



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Political Satire and 'Brazen Censorship': Cartooning, Pakistan-US-India Political Ties and Government Backlash**

Dr. Ayesha Ashfaq <sup>1</sup> Dr. Savera Shami <sup>2</sup> Dr. Shazia Ismail Toor <sup>3</sup>

1. Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecture, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

**PAPER INFO**

**ABSTRACT**

**Received:**

September 14, 2019

**Accepted:**

December 25, 2019

**Online:**

December 31, 2019

**Keywords:**

Brazen Censorship  
Government  
Backlash  
Political Satire  
Political Ties

**Corresponding Author**

ayashaashfaq.ics  
@pu.edu.pk

Popular discourses assume that in the world of political cartooning, nothing is too sensitive and too outrageous; they can intimidate and instigate the powerful stakeholder of a country. Political cartoonists have capacity to criticize and comment on serious political matters and raise voices of general public but it is only possible if their political system provide freedom to them to play with their pens and brushes. This study primarily aims at drawing the attention to the point that how the dynamics of free speech and freedom to political cartooning in Pakistan have been changed with the same patterns of depiction of the United States-Pakistan-India relationships in different political eras and state foreign policies of the county. Therefore, political cartoons from three highest circulated newspapers (*The News, Dawn* and *Nation*) were selected from post-Cold war (January 1991) to October 2019. Political cartoons only related to Pakistan-United States-India political ties were analyzed under the Barthes' model for Semiotic.

**Introduction**

An announcement by the Daily *Nation* to fire its senior political cartoonist, Khalid Hussain after drawing a controversial cartoon of Prime Minister Imran Khan with Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 25, 2019, depicted that how Pakistani political media discourse is being restricted by the government of Pakistan. The cartoon portrayed Imran Khan pulling a carriage that has American President Donald Trump while seating with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, dangling a 'mediation' carrot in front of Khan (Cartoon 1) (Nazar, 2019, October 6). The firing of the cartoonist and newspaper's apology after the

outrage over the cartoon by the authorities clearly show the growing censorship and backlash from the government.

This cartoon was published when Imran Khan reminded the 'duty' of the U.S. President Donald Trump to mediate and calm the Kashmir standoff with India during his meeting on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in New York on September 23, 2019. The tensions between India and Pakistan got escalated after India's revoking the special status of Kashmir under the Indian Constitution's Article 370 on August 5, 2019. Pakistan wanted the United States to mediate but India had always been rejecting the idea of mediation and declared Kashmir issue as a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan. On the other side, the U.S. president Donald Trump also announced that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approached him to play his role as mediator for the dispute in the state (Hebber, 2019, August 6) regarding revocation of special status of Kashmir.



Cartoon 1. Published on September 25, 2019 (The Nation)

Since the privatization of electronic media and enlightened moderation of General Pervez Musharraf in 2002, the landscape of Pakistani media has been flourished as [a vigilant platform in South Asia](#). However, [in 2018 elections, 'the undeclared censorship and involvement' by the establishment radically increased](#) in Pakistani press. Journalists and media owners from all over Pakistan have been faced harassments, blanked-out columns and editorials, threats of pulling funds of government ads, channel shutdown and huge salaries cut offs if they try to criticize state or government policies. For the very first time in the democratic history of Pakistan, the interview of Asif Ali Zardari has been pulled of the air. After a week, interview of Maryam Nawaz Sharif was also cut down by broadcasting the unexpected long advertisement and after the end of the ad break, this interview was replaced by an old interview of a politician from government (Kermani, 2019, July 28)

There are several other examples that depict an unsettled relationship of media with Prime Minister Imran Khan who was elected in 2018 with the 'unannounced strong support of military establishment'. The censorship and restricted media freedom has been observed more frequently than ever before (Ellis-Peterson & Baloch, 2019, November 5). As Siddique (2019, July 24) argued in his online blog that that "a recent survey carried out in the country by a media watchdog pointed out that 88 percent of the country's journalists self-censor to avoid getting into trouble. And threats are not just limited to censoring them." This suffocation is not only limited to individual journalists in Pakistan but big media organizations have also faced a new kind of suppression to limit and restrict the free speech. This force is exercised through making them financially squeezed by reducing their allocated advertisements revenue. Due to this financial control, thousands of journalists have lost their jobs and thousands of them have been suffering from the huge salary cuts in the two year- government of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Freedom of press has never been a cherished idea in Pakistan due to unstable military and democratic political regimes in Pakistan (Perveen & Bhatti, 2018). As Hashim (2019, July 10) also defined the situation of Pakistani press as under 'brazen censorship' for the last 72 years history and blamed military and dictatorial governments in Pakistan for curtailing the freedom of expression. He also cited the report of the U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) that "the country's military, which has ruled [Pakistan](#) for roughly half of its 72-year-history, "restricts reporting by barring access - encouraging self-censorship through direct and indirect acts of intimidation, and even allegedly instigating violence against reporters" (Hashim , 2019, July 10).

Political satire has also not been so welcomed by the democratic and military leaders of the state since the inception of Pakistan (Ashfaq, 2014). Different cartoonists face different kind of pressures as per their and their newspapers' political affiliations. Almost all military regimes in the history of Pakistan had been the darkest period of the political cartooning except the military regime of General Pervez Musharaf (Ashfaq, 2014). As Mahmood (2009) commented on the system of freedom of expression in Pakistan and added that "before Ayub Khan's military dictatorship, we witnessed freedom of expression in Pakistan but his Martial Law and the brainchild of the National Press Trust destroyed not only press freedom but also political cartooning". He further argued that

The Press Publication Ordinance was the last nail in the coffin of press freedom and political cartooning. In his period, political cartooning became so meaningless. It was nothing more than a story of the past and an episode of by-gone days. Political cartoonists were allowed to draw cartoons on only social issues. For example, broken telephone lines, inflation, electricity problems, etc."

While commenting on the restrictions imposed by military dictators on Pakistan especially during the regime of General Zia ul Haq, Toor (2011) summarized that the decade of 1990s is often discussed as 'the darkest tunnel' and 'the lost decade' in the history of Pakistan because of the anti-climactic follow-up to the unbridled military regime of General Zia ul Haq.

In the General Pervez Musharraf's time period, unlike all democratic and military regimes of Pakistan, media was so free that television channels also started to broadcast political animated cartooning e.g. 'Bankey Mian kiQawali', 'Geo cartoons' etc and satirical programs on politics and social issues e.g. 'Hasb-e-haal', 'Darling', 'Hum Sub UmeedSey Hain', 'Miss Dunya' etc.. This decade did not witness any direct law imposed by the military rule on Pakistani press and media rather dozens of new private television channels, newspapers and magazines got license by the military regime of General Pervez Musharraf. Journalists also witnessed unprecedented freedom (Ashfaq, 2014).

Unlike to previous regimes, the current situation in PTI's democratic government based on the slogans of 'Change' and 'accountability', and 'freedom' is entirely new for political cartoonists where they have an example to face an open government backlash for making a cartoon on Pakistan-U.S.-India political. Therefore, this paper aims to understand and compares cartooning in the ostensibly free environment in the previous military and democratic political eras and the visibly-restricted atmosphere in the sitting government of PTI in Pakistan to see the changing dynamics of free speech in political cartooning with reference to the relationship with the United States in Pakistan-India enduring and historical rivalry. Media discourses and political researches observed that the United States and Pakistan have always been fair-weather friends since 1947 (Ashfaq, 2019). The United States does not ignore Pakistan because of its geo-strategic position in South Asia. On the other hand, the United States has been steadily deepening its relationship with India because of its being a regional heavyweight that may counterbalance China's rising power in the region. India's foreign relationships with China always remained tense due to the legacy of the 1962 war (Ashfaq, 2014; Ashfaq & Hussein, 2014; Roblin, 2019, December 31). Thus, it has been observed that the U.S. political players have always been got a place in Pakistani political cartooning with reference to the nature and significance of its relationship with these two rival states in all democratic and military rules in Pakistan (Ashfaq, 2019). This paper highlights the different metaphors, signs and symbols used by the Pakistani political cartoonists in the depiction of Pakistan with the United States and India since Post-Cold War. This study primarily aims at drawing the attention to the point that how the dynamics of free speech and freedom to political cartooning in Pakistan have been changed with the same patterns of depiction of the United States-Pakistan-India relationships in different political eras and state foreign policies of the country.

## Research Design

To see the trends of the representation of the main signifiers of the United States, Pakistan and India in political cartooning with special reference to their historical rivalry and bilateral relationships with the United States, all editorial cartoons published in *Dawn*, *the Nation* and *The News* were selected from post-cold war (January 1991 to October 2019). Only those political cartoons were selected where signifiers from all three countries, Pakistan, India and the United States were depicted.

These newspapers were selected because of the following reasons.

1. These newspapers are the highest circulated English newspapers of Pakistan.
2. The most renowned, award winning and senior political cartoonists of Pakistan are associated with the selected newspapers. The cartoons of Shatoon from *the News*, Feica from *Dawn* and Khalid Hussein & Maxim from *the Nation* were selected for the research.
3. Khalid Hussain who is fired because of the controversial cartoon of Imran Khan with Donald Trump and Narendra Modi, was also associated with *the News* for decades and now with *the Nation* at the time of the termination of his job.
4. *The Nation* is a sister publication of *Nawa-i-Waqt* group that always stands pro-government while *the News* belongs to the *Jang* group that is extremely anti-Pakistani Tehreek-e-Insaaf (sitting government). *Dawn* is known as liberal and neutral elite mainstream English newspaper of Pakistan (Ashfaq, 2014). Therefore, the sample of these three English newspapers reflect diverse policies towards government and its foreign policies for decades in the history of Pakistan.

The time period from 1991 to 2019 was selected because this time period covers almost major political regimes with different foreign policies towards the United States after the end of Cold War. As it is discussed about that the United States and Pakistan always happen to be the fair-weather friends (Ashfaq, 2014). Because of the geo-strategic importance, the US has always been developed good ties since decades for their national interests but soon after changing the geo-strategic situations, the United States turned its fair policies towards India (Ashfaq & Hussein, 2014). The usage of Pakistan's territory against Soviet Union in Cold War and against Taliban in Post 9/11 are two prototypical examples of the Pakistan-U.S-India triangular relationships. This shift has also been a great influence in the foreign policies of Pakistani governments towards the United States. Therefore, this time period was significant as it contains one decade of post-Cold War and almost two decades of post 9/11 to examine the trends how Pakistani political cartoonists drew the image of the United States with relation to Pakistan-India historical rivalry as per their prevailing circumstances of freedom of expression in the given political setups.

In addition, there were seven democratic governments and one military rule in Pakistan.

1. November 1990-July 1993 (Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, PML(N))
2. October 1993-December 1996 (Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, PPP)
3. February 1997-October 1999(Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, PML(N))
4. October 1999-May 2001 (Martial Law imposed by General Pervez Musharraf as Army Chief Executive)
5. June 2001-August 2008 (Military President General Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, PML (Q))
6. September 2008-March 2013 (Prime Minister Asif Ali Zardari, PPP)
7. June 2013-July 2018 (Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, PML(N))
8. July 2018-Incumbant (Prime Minister Imran Khan, PTI)

During the selected period, three presidential regimes of Democratic and Republican Party respectively with four white and one black Presidents of the United States are the following.

1. January 1989-January 1993 (President George H. W. Bush, Republica
2. January 1993-January 2001 (President Bill Clinton, Democratic)
3. January 2001-January 2009 (President George W. Bush, Republican)
4. January 2009-January 2017 (Two Presidential tenures of Barack Obama, Democratic)
5. January 2017-Incumbant (President Donald Trump, Republican)

Therefore, the selected sample of political cartoons was analyzed as per the relationships of Pakistani political governments with Presidents of the United States within the selected time period. For the analysis, Barthes's model of semiotic analysis was applied by examining the connotation and denotation level of meanings conveyed through cartoons. Themes, Captions, assigning roles and body structures with gestures were analyzed.

Collectively 431 political cartoons of the United States, Pakistan and India were found as per the set criterion discussed above from 1991 to 2019. The following themes, codes and trends were extracted from the selected sample of political cartoons that are clustered according to the regimes of the U.S. presidents with Pakistan and India.

#### **President George W. H. Bush & Pakistan-U.S.- India Triangle**







*Cartoon 2. Published on September 27, 1991(The Nation) Cartoon 3 Published on February 01,1991(The News)*

During the presidency of George W. H. Bush, one of the significant issues of Pakistan-India- U.S. political ties was military assistance and the nuclear non-proliferation. Political cartoonists in Pakistan predominantly constructed the image of the U.S. president and Uncle Sam as an 'unjust' and 'unfair' in his dealings with two historical rivals i.e. Pakistan and India. Political cartoons in all three selected newspapers *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *The News* portrayed the relationships of all three countries by using almost the same patterns of metaphors, signs and symbols. It was found that the Prime Ministers of Pakistan, India and Israel as the main signifiers were depicted in the dependent roles, with small body structures where George W. H. Bush was portrayed in the independent role with giant body structures in most of the political cartoons with reference to their relationships

Cartoon 2 and 3 are the most prototypical examples of political cartoons that depicted the undue treatment of the US President George W. H. Bush towards Pakistan, India and Israel. The metaphor of mother/guardian is used to depict George W. H Bush and kids for Nawaz Sharif, Narasimha Rao and Yitzhak Rabin. Both cartoons represented that how the U.S. is feeding its two 'beloved' babies i.e. India & Israel while leaving its third child Pakistan hungry aside all alone. Since the end of the Cold War, most of the Pakistani political cartoons depicted the pressures of the United States to stop Pakistan's nuclear program and imposing the undue sanctions. The United States pressured China as well for stopping the technological support to Pakistan for developing its nuclear program but on the other side, the United States continued its military and technological aid to India and Israel (Ashfaq, 2014). Therefore, the focus of almost all political cartoonists to portray the double standards of the United States towards India and Pakistan despite the continuous support of Pakistan to the United States in the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

### Bill Clinton and Pakistan-U.S.-India Political Ties

During Bill Clinton's Presidential regime, one of the important issues of India and Pakistan with reference to the United States was also the nuclear non-proliferation like in the previous presidency. It was observed that there was no any visible change in the patterns of depiction of Pakistan and the U.S. with the reference to Pakistan-India-US political ties in cartoons of Pakistan.



Cartoon 4.. Published on March 21, 2000 (The News)



Cartoon 5. Published on April 20, 2000 (Dawn)



Cartoon 6. Published on February 01, 2000 (The Nation)

By using different symbols, metaphors and themes, political cartoonists in *Dawn*, *The Nation* and *The News* depicted Pakistan at the suffering end, India as the receiving end and Bill Clinton as an unfair President of Superpower. Bill Clinton during his visit to India announced several mutual agreements regarding commerce, technology and infrastructure but in Pakistan, the main focus of Bill Clinton was to talk about the major issues of South Asia related to India and Pakistan. Few of the most prominent examples are discussed.

Shahtoon in *The News* depicted Bill Clinton's preferences and attitudes towards India and Pakistan during his visit to South Asia in 2000. In the cartoon 4,



two scenes are dawn, one depicts his visit to India and the other represents his visit to Pakistan. In India, Bill Clinton is riding a vector of festive elephant with the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and two other people. Indian Prime Minister, Atal Vajpayee shows a menu card to Bill Clinton to have a feast on his arrival. Both look so happy. While in the scene 2, Bill Clinton is depicted sitting very formally, holding a stick in his hand with annoyed face in the foreign office of Pakistan. He looks inquiring about different files including 'talks with India and terrorism', 'democracy', 'CTBT', 'security' and 'Osama'.

Similarly, in *Dawn*, Feica built the same image of Bill Clinton in his cartoon where he is holding a measuring scale with three scale pans of 'Pakistan, Bangladesh and India' separately (Cartoon 5). The scale pan of India looks the heaviest and the biggest as compared to that of Pakistan and Bangladesh. 'Measuring scale' symbolizes justice and fairness. The 'bigger size of Indian pan' refers to the announcements by the President regarding the agreements of building infrastructure in India during his visit to South Asia.

*The Nation* used a different metaphor in cartoons drawn by Maxim but the image was constructed in the same way. The most common theme in the cartoons of Maxim was love relationship between India and the United States in a way that the US signifiers i.e. Bill Clinton and Uncle Sam are hugging or kissing the Indian Prime Minister/politicians. For instance, in a cartoon 6, Bill Clinton hugs and kisses Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee while holding Pakistan man who is depicted in Pakistani national dress through crossing his legs. Holding someone from legs is a symbol of disrespecting someone in Pakistani culture (Ashfaq, 2014). The caption is "US promised to stay engage with Pakistan" explains through the drawing that though the United States was in touch with Pakistan but the nature of the relationship was very insulting as compared to India. This was also drawn to predict the attitude of Bill Clinton towards Pakistan and India during his same visit.

### **George W. Bush and Pakistan-U.S.-India Love Hate Affair**

It has been observed that due to the military dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf and his alliance in war against terrorism after 9/11, the major focus of Pakistani political cartoonists was to depict the United State with reference to its ties with India and Pakistan. It has been found that despite being the ally of the United States and the under the rule of a military dictator Pervez Musharraf, there was no as such major difference in political cartooning on Pakistan-United States- India love triangle. Almost the same kind of images was portrayed where India has been the first preference of the United States and Pakistan has been a fair weather friend for the United States. Four of the most prototypical examples are the following:

*The Nation* used the same symbolic expression of kissing and hugging Indian Prime Ministers to show the love of United States towards India and holding Pakistan with legs to express the 'insulting' interest-specific relationship as per cultural connotation of Pakistan (Cartoon 7). While *Dawn* used a new metaphor of 'being lover who is giving flowers to Indian 'girlfriend' but giving broom to Pakistan

for sweeping out the terrorist.’ The unfair attitude of lover/spouse shows the nature of the relationships and dealings of the United States (Cartoon 8).

It has been observed that Khalid Hussain has always been very critical to Uncle Sam. Most of his cartoons in the *News* and now in *The Nation* have been focused on Pakistan-India relationship with reference to the United States as a main signifier. For instance, before 9/11 when Pakistan had no more geo-strategic importance for the United States, a common metaphor in political cartoons for Pakistani players was ‘murgha’ (becoming hen). ‘Murgha’ or ‘becoming hen’ is perceived as a ‘penalty or stress punishment’ culturally in Pakistan where “a man is supposed to squat, loop the arms behind the knees and holding his ears. This way of punishment is usually used by some elders or high rank officers like in teacher and student or parents and children relationship” (Ashfaq, 2014, p. 209). Before 9/11, George W. Bush imposed sanctions on China for transferring missile technology to Pakistan. Sanctions were also imposed on Pakistan and India for halting their nuclear programs but the nature of sanctions were different. *The News* published several political cartoons on the U.S. sanctions by using the same metaphor where Pakistani signifiers are ‘murgha’ bearing a very big bale of sanctions while Atal Bihari Vajpayee standing with Uncle Sam in a friendly manner and Uncle Sam is showing a very small bale of sanctions ties to him with happy gestures (Cartoon 9).

Similarly, after 9/11 during strong military relationships of the United States with India despite having Pakistan as an ally in war against terrorism, Khalid Hussain used another metaphor of being ‘ghora’ (becoming horse) (cartoon 10) for Pakistan signifiers and political players in his political cartoons. Being ‘ghora’ or ‘becoming horse’ is “a cultural game in Pakistani culture where the elders make children to sit on their back to make them happy” (Ashfaq, 2014, p. 213). For instance, in cartoon 10, Manmohan Singh, Indian Prime Minister is sitting at the back of General Pervez Musharraf while Uncle Sam with smiling face is helping him with this hands to sit at the back of President Musharraf who is bending himself as a ‘ghora’. General Musharraf seems very sad and feels as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is a burden. This cartoon was published when “the US signed Indo-US Nuclear Pact with India which was also viewed as an action of unfairness and double standards because the US refused Pakistan for the same deal” (Ashfaq, 2014, p. 2014).

As Shuja (2007) added that on this occasion, Richard Boucher, Assistant Secretary of the United States stated that “Pakistan’s energy requirements and economic needs are different from those of India. Pakistan should not expect similar arrangements to those the U.S. has made with India”. Therefore, the themes, metaphors, signs and symbols used by political cartoonists in Pakistan remained very critical towards the depiction of Pakistan-U.S.-India political relations in George W. Bush presidency despite Pakistan’s closest alliance with the United States in War against Terroris



Cartoon 7. Published on March 17, 2004 (*The Nation*)



Cartoon 8. Published on March 16, 2006 (*The Nation*)



Cartoon 9. Published on July 21, 2001



Cartoon 10. Published on July 21, 2005 (*The News*)

### **President Barack Obama and Pakistan-U.S.-India Political Triangle**

Interestingly, it has been observed that there was not a single cartoon published by any selected newspaper on Pakistan-United States-India foreign and political relationships. During this regime, instead of comparing the U.S. political ties towards India and Pakistan, all political cartooning revolved around the prospects from a Black U.S. President Barak Obama. Initially, when Barrack Obama won the elections, not only black people in the United States but the entire world also celebrated its victory because there was global perception that “he is not just a black president, he is politically educated man who has touched the imaginations of people all around the world. He represents a movement to people—and we are happy to celebrate that” (“the whole world celebrates...”, 2009). Despite of this global image of Barack Obama, Pakistani political cartoonists remained critical and depicted his negative images with a position that ‘Pakistan should not expect much from President Barack Obama and must not live in fool’s paradise’ because he would also follow the footprints of his predecessors. In the later period of presidency, cartoons’ depiction was shifted towards his policies of drone attacks in the territory

of Pakistan. All the images were very critical by using the zoomorphic techniques. Political cartoonists portrayed the U.S. as 'evil' due to drone attacks and killing innocent people and represented Pakistani signifiers as 'dependent,' 'weak,' shallow,' 'helpless', and 'indecisive' in front of the United States.

Surprisingly, it was further observed that the hunt and murder of Osama Bin Laden was also completely overlooked by the Pakistani political cartoonists because there is a circle in Pakistan that views Laden's presence and killing in the territory of Pakistan as a symbolic event directed by the U.S. administration. For example, *Dawn's* cartoonist Feicaagued

Osama's killing! It was nothing more than a fake drama directed by Obama just to win in the next election. And I want to inform you that my political cartooning reinforce public opinion. So, I don't want to give any impression to my public that Obama killed Osama and suppose if yes he did. (Personal Communication, 2018)

Similarly, the *Nation's* cartoonist Maxim also added that

No there was no instruction from the paper or the government to be silent on this issue. It was my own choice not to highlight. Because it will create more anxiety among Pakistani people that they are not safe in their country. Anyone can enter your country and kill people. Pakistani government is nothing more than puppets of the U.S. who has only one duty to say yes to their American bosses. There was no any Osama. It was just symbolic stunt to show the victory of Obama. I prefer to portray those issues that have some reality. (Personal Communication, 2018)

### **Donald Trump and India-Pakistan-US Political Affairs**

This presidency period was unique in two ways.

1. The unexpected victory of Donald Trump in the United States and its poor relationship's policy for Pakistan but very welcoming attitude towards India.
2. In Pakistan, for the first time in the history, two biggest parties (PML (N) and PPP) got defeated and Imran Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf won the elections. International and local media reported Prime Minister Imran Khan as Pakistan's Trump during his election campaigns (Robertson, 2018, August 18).
3. India revoked Article 370, "a constitutional provision that grants special status and allows the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir to make its own laws. The order was subsequently approved by the Indian President" (Srivastava, 2019, August 5). After the one sided decision of Indian government, almost the whole Muslim world especially Pakistan outraged that made Pakistan-India relationship more tensed.

4. Imran Khan raised Kashmir issue in the United Nation General Assembly and asked Donald Trump to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir issue during his visit to attend UN General Assembly session on September 23, 2019.
5. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's government restricts and even controls Pakistan's news media, particularly for giving any negative coverage of his administration. Media in Pakistan in large suffer from financial siege soon after Prime Minister Khan came into power and took the office charge on August 18, 2018, simply because of one major reason; the advertisement funds from the government were delayed. A huge attack of censorship on Pakistan private Television channels, newspapers and social media activists were set the stage during election trail because this is happened for the very first time in Pakistan when a mega star, a cricketer and a play boy in his young age, came in to power by beating two biggest political parties of Pakistan (Rashid, 2018).



Cartoon 11. Published on September 2, 2016 (The Nation)



Cartoon 12. Published on October 9, 2016 (The Nation)

During the presidency of Donald Trump, a clear difference has been observed in the depiction of the triangular relationship in Pakistani political cartooning between PML (N)'s government and incumbent government of PTI. During PML (N)'s government, the similar nature of the representation of Pakistan-

U.S.-India relationships was pre-dominantly found in political cartooning of Pakistan where President Donald Trump is either supporting India against Pakistan or playing at both sides in a hypocritical manner. This image was being depicted by using different metaphors. For instance, 2016 to 2018 was the period of the U.S.-India love affair where the United States made India its major defense partner in the region and signed an MOU for the exchange of advanced Logistics with India. By the MOU, India got a license to use the U.S. military system to counter terrorism and China's growing influence in the region (Iqbal, 2016, August 30). According to several media reports and political analyses from Pakistan and the United States, this MOU with India would affect Pakistan badly in the region in all aspects because this would allow India to access the modern American weapons in Kashmir and also against Pakistan. In addition, the most important matter was the timing of signing this MOU because Pakistan was looking at the United States to mediate between India and Pakistan to Kashmir issue (Iqbal, 2016, August 30; Munir, 2016). Cartoon 11 and 12 are clear examples of the United States favorable relations with India and unfavorable relations towards Pakistan. In cartoon 11, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is relaxing on Mediator's Chair of Donald Trump by extending his legs and arms while a man in Pakistani national dress and Jinnah cap is standing far away by turning his face on the other side. Donald Trump is looking at Indian Prime Minister with very serious looks and with determined body expressions that shows his support towards him. In cartoon 12, Uncle Sam is scaring Pakistani man with a shaking head with hanging tongue of Narendra Modi's spring clutch. This metaphor also denotes to the military MOU signed by the U.S. and India that scares Pakistan.

## Conclusion

Political cartooning is known as a visual protest that may comment on a serious issue in a humorous manner to make, shape and alternate the public opinion. Political cartoons are often described as 'bomb throwers' (Suman, 1998) and 'portrait of anti-portrait' (Saeed, 2003) that have capacity "to discuss, investigate and lampoon topics that are... generally left untouched by the media at large" (Koetzle&Brunell, 1996, p. 96). It is reflected as a light medium of communication that may not make people and nations get frustrated as much as they can through the other content of media because political cartoons are humorous and satirical way of communicating the truth that reduce the harshness but amplify the impact of desired message.

There are several examples throughout the history of political cartooning in Pakistan since cold war that made the same image of Pakistan with reference to India and the United States triangular foreign relationship. Indian signifiers have always been depicted very close and preferred state for the United States as per their relationships while Pakistani signifiers have always been depicted as 'neglected' and 'inferior' state in terms of the United States' preferences between India and Pakistan despite being the closest ally of the U.S. in Cold war and War against terrorism. Different symbols, metaphors, themes and roles have been sarcastically used by



almost all political cartoonists of Pakistan to depict the fair-weather relationship between the U.S.-Pakistan and a constant love affair between the U.S. and India during all political regimes of Pakistan.

It has been concluded by analyzing the political cartoons of Pakistan that throughout the history since Cold War, metaphors of animals and being puppets, symbols of being helpless, shallow and indecisive and signs of being weak and dependent have been used to build an image of Pakistan. However, the backlash from the PTI government for a cartoon of Imran Khan reflected that how the acceptable and predominantly used theme for Pakistani signifiers/ Prime Ministers in political cartoons since decades became unacceptable in the dynamics of free speech in present situation of Pakistan.

## References

- Ashfaq, A. (2019). Representation of the United States through political cartoons of Pakistan: Pre & Post 9/11 Image Construction. *Journal of Research Society of Pakistan*, 56(2) 175-189.
- Ashfaq, A. (2014). *The Representation of the United States in Mainstream English Newspapers of Pakistan: An Analysis of Political Cartoons (1991-2013)*. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis). Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang.
- Ashfaq, A. & Hussein, A. (2014). Superpower syndrome: The enduring debate on pro-Americanism and anti-Americanism in foreign media. *Asian Social Science*, 10(3), 145-158. doi: 10.5539/ass.v10 n3p145
- Ellis-Peterson, H. & Baloch, S, M, (2019, November 5). 'Extreme fear and self-censorship': media freedom under threat in Pakistan. *The Guardian*.
- Hashim, A. (2019, July 10). Media watchdogs slam 'brazen censorship' by Pakistan. *Al-Jazeera*.
- Hebber, N (2019, August 6). Revoking of Article 370. Always on the cards, but Donald Trump supplied a quick trigger. *Dawn*.
- Iqbal, A. (2016, August 30). US-India defense pact to impact Pakistan, China. *Dawn*.
- Kermani, S. (2019, July 28). Pakistan censorship: 'Hovering above the mute button'. *BBC News*.
- Koetzle, W., & Brunell, T. L. (1996). Lip-reading, draft-dodging, and Perot-noia: Presidential campaigns in editorial cartoons. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 1(4), 94-115. doi: 10.1177/1081180X96001004008
- Mahmood, S. (2009). *The art of political cartoons in Pakistan*. Expression Forum
- Munir, Z. (2016). *Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement*. CSCR.
- Nazar, S. (2019, October 6). Who is afraid of a cartoon? *The News*.
- Perveen, S. & Bhatti, M. N. (2018). Freedom of expression and media censorship in Pakistan: A historical study. *Journal of Historical Studies*, IV (II), 1-21.
- Rashid, A. (2018, July 4). The assault on Pakistan media ahead of vote, *BBC News*.
- Robertson, N. (2018, August 18). Imran Khan: Pakistan's Trump?. *CNN News*.

Saeed, T. (2003). *Comparative political cartoon coverage of the Dawn, The News, & the Nation during January- July 2003 with international and national political issues and personalities* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Shuja, S. (2007, February 17). International Affairs: Pakistan feels jilted by US-India nuclear deal. *Newsweekly*

Siddique, T. (2019, July 24). Pakistan press biased, shadow-banning Marwayn Nawaz proves again. *The Quint*.

Srivastava, S. (2019, August 5). India revokes special status for Kashmir. Here's what it means. *CNBC*.

Suman (1998). *Analytical study of cartoons coverage in The News and the Nation during Benazir era*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of the Punjab, Lahore.

The whole world celebrates the beginning of Obama's presidency. (2009, January 20).

Toor, S. (2011). *The state of Islam: Culture and Cold War politics in Pakistan*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.