



# Who will hold the Pakistani mainstream media responsible

Briefing Paper  
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### Report Authors

"Who will hold the Pakistani mainstream media responsible?" was researched, compiled and written by Faran Jaffery, Contributing Analyst.

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CommandEleven is a research organization focused on Pakistan's national security aspects and enhancing global understanding and collaboration opportunities for the nation.

Founded in 2015, CommandEleven provides situational awareness to facilitate a better understanding of the key dynamics that effect Pakistan from a national security perspective, especially in relation to terrorism, insurgencies and extremism.

CommandEleven seeks to inform and guide public policy and decision makers in government, business and military through a rigorous program of publications, conferences, digital medias, policy briefings and recommendations.

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Mainstream media (MSM), in any country, plays a pivotal role in not only educating the public with facts and in-depth stories, but also in forming a national narrative. Every country, whether the US, Russia or India, has its own national narrative which is based on its own realities. As is the case with people, the reality of one state may vastly differ from the reality of another state. A country's media represents the interests of the state as well as the public opinion.

In US, the MSM is basically the establishment's media. Outlets like the Washington Post, the New York Times, etc. are known for propagating the US establishment's point of view. It would be fair to say that the MSM has played a major role in forming the public opinion and pushing US interests, whether you agree with their narrative and interests or not. With the emergence of President Donald Trump, who has a reputation for being anti-establishment, previously little known outlets like Breitbart and Daily Caller became the voice of the Trump White House. This partially happened because the grip of US establishment on US MSM is still quite strong.

Now enter Pakistan. Another country where the MSM is pushing the interests of an establishment.

But the question is, which establishment?

Pakistan's establishment or a foreign establishment?

Unlike the MSM in US, the Pakistani establishment doesn't spend a lot of money on MSM for narrative building, which is mostly due to lack of resources. Being one of the least funded militaries in the region, the Pakistani military is often subtly portrayed as the all-powerful villain in Pakistani MSM, a view adopted from foreign MSM.

But if Pakistani military was so powerful, wouldn't it at least be able to guarantee positive coverage in the MSM?

While Pakistani establishment suffers from lack of resources, foreign establishments swoop in throwing large sums of money and lucrative packages at the Pakistani MSM. I have a famous saying, "if you won't do it, the enemy will." I have found this to be true so far.

Let's take DawnLeaks, a story that attacked and maligned the Pakistani establishment, but was buried by the same Pakistani establishment for reasons. What reasons, one may ask?

For starters, the establishment knew where Panama Papers case was headed.

When Rana Sanullah recently said the JIT report was compiled in four years, and not six months, he actually had a vague point.

Do we really think Pakistani Intelligence Community (IC) didn't know about anything before JIT started their own investigation? Of course not.

It is the job of the IC to know what the leaders are cooking in the PM house, or GHQ for that matter.

Do we really believe that ISI and MI don't 'keep track' of their own chiefs? Because that's standard procedure. Hence, it would be ignorant to think that Pakistani establishment didn't know that Sharif had screwed up in the Panama Papers case and had no real evidence to get himself out of it.

And assuming that they did know this during the time of DawnLeaks case, it makes sense that they thought it would be wise to bury DawnLeaks because Sharif is going down and out in the Panama Papers case anyway. Had the establishment pursued DawnLeaks any further, it would have brought down the government since elements within the PM House were involved.

That is also what the Sharif family wanted.

Sharifs' never expected to be buried under Panama Papers case.

Analyzing the DawnLeaks case today while going through the coverage of Pakistani MSM on Panama Papers-JIT report, things may start making more sense to an average Pakistani. As I have written before, DawnLeaks was a classic influence operation initiated with the help of elements within Pakistani government, which sought to establish the narrative of Indian + US establishments. For the establishment, demolishing the Nawaz government over DawnLeaks was appealing but not wise; it would have created an unnecessary political martyr who was already stuck in the Panama Papers case.

But just because the military decided to bury it and Maj. General Asif Ghafoor amusingly told us it is in "national interests", does this mean everyone has forgotten it too? No, we haven't. And we won't.

DawnLeaks was not the only story of its kind. It was the most explosive and most harmful to Pakistan's national interests, but there have been several other similar but less impactful stories and articles in Pakistani MSM that were meant to propagate the viewpoint of foreign establishments and harm Pakistan's interests.

For instance, take this article in Express Tribune by Feisal Naqvi. The headline is "Kabhi Apni Shakal Dekhi Hai", meaning "have you ever seen your face?". The article discusses violence in Kashmir and peddles Indian narrative that points towards Pakistan's flaws in retaliation against Pakistan's stance on Kashmir.

This also happens to be the popular narrative among Pakistan's liberals. And this is exactly how disinformation, influence operations and raw propaganda works. Enemy propaganda can never work without existing narratives and half-truths.

Why I say enemy propaganda?

Because this article has been doing the rounds in Indian Army.



**Ata Hasnain**

4 hrs · 🌐

My good friend Lt Gen Gautam Moorthy who co-authored the article in The Tribune yesterday (on my timeline), has sent this one to me from Pakistan's Express Tribune. Very appropriately titled - KABHI APNI SHAKAL DEKHI HAI. Its an advice to Pakistanis to introspect about their dream of absorbing Kashmir. Equally its a message to Kashmiris whether they wish to join a society such as Pakistan. The title is a common Urdu and Hindustani proverb asking someone to introspect about the weaknesses he finds in others.



### Kabhi apni shakal dekhi hai? - The Express Tribune

Whether Kashmiris really want to join us is a question only they can answer. At this point, I can't see why they...

TRIBUNE.COM.PK

Coming back to DawnLeaks, while the author of the Dawn story and the owners of Dawn media group claim to be anti-establishment liberals, one may ask are they just against Pakistani establishment or all establishments everywhere? Because it increasingly looks like they are \*only\* against Pakistani establishment, which should raise some eyebrows.

Here is Dawn CEO Hameed Haroon hanging out in India:



Will Indians welcome Mr. Haroon this way if, let's say, he was anti-Indian establishment? I don't think so.

Here is Mr. Haroon hanging out with US ambassador to Pakistan David Hale:



U.S. Consulate General Karachi

May 10 · 🌐

American Ambassador David Hale and Consul General Grace Shelton met with dawn.com CEO Hameed Haroon in Karachi and reaffirmed American support and commitment to freedom of the press.



This meeting was held when Dawn Media Group was under pressure from Pakistani public over DawnLeaks. So, the CEO of Dawn, who portrays himself as a principled anti-establishment liberal, runs like a puppy dog to the Americans at the first sign of trouble with Pakistani public? What does that tell us?

Take this story by Dawn on Pakistan's defence budget. The headline reads:

# DAWN

HOME LATEST POPULAR **PAKISTAN** TODAY'S PAPER OPINION WORLD SPORT BUSINESS MAGAZINES CULTURE BLOGS TECH

## Chinese footprint on the Pakistani budget

Nasir Jamal | Updated May 29, 2017

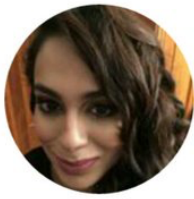
f 218 t p e 48

Seeking help from the American ambassador while publishing headlines like the one above. Are the readers thinking what I am thinking?

To be fair, Dawn and Express Tribune are not in this alone, which is why this article carries the term 'mainstream media'. There's a long list of TV channels, anchors and journalists who form their coverage and narrative as per the wishes of the highest bidder. Don't forget the same MSM takes \$50 billion annually from USG. Here is almost-US President Hillary Clinton talking about USA's information war:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1p-E2xmpjA>

Here is Pakistan correspondent of Reuters using Quora, a Q/A website, as a source:



**Mehreen Zahra-Malik** ✓

@mehreenzahra

#Calibri first saw broad availability outside @Microsoft in a @Windows beta release on 9 August 2004



When was Calibri font made available to general public as ...  
quora.com

2:27 PM · 11 Jul 17

**2 Retweets** **10 Likes**

Here are the lists of MSM outlets consisting of figures in Rupees on who made how much from federal advertisements:



## A CommandEleven Briefing Paper

FM-99	705,510	1,05,201	-	-
FM-103	411,548	301,392	5,067,236	6,074,138
FM-106-2	1,334,643	108,266	13,466,247	13,986,061
FM-89	1,646,190	-	0	1,334,643
FM-91	1,446,190	1,982,983	16,083,738	19,712,911
FM-94.6	-	1,600,181	22,652,345	25,698,716
FM-107	1,234,643	1,547,747	21,627,400	23,175,147
FM-107.4	-	-	0	1,234,643
Geo Kahani	-	-	0	-
Jaag TV	2,574,040	1,127,644	6,823,590	7,951,234
Jang.Com.Pk	1,376,573	-	0	2,574,040
Geo News	-	8,541,254	514,378	10,432,205
Geo Taiz	46,087,761	124,844,746	267,361,216	438,293,723
Geo Super	742,980	6,623,137	4,543,802	11,909,919
Koh e Noor TV	786,240	-	840,294	1,626,534
Kay 2	-	-	23,852,890	23,852,890
Hum TV	-	839,061	32,164,308	33,003,369
KTN News	5,229,315	483,000	0	5,712,315
Metro One	12,191,460	15,986,476	51,260,941	79,438,877
Khyber News	426,300	10,426,762	17,018,277	27,871,339
Neo News	3,935,822	18,966,851	53,055,269	75,957,933
News One	4,919,749	5,001,080	51,025,635	60,946,464
PTV Home	2,006,690	17,204,776	54,338,184	73,549,650
PTV News	605,029	2,076,941	0	2,681,970
Masala TV	4,084,024	8,640,149	111,817,920	124,542,093
Mehran TV	87,633	-	0	87,633
PTV World	2,135,735	-	1,279,460	3,415,195
Pashto One	-	5,476,661	0	5,476,661
Punjab TV	-	-	7,363,347	7,363,347
Royal News	2,025,471	8,135,678	15,545,320	25,706,469
Roze TV	10,487,299	63,277,168	64,050,215	137,814,682

Following names of TV channels to which Federal Govt. advertisement were on-aired and the amount paid to each TV channels from 01.07.2013 to 25.07.2016 (Annexure-II)

S.#	Name of TV Channels	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total from 01.07.2013 to 25.07.2016
1	A Plus	-	-	-	81,900
2	92 HD News	81,900	-	-	81,900
3	Aab Tak	-	-	-	-
4	Aaj News	13,293,577	16,969,700	106,570,250	123,539,950
5	ARY Digital	18,663,756	81,778,739	204,576,255	299,648,571
6	Apna Channel	245,700	38,485,449	70,135,784	127,284,988
7	ARY News	239,400	241,500	15,412,705	15,899,905
8	Ary Zauq	26,329,360	13,462,769	22,269,625	22,509,025
9	Awaz TV	73,710	-	4,105,710	43,897,839
10	ATV	1,436,400	-	0	73,710
11	AVT Khyber	5,877,021	6,934,749	9,503,340	10,939,740
12	Awaz TV	5,347,672	-	49,276,707	62,088,477
13	Business Plus	1,062,474	460,160	1,944,401	7,292,073
14	Capital News	4,204,054	14,028,798	0	1,522,634
15	Channel 24	18,085,018	69,182,270	56,366,716	74,599,569
16	Channel 5	3,339,583	12,925,684	22,070,500	38,335,767
17	City 42	4,596,418	26,117,113	33,694,610	64,408,141
18	CNBC News	7,348,110	15,980,986	32,465,300	55,794,396
19	Dawn News	1,632,776	-	0	1,632,776
20	Dawn.Com.	42,696,753	47,668,078	54,680,120	145,044,952
21	Din News	-	354,000	0	354,000
22	Dunya News	1,876,770	5,105,450	12,135,995	19,118,215
23	Express News	36,481,700	96,200,439	240,524,015	373,206,154
24	FM-100	46,624,489	91,854,561	130,224,758	268,703,808
25	FM 93	1,152,333	1,600,153	13,890,449	16,642,935

While federal advertisements are a major source of profit for MSM and it comes handy when the government is in trouble, it is not the only means of profit for the MSM. In fact, it's just a fraction of it.

Another example of MSM's corruption is the latest The Friday Times editorial by one Najam Sethi, who accuses Pakistani "deep state" of plotting against Nawaz government. Yes, this is the same Najam Sethi who was given the top post at Pakistan Cricket Board by Nawaz government despite his complete lack of experience in the cricket field. Believe it or not, a job like that at PCB comes with more "lucrative packages" than a job at a MSM outlet like Geo News, which is why when the choice had to be made Mr. Sethi opted to

stick with PCB instead of Geo even though his relationship with Geo/Jang group is still the same. All this obviously doesn't account for his wife Jugnu Mohsin's close relation with the Nawaz government but hopefully some 'real' journalist will do a story on that soon.

2 dharnas didn't work, so the deep state had another plan to 'Save' the system! This week's edit:  
[thefridaytimes.com/tft/save-the-s...](http://thefridaytimes.com/tft/save-the-s...)  
[@najamsethi](https://twitter.com/najamsethi)



12:06pm · 14 Jul 2017 · Twitter for iPhone

Another example of MSM's utter moral bankruptcy and corruption bordering on treason is the case of Jang group journalist Ahmad Noorani and his recent #fakenews story to malign the ISI and provide cover for PM Nawaz and the government.



**Roohan Ahmed**

@Roohan2Ahmed



-@Ahmad\_Noorani apologizes to readers after his Monday's story proved wrong. Humans make errors & he's no exception

INTERNATIONAL  
**THE NEWS**

Reporter's apology to readers

ISLAMABAD: Let me start with an admission ...

[thenews.com.pk](http://thenews.com.pk)

7:44 AM · 12 Jul 17

And no, apologizing doesn't cut it. You're a journalist, not a kindergarten kid who just smelled his finger after inserting it into his anus. Also, the story itself has still not been taken down. All this is not only in gross violation of Supreme Court of Pakistan and the right of free speech the MSM is afforded by the state (which, frankly, helps all of us) but

also a direct attack on the public of Pakistan since it is the public that is the primary target and victim of these influence operations.

Pakistani MSM is corrupted, rogue and must be held accountable. It is time to bring MSM to the book. And only Supreme Court of Pakistan can do it. All eyes on the independent courts now.

### About the Author

Faran Jeffery is a Pakistani researcher, analyst and expert on radicalization who comments on all-things security, terrorism & geopolitics, especially in South Asia region. Faran Jeffery holds M.A. in Military History from Norwich University, M.A. in International Relations from Karachi University and Bachelors in Israel Studies from American University.

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