great deal since then and any effort by the State or Non-State actors to diminish the power of the media aims to only endanger the public's understanding and in turn the security of the State.

## Conclusion

Thus, for our better evaluation and inference of media's role in national security, one must view the concept of governance and threat reduction as part of the overall security architecture, and help the media to examine the detection or gathering of intelligence and its proper analysis, prevention or pre-emption, preparedness and capacity building and disruption of response while covering issues of terrorism and insurgency.<sup>86</sup> The goal of all security systems must not be to provide a foolproof system but to make the task of the terrorists difficult, such that it is impossible for them to carry out any attacks.<sup>87</sup> In this context, Indian media should be flexible and facilitate prevention. In turn, understanding the Indian media becomes professionally important for policy makers and strategists for nation building and security. There is also a need of a requisite intellectual insight and capacity in shaping national will as the lack of understanding of one's national goals can have a negative impact on our national growth.<sup>88</sup> In regard to national security issues, it also becomes important for Indian media to be an observer; and to a certain limit a participant, but not completely involving itself on any particular side, as it may lose focus and further agendas and issues, mainly because as an observer, media will get the right to observe, absorb and report on security issues and instigate the Government and the public to fruitfully participate.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, the Indian media and the Government needs to develop a common understanding of our core values and national interests, which focus around the preservation and strengthening of the core values of the nation and the understanding, pursuit and protection of these interests. Any dilution or violation of the core values enshrined in our preamble threatens Indian security. Comprehensive national development, compatible with the guiding principles of our Constitution and fundamental goals of our democratic Government strengthen broader national commitment and build adequate power to achieve national goals of security.<sup>90</sup> Through analysis conferred and adhering to the objectives of the paper, we can finally conclude that information is the currency of power and media plays an important role as a soft power, especially for a country like India with a large population and capacity in communication and technology. The media, like economy, technology and manpower, is one of the tools of India to compete in the globalised structure of power play.<sup>91</sup> The largest democracy with a free and multilingual press can effectively be part of this power play by restraining its constant negative judgment of the inward-focused Indian media and providing adequate space for its information resource to be developed and utilised effectively in the overall national security strategy.

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# CAPS 'NON-RESIDENT FELLOWSHIP' PROGRAMME ON NATIONAL SECURITY

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- Promote a strategic outlook amongst the widest possible populace through publications and seminars
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The duration of the fellowship would normally be 9 months and can start at any time of the year. The scholar will be expected to complete a monograph of approximately 30,000 words during the fellowship while working at home/present location. Applications for fellowship must include a CV and a project proposal (not exceeding 800 words) along with chapterisation. The final manuscript will be reviewed by an independent reviewer for its fitness for publication. If the mss is accepted for publication, the research Fellow will be entitled to an honorarium of Rs 30,000/- and a certificate from CAPS for queries and details write to the Centre (e-mail: [capsnetdroff@gmail.com](mailto:capsnetdroff@gmail.com)) or by letter to following address:

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