

## **Pakistani Media's Reliance on Western Sources of Information: A Case Study of Osama bin Laden's Killing**

### **Abstract**

*This research paper looks at the reliance of Pakistani English-language daily Dawn on the Western sources of information while covering the historic killing of al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan. This paper examines whether Dawn covered the event on its own by utilizing local sources or if it showed dependency on the Western sources to report the high profile event. The content of Dawn newspaper was studied for ten consecutive days –from May 3, 2011 to May 12, 2011. The findings – based on the content analysis of 191 news articles – show that Dawn showed some level of dependency on the Western sources to report the event, contributing the minimally significant material to the story. The findings raise the question that Dawn, despite being the host of the event, was unable to pull the strings in its own way by exploring the investigative lines attached to the incident.*

**Keywords:** *Bin Laden's death, Dawn coverage, Dependency on Western sources, Weak local coverage, Contribution to the story of bin Laden's death*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Osama bin Laden was allegedly shot dead by US Navy SEALs in the operation titled 'Neptune Spear' in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011. The 'one-sided' US operation left five dead and two injured. The dead included bin Laden, his son Khalid, wife of one of the trusted couriers and two brothers including Abu Ahmed

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al-Kuwaiti, a trusted courier of the al-Qaeda chief – who assisted him during his stay in Abbottabad and provided a cover to bin Laden (and his family) as a ‘typical extended Pakistani family’ (Gall, 2014, p.243). His real name was Ibrahim Saeed Ahmed. The two injured were the widows of bin Laden, who were later treated in the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Rawalpindi and Abbottabad (SAMAA, 2011). The United States claimed that bin Laden was traced due to a telephone call from one of his trusted couriers (Woodward, 2011; *The Telegraph*, 2011). The Pakistani civilian administration initially welcomed the operation, but changed their stance after the apparent pressure from the Pakistani military establishment. The U.S. intervention put both the Pakistani government and the military establishment in an embarrassing situation, but it was big news for people around the world, including Pakistanis. Abbottabad, a garrison city, became the focus of attention of the world media that lasted for weeks.

This research paper looks into the coverage of *Dawn*, a renowned Pakistani English-language daily, for ten consecutive days. The findings will help us understand whether *Dawn* covered the event from its own perspective by exploring all the important angles attached to the issue or if it showed reliance on the threads developed by different Western sources. The findings will also guide us as to what, if any, significant contribution *Dawn* made to the story of bin Laden’s killing.

The research questions answered in this research study are:

- a) How many articles in *Dawn* have their base in Pakistani and Western sources?
- b) How many new threads about bin Laden’s killing (coverage) were developed by the U.S. and Pakistani sources in the coverage of *Dawn*?
- c) How significant is *Dawn*’s contribution to the story of the killing of bin Laden?

The answers to all these questions will help us understand the coverage of counter-terrorism event in the mainstream Pakistani Media – especially English language newspapers. It will also help us understand what, if anything, Pakistani Investigative Journalism lacked in its ability to explore an event that happened within Pakistan. The findings will help the owners of newspapers and practicing journalists to ensure the local investigative perspective, while covering counter-terrorism events, and in return will help the policy makers and general readers to have greater insight into the event/issue.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Bin Laden’s death was one of the most historic events in the “war on terror.” On one hand, it gave an opportunity to the Western allies to celebrate; on the other, it also

annoyed the frontline state ally, Pakistan. The killing of bin Laden was celebrated as a 'victory' in the United States and other Western countries, but it was taken as an 'attack on its sovereignty' in Pakistan' (Marwan, 2015). It shows that two different sets of stories appeared in the media outlets of the U.S. and Pakistan. Marwan (2015) argues that despite that fact that the event took place in Pakistan, but still the U.S. media was having more command over the script of the news stories about the killing. Lawson (2011), in his analysis of the coverage in global media, claimed that 'journalistic detachment' was missing in all the three world leading TV channels – the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera. He also stressed that these TV channels relied on their strength and covered the story in various demographic regions. . CNN mostly covered it from the U.S.; Al Jazeera covered it from Middle East and Pakistan; and BBC also mostly covered it from the U.S., despite touching more locations than CNN. Lawson (2011) found that both the Western networks mostly highlighted the U.S. side of the story.

Marwan (2015), while conducting research on the utilization of sources in the news stories by the American, British and Pakistani media, noted that U.S. officials dominated the coverage in the media outlets of all the three close allies of the "war on terror." Thus it shows that the U.S. officials controlled the information related to the Abbottabad operation and post-operation scenario. However, it was not the same everywhere. As Storie, Madden and Liu (2013) noted that the coverage of the event in the Russian media was drastically different from American media's. They found out that American media focused on the U.S. story disregarding the international audience as their target public. The American media neglected the story of terrorism more generally by guiding their own people about how different terrorist groups function and how they can be identified. On the other hand, Russian media approached the event with distrust towards the U.S. government and accounts of bin Laden's assassination. The Russian media also tried to frame bin Laden as a human being, not just the most wanted terrorist. The Russian media covered it from the 'cold war' mentality by casting a doubt on the death of bin Laden besides undermining the U.S. success (ibid, 2013, p.435).

The above discussion of the different studies show that though bin Laden's death was the biggest counterterrorism event in the "war on terror," but it was perceived differently by even close allies of the United States, like Pakistan. Media outlets in different countries tried to cover it from their own perspective. This research study will now go one step forward by exploring the base of news stories to find out how many news stories have its base in Pakistani and Western sources. Furthermore, it will also explore that how many new threads about the event were developed by both (the U.S. and Pakistan) in the coverage besides exploring the contribution of daily *Dawn* to the overall story.

## Research Framework

This study uses the lens of Agenda-Building theory, specifically inter-media agenda setting, to analyze the coverage of bin Laden's killing. For agenda-building analysis, researchers "closely examine news stories for the use of routine channel sources that appear to have served as the news peg for coverage" (Nisbet, 2008, p. 3). Agenda-building is a collective process in which media, government, and the public influence one another in determining the news value of a story. However, the more recent research has shown that the contents of other media have a profound effect on how a news channel (or, newspaper) reports a particular event. When the elite national or international media set the agenda for other media, Danielian and Reese (1989, as cited in Severin & Tankard, 2001) call it as inter-media agenda setting. This research study –based on coverage of the death of bin Laden –looks at the coverage of English-language daily *Dawn*, to examine whether, and how much this newspaper relied on Western Sources of information while reporting on the incident that happened in Pakistan.

*Dawn* newspaper is one of Pakistan's oldest newspapers with a liberal point of view (Yousafzai and Rawan, 2009). In conducting a research on the September 11 attacks and its consequences Singh (2002, p.1) selected only *Dawn* newspaper from Pakistan, and claimed: "[it] represents the best of Pakistani Journalism." Hence this research paper also follows a similar stance and has selected *Dawn* for its analysis. In order to ensure in-depth data and better results, the content of the print version of daily *Dawn* have been studied for ten consecutive days – May 3, 2011 to May 12, 2011. All the news stories and editorials containing phrases like 'Osama bin Laden,' 'bin Laden,' 'al-Qaeda chief' were selected and studied. Opinion pieces were excluded from analysis, because they represent the opinion of individual writers to which the newspaper may not subscribe. A total of 191 news articles were coded for this research study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Content Analysis has been employed in this study to answer the research questions. A number of researchers posit "quantitative" content "analysis is" the "most efficient" method "when explicit hypotheses or research questions are posed" (Riffe, Lacy and Fico, 1998, p.37). Hansen (1998, p.95) also claims: "Content Analysis by definition is a Quantitative Method and it basically lays stress on identifying and counting the occurrences of the specified characteristics, or dimensions of the text, and on the basis of which, one is able to say something about the messages, images, and representations of such texts and their wider social significance". The same method was also followed in this research study in which the "specified characteristics or dimensions" were identified in every news item and were coded accordingly. "(ibid, 1998, p.95). It is true that many researchers also criticize

content analysis for its limitations in looking at the latent meaning of the text, but Hansen (1998, p.98) still pleads that content analysis is the best methodology to address the qualitative questions effectively by identifying the 'specified dimensions (in the text) and (then) they analyze the *relationships* between these dimensions.' While explaining the process, he says: "content analysis first divides the text into the constituent parts, which can be counted; it reassembles these constituent parts at the analysis and interpretation stage to examine its co-occurrence in a context, for a specific purpose and implications" (ibid, 1998, p.98). Thus, it shows merit in applying content analysis to this research study. It must be noted that different examples have been given in the findings section of this paper to show how the different stories have been coded in the different categories.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have been discussed in two different sections. The first section discusses the reliance of daily *Dawn* on the Western and rest of the world (including Pakistani) sources of information to report the story of bin Laden's killing to its readers. The second section discusses the contribution of *Dawn* to the story of bin Laden's killing by exploring the new threads. Though, the findings have been divided into two different sections, the aim is to show the dependency of *Dawn* on the Western sources for the coverage.

### **Dawn and its reliance on Western sources**

The data below shows that *Dawn* was mostly looking at the 'Western' sources for new information related to the operation. It also means that most of the new threads about the issue of bin Laden's death, Abbottabad Operation or Post-Operation scenario came from the United States via different sources. It includes statements from the U.S. President, CIA Chief, Pentagon officials, U.S. senators and different western news agencies including Associated Press (AP), Agency France Press (AFP) and Reuters. Pakistani officials confined themselves merely to reacting to bin Laden's killing and reaction to the threads developed, mostly by the U.S. and international media. In order to support this claim, a content analysis of *Dawn*'s coverage was done in which all the columns and news items published, were studied and were coded in a particular way to provide results about the desired angle of the coverage. Initially, all news items were divided into two categories – news items having their basis in Western sources of information, and news items having their basis in Pakistani sources. All the news items were further categorized in the following five broad themes or topics.

- a) New details about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (developed by the U.S.)
- b) U.S.'s reaction to bin Laden's killing
- c) Pakistan's response to the U.S. version of the story

- d) Pakistan's response to bin Laden's killing
- e) New details about the Operation etc. (developed by Pakistan)

The news stories finding a place in the U.S. sources have been categorized in two sections, as the U.S. has not shown any dependency on Pakistan for the information related to the raid or post-raid situation. On the other hand, the news items finding their place in Pakistani sources have been further categorized into three sections to show the reliance of *Dawn* on Western sources to report the incident and to know about any new angle of the issue explored by *Dawn* in its ten days' coverage. In coding the data an opinion has been placed on the overall news items. The examples given here show how the different news items were coded; 84 out of 191 news items, 44% of the total, had its base in the Western sources – either they were reported by their own reporters citing western sources, or they were reported by the western reporters quoting Western sources. It means that they were reliant on the 'Western' sources in many ways. The details can be seen in table 1.

The following are examples of news items – selected randomly from *Dawn* – that will help us understand how different stories were coded into different categories.

- a) A news item, carrying the headline “Jubilant Americans gather outside White House”, focuses on the celebration of Americans, in front of the White House, in the wake of the killing of bin Laden. The news item includes comments of different Americans, who were part of the celebration (*Dawn*, May 3, 2011, p12.): categorized as ‘News item showing reliance on Western sources’ and also as “US reaction to bin Laden's killing”.
- b) A news item, headed “Multiple methods used to identify body: US”, focuses on the confirmation of bin Laden's body through scientific means, i.e. DNA. It quotes U.S. officials supporting the claim (*Dawn*, May 3, 2011, p14.): categorized as ‘News item showing reliance on Western sources’ and also as “New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing”.
- c) A news item appearing with the headline “Gilani hails ‘a victory of anti-terror alliance’” discusses the initial statement issued by the Pakistani Premier supporting the killing of bin Laden in the U.S-led operation (*Dawn*, May 3, 2011, p.3): categorized as ‘News item showing reliance on Pakistani/ Rest of the world sources (but not Western)’ and also as “Response to bin Laden's killing”.
- d) Another news item appearing with the headline “Afghans ‘led U.S’ to Osama house, says agent”, discusses the claim of the Afghan intelligence officials that they helped the Americans in identifying bin Laden's compound, where he was killed (*Dawn*, May 4, 2011, p12): categorized as ‘News item showing reliance on Pakistani/Rest of the world sources (but not Western)’ and also as “New detail about the operation etc.”

- e) News item, appearing on the front page, with the headline “At sea – Americans do the British way”, focuses on the burial of bin Laden in the sea by the American forces to avoid a shrine; a similar treatment as the ‘Colonial British’ gave in 1943, when they hanged a local saint ‘Pir Sibghatullah Shah Rashdi’ for treason under martial law, and later on buried him at ‘Astola Island’ (*Dawn*, May 4, 2011, p.1): categorized as ‘News Item showing reliance on Pakistani/Rest of the world sources (but not Western)’ and also as “New detail about the operation etc.”
- f) Another news item appearing with the headline ““there was no need to bypass Pakistan””, focuses on the statement issued by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, who said the United States should have taken Pakistan into confidence about the operation. He gave this statement in the wake of the CIA Chief, Leon Panetta’s statement, who earlier said the information about the raid was not shared with Pakistan as the U.S. thought Islamabad would leak the information (*Dawn*, May 7, 2011, p.3): categorized as ‘News item showing reliance on Pakistani/Rest of the world sources (but not Western)’ and also as “Pakistani response to the U.S. version of story”.

**Table 1.**  
**Dawn and its dependency on Western sources**

Date	Number of news items showing reliance on Western sources	Broad themes of these stories	Number of news items showing reliance on Pakistani/rest of the world sources	Broad themes of these stories
May3	8	Reaction to killing (5) New details about the raid/ bin Laden’s killing (3)	14	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden’s killing (12) New detail about the Operation etc. (1)
May 4	14	Reaction to killing (8) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden’s killing (6)	11	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden’s killing (7) New detail about the Operation etc. (3)
May 5	15	Reaction to killing (11) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden’s killing (4)	13	Pakistani response to the US version of story(2)

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May 6	16	Reaction to killing (8) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (8)	10	Response to bin Laden's killing (10) New detail about the Operation etc. (1) Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (6) New detail about the Operation etc. (3)
May 7	10	Reaction to killing (7) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (3)	13	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (9) New detail about the Operation etc. (3)
May 8	1	Reaction to killing (0) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (1)	14	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (10) New detail about the Operation etc. (3)
May 9	7	Reaction to killing (6) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (1)	10	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (7) New detail about the Operation etc. (2)
May 10	5	Reaction to killing (3) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (2)	10	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (9) New detail about the Operation etc. (0)
May 11	4	Reaction to killing (2) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden's killing (2)	8	Pakistani response to the US version of story(1) Response to bin Laden's killing (7) New detail about the Operation etc. (0)

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May 12	4	Reaction to killing (3) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden’s killing (1)	4	Pakistani response to the US version of story(0) Response to bin Laden’s killing (4) New detail about the Operation etc. (0) Pakistani response to the US version of story (11) (6%) Response to bin Laden’s killing (81) (42%) New detail about the Operation etc. (15) (8%)
Total	84 (44%)	Reaction to killing (53) (28%) New detail about the raid/ bin Laden’s killing (31) (16%)	107 (56%)	

Table 1 shows that 107 news items – which make 56% of the overall coverage of *Dawn* – had their base in non-U.S. sources; while 84 news items – which make 44% of the coverage of *Dawn* – had their base in the U.S. or Western sources, showing that there was some level of reliance on Western sources to report the incident; despite the fact that most of the news items have their base in non-U.S. sources. It also demonstrates that most new threads about bin Laden’s death, Abbottabad operation or the post-operation scenario were shared by the U.S., and this is evident from the 31 news items – which make 16% of the overall coverage; while the new information shared by *Dawn* about bin Laden’s killing etc. made only 8% of the overall coverage (15 out of 191 news stories, (We will study them in detail below). Although, the data shows that much of the coverage was based on the reaction to the incident from both the U.S. and Pakistan’s side as it made 28% and 42%, respectively; but it also shows the response of Pakistan to the U.S. version of the story as it made 6% of the total.

From the findings, it is clear that though the story was initiated by the U.S. as is evident from 31 out of 46 news items containing new information about the incident – but, still, most news items are non-U.S. based. It is now important to look at the new threads developed by the fifteen non-U.S. sources in *Dawn*’s coverage. It will help us know about how many of them were developed exclusively by *Dawn* utilizing the Pakistani sources.

**Contribution of Dawn to the story of bin Laden’s killing**

This section examines the 11 out of 15 threads developed by *Dawn* by utilizing Pakistani sources. It is important because it will help us understand what *Dawn* contributed to the overall coverage, besides sharing the reaction of Pakistani officials

to the threads developed by the U.S. or their general reaction to the killing of bin Laden, or anything related to the Abbottabad operation. Following are the themes, topics or threads developed by *Dawn* in its ten days' coverage.

- 1: The news item with the headline “Neighbors did not see any suspicious activity”, focuses on the comments of the eye witnesses and local people, who observed the Abbottabad operation and courier of bin Laden – living in their neighborhood (*Dawn*, May 3, 2011, p.3).
- 2: The news item, appearing on the front page, with the headline “At sea – Americans do the British way” focuses on the burial of bin Laden in the sea by the American forces to avoid his shrine: a similar treatment occurred when the ‘Colonial British’ hanged a local saint ‘Pir Sibghatullah Shah Rashdi’ for treason in 1943, under martial law, and later on, buried him at ‘Astola Island’ (*Dawn*, May 4, 2011, p.1).
- 3: The news item carrying the headline “Builder of Osama’s compound missing”, focuses on the contractor – who built bin Laden’s compound. In the story, the reporter also tries to find out from the local people about the alleged owner of bin Laden’s compound (*Dawn*, May5, 2011, p.3).
- 4: The news item with the headline “3 foreigners arrested”, initially tells about the arrest of three foreigners, and then tells about the version of the local people about bin Laden’s courier. It should be noted that none of the details about the identity of the persons arrested were provided and even no follow-up story was found in the coverage later (*Dawn*, May 6, 2011, p.14).
- 5: The news item with the headline “Uneasy questions await government on OBL issue”, focuses on the upcoming debate in the National Assembly of Pakistan on May 9, 2011, in which the government camp will answer hard questions linked to the Abbottabad operation and Bin Laden’s killing (*Dawn*, May 6, 2011, p.15).
- 6: Another news item with the headline “Osama lived in Haripur before moving to Abbottabad: wife”, tells us about the version of bin Laden’s wife, who shared with the intelligence officials that before moving to the compound in Abbottabad, they were living in Chak Shah Mohammad Khan, a village near Haripur. We did not see any follow up of this story later, in *Dawn*’s coverage (*Dawn*, May7, 2011, p.1).
- 7: The news item with the headline “20 held near Osama compound”, tells us about the search operation carried out by the law enforcement agencies near the compound of bin Laden, in which twenty people were arrested. The story also tells us about the security of the compound. Again, no further information has been provided about these arrested persons and no follow up story was witnessed in the coverage (*Dawn*, May 7, 2011, p.3).

8: The news item with the headline “‘Preserve Osama compound for sake of history’”, focuses on the versions of different experts and historians, who asked the government not to demolish the compound of bin Laden, as they stressed that it should be preserved for the sake of history (*Dawn*, May 7, 2011, p.5).

9: The news item with the headline “‘Foreign channels’ live coverage from Abbottabad barred”, tells about the ban placed by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on foreign TV channels to do live coverage from Abbottabad (*Dawn*, May 8, 2011, p.1).

10: Another news item with the headline “‘Bin Laden farm and a life of rural charm’”, described the whole scenery of bin Laden’s compound including life therein (*Dawn*, May 9, 2011, p. 3).

11: The last news item appearing with the headline “‘A confusing scenario’” is basically an investigative story, which focuses on visits of the Station House Officer (SHO) of police department to Bilal town where bin Laden lived. The main purpose of the visits was to collect data about the new settlers in town.

The reporter – Syed IrfanRaza – mentions that the basic reason behind the police visit was the arrest of Abu Faraj al Libi, al Qaeda No. 3 and Umar Patek, a top Indonesian terror suspect from the peaceful Abbottabad. The reporter has quoted the mosque’s Imam (religious cleric who leads the gathering in mosque) that the SHO used to pay visit every Friday night to update his list of the inhabitants of the area by talking to the new inhabitants. The reporter has cited many local people – who have shown dissatisfaction with both police and intelligence officials – who were not aware of bin Laden’s stay in Abbottabad. He further doubts how they did not crosscheck the two ‘Al Kuwaiti brothers’ who were showing ‘odd behavior’ in the area and were not mixing with the people. They have further questioned this ignorance since the Army Chief usually paid visits to the Kakul Training Academy; the screening of the area is done by the military personnel, on a regular basis; and that the Army Chief had visited the academy just a few days before the Abbottabad operation. If we look at new threads developed by *Dawn*, it is evident that the contribution by utilizing the Pakistani sources in the coverage was not very significant; since it lacked investigative abilities. It, too, carried out a few stories: the arrest of the builder of Osama’s compound; arrest of foreigners and other persons from the area; claim of bin Laden’s wife about living in Haripur; and of course, the last news item in which the reporter tried to build on the story or issue. Most of these stories looked hazy (as complete detail was missing) and no follow-ups were seen in the coverage. It is also true that only one news story – based on these exclusive threads developed by *Dawn* – was placed on the front page (which, up to some extent, also shows the treatment and importance of these contributions to the newspaper itself).

The last news item, which was more investigative than any other news item in the whole coverage, was placed on the 'Islamabad Metropolitan' page and it appeared on the lower half of the page. It is hard to assess the decision of the editors as to why they looked down upon its own news item, which deserved more prominence. It is also true that none of the threads developed by them were followed-up later in the coverage, showing that the U.S. mostly pulled the strings of the coverage about the Abbottabad operation and post-operation scenario, in an extremely organized way, to derive maximum interest from it; and *Dawn* was reliant on them for all the significant details related to the death of bin Laden/Abbottabad operation.

## CONCLUSION

This article examined the dependency of *Dawn* on the Western sources of information in covering the killing of bin Laden, besides showing the contribution of *Dawn* to the overall story. The findings – based on the content analysis of 191 news articles – support the assumption that though most news articles have their base in Pakistani sources, but still there was a noticeable level of dependency on the Western sources to report the event. This means that Western sources (taken as elite-sources in this research) set the agenda for Pakistani media on an important event that happened inside Pakistan. One of the possible explanations for this reliance of daily *Dawn* is the silence of Pakistani official sources on the issue. The responsible Pakistani officials, including the Prime Minister, President and other federal ministers, instead of taking the Pakistani people in confidence were busy in convincing the Western audience. It is evident from the strategy adopted by the then President Asif Ali Zardari, who preferred to publish an article in *The Washington Post*, a day after the operation, but avoided the Pakistani audience. Similarly, the then Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani also preferred to go to Paris on an official trip instead of taking the people of Pakistan in confidence by addressing the ongoing session of the Senate. The visibility of Pakistani officials after the Abbottabad Operation was an issue, and perhaps they were of the view that with the passage of time everything will get settled, but it didn't. It also seems that it was hard for the Pakistani government to own the US-led operation and also to welcome the killing of bin Laden.

According to agenda-building theory, one of the factors that influence media content is the reliance of reporters on official sources. When local media rely on foreign (elite) sources for content, the local perspective is compromised. It also goes against the social responsibility of the mass media to be pluralistic and diverse in its content and opinion. It is also evident from the findings that most new threads about the operation and post-operation scenario were also developed by the Western sources of information. The detailed analysis of all the new threads, developed by *Dawn*, while quoting Pakistani sources shows that it lacked investigation, follow up stories and deliberation. There was only one news story, which was investigative in nature, but

its own management played it down by publishing it in the lower half of the Islamabad Metropolitan page. All of the evidence, therefore, shows that *Dawn* covered the event in a superficial way by exploring the reaction of Pakistan and the United States to the event, rather than in an investigative way to help its readers in making an informed opinion. One would have expected *Dawn*, being the local host of the event; to explore the event in much greater detail and investigative manner by exploring all the necessary angles attached to the story to form a healthy public opinion about the issue. The possible reasons for avoiding the investigative journalism by *Dawn* include the sensitivity of the issue (Osama bin Laden's death) and the embarrassment it caused to the Pakistani institutions. Generally the Pakistani media find it hard to criticize the Pakistani establishment and Taliban, and try to find the middle ground while debating hard issues to avoid any unwanted repercussions. Perhaps, they too compromised in the aftermath of the Abbottabad Operation and practiced self-censorship, to the detriment of the Pakistani media's impression within and outside Pakistan.

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