



**Coverage of the Raymond Davis Issue in the *DAWN* and *The News*: A Case Study of Peace Journalism**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Raymond Davis, Pakistan, United States, Sensationalism</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author*:</b> <b>Ayisha Khurshid,</b> National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ayishakhurshid87@gmail.com">ayishakhurshid87@gmail.com</a></p>	<p>This study examines how two leading Pakistani English newspapers—<i>Dawn</i> and <i>The News</i>—framed the 2011 Raymond Davis incident, a highly sensitive diplomatic crisis involving the United States and Pakistan. Using a qualitative research design and discourse analysis, the study analyzes unsigned editorials published between 27 January and 18 March 2011 to assess whether the print media adopted a peace-oriented or sensationalist reporting approach. Drawing on Constructivism and Nye’s Soft Power theory, the study demonstrates that media discourse not only reported the incident but actively constructed political identities, narratives of sovereignty, and perceptions of power asymmetry between the U.S. and Pakistan. The findings reveal that both newspapers simultaneously served as mediators and amplifiers of conflict: while they occasionally emphasized legal processes, cooperation, and issue resolution, they also sensationalized themes of dominance, pressure, diplomatic immunity, and national dignity. <i>The News</i> provided more extensive and dramatic coverage, whereas <i>Dawn</i> adopted a relatively restrained editorial tone. Overall, the study concludes that Pakistani print media played a critical role in shaping public discourse, influencing perceptions of justice, and reframing a criminal case into a broader geopolitical confrontation. The research highlights the need to strengthen peace journalism practices to enhance responsible reporting, reduce the escalation of conflict, and promote informed public understanding during international crises.</p>

## 1. Introduction

In this world, millions of actions are taking place simultaneously, and everyone has the right to express his/her views and opinions; these rights include freedom of speech and the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media. Fairclough notes that, “we live in a linguistic epoch, where language has become the commonest form of social practice and the most effective tool for communication.”<sup>1</sup> Today, the most effective means of communication is the media. All meaningful communication depends on language as a substitute for meaning and for conveying information. Language is a symbolic channel through which communication occurs. Communication, the most common of non-mechanical media, cannot be conceived outside of language. According to Puddephatt, “freedom of expression requires a public dimension, a means of communication to facilitate the exchange of opinions, ideas and information.”<sup>2</sup>

Language plays a significant role in the growth of ideas. Through language, human beings can understand communication. Language is not only verbal; it is also in black-and-white form. The languages used in print media reflect the mindset. Language is an important part of society. It is dramatized more specifically in times of conflict.

Print media uses hedges or creates hypes by sensationalizing images and molds public opinion. Print media is important because in any society, it is the fourth pillar. The media wrap the political, economic, and social spheres. The media set the public agenda and act as the gatekeepers of municipal concerns. The media serves as a watchdog, especially during disasters.

The media is particularly significant in assisting nation-building, particularly in post-colonial societies and those that recognize racial and religious diversity. However, the media do not always play the same role. “The power of the media coverage proved more potent than the will of governments.”<sup>3</sup> It is influenced by society.

“Our pictures of the world are shaped and refined in the way journalists frame their news stories. This function of media is called the agenda-setting function of media.”<sup>4</sup> The media present conflicts as serious disagreements or arguments, prolonged armed struggles, or incompatibilities between opinions or principles. Conflicts occur at various levels of society. These could be among individuals, within a family, among families, or groups that come together for various shared interests.

The concept of conflict is multidimensional. It is a balance of powers, of abilities to create effects. It is a clash of supremacy, not a balance of powers or a stable equilibrium. It can be constructive or destructive. Conflict can be resolved. Conflict is the process of judging the stability linking powers. Most vitally, conflict is correlated with power and is universal. In print media, the

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<sup>1</sup> “Norman Fairclough: Theory & Discourse | StudySmarter,” StudySmarter UK, accessed November 10, 2025, <https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/english/key-concepts-in-language-and-linguistics/norman-fairclough/>.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Puddephatt, “Conflict and the Role of the Media,” *Copenhagen: International Media Support Report*, 2006, [https://media-diversity.org/additional-files/documents/b-studies-reports/Conflict%20and%20the%20role%20of%20the%20Media%20\[EN\].pdf](https://media-diversity.org/additional-files/documents/b-studies-reports/Conflict%20and%20the%20role%20of%20the%20Media%20[EN].pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Puddephatt, A. (2006). *Conflict and the role of media*. International Media Support.

<sup>4</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media 1 2,” *The Agenda Setting Journal* 1, no. 2 (September 2017): 105–16, <https://doi.org/10.1075/asj.1.2.02mcc>.

language used, in one way or another, creates a conflict over an issue. Sometimes it gives the impression that the media tries to resolve the issue, but in reality, they sensationalize it. Print media has the power or aptitude to shape the mentality of the reader, as a well-known proverb says, “The pen is mightier than the sword.”<sup>5</sup>

On 27 January 2011, the US consulate's Raymond Davis killed two Pakistani motorcyclists on Thursday near Qurtaba Chowk. According to Davis, he had opened fire in self-defense. Raymond Davis fled the scene, but two traffic wardens chased and overpowered him in Old Anarkali Food Street and handed him over to the police. Many people blocked the road after the incident by setting tyres on fire to protest the killing. Raymond Davis used a 9mm Glock pistol. Two people were killed, one of whom was Faizan, and he also had a police record. Davis had a weapon but no license for it, which was recovered from his possession. The weapon was also with the two motorcyclists. This is an important case because the governments of the United States and Pakistan are both involved. Both the US and Pakistan tried to resolve the Raymond Davis issue. The problem at hand is to analyze how the Pakistani media presents the case of Raymond Davis, that is, whether it sensationalizes or presents reality through the broad mirror production model.

## **2. Literature Review**

Newspapers have always been an important and accessible source of political information because of their affiliations. Articles play an important role in the process of readership, and editorials are the voice of a newspaper. However, the editorial, in its point of view and form, is closer to a column or an article. Print media, especially keep an eye on the editors of The Newspapers. Therefore, they frequently set The News agenda, and audiences can often find ‘framed’ news on these media outlets. It is rare to have firsthand information from direct sources, so the mass media provide second-hand information.

Walgrave and Aelst (2006) cited Cobb and Elder (1971, p. 909) that “the media can also play a vital role in elevating issues to the systemic agenda and increasing their chances of receiving consideration on institutional agendas.”<sup>6</sup> It is a complex job for media people to collect, edit, and present information. A report is part of culture, and a reporter cannot be a biased being. The newspapers raise the issue, gather the information, and present it according to their own structure. A writer may change people's opinions. Nowadays, the media not only transfer information but also select and reject certain news. Through this, the media shapes thoughts and views. Print media have the power and aptitude to shift the news agenda into the public agenda by disseminating the technique.

Walgrave and Aelst (2006), cited that “the more people need orientation on an issue, the more they will rely on media and be affected by media coverage”.<sup>7</sup> Nowadays, we cannot live without media, but we can live without traditions. People are not even aware of their own town's situation, but they are aware of what is happening around the world; they rely on the media. The media fulfill informational needs. People need direction on current issues, and eventually, they are influenced by it. James (1984) quoted Bernard Cohen that

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<sup>5</sup> “Best Universities for Media and Communication Abroad in 2025,” WeMakeScholars, June 26, 2025, <https://www.wemakescholars.com/blog/best-universities-to-study-media-and-communication>.

<sup>6</sup> Walgrave and Van Aelst, “The Contingency of the Mass Media’s Political Agenda Setting Power.”

<sup>7</sup> “Contingency of the Mass Media’s Political Agenda Setting Power: Toward a Preliminary Theory | Journal of Communication | Oxford Academic,” accessed January 25, 2026, <https://academic.oup.com/joc/article-abstract/56/1/88/4102573>.

The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about.<sup>8</sup>

The Media Corporation and pressure groups have an excellent platform for influencing public opinion through public concerns and information. The media prioritize their marketable goods by selecting conflicting news with more hype, sensation, and drama to create snooping and confusion and grab the attention of the most viewers.

Stephen (2001) cited Entman (1993) that.

A frame is determined in large part by its outcome or effect: To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.<sup>9</sup>

The Pakistani media environment is conducive to agenda-setting. Pakistani media can exhibit several features that serve societal realities and vested interests, such as media illiteracy, political unrest, commercialization, pressure groups, non-implementation of self-regulation or self-responsibility, and a lack of a democratic environment.

While private media is driving a shift in Pakistan's media industry, criticism and debate over their reliability, independence, neutrality, and accountability levels have been a hot topic in recent years. Whether it is the case of Lal Mosque, the renovation of the judiciary, the fall of Musharraf's government, cases against the Zardari government, Pak-US relations, or the 'independence' and 'impartiality' of these media outlets, the question marks are beside these media outlets.

Stephen (2001) further cited Tankard et.al (1991) that

A frame is a central organizing idea for news content that provides context and suggests the issue through selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration.<sup>10</sup>

McCombs (1972) holds that first-level agenda-setting effects demonstrate this phenomenon. However, as both agenda-setting and priming demonstrate, closer attention to the specific content of media messages – including the tone of those messages – provides a more detailed understanding of the pictures in our heads and of subsequent attitudes and opinions grounded in those pictures.<sup>11</sup>

Conflict exposure is a particular field in journalism and mass communication that, however, remains underdeveloped in third-world countries like Pakistan.

Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines conflict:

As a serious disagreement or argument, a prolonged armed struggle, or an incompatibility between opinions or principles. Conflicts occur at various levels of society. These could be among

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<sup>8</sup> Bernard C. Cohen, *Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton University Press, 1963),

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183q0fp>.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of A Fractured Paradigm," *The Journal of Communication* 43 (December 1993): 51–58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Ryan, Sharon Dunwoody, and James Tankard, "Risk Information for Public Consumption: Print Media Coverage of Two Risky Situations," *Health Education Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (October 1991): 375–90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/109019819101800309>.

<sup>11</sup> Giovana Olicshevis, *Telejornalismo global um perfil editorial da CNN, BBC e Globo News*, 2007, <https://acervodigital.ufpr.br/handle/1884/96287>.

individuals, within a family, among families, or groups that come together for various shared interests.<sup>12</sup>

A clash between two disparate groups, a conflict between two simultaneous or mismatched feelings, is a conflict. A situation of opposition between people or thoughts or interests; goes against the rules and laws; an argument about something significant; it is a state of dispute caused by the actual or perceived conflict of needs, principles, and interests.<sup>13</sup> It can be internal or external.<sup>14</sup> A clash or disagreement, often violent, between two opposing groups or individuals, and a struggle between opposing forces, are known as conflicts.<sup>15</sup> Internal conflicts arise within the character's mentality, stemming from contrasting feelings or objectives. An external conflict occurs when a character.

Resist the outside force. It is a state of opposition, dissimilarity, or inappropriateness between two or more people or groups, which is sometimes illustrated by physical violence.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework: Constructivism and Soft Power in Media Representation**

International relations are shaped not only by material capabilities but also by socially constructed meanings, identities, and narratives. To understand how Pakistani print media framed the Raymond Davis incident, this study applies **Constructivism**—a leading IR framework that emphasizes language, discourse, and the construction of political realities.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the framework draws on Joseph Nye's concept of soft power to explain how states project influence through diplomacy, persuasion, and normative appeals rather than solely through coercion.<sup>17</sup> Together, these perspectives provide a robust analytical lens for understanding media narratives and power relations embedded in the Raymond Davis case.

### **Constructivism: Media, Identity, and Discursive Power**

Constructivism argues that international politics is socially constructed through language, norms, and shared understandings rather than objective material facts. For constructivists, key concepts such as “power,” “sovereignty,” “self-defense,” or “alliance” gain meaning through discourse and social interaction.<sup>18</sup> Media institutions—especially newspapers in politically charged environments—play a central role in shaping these shared meanings.

In the context of the Raymond Davis incident, Pakistani media coverage actively constructed identities such as:

- **The United States is a dominant superpower** that exercises privilege, pressure, and entitlement.
- **Pakistan is a vulnerable or aggrieved state** struggling to protect its sovereignty and legal autonomy.

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<sup>12</sup> “ADR Assignment | PDF | Alternative Dispute Resolution | Mediation,” Scribd, accessed November 10, 2025, <https://www.scribd.com/document/644875420/ADR-Assignment>.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph N. Mojekwu et al., *5TH Applied Research Conference in Africa*, n.d., accessed November 9, 2025, [https://ujcontent.uj.ac.za/esploro/fulltext/conferencePaper/5TH-applied-research-conference-in-Africa/9913770207691?repId=125363640007691&mid=135689200007691&institution=27UOJ\\_INST](https://ujcontent.uj.ac.za/esploro/fulltext/conferencePaper/5TH-applied-research-conference-in-Africa/9913770207691?repId=125363640007691&mid=135689200007691&institution=27UOJ_INST).

<sup>14</sup> Mojekwu et al.

<sup>15</sup> “Eberly Students Attend 2021 United Collegiate Women's Leadership Conference,” Indiana University of Pennsylvania, accessed November 9, 2025, <https://www.iup.edu/business/news/2021/04/eberly-students-attend-2021-united-collegiate-womens-leadership-conference.html>.

<sup>16</sup> “Social Constructivism | Theories of International Relations Class Notes,” Fiveable, accessed November 27, 2025, <https://fiveable.me/theories-of-international-relations/unit-3/social-constructivism/study-guide/pCke1hMKOPrx0dIZ>.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Fiveable, “Social Constructivism | Theories of International Relations Class Notes.”

- **Raymond Davis as either a protected diplomatic actor or a violent perpetrator,** depending on the framing.<sup>19</sup>

These identities are not pre-existing truths; instead, they are discursively produced through specific linguistic choices, lexical selections, evaluative tones, and narrative framing. Terms like “superpower arrogance,” “threatening messages,” “commanding tone,” and “bullying ally” help construct a shared perception of U.S. superiority and Pakistani subordination. Similarly, references to “justice,” “aggrieved party,” and “national honour” construct Pakistan’s identity as a moral victim defending its sovereignty.

Constructivism, therefore, explains how public opinion and state preferences are shaped by media discourse and why the Raymond Davis case escalated into a diplomatic crisis despite its initially localized criminal nature. The media’s language transformed the incident into a broader narrative of sovereignty, national dignity, and unequal power relations.

### **Soft Power: Influence, Diplomacy, and Narrative Control**

Joseph Nye’s concept of *soft power* complements the constructivist analysis by explaining how states pursue their interests through attraction, persuasion, and cultural legitimacy rather than direct force.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the Raymond Davis episode, U.S. officials engaged in diplomatic efforts, appeals to legal conventions, and multiple forms of political messaging designed to secure Davis’s release without escalating the crisis.

Media coverage revealed several soft power strategies:

- **Emphasizing diplomatic immunity** to assert legal legitimacy and moral authority.
- **Threats of aid suspension** or deterioration of bilateral relations — a form of “negative soft power” that relies on influence rather than force.
- **High-level diplomatic interventions** such as meetings, official statements, and appeals to international conventions.
- **Attempts to manage public opinion** by framing Davis as performing “administrative and technical duties,” rather than intelligence work.

Soft power also works indirectly: the perception that Pakistan depends on U.S. economic, diplomatic, and security support creates a narrative environment in which U.S. preferences appear natural or inevitable. Pakistani media frequently alluded to this dependency, reinforcing the idea that Pakistan’s political elites must navigate U.S. influence carefully.

### **Integration of Constructivism with Soft Power**

By combining Constructivism and Soft Power, the Raymond Davis case can be understood as:

1. **A discursive struggle** over the meaning of sovereignty, justice, and diplomatic privilege.
2. **A demonstration of asymmetric power**, where the U.S. deploys soft power tools to shape outcomes, while Pakistani media constructs a counter-narrative emphasizing national dignity and legal independence.

Constructivism explains *how* the media shapes identities and meanings. Soft power explains *why* states behave as they do within these constructed meanings. This dual-theoretical lens reveals that the Raymond Davis incident was not merely a criminal case but a symbolic confrontation embedded in broader narratives of power, dependency, and international norms. The media’s role becomes central in amplifying, contesting, or legitimizing these narratives, ultimately influencing both domestic perceptions and foreign policy behaviour.

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<sup>19</sup> Alex Rodriguez, “Pakistan Court Acquits CIA Contractor Raymond Davis of Double Murder,” Los Angeles Times, March 16, 2011, <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-xpm-2011-mar-16-la-fg-pakistan-cia-davis-20110317-story.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Nye, *Soft Power*.

### 3. Research Methodology

This study analyzed newspapers to assess the role of print media in national issues. The researcher used a qualitative framework and applied discourse analysis to Articles assembled from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011 from *The News* and *The Dawn*.

Although it is difficult to recognize the state definitively the political orientation of any given newspaper, and because the actual width of Raymond Davis issue within the Pakistani press is continually open to argue, then decided to focus on these two particular newspapers, which are commonly off the record as ‘of the right’ (*The News*) and ‘of the left’ (*The Dawn*), and hence representative of the Pakistan daily setting. Documentation for both newspapers was readily accessible. *The News* and *Dawn* newspapers were selected because both are leading English newspapers in Pakistan and compete with other English newspapers. Articles were selected from the two national newspapers, *THE NEWS* and *DAWN*. These articles will be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data would be collected from January 27, 2011, to March 18, 2011.

### 4. Analysis

Drawing on constructivist theory and Joseph Nye’s concept of soft power, this analysis examines how Pakistani print media discursively constructed power, sovereignty, and national identity during the Raymond Davis episode. Rather than treating power as purely material, the study focuses on how language, framing, and narrative choices produced meanings of dominance, victimhood, resistance, and legitimacy. The analysis, therefore, interprets media texts not as neutral reflections of events but as sites where international power relations were symbolically negotiated.

#### 4.1. Game of power

From a constructivist perspective, power in the Raymond Davis case is not merely exercised through military or economic capabilities but is produced and reproduced through discourse.<sup>21</sup> Pakistani newspapers constructed the United States as a “superpower” through lexical choices that emphasized command, entitlement, and coercive diplomacy. Terms such as “expect,” “threatening messages,” and “postponement of presidential visits” function discursively to normalize U.S. authority while positioning Pakistan as a state under pressure. This linguistic construction reflects what constructivists describe as the social production of hierarchy in international politics, where dominance is sustained through shared narratives rather than direct force.<sup>22</sup>

- US

The US has power because its economy, social standing, and influence are more potent than Pakistan's. The US gave different types of funds to Pakistan, and Pakistani leaders are just dummies in their hands. The US caught many Pakistani people, and they think they are superior.

They treat Pakistanis like a brute or think that their lives have less value. In the case of Raymond Davis, he killed two Pakistanis in the name of self-protection. The US did not label the terrorists or murderers; they only forced Pakistan to release their persons, even though they knew many poor Pakistanis were present in their detention that are innocent.

“President Barack Obama said he is not callous. Obama asks Pakistan to free Davis.” (*The News, 2011*) The tone of Obama is not suitable to show hype, as the lexical item “asks” shows that he is commanding Pakistan instead of requesting to release their person; on the other hand, it also

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<sup>21</sup> “CO11033 | The Raymond Davis Affair: A Case with Global Ramifications - RSIS,” January 2026, <https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/1505-the-raymond-davis-affair-a-ca/>.

<sup>22</sup> Janice Bially Mattern and Ayşe Zarakol, “Hierarchies in World Politics,” *International Organization* 70, no. 3 (July 2016): 623–54, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818316000126>.

suggests that the US considers its citizens as innocent. The US does not call him a murderer or a terrorist.

“Obama told a news conference, ‘We expect Pakistan to abide by the same convention’ (*The News, 2011*). The language shows that Pakistan does not follow rules, but they expect Pakistan to follow rules because at this time their person is in terrible condition. When many Pakistani people are in their custody, they forget to follow rules, but now they keep in mind that there are some rules and regulations that we follow and work formally.

“The imperial power arrogance of a superpower is increasing day by day for a weak democracy in Pakistan, but remains counterproductive.”(*The News, 2011*) This statement shows that the US is more powerful than Pakistan. Writers use *superpower* for the US and show that Pakistan is under pressure from the US government.

“US officials conveyed to Pakistan that if Raymond Davis is not released in the coming days, then the visit of President Asif Ali Zardari to the US could also be postponed” (*The News, 2011*). The word “if” shows a threatening tone. The language used for conveying a message shows the harshness or attitude of the US and shows its supremacy, that they are capable of taking any step.

Similarly, “White House is directly dealing with the Raymond Davis case under pressure from the CIA.” (*The News, 2011*) The phrase “directly dealing” emphasizes the importance of US citizens and shows that releasing Davis now is a matter of prestige for them.

“Pakistani Embassy conveyed Pakistani officials in Washington are getting threatening messages directly from the White House.” (*The News, 2011*) That statement shows how powerful the US is, and White House, which is against terrorism and takes a vast part in the dialogue against terrorists, has now given a threat to Pakistani officials.

“US deputy chief of mission and another senior diplomat separately met officials of the Foreign Office’s protocol division, which handles issues relating to diplomatic immunities and privileges.” (*Dawn, 2011*) Senior US officials use their power to try to release Davis because they are concerned that other officers are saving their own person.

“The US case is weak, but it is being very forcefully articulated.” (*The News, 2011*) According to the columnist, the case is very weak from the US side, but it was expressed powerfully. It shows the power of the US: even knowing the mistakes, they want their person back; they know they are wrong, but power makes them right. Joseph Nye’s concept of soft power helps explain why U.S. pressure in the Raymond Davis case was largely articulated through diplomatic language rather than overt coercion.<sup>23</sup> Media references to diplomatic immunity, international conventions, and high-level meetings illustrate attempts to frame U.S. demands as legally legitimate and normatively acceptable. Even threats related to aid suspension or diplomatic fallout functioned as indirect influence mechanisms, relying on Pakistan’s perceived dependency rather than military force. Pakistani media’s emphasis on these tactics reveals an awareness of soft power asymmetry, where persuasion and pressure coexist under the guise of diplomacy.

- **Pakistan**

In contrast, Pakistani media constructed a counter-narrative of resistance and legal sovereignty. Through repeated references to judicial authority, sub judice proceedings, and constitutional autonomy, newspapers framed Pakistan as an actor capable of challenging U.S. pressure within the bounds of law. From a constructivist standpoint, this narrative performs an identity-building function: Pakistan is represented not merely as a weaker state but as a morally

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<sup>23</sup> Nye, *Soft Power*.

legitimate and legally grounded actor. Such framing reflects an attempt to reclaim symbolic power by redefining strength from coercive capability to judicial independence and national dignity.

“Pakistan is challenging the US a second time” (*The News, 2011*). This statement shows that Pakistan is not afraid of the US and faces any critical situation.

“Pakistani court will decide the fate of Raymond Davis said top government officials (*The News, 2011*). The Pakistani court tries to resolve this issue according to the law because they know the two people killed by Raymond and the families of those people want revenge as well as justice.

A powerful federal minister told us that we are not in a position to oblige the US because the matter is now sub judice, and the Lahore High Court has included Raymond Davis's name on the exit control list.<sup>24</sup> It shows that Pakistani politicians move aside and all depends on the court, but the court is in a position to take some action; they are not afraid of US threats.

“We are ready to face US sanctions because we know that new elections are very close and a small mistake on this issue will destroy the political future of the Pakistan People’s Party” (*The News, 2011*). The columnist uses the word "sanctions," which refers to Pakistan's disobedience of any law, and the politicians are very concerned about public support because gaining votes is their priority.

Moreover, the newspaper states that “the applicant pleads that he is an aggrieved party in the case as Raymond had killed his brother and his friend. Therefore, the court should also hear his viewpoint” (*The News, 2011*). It shows that the game of power is in the hands of Pakistanis. Ordinary people want revenge from the US. He asked the court to listen to him because he is an aggrieved party.

“The Lahore High Court Chief Justice on Monday dismissed two applications to make the Raymond Davis case and to issue a stay order against a possible approach to the ICJ by the US or Pakistan to resolve the immunity matter” (*The News, 2011*).

The Chief Justice of Pakistan also shows that Pakistan has power and is equally important as the US. “Pakistan govt to decide Davis’s status.” (*Dawn, 2011*) The article's headline underscores Pakistan's importance and suggests the game of power is in Pakistan's hands. “Govt not to budge from stand on Raymond issue” (*Dawn, 2011*). Whatever the critical situation, Pakistan did not change the decision.

Rana Sanaullah said at a press conference that the government would not give in to any “national or international pressure” in the trial of Davis (*Dawn, 2011*). Pakistani leader tries to resolve the issue because rumors are spreading that Pakistan faces pressure from the US, and it is also reported that Pakistan has the power, which is why no one can pressure it.

“Former asks US not to threaten Pakistan over Davis issue” (*The News, 2011*). The lexical items show that Pakistan is in a commanding position and warns the US not to threaten Pakistan.

“20 former Pakistan ambassadors in a bleated statement said that the US should refrain from threats and pressure against Pakistan” (*The News, 2011*). In this statement, the word “should refrain” shows that power is in Pakistanis' hands. Moreover, Pakistan can control the international issues even when facing threats towards it.

“US should cooperate in this investigation, to disclose the identities of the US nationals who were in the vehicles and to take steps for their return to Pakistan for investigations” (*The News, 2011*). The lexical item “should” refer that Pakistan is commanding, on the other hand it

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<sup>24</sup> Author Simurgh, “‘Diplomatic Immunity’ or Murder with Impunity? And Who’s a Diplomat Anyway?,” *PULSE*, February 17, 2011, <https://pulsemedia.org/2011/02/17/diplomatic-immunity-or-murder-with-impunity-and-whos-a-diplomat-anyway/>.

also suggest that Pakistan has power to control the international issue and Pakistan demanding to send back two US nationals for investigation.

- **TWO DIFFERENT CASES**

According to the US, two different cases are those of the American citizen “Raymond Davis” and the Pakistani citizen “Dr Aafia Siddique”, both of whom are in prison. The US is not to swap Dr Aafia with Davis. The Obama administration rejected Pakistan’s proposal to trade Raymond Davis for Dr Aafia Siddique” (*The News, 2011*).

The US wanted to release their person in any condition, but they have not given back Aafia, although they know very well that Aafia is not a terrorist and she has not killed anyone. The US government would mind this step if taken” (*The News, 2011*). Pakistan is very concerned about the US. Pakistan cannot afford to anger them.

“The US government was working on several mass development projects in Pakistan and wanted to accomplish them.” (*The News, 2011*) The columnist tries to show the power of the US and the weak economic state of Pakistan, that if Pakistan takes any step, it would be a tough time for Pakistan's future.

“America still believed that Pakistan would surely give immunity to Davis soon.” (*Dawn, 2011*) A columnist's use of specific words shows the American government's relaxation towards Davis. “US denies Davis refused to accept challan.” (*The News, 2011*). The columnist shows the power of Americans, who also do not accept the challenge from the Pakistani court and refuse to obey the law, even though they are wrong.

“He contended that the court that is going to try him is not authorized to conduct a trial against him” (*The News, 2011*). Davis disobeying rules and challenging the Pakistan court, claiming they are not capable of imposing any punishment.

“The government first offered to release Davis if Aafia Siddique was transferred to Pakistan to serve her sentence here. But this proposal was immediately shot down by the White House.” (*The News, 2011*) columnists explain that Pakistan just demands that they give back Aafia. They will release their person, Davis, but the White House refused to return Aafia. Although Aafia did not kill anyone, she is not a terrorist, but Americans think that her crime is bigger than Davis's.

#### **4.2. Terror**

Constructivism explains anti-Americanism in Pakistani media not as a spontaneous public emotion but as a discursively produced outcome of framing practices.<sup>25</sup> By repeatedly associating Raymond Davis with labels such as “US official,” “CIA spy,” or “consulate employee,” newspapers linked an individual criminal act to broader narratives of U.S. interventionism and secrecy. This framing transformed Davis from a singular actor into a symbol of American intrusion, thereby reinforcing a collective identity of Pakistan as a victim of external dominance.

- **Blaming the US**

“The US consulate employee who shot dead two citizens on Thursday was remanded in police custody” (*Dawn, 2011*). The word used for Raymond Davis by the journalist is US consulate which shows the journalist prefers to name the killer by his national identity.

“The US authorities helped the two US nationals who were in that vehicle at the time to leave Pakistan surreptitiously” (*The News, 2011*). Columnists here refer to the fact that US nationals helped the criminal escape from Pakistan, which shows that all the US diplomats know what happened. They made every arrangement to let the criminal escape punishment.

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<sup>25</sup> “On Pakistani Anti-Americanism | Brookings,” accessed January 25, 2026, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/on-pakistani-anti-americanism/>.

“Davis was not included in the list of embassy staff sent on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011” (*The News, 2011*). This shows that he came to Pakistan for a specific purpose, as his name was not on the list just two days before the incident.

“The American position is very convoluted and appears to be based on “legal smoke and mirrors” (*The News, 2011*). The columnists criticize America and say their position is unclear because they sometimes say one thing and then deny it the next moment. They also face complications.

American military officials are telling their Pakistani counterparts they want to save the Pakistani-American relationship. The way to do this, they say, is to “forgive” and “forget” the Raymond Davis (*The News, 2011*). The columnists Ahmad tells the reality that if we want to save the relationship between Pakistani-Americans we want to forget the issue of Raymond Davis.

Davis refused to formally receive the challan copy. Columnists argue that the American prison system recognizes its importance and does not accept court decisions. Raymond Davis's actions show an attitude of superiority, even committing mistakes and refusing to accept a challenge.

“The Oman meeting indicates the goal now is to sweep all urgent issues under the carpet in the name of saving the Pak-US relationship.” (*The News, 2011*) Columnist Ahmad Quraishi criticizes the US for arranging the Oman meeting to save the relationship between the two countries.<sup>26</sup>

#### **4.3. Role of Print Media**

From a constructivist and peace journalism perspective, Pakistani print media functioned as both a mediator and a magnifier of conflict.<sup>27</sup> While some reports emphasized legal processes, judicial restraint, and bilateral cooperation, which explain the hallmarks of peace journalism, others relied on sensationalist framing that amplified hostility and suspicion. This dual role illustrates how media discourse does not merely report conflict but actively shapes the boundaries of acceptable political interpretation and public emotion.

- **Resolve**

“The Lahore High Court Chief Justice on Monday dismissed two applications to make the Raymond Davis case and to issue a stay order against a possible approach to the ICJ by the US or Pakistan to resolve the immunity matter.” (*The News, 2011*) The Chief Justice of Pakistan tries to resolve the issue with the help of both governments. Pakistan wants to resolve the issue with the US government's help to avoid further hatred.

“Pakistan did not raise any objection in the past about Raymond Davis' status.” (*The News, 2011*) The journalist tries to highlight the Pakistani government's ignorance, as they do not know which type of foreign citizens live in their country.

“I cannot comment on- I mean, he does have legal representation by Pakistani lawyers. I cannot speak to their particular status. We had consular officials present at today's hearing, said Beale (*Dawn, 2011*). To remain quiet on a particular issue shows that the US also wants to resolve it but seems to be working secretly on the given issue.

“He has complete trust in the country's judiciary. He dispelled rumors of any settlement with the US officials, said Fahim.” (*The News, 2011*) Columnists engaged in a positive

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<sup>26</sup> Tao Lin, “Peace in the Taiwan Strait: The Triangular Relationship Among the United States, Taiwan, and China” (PhD Thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 2021), <https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/1774.2/64103/1/LIN-DOCTORALTHESIS-2021.pdf>.

<sup>27</sup> B. Rahman and Abida Eijaz, “Pakistani Media as an Agent of Conflict or Conflict Resolution : A Case of Lal Masjid in Urdu and English,” 2015, <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Pakistani-Media-as-an-Agent-of-Conflict-or-Conflict-Rahman-Eijaz/634092a20cf14814e2f48f8ee2af6ca3748681ab>.

conversation with Fahim to resolve the specific issue. US officials show trust in Pakistan's judiciary, which is very good for their relationship.

“Local and international media persons were barred from attending the trial proceedings” (*The News, 2011*). No media coverage is allowed during the trial because top-secret information is being discussed, so no media personnel are allowed to attend.

“No one should play with it and misguide the people, said the Prime Minister of Pakistan” (*The News, 2011*). The Prime Minister tries to resolve the issue and advises that no one misguides the people.

“Complete freedom for the media and political activities. The freedom must be used for constructive purposes, the Prime Minister of Pakistan said” (*The News, 2011*). He tries to clear everyone's position to resolve the issue.

“The guilty will be punished, and the innocent will get justice” (*Dawn, 2011*). The reporter here suggests that the issue would be resolved, that everyone would receive justice, that the innocent would be rewarded, and that the offender would be punished for the act.

“CIA police claimed to have traced the criminal record of one of the two youths killed by Davis” (*Dawn, 2011*). CIA police not only focus on Davis' character but also focus on the two motorcyclists to resolve the issue. It shows that they try to present that not all faults are on Davis's side, because two motorcyclists have criminal records that show they have no good deeds. “SP said two cell phones recovered from Faizan Haider's pocket had been snatched in a street crime” (*Dawn, 2011*). The reporter also covered the SP discussion that one of the two motorcyclists was a criminal because two cell phones were present with him at the time of killing, which were snatched in a street crime. It was reported that Faizan had committed some criminal acts before that incident. “An armed robbery case registered against him with Faisal town police, and another with Gulshani-ravi police had also been traced” (*Dawn, 2011*). The journalist tries to focus on both perspectives, not to defend one person, and to show reality. He says that Pakistani police also checked the criminal records of two motorcyclists to resolve the issue. Pakistani media focused on both sides. “Salman Bashir, Diplomatic sources confirmed that the US State Department was also working with the Pakistan embassy in Washington on this issue” (*Dawn, 2011*). Baqir, the journalist here, tries to avoid much blame, and his statement shows he is trying to present the reality and resolve the issue, because many journalists have said the Pakistan embassy faces direct threats from the White House. This statement shows that the US and Pakistan are trying to resolve the issue to help each other and work together.

The US embassy, in a very brief statement, regretted the loss of lives and confirmed that it was trying to resolve the issue. “The US embassy is working with Pakistan authorities to determine the facts and works towards a resolution.” (*Dawn, 2011*). In this statement, the US regretted the loss of lives, and Baqir noted that the Pakistani authorities and the US both try to get the facts and resolve the issue.

“It would be a mistake to assume that the US-Pakistan relationship would plunge into crisis only after the Raymond Davis episode, said Michael Kugelman.” (*The News, 2011*) here the columnists coated the Washington person speech that the relationships between US-Pakistan not depend on Davis issue he said that it would be the mistake for those people who assume that this case made their relation ghastly.

- **Sensationalize**

Sensationalism is a type of editorial bias in mass media in which events, issues, and topics are over hyped to increase readership. “The US is not ready to apologize or show respect to the Pakistani law but is trying to prove that Pakistan is not its most trusted but its most bullied ally”

(*The News, 2011*). Columnists try to describe that the US has authority, and that is why they do not express regret to Pakistan for the harsh acts of their citizens. Also, they give assurance that Pakistan is not capable of taking action against its citizens.

“US congressmen are also planning to start a move for disrupting US aid to Pakistan.” (*The News, 2011*) The US is in a position to take action if Pakistan does not release its citizen; they know Pakistan needs their support to survive.

“The record claims “no powerful minister” to say anything about the US on record.” (*The News, 2011*) Powerful here refers to a coward or a fearful person who is unable or unwilling to speak out against anything.

“Foreign office sources said the arrogant attitude of the US on the Davis case also exposed the seriousness of the US for its war against terror and strategic dialogue with Pakistan. The US is ready to forget everything just for a person who killed two Pakistanis in the name of so-called self-defence.” (*The News, 2011*)

Columnists here sensationalize that the US tries to show its attitude that it takes serious action against Pakistan, and just for a person who is a killer, forget all the old issues regarding their state. “Davis refuses to sign...” (*The News, 2011*) The article's headline shows how much power was given to Davis that he even refused the court's order. The language also sensationalizes the issue.

“I know who mishandled the Davis case: Qureshi.” (*The News, 2011*) The article's outline sensationalizes the idea that some powers affect the issue.

“If and when Raymond Davis does eventually return to the US, and regardless of what happens in the interim, Pakistan will remain a bulwark of American strategy in the wider region, the Pakistani military will continue to take American dollars while talking itself up as the guardian of sovereignty, and the right-wing juggernaut will continue to heap pressure on the weak elected government” (*The News, 2011*). The journalist of this article criticizes the Pakistan military and government, and if or when Davis returns to his country, the condition of Pakistan will remain.

“No member of a diplomatic mission in a country is allowed to carry arms” (*Dawn, 2011*). The journalist tries to sensationalize that Davis was not allowed to keep a weapon. He said that no person with diplomatic immunity is permitted to possess any weapon. It is against the laws of any country that people keep weapons, even for self-defence.

“US embassy in a very brief statement regretted the loss of lives and confirmed that it was trying to resolve the issue” (*Dawn, 2011*). Columnists sensationalize the issue because the word “brief” shows some attitude. At the end of the statement, the US tries to resolve the issue.

“The case of Raymond Davis also raises the question of abuse of diplomatic immunity” (*The News, 2011*). The journalist here sensationalizes the issue and also notes the other side of the reality that the Raymond Davis case raises many questions about diplomatic immunity. Because after this incident, every country wants to be conscious of diplomats and keep some distance.

“Our case is strong, but the Zardari government is shying away from presenting it to the world in order not to 'anger' Washington” (*The News, 2011*). In this statement, the writer sensationalizes the claim that the Pakistani president knows we are right and that our case is as strong as the US's, yet, despite all the facts, he takes no action because he does not dare anger Washington.

“Pronouncement of senior US officials, Washington is not interested in any long-term relations with Pakistan. The American focus is temporary and limited to its regional interests” (*The News, 2011*). Ahmad, the columnist, tries to sensationalize the issue and says that Washington wanted some favor from Pakistan, which is why they want relations, but these relations were not long-term; for their own purposes, they use Pakistan.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that print media plays an important role. Print media plays a central role in promoting the resolution of the issue. Print media can influence policymakers and bring hidden stories to readers' attention. The primary duty of editors is to maintain a balanced stance during times of conflict. Peace journalism helps resolve issues or bridge gaps between enemies and focuses on the need for advocacy.

A peace process aims to build support for the national peace agreement. Conceptual understanding and practical skills for objective and independent reporting have been lacking in Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> The findings of this case study were both a surprise and expected; on one hand, it was predicted that the divide between *The News* and *The Dawn* would be less apparent than before. The study has different media agendas regarding the issue.

Two newspapers ranked the issue's importance based on media coverage in the newspapers they read. *The Dawn* gave less coverage to this issue than *The News*. However, both newspapers transfer a reasonable portion of their news content to the inner pages of The Newspapers in the shape of jump heads.

Both newspapers in the study (*The Dawn* and *The News*) took a favorable stance toward the government in the Raymond Davis case. The findings of this case study were expected because print media, in some issues, try to sensationalize, and they can also try to resolve the issue because it is an international issue.

Integrating Joseph Nye's concept of soft power further illustrates how the United States' diplomatic influence, legal arguments, and pressure tactics appeared in media narratives as forms of persuasion rather than coercion. At the same time, Pakistani media framed the state's responses as assertions of sovereignty, legal authority, and national dignity. Together, these frameworks reveal how the press mediated the power asymmetry between the two countries, constructing competing interpretations of responsibility, justice, and international norms.

The findings confirm constructivist assumptions that international crises are shaped as much by discourse as by material interests. Pakistani print media did not merely reflect U.S.-Pakistan power asymmetry; it actively constructed meanings of sovereignty, justice, and legitimacy through language. Integrating soft power theory further demonstrates how diplomatic persuasion, legal framing, and normative pressure operated as key instruments of influence. Together, these frameworks reveal that the Raymond Davis case was not only a legal or diplomatic dispute but a symbolic struggle over identity and authority in international politics.

The study also highlights the complex role of peace journalism in conflict-sensitive reporting. While both newspapers occasionally practiced constructive reporting by contextualizing events, presenting multiple perspectives, and seeking to de-escalate tensions, instances of sensationalism were equally evident. Headlines emphasizing threats, arrogance, or political cowardice demonstrate how media outlets can inadvertently intensify conflict narratives, shape public sentiment against foreign actors, and influence policy debates.

Overall, this research concludes that Pakistani print media serves as both a mediator and an amplifier in international incidents. *Dawn* and *The News* differed in the extent and tone of their coverage, yet both played an important role in framing the Raymond Davis case as a national and diplomatic crisis. The study reaffirms that in contexts of geopolitical sensitivity, media outlets do not simply report events—they actively participate in constructing meaning, shaping national

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<sup>28</sup> Dr Mirza Jan and Dr Muammad Rashid Khan, "Peace Journalism and Conflict Reporting: The Case of Pakistani Media," *South Asian Studies* 26, no. 2 (2020), <http://journals.pu.edu.pk/journals/index.php/IJSAS/article/view/2830>.

identity, and influencing the trajectory of diplomatic engagement. Strengthening peace journalism practices, enhancing editorial responsibility, and promoting more context-sensitive reporting can improve the media's role in de-escalating conflict and fostering informed public discourse in Pakistan.

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