

**Comparative Study of News Reports by BBC World,
CNN, Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera for the
Annapolis Summit (Nov 19th – Dec 9th, 2007)**

The Role of Media in Conflict Resolution

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

The media is said to constitute the fourth pillar in a state. Baron Charles Louis de Montesquieu¹, a French political Enlightenment thinker, gave his theory on the separation of power between the state apparatus. The legislative, executive and judiciary were the three core organs of state but later on the media came to be informally known as the fourth pillar. The reason why the media has come to occupy the centre stage in the contemporary world is explained by Johan Vincent Galtung, a specialist in Political Economy of the Media. According to him, in a democratic society ideally speaking, the media should tell state, capital and civil society what goes on between them in a transparent and objective manner. This is the operation of a democratic state in a nutshell and helps to institutionalize peace and harmonious coexistence (Galtung, 2004:11). However, a closer examination of the media in a democratic society reveals a pattern often to the contrary. Galtung (2000:3) quotes John Vasquez who talks about “The war Puzzle” and develops lessons from Correlates of War Project², (a project started by David Singer from University of Michigan). He summarized that a war culture is in place especially epitomized by the Cold War, which delegitimizes and dehumanizes the enemy, often to a point that negotiation or mediation becomes all but impossible. This war culture is, of course, brought in place through different measures but the media plays the most crucial role.

Thus, the study wants to examine, if at all, there is a war culture prevalent in the media discourse or practices. This chapter will explain the phenomenon that may hinder media to report on solutions that are marginalised and may appear alternative to mainstream discourse. This study is not going to focus on media ownership or how consciousness is

¹ <http://www.kevinboone.com/separation.html>

² <http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~phensel/icow.html>

<http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR-STUDY/09905.xml>

manufactured by the media but only on discourse and will examine how media can best explain and discuss the alternative solutions that can lead to conflict resolution. To add further to the scope of this study, it will also take a normative approach while discussing the data analysis.

Whatever the nature of the society, it is rather important to explore the conditions for messages to pass through the media. According to Lewis H. Lapham, it was not just the Soviets that had censorship, but the Americans too. When the media use the discourse of the past as apparent political reality, reaffirming the status quo by producing reports based on superficial empirical reality, then this is essentially censorship. (Lapham quoted in Galtung, 2004:79) Censorship is thus at times direct and other times a subtle means of withholding information that challenges status quo. Thus by doing so, the media do not bring to light new political thinking that can change the status quo and promotes a culture of confrontation. It is also important to note that Galtung himself admits that not all media are similar and it would be unwise to categorize all the media in one way. There are three kinds of news media that operate in the contemporary world i.e.

1. Corporate/commercial and global
2. Private non-profit bodies or alternative media (owned by political parties or groups with special cultural or social tasks)
3. Public sector (open to public scrutiny to maximize the independence of decision making about the content)

This study, however, will focus on corporate and public service news media that have a global reach. Censorship or self censorship within the media plays an important role that leads media discourse to cater to the status quo. According to Galtung, censorship and the use of discourse help to build an environment in which the political themes challenging status quo are not discussed in the media. Thus, contributing to a war culture which is one of the reasons why many conflicts become intractable. Media has

the potential and the means to become an agent of positive change by explaining and discussing the alternative solutions, which the diplomats or negotiators may find hard to do due to various political or constituency constraints.

David Miller (2003) traces the involvement of the media in propagating the cause of war. He says that it was during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 that General Charles Knightly suggested in an internal government report that world public opinion is now the absolute principal of war. The use of media to influence public opinion is quite easy to see in hindsight, e.g. the Vietnam War, the Falklands War, US interventions in Latin America and Gulf wars in 1991 and 2003. What the media ensures is “to make certain that government policy is not undermined by the way a war is reported” (ibid). This can be achieved through various means such as controlling the access to information, invoking censorship, projecting one’s own cause as just and rallying support in the form of patriotism at home and in the battle zone. Furthermore, if there is a close relation between the rulers and the media³, whereby media only reports reality that reaffirms the status quo, then it becomes ever more difficult to challenge this hegemony. There will be less and less space for dissenting views. (David, 1995) E.g. the uncritical approach of US news media towards the information provided by the US government in the run-up to the war with Iraq in 2003⁴.

³ The alliance can be seen if there is an increasing reliance on governmental sources and uncritical approach towards those sources e.g. David Edwards (2001), explains “the idea that the “non-corporate” BBC somehow counterbalances the corporate media is quite questionable. http://medialens.org/articles/the_articles/articles_2001/de_new_chairman_bbc.html

The steady monitoring of BBC World, The Guardian and Observer (Also CNN) by the media monitor - Media lens, shows that their reporting is quite masterfully laced with government’s views by adopting means, such as, providing government sources, self censorship, bias etc, e.g. the case study of media reporting by aforementioned networks of NATO bombings of Serbia v/s Coverage of Shuharto regime’s terror on Indonesian and East Timor. http://medialens.org/articles/the_articles/articles_2001/de_marr.html

⁴ The failure of the liberal media, including the Guardian and Independent, is vital to this debate because, while they are consistently more open than their conservative counterparts, they set the boundaries of permissible dissent. In the case of Iraq, those boundaries helped create a disaster. Thus, while whistleblowers were effectively ignored, one prominent in-house Guardian commentator declared in January 2003 that it was “a given” that Saddam was hiding WMD. Despite the fact that while in 1999 and 2000 the Guardian and the Independent both reported that UNSCOM inspections had been infiltrated by the CIA, this almost never featured in the saturation 2002-2003 coverage of resumed inspections and Iraqi attitudes to them. http://www.medialens.org/articles/the_articles/media/balance_in_the_service.php

The censorship prevents the discourse from being broad, deep and adequate and is a subtle form of censorship. This then shows that whether the censorship is direct or subtle, or whether the society is democratic or communist for instance, one important reason behind it is that it is usually intended and subconscious part of editorial psyche. It limits speech often by controlling discourse. The two main categories of censorship are permitted and not permitted. Permitted themes are the ones that perpetuate the status quo through following prescribed information and by being indifferent to injustice etc. (Galtung, 2004:13) Therefore within the permitted dimension there is no censorship at all. However, what is not permitted is to venture outside those dimensions, broadening the discourse. This is the subtle type of censorship prevalent in corporate or global news media due to various pressures, i.e. from lobbies, advertisers, government etc. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1988) have developed a propaganda model by describing these indicators with empirical evidence. Galtung and Vincent (2004) document some examples of self censorship by the media that indicates the process of marginalisation of the information deemed alternative to status quo by the media. These are as follows:

1. Terrorism is to be discussed in terms of consequences and possible counter-measures, not in terms of political causes unless these causes can be seen as those originating from non-applaudable and non-laudable motives such as those emerging from crank or criminal individuals and thus demonizing or presenting them as mentally deranged.

2. When the western media covered the nuclear accident in Chernobyl where the blame squarely fell on the incompetence of the Soviets and no issues whatsoever were raised to bring to light the dangers of nuclear power or warfare. The fear and suffering of the native people was rarely touched upon by any network and none of the American media

drew any parallels between the Soviet nuclear disaster and the accidents occurring in the American space program or the nuclear incident in Pennsylvania.

3. Johan Galtung was interviewed twice for US media, once for US withdrawal from The World Court (or more commonly known as the International Court of Justice - ICJ) and the other time about analysis of the Cold War. Both times the interview was never aired by the respective media organizations, saying: "Our viewers will have difficulty understanding this."

The sole objective of highlighting these examples that relate to one of the key contemporary issues of international relations is to explain that, censorship is at the heart of perpetuating practices of journalism, formally called by Galtung as "War Journalism". War journalism has impeded peaceful transformation of many conflicts and strengthened the policy of confrontation. As explained earlier, outright censorship is withholding of information and subtle censorship (or bias) is actually misleading information that reinforces status quo and excludes or marginalises information alternative to status quo. It is exactly the kind of challenge that critics of war culture have to face. Their efforts are often crippled by the fact that they drive their framework from the very culture they endeavour to replace.

It is with this perspective that this study intends to analyze the empirical material collected. It also seeks to explore whether or not the media will present the alternative solutions for the conflict it is reporting and what means e.g. peace journalism etc will it employ should it do so.

Rationale for the study:

Media, especially when reporting about conflicts, tend to project more shocking scenes to make their reports more exclusive. Therefore wars or conflicts are partly what the media make them to be. However, media are not homogenous and they do not exist outside the political and social world they describe. (Allen and Seaton, 1999) Hence, if the media (especially corporate or commercial) operate in a system that allows only one

class to stay in power and subjugate others, then the media is most likely to work for that order or preserve that order.

Censorship helps to contribute to a war culture therefore the aim behind this study is to analyze the coverage by the selected global news media in order to see the following:

- a. Whether the coverage mainly tended toward war or toward peace journalism
- b. Also if, possibly, the element of war journalism presented an obstacle to media coverage being more solution oriented or present solutions so far marginalised.

It is also noteworthy to mention that war journalism has mostly been analyzed when media reported events in places of active conflict or during war. This study will however, pursue a different angle as it will focus on coverage of peace negotiation. Disinformation or censorship in case of a war is needed by all parties involved in a conflict and if these practices continue when the guns are silent and there is an apparent intent for peace making through negotiations, then it may indicate instances where media do not appear to follow the objective stance they advocate they hold.

The study will focus on the reporting of some of the contemporary media with a global reach, i.e. BBC World, CNN, Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera's coverage of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians brokered by the US in Annapolis for a period of approximately three weeks (Nov. 19th, 2007 – Dec. 9th, 2007).

Research question:

The research question that will be addressed in this study is; will the coverage from Al-Jazeera (English), Guardian Unlimited, CNN and BBC World for the peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians, qualify mainly as Peace journalism or War journalism?

Rationale for selecting the four news networks:

The new technologies have definitely affected the news media and this, in turn, affects the way the institutions operate and the content of the messages they transmit. Most importantly, the new technology has increased the speed with which the news is gathered and dispersed, thus reducing the cost. The danger prevalent in such an environment is that the news quality may well be sacrificed. (Galtung, 2004:197) Due to the revolutionary nature of the telecom industry today, we are witnessing a proliferation of global news media all over the world.

In studies carried out by media watchdogs (See literature review) it is recommended that the media should follow the ideals of peace journalism and this shall be discussed in detail in the theoretical base of this study. But briefly, the way an event is covered, especially one that is characterised by violent conflict, the media are advised to opt for more responsible and restrained demeanour in reporting it to the masses so as to avoid any further deterioration of the situation. For media with global reach, this principle is ever more central to their reporting because if the media choose to portray the situation as emotionally charged then they not only discourage the possibility of a peaceful solution being discussed but also risk fuelling the conflict further. The global media can be reached by audiences all over the world (especially through the web based services) and this why they can actually play a key role in defining international relations. It can be argued that all the networks have a somewhat global reach through their web-based news services. And this is the main reason for the selection of Al-Jazeera (English), Guardian Unlimited, BBC World and CNN for this study.

Secondly these networks were selected as they represent a wide range of political leanings. Guardian Unlimited is leftist⁵, and though it is a newspaper but with its web-based news services has a global reach worldwide. CNN, primarily a commercial news network, has come to be known as pro government and pro market⁶. BBC World has a

⁵ http://www.businessweek.com/innovate/content/jan2006/id20060125_168455.htm

⁶ <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article2375.htm>

wide range of media services, an electronic news channel, radio services and web-based news service. BBC has the status of public broadcaster but at the same time it has clauses in its charter that make it open to government scrutiny. Nonetheless, it claims to maintain its independence and objectivity in news reporting⁷. Al-Jazeera English, has ever since from its inception, maintained its independent and objective stance⁸. Al-Jazeera is dependent to some extent on the goodwill of the Amir of Qatar. Therefore the different political leanings of each of the selected news networks will present with an interesting opportunity to conduct a comparative analysis of the news reports.

Rationale for selecting the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

The Palestine-Israel conflict constitutes one of the longest standing unresolved conflicts in the contemporary world. With tremendous amount of media attention, events are keenly followed all over the world, as the region itself has wider geopolitical significance. The previous attempts at peace have not been successful but the recent attempts to revive the process present with renewed hope. Following are some of the underlying ideas that led to the selection of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as some of these aspects are characteristic of this conflict:

- a. The Annapolis summit was being held providing subject for the data gathering process.
- b. The presence of asymmetric relations between parties in conflict
- c. The negotiations facilitated by a powerful mediator and the manner in which it was reported by the media

⁷<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2006/10/27/do2701.xml&sSheet=/opinion/2006/10/27/ixopinion.html>

⁸ <http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/06/09/1773/>

<http://www.mediachannel.org/wordpress/2007/06/08/is-there-a-%E2%80%9Cfoxification%E2%80%9D-underway-at-al-jazeera-television/>

Chapter 2

Theoretical base:

As indicated the study will analyze the media coverage of two parties in conflict in an asymmetric relationship engaged in negotiations in the presence of a mediator. For that purpose the study has to explain the concept of power asymmetry and is going to operationally define it for the benefit of this research. Secondly, the focus will be on explaining peace and war journalism, as the researcher aims to analyze whether or not the sampled data is mainly following the principles of peace or war journalism, or is multi-dimensional.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one instance where the concept of power asymmetry between two parties locked in a conflict is applicable. Therefore, the study will operationalize the “Power Asymmetry” between the Palestinians and the Israelis, especially when in negotiations. According to the earlier theories of power, for instance the classical power theory, the stronger party will always come out on top when in negotiation with its weaker counterpart. On the other hand, there have been instances when weaker states can do better while in negotiations with a stronger state. E.g. Vietnamese delegates were able to demand much more from their US counterparts in the negotiations that were carried out in Paris and concluded in 1973 (Habeb, 1988). This, however, is subject to certain conditions, and in international relations mostly power asymmetry has been to the detriment of the weaker party.

It is with this perspective that this study wants to explain the notion of power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In the tough world of international relations, especially in conflict situations, there are more than two parties seldom united with various needs for security and ambitions for power. This is further complicated when there is manipulation and imperfect information and the actors or states have to confront complex issues. Of course in this situation, the powerful will use the resources

available to them to their advantage. Therefore the parties will decode information about their opponents that reinforces the hostile images that they already entertain towards each other. Furthermore, the parties are largely oblivious to their own responsibility for the conflict and display hostile behaviour towards the other party. In this situation, each party wants to demand more from others. (Hopmann, 1996)

The general mistrust between the parties and furthermore, the impulse to gain more than the counterpart will lead each party to look for means that can give them power over the other so that they can exercise more control. In order to command a better position than one's counterpart, one will want to have as much power as one can muster and that's when power asymmetry in negotiations, comes into the equation. Therefore one must define power asymmetry for the sake of this study. The realist school of thought in the realm of international relations explains best the consideration of power and power asymmetry. According to Hopmann (ibid), the key concept in the realist tradition is power and with reference to the process of negotiation, its importance can not be under emphasized. The study wants to look at power dynamics involved in an international scenario between two or more players not by a state within its territory.

To command power in an international sphere is more difficult, as the system is anarchic in absence of central authority. It is this anarchy that reinforces the drive for international players to gain power and establish the rule of the powerful. Therefore, the states with better economic, military, political and institutional strength will have more means at their disposal to establish their supremacy. This supremacy is even harder to challenge as the international system is anarchic and the powerful will tend to form alliances with other powerful actors. Power is defined by the realists in many ways i.e. absolute power (A's absolute power over B and B's dependence on A), relative power (A's power over B and B's power over A), total power (A's power over B + B's power over A – i.e. total sum of power in the equation)

For this study, however, the concept of absolute power is needed, especially due to the nature of power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Israel, wielding a

better economic, political and military position, has absolute power over its counterpart and thus renders itself free from any dependence on Palestinians who are considerably weak compared to the Israelis.

Power Asymmetry:

It is due to the powerful position a party has that it can exert pressure on its counterpart to get more out of the negotiation process. Power gives the ability to influence, and the greater the power; the greater will be the power to influence others. To hold power over another and influence it to adopt one's preferred solution is key aspect of power asymmetry. Therefore power in a social context can be defined as "the ability of one party to move another in an intended direction", which seems appropriate for this study (Zartman and Rubin, 2000:7). This will lead the powerful party to have control and the ability to influence its counterpart, which according to Habeeb (1988), is the single most important component of power.

In the relation between the Palestinians and the Israelis, Israelis have more power and influence. To sum up the basic argument from the discussion thus far, power asymmetry between two parties in a conflict is a threat to a feasible solution for both. It can be further dangerous should the mediator, owing to the ideological and economic ties with the powerful party, favour its agenda over the weaker party. This aspect of the theoretical base has held true of the Palestinian and Israel negotiations in both US and Norway, as the brief literature review will show. Hence, this study, defines power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis through the better political, economic and military position in the equation and also with the stronger ties to the mediators, which Israel happens to hold.

The second aspect of the theoretical base for study will derive its support from the concept of war journalism proposed by Johan Galtung, who has critically analyzed the conventional news coverage of conflicts. He has developed postulates for journalism that help to differentiate between "Peace Journalism and War Journalism". The

following summarised table sheds light in great detail on both Peace and War journalism. (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005:6)

Peace Journalism	War Journalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win-win orientation, explore conflict formation with many parties and issues • Humanisation of all sides, focus on invisible effect of violence, such as trauma, damage to the structure etc. • Truth-orientated, expose untruths on all sides • People-orientated: no demonisation and focus on suffering of all the people. Exploring root causes and instigators of the conflict • Solution-oriented: highlighting peace initiatives, focus on structure, culture and society and reconstruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on conflict arena: 2 parties, 1 winner , zero-sum oriented (winner-looser)"us-them", • dehumanisation of the enemy focus only to the visible effect of violence, such as how many killed, wounded, material damage • propaganda-orientated: expose "their" untruths, cover-up "ours" • elite-orientated: giving voice to elites, give name to their evil-doers, highlight "our" casualty figures marginalise enemy suffering • victory oriented: sees peace only as victory or ceasefire

A brief look at the table will help in understanding the basic premise of both approaches. A news report that is characterized by war journalism will emphasize on differences by putting forth “us” versus “them”. According to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005:43), “ultimately each faces either victory or defeat. Defeat being unthinkable, each party steps up its efforts for victory. In other words, thinking of or framing a conflict as consisting of only two parties, is bound to escalate it.” War journalism carries an approach that sustains and promotes violence and due to its focus on violence, fails to pay any attention to people’s grievances and strategies for peace outcomes.

Eventually it leads the media to portray one side as good and the other as evil by demonizing the other, by exposing “their” untruths and help in “our” cover-ups/lies. It also focuses on the isolated violent incidents or conflict and not on the long-standing issues that sparks such incidents. War journalism focuses only on issues that strengthen the conflict as it does not delve into details of unresolved issues, fails to empathize with the plight of the victims and also fails to propose peaceful solutions for the transformation of the conflict. Therefore to mention information such as; an account of

day's events, on who advances and who capitulates, the number killed and wounded and material damage, is actually a means of diverting attention from core issues within a conflict. The omission of information about the core issues allows readers or the audiences to overvalue violent responses to the conflict issues and undervalue non-violent ones (Ibid: 28). Similarly when the same perspective is applied to negotiations, which are treated as verbal battles, the focus of media is on who outsmarts the other, who comes out closest to his original position. However, this aspect of “war journalism” in reports covering the negotiations has not been touched upon in great detail.

Peace journalism is everything opposite of war journalism. Primarily it seeks to give the details of all the stakeholders in a particular conflict without the constraints of time and space. Therefore, it does not appear as a fight between two parties. Secondly, it gives importance to the central or core claims of both sides in order to give each side a legitimate voice. Thirdly, not only it is important that the news report should explain the demands and concerns of each party but should explain pros and cons of these demands by the parties involved. By doing so, a proper platform for the establishment of justice can be achieved. Lastly, through bringing to light the solutions that are mutually beneficial, the media can bring the parties in conflict closer to conflict resolution rather than reinforcing the divide.

Usefulness of the two approaches for the study:

There are a few central themes in this study that the introduction and theoretical framework have sought to clear. At first, it was explained that censorship by the media brings a war culture. The practice is formally known as “War Journalism”. This chapter has explained another important focus of this study i.e. power asymmetry so that it can be analysed how it is dealt with by the selected networks. The issue of power asymmetry and war culture is related and thus, provides this study with a strong base to analyse the data gathered from respective news media to see if solutions alternative to the mainstream are presented or not.

Chapter 3

Literature review:

This literature review, at first, will focus on studies that dealt with bias in the media reporting specifically with reference to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Secondly, the other type of studies included in this literature review will be the case studies of peace negotiations that were carried out between the Palestinians and the Israelis, chiefly Oslo peace Accords 1993 and the Camp David negotiations in 2000. As explained a few times earlier, the study intends to find out, whether or not the news reports shed light on alternative reality or the missing political themes. The media can do so by introducing the solution-oriented approach in the reporting “by picking on suggestions for non-violent responses from whatever quarter and remitting them into public sphere” (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005:18). Furthermore, the omission or marginalisation of alternative or peaceful solutions, “a characteristic of war journalism, is a serious and systemic factual inaccuracy” (ibid: 18). Therefore it seems only plausible that the information about this conflict be seen from the angle of political analysts or historians considered alternative to mainstream (such as governmental officials from Israel and Palestine). Of course, the official sources will reinforce the status quo and it seems appropriate that to analyse the information in the news against the opinions of these analysts or historians to determine effectively if the alternative views or solutions are being presented or not.

Media monitors such as FAIR, Media Lens, and the researchers at the Glasgow University Media Group etc have been documenting the coverage patterns of leading news organizations in an attempt to keep the democratic norms in a society alive i.e. to exercise their right to question public bodies. The study relies heavily on the report prepared by Glasgow University Media Group, especially in methodology. Their study focused on BBC One and ITV News from the start of the current Palestinian Intifada. The Glasgow researchers examined about 200 news programmes and interviewed and questioned over 800 people. The study was quite unique because for the first time it

brought senior broadcasters together with ordinary viewers to work in research groups, analysing how the news informs people and how it could be improved. Those taking part included George Alagiah and Brian Hanrahan from the BBC, Lindsey Hilsum from Channel 4 news, the film-maker Ken Loach and a large number of other broadcasting professionals and programme makers. Here it will briefly summarize the individual findings, which are as follows:

1. There is a preponderance of Israeli official sources in the news reports.
2. The news reports almost say nothing about the origins or historic facts related to the conflict due to the space and time constraints
3. Without proper context, and exact information, grievances of one side are marginalised. E.g. illegal settlements now comprise of about 40% of the West Bank, something that is hardly mentioned in the media.
4. More importance is given to Israeli casualties and death compared to Palestinian, albeit Palestinian deaths and casualties are more.
5. Israelis are projected as synonymous to western values of freedom etc as opposed to Palestinians who are mostly portrayed as trouble makers.
6. The information about the core issues, such as settlements, right of return and east Jerusalem is heavily slanted in favour of Israel⁹.

In order to explain how the war culture is put in place, one has to look at what kind of sources, are being used. Fairness and accuracy in reporting (FAIR), operating from US has undertaken a lot of studies to analyse the US media and its journalistic practices. Steve Rendal (2003) looks in to mechanism of bias, by providing information on CNN's use of sources in news reports. If the media organization keeps including guests with a particular political leaning without giving room to alternative views, it then becomes a source of bias. FAIR undertook a study of CNN's 'Reliable Sources', a program that invites guests for exchange of ideas. The findings showed that, with 203 guests,

⁹ <http://www.gla.ac.uk/centres/mediagroup/badnews.htm>

Reliable Sources' guest-list strongly favoured mainstream media insiders and right-leaning pundits, therefore marginalising the voices on the left.

Discourse also plays a very important role. FAIR (2002) analyzed the coverage by CBS, NBC and ABC in order to check how attacks from Palestinians and Israelis against each other are described. The word retaliation, that gives an attack justification, was used 150 times by the aforementioned networks from 2000 to 2002. About 79% of those references were to Israeli "retaliation" against Palestinians. Only 9 % referred to Palestinian "retaliation" against Israelis. Similarly, another example of how language can be a source of problem is given by Seth Ackerman (2002). He quotes from Ha'aretz that the Israeli Broadcasting Authority has been advising against the use of words settler or settlements. The UN voted in 1979 against Israel's settlement policy (resolution 446), which is in direct contradiction to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the subject of settlements then became quite sensitive for Israel domestically and internationally. CNN, under pressure from various pro-Israel media watch dogs such as CNN Watch, Honest reporting, referred to the settlement of Gilo as "neighbourhood" (ibid).

The pro-Israel media watch dogs have held that media in the US is biased against Israel. Seth Ackerman (2001) has tried to see the truth of this assertion and found quite the contrary. E.g. the liberal Jewish magazine Tikkum came under tremendous pressure to alter its editorial position towards Israel's occupation of Gaza and West Bank. Hundreds of subscribers cancelled their subscriptions and donors withheld the money for the magazine. One of the most ridiculous criticisms of pro-Israel critics of US media was illustrated by a Jerusalem Post letter to the editor where a complaint was registered over one of the news reports shown on CNN. That report used the term "stone throwing Palestinian kids". The objection was raised that these kids throw rocks and should be called as such.

Furthermore, Rula Amin of CNN, a correspondent based in Palestinian occupied territories came under considerable pressure and was accused of being pro-Palestinian

in her coverage. Later on she was replaced by Tom Mintier, who started covering for the region. Another interesting example given by Ackerman (2001) was of New York Times article (10/24/00) about the apparent cover up by the “pro-Palestinian” media of a Palestinian cleric who incited violence against Israel. CAMERA objected to this and maintained that the article had not cited the sermon's most incendiary passage, which urged the audience to "kill those Jews." Journalistically speaking, the criticism is fair enough, but both CAMERA and the times article neglected to point out that the cleric who gave the sermon was arrested by the Palestinian Authority within hours of his speech.

James Zogby (2001), president of Arab American Institute (AAI) explains that demands have been made to CNN to replace reporters of Palestinian decent with pro-Israel reporters. Furthermore PR firms have been hired to give advice on media strategies that produce a favourable image of Israel. Also the pro-Israel media watch-dogs have been criticizing western media in particular, of harbouring a bias against Israel. Contrary to this view, Zogby holds that independent studies have revealed a different pattern and he quotes two of the following studies.

a. The study done by Melissa Morey from Arab American Institute (AAI), shows that Israeli deaths are given more importance, by giving news reports comprising of Israeli casualties more time, and in depth analysis of carnage that ensued in event of a Palestinian attack on Israelis. “Palestinians are never seen as responding to either specific Israeli attacks or an accumulated pattern of Israeli abuse. The Israeli losses are decried as "senseless victims of terror," while Palestinian deaths are not only depersonalized, but allowed to appear as the logical consequence of the violence initiated by their compatriots”. (ibid)

b. The study by Jennifer Salan Media Director of AAI, which focuses on CNN’s Jerusalem Deputy Bureau Chief Jerrold Kessel, found an extensive list of bias in favour of Israel. The reports made by Jerrold Kessel failed to verify the accuracy of information provided by Israeli officials, the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis

was shown as between two equal parties instead of pointing out the power asymmetry in terms of a civilian uprising against an occupying army and gave extensive insights into “Israeli mood” and “Israeli political reality” without balancing it with “Palestinian mood” and “Palestinian political reality”.

Similar studies of the British media by Media Lens as to how media in UK reports deaths of both Israelis and Palestinian civilians, have found similar patterns of giving importance to Israeli deaths. David Cromwell (2008) reported that the horrific shooting of eight young people at a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem in January 2008 resulted in frenzied media coverage. From *The Guardian*, *Daily Mirror* and *Telegraph*, all were united in their conclusion that the horrid incident was a dramatic escalation and killing of children in library is tantamount to torpedoing the peace process. “In contrast the killing of 120 Palestinians, including many women and children, in occupied Gaza in the preceding week to this incident, hardly presented itself as a horrible incident worthy of slight condemnation, if not similar. No reporter suggested that ‘the peace process’ had now ‘died’. No headlines screamed of Palestinian babies ‘murdered’ in their beds. In short, news reports from the Gazan bloodbath typically lacked the anguished details and tone that suffused the reporting from Jerusalem less than a week later”. (ibid)

One other important concern that should be identified is the notion of state terrorism. There seems to be a general consensus by the states around the world to call those groups employing violent means of retribution on civilian population as terrorism. There are considerable inconsistencies in the way state terrorism is viewed. According to Johan Galtung (2002), “Terrorism (carried out by men and women without uniform) and state terrorism (carried out by men and women in uniform, a difference of little importance to the victims) have the following characteristics in common: they use violence for political ends; they harm people not directly involved in struggle; they are designed to spread panic/terror to bring about capitulation; they have an element of surprise in the choice of who, where, when; they make perpetrators unavailable for retaliation or incapacitation.” Therefore in his opinion to end terrorism one must end state terrorism. It should also be pointed out that the UN Charter allows the use of

force only in defence and proportional to the attack that was launched on a particular state. Israelis policies in reference to UN Charter not only count as belligerent but also state terrorism¹⁰. The collective punishment of the Gazans and continuous violations of human rights within the Palestinian territories is quite un-proportional a response to Hamas terrorism. B'tselem in its report on 50th anniversary of the Universal declaration of Human Rights said, 'apart perhaps from the articles prohibiting slavery, the state of Israel violates each and every one of the Declaration's provisions in its behaviour toward the Palestinians in the territories.' (Philo and Berry, 2004:116)

The study will now turn its focus on how various analysts have viewed the peace negotiations brokered by mediators between Palestinians and Israelis. This part of the study, for the sake of brevity, will only focus on Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 and Camp David Accord in 2000.

Hilde Henriksen Waage (2000) has studied the role of Norwegian mediation between the Palestinians and the Israelis in 1993 Oslo peace accords. She explains the details of the peace process and how it came about. Johan Jørgen Holst, the then foreign minister, was the head of Norwegian mediation team. According to Waage, he played a key role as he was able to provide crucial information to the Israelis as to when Palestinians would concede and make concessions. He also pressured Arafat into accepting the demands of Israelis due to fear of breakdown in negotiations. It is interesting that

¹⁰ Terrorism defined by EU 'intentionally committed by an individual or a group against one or more countries, their institutions or people with the aim of intimidating them and seriously altering or destroying the political, economic or social structures of those countries.' Here, once again, the definition excludes state terrorism.

Terrorism defined by OIC 'The Meeting reaffirmed its resolve to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism including state terrorism, and its determination to participate in the multilateral global efforts to eradicate this menace, rejected selectivity and double standards in combating terrorism, and any attempts to link terrorism to a specific religion or culture. It also reiterated its support for the convening of an international conference under the aegis of the United Nations to define terrorism and stress the need for efforts to be exerted to conclude a convention on international terrorism that would differentiate between terrorism and legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation for self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law. The Meeting reaffirmed that situations of foreign occupation are governed by international humanitarian law and not by conventions on terrorism, it also called upon all Member States, who have not done so, to take the necessary steps towards the ratification of the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism.' Notice the specific mention of state terrorism and the need for a UN definition of terrorism that would distinguish it from "legitimate struggle." These differentiate their position from those of the US and Europe.

<http://www.culture-of-peace.info/terrorism/AlternativetoTerrorism.pdf>

Norwegians only pressured Palestinians to comply with Israeli demands. In this regard Waage is of the opinion that Norwegians realised the powerful position Israelis wielded over the Palestinians and were thus able to demand much more from their Palestinian counterparts. Also the Norwegians were aware that this power asymmetry would lead to a stalemate, in case Palestinians did not agree to Israeli demands. Therefore, being a small state, the Norwegians could not pressurise Israelis. Though, when this is viewed in light of the economic, political and ideological ties between the Israelis and the Norwegians, this observation by Waage, finds itself on shaky ground.

Waage (ibid), herself in the same study, has elaborated on these traditional ties between the Norwegians and the Israelis. From historic perspective, Norway's role in deporting Jews from Norway to Germany, and strong Christian base led the government to be sympathetic towards the new Jewish state Israel. Political ties were strong as both countries were set up on socialist models of governance. Apart from that, the Labour party in Norway up till 70s had strong ties with Israel and many of its members were part of a pro-Israel lobby called, Friends of Israel¹¹. Johan Jørgen Holst himself was part of that lobby. This seems particularly of interest as he was later on to become the head of mediation team for Norwegians in 1993. The strong identification with Israel from labour party changed a little in late 80s and 90's but the Pro-Israel elements within it were still strong. Norway has also extended a lot of support to Israel in terms of economic aid¹². Norway provided Israel with oil in 1974. The sympathizers of Israel within Norway gave more support to Israel in terms of selling weapons. Most crucial is

¹¹ In 1974 the Foreign Ministry, under Knut Frydenlund, wanted to include Palestinian Liberation Organizations in the peace process. In response to this, a parliamentary pro-Israel organization was formed, known as "friends of Israel". The group comprised of 80 out of 150 members of parliament and at first it was not considered powerful. But in order to counter the efforts by Knut Frydenlund, this group together with close cooperation from the Israeli Embassy launched an effective campaign. A petition was signed by a number of 200 leading politicians, among them Johan Jørgen Holst, who even formulated the petition. (Waage, 2000:40)

¹² Norway was exporting much needed timber for a lot of social projects to Israel and any request for building material by Palestinians to aid the refugees was undercut by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. Norway however decided to distribute fish to the refugee settlement, most of which upon arrival was rotten. The original motive behind this was to provide the Norwegian fishing industry with a chance to get rid of surplus stocks. By giving fish to the refugee settlements the government could circumvent the need to tap its sparse dollar reserves, still urgently needed for the Norwegian reconstruction effort. The Israeli government had approached the Norwegians for the possible sale of heavy water and upon receiving the request the response by the Norwegian government was to ask merely how much they needed. (ibid :28)

the sale of heavy water to Israel for its nuclear program. Given the extensive support Norway extended to Israel, it was in a position to pressure Israel to concede to Palestinians as well. Furthermore, Johan Jørgen Holst acting as head of mediation team also seems biased as a known supporter of Israel. Yassir Arafat, then Head of PLO, had approached Norwegians to mediate between Palestinians and Israelis especially because he knew Norwegians are close to Israel and may then be able to demand some concession (Waage, 2000).

Many independent observers have maintained that Oslo Peace Accords in 1993 actually led to more damage than peace. None of the media attention and high profile activity seems to take notice of the failures following the aftermath of the Oslo Accords. According to Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari (2000), the Oslo accords proposed a series of steps to be taken by both Palestinians and Israelis that first concerned itself with slow withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and the thorny issues such as settlements, Jerusalem and right of return were left for other rounds. However, the slow pace of implementation of the first phase led to more challenges and the core issues were never actually brought up. Edward Said (2000) maintains the Oslo Accords led to more land expropriation and divided West Bank in to Bantustans, deterioration in standard of living in the West bank and Gaza, more check points, and violence. "The Palestinian claim that Israel refuses to implement signed agreements and violates its commitments, is beyond dispute. A simple comparison of the September 1993 Declaration of Principles ("Oslo"), the September 1995 interim agreement ("Oslo II"), the January 1997 Hebron protocol, the October 1998 Wye memorandum, and the September 1999 Sharm al-Shaykh agreement reveals a clear pattern in which Israel first refuses to implement its own commitments, then seeks and obtains their dilution in a new agreement, subsequently engages in systematic prevarication, and finally demands additional negotiations, leading to a yet further diluted agreement". (Rabani, 2001:71)

When viewed in light of the above discussion, it may seem that Norwegians as mediators for the Oslo accords did not do justice to their role. It can be argued that,

since these accords were the first of their kind for the parties involved in this conflict, the mediators were not fully aware of the challenges that may have occurred during the process. It seems plausible, though the only contention with this view that may emerge is why was it the case that Norwegians mainly demanded concession from the Palestinians? The techniques of stalling the peace process that are employed by Israelis, pointed out by Rabbani (ibid), should merit strong pressure from mediators to achieve a just and peaceful solution. Hence, contrary to the prevailing view, Israel rather than the Palestinians, bear the greater share of the responsibility for the breakdown in peace as it enjoys unconditional US economic, military and political and diplomatic support of Israel. This powerful position has not only enabled Israel to disregard the legitimate interests and demand of the Palestinians but also has caused significant damage to Israeli interests as well, as the continuation of conflict results in hardliners from both sides to use brute force. (Slater, 2001)

The 1990's saw a series of accords and sub accords and their failures, this can be argued, may have given enough empirical evidence in order to help overcome avoidable challenges. Yet another big initiative by President Clinton that was formally referred to as Camp David accords in 2000 also sank in to the same pattern of mistakes done on part of the mediators, most important of those was the failure to take in to consideration power asymmetry between the parties in conflict. President Bill Clinton of the US oversaw the peace initiative of 2000 in Camp David. Clinton had promised the Palestinians of an even handed approach and Palestinians had faith in him as they knew Clinton had confronted Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime minister, in regards to his extreme policies. However, as the negotiations commenced, it became obvious that Clinton favoured Israeli solutions for the peace process. Akram Hanieh (2001) says that Clinton took the traditional approach¹³, as prescribed by Henry Kissinger, who once

¹³ E.g. Clinton tried to push the Palestinians to accept the map proposed by the Israelis that was actually open land annexation. On rejection by Abu Ala, the Palestinian negotiator, Clinton stormed out of the room in anger. In another instance, President Clinton went as far as claiming that Palestinians are to be held responsible for wasting a historic opportunity, when his team was actively trying to persuade Arafat to give away Jerusalem in name of a Palestine state.

infamously remarked, anything that is to be proposed to Palestinians will be first subjected to Israeli approval before its is made public for the Palestinians.

There are however a wide range of conflicting opinions swirling now and especially in the media about Camp David Accords in 2000. One view contends that it was the Palestinians who failed to accept the “generous offer” by Ehud Barak, the Israeli prime minister. However, Robert Malley, part of the US negotiating team and Hussein Agha (2001) explain that Arafat was used as a scapegoat by Americans and the Israelis on whom the blame for the failure for the peace talks could be pinned. This too, when right at the beginning of the talks Clinton had assured Arafat no matter what the outcome of the summit, there will be no blame game or finger pointing. Furthermore, the Palestinians had agreed to work out a solution for the refugee issue in such a manner that promised not to threaten the Jewish majority. No other negotiating party in Middle East, be it Anwar Sadat of Egypt or King Hussein of Jordan, ever came close to considering concessions on this scale towards Israel. Despite these major concessions that included Israeli sovereignty over 11 Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, most of the media, the US and the Israelis held Palestinians responsible for the failure of the talks. One of the telling aspects of Clinton’s peace team was the fact that there were a lot of American Jews, that were a part of it, but it’s quite baffling that there was not a single American Arab part of the same team. “In the eight years of Bill Clinton nothing good for Israeli-Palestinian peace happened. He was totally subservient to the Israel lobby, and on his watch the number of Israeli settlers in the Palestinian territories more than doubled”. (Avnery, 2007)

A question then arises; given the tremendous leverage the US can wield over the Israelis, (which has been quite thoroughly documented by John Mearsheimer and Stephan Walt (2007) in their book “The Israeli Lobby”¹⁴) what then stops it from

Arafat stood his ground claiming that the UN resolution called for the Palestinian state and proclaimed “Do not expect me to betray my people, I will not sell Jerusalem, I will not sell the Muslims and I will not sell the Christians.” (Hanieh, 2001:90)

¹⁴ Mearsheimer and Waltz give a long list of privileges exclusively allocated to Israel in following aspects:

putting pressure on Israel in order to bring about peace. According to Waage (2000) US president George Bush senior, did threaten Yitzhak Shamir of withholding aid for settlements, if he did not agree to attend the Madrid Peace conference. Shamir had categorically rejected to participate in the conference, prior to the President Bush threat and later on agreed to attend the Madrid Conference.

It becomes apparent that in order to bring about a solution that is tenable and viable there has to an effort on part of the mediator to pressurize not just the Palestinians but Israel as well to make it concede to the legitimate demands of Palestinians as envisaged by Security Council resolutions, in particular 242¹⁵.

a. Israel is the recipient of billions of dollars worth of aid which is spent by Israel without any check from Americans to ascertain if it has been spent on things the US doesn't condone, such as building settlements etc. The US has provided Israel with nearly \$3 billion to develop weapons systems, and given

b. Washington also provides Israel with consistent diplomatic support. Since 1982, the US has vetoed 32 Security Council resolutions critical of Israel, more than the total number of vetoes cast by all the other Security Council members. It blocks the efforts of Arab states to put Israel's nuclear arsenal on the IAEA's agenda.

c. In terms of ideological ties, both countries consider themselves as democracies and also claim to have a similar threat to security i.e. terrorism

d. The support is also because of the history of Jewish suffering in the Christian West, especially during the holocaust. The idea behind the support being, Jews have been subject to persecution for many centuries and the creation of Israel has now given them a homeland and in that measure Israel deserves special treatment from the US. But this support is at the expense of an innocent third party now subjected to the same brutal treatment which has nothing to do with Jewish persecution in Europe.

¹⁵ Text for UN Security Council resolution 242

Chapter 4

Methodology:

The intention behind this research is to analyze whether or not the news reports about the Annapolis Summit from the sample tilted toward war journalism or peace journalism and furthermore to see how the power asymmetry between the parties in conflict, the Palestinians and the Israelis, was portrayed. Therefore the methodology will focus on ways to explore the concerns outlined above. The research methodologies used in this study are thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Both research methodologies are qualitative in nature, but quantitative means will be used, albeit very basic. The quantitative part of this study is only to measure frequency and the greater part of the study will focus on qualitative analysis or discussion. First, this chapter will explain the details of thematic and discourse analysis. Second, it will explain the unit of analysis for this study. Third, it will explain the sampling technique employed for the study.

Thematic analysis is quite often used within the qualitative research methodologies. Thematic analysis helps to pick up themes or patterns recurrent in the sample. The selection of themes helps in the formation of categories which are to be supplemented with the observations gathered from the data. These observations then help the researcher to determine what reality is intended for the receiver or the audience to decode. Therefore the themes make or construct a particular reality and also how that particular reality is made acceptable to the audience. (Philo and Berry, 2004:95) If one perspective prevails (with the frequency with which it is narrated) in these themes compared to another perspective, then the dominant perspective constructs the reality of an event in absence of the view or perspective that was marginalised.

The way the thematic analysis operates is quite simple. According to Jodi Aronson (1994) qualitative data can be better understood under the control of a thematic analysis. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or

behaviour and can be applied to the sample data for this study. Jodi Aronson has prescribed a few steps through which the thematic analysis is conducted. The first step is to gather patterns or themes from the collected data. The second step to a thematic analysis is to identify all the data that may relate to the classified patterns or themes. The third step is to combine and catalogue related patterns into sub-themes – if the need arises. The themes and the sub-themes help to piece together a comprehensive picture of what kind of reality is being projected. At this point it is very important for the researcher to have rigorously studied how different ideas or components fit together in a meaningful way or how the competing views that do not fit, have to be understood (ibid).

Since there are a lot of contesting opinion in regard to Palestinian and Israeli conflict, this approach sounds most reasonable to analyze the data. It is important to mention here that this procedure is quite useful in another sense as it can also help identify the patterns of peace and war journalism. The themes or categories formulated for this study help to pinpoint exactly the patterns of peace or war journalism can be identified. Furthermore, it also gives a deeper understanding if the events are being reported in entirety or one perspective is reported in the absence of the other. This study will follow this mechanism. It will first identify the themes from the sample data from the four news networks. So the essence of the method is to first note the themes for the collected data. Then the data that qualifies under those themes is to be put there. That helps to analyse the explanation provided in that particular news report that forms a certain understanding and is, then, injected in to the public debate. After identifying the themes recurrent in the sample, the results are to be compared with the range of available evidence that can account for different positions and perspectives by noted analysts etc. As indicated this exercise helps to see what explanation by the media is given prominence and what is excluded, etc. Some of the themes that were derived to analyse this data, are:

Events reported in the sample:

It is important to see if the news reports cover all the important events that happened in the sampled period. Omission of certain events could be censorship being one of the key indicators of war journalism and it should be interesting to see which events were not covered. For the details of all the events that occurred, appendix 1 was prepared with a detailed narration of all the events that occurred in the sample period. This narration is going to be helpful for the data analysis as it is important to mention which of the events were deemed important enough to be covered and how it shaped the coverage, for better or for worse.

Should it be the case that some events were not reported then in that case there can be different reasons as to why it happened. It could be bias, subtle censorship etc and if it limits the discourse and hinders the media reports to present alternative reality or to comment on political themes which are not being discussed by the diplomats or politicians, and then it might be taken as a case of war journalism. This should, however, be made clear one more time that it is not the scope of this study to determine if this is deliberate or not and it is certainly not the intention of the study to explore that. The only reason why this is being explored is to help and come up with better means of coverage for conflicts and negotiations so that media plays a more constructive role in conflict transformation. However if there are instances where the media will be selective about its coverage towards specific events, then the important thing to note here is that it occurs and is potentially quite a hurdle for peaceful transformation for a conflict.

Historical and contemporary context for this conflict:

The reference to main issues in a particular conflict is quite critical. Therefore if the reporters are themselves unclear about the topic at hand or they give an incomplete understanding of the issues at stake, then it results in confusion. Background information about this conflict is necessary in the reports, wherever needed. The Glasgow University Media Group found in its research that background information especially about the events of 1948 or 1967 for this conflict was simply missing. (Philo

and Berry, 2004:110) This finding gives a departure point for this study to examine in the reports, how many times and in what way background information for this conflict was presented in the news reports. Therefore, this category will look closely at how the context for this conflict is provided, from the inception of this conflict to the recent events. This is in order to analyse if the background information or the context for this conflict and the peace negotiations was explored so that standpoint of both the Palestinians and the Israelis were made clear. The sub-themes in this category are:

- a. Events of 1948 when Israel was created and a large number of Palestinians were driven from their land through a process of ethnic cleansing. And 1967 occupation of West bank and Gaza.

The first theme, which according to many analysts forms the crucial basis for the understanding of this conflict, is the events of 1948 which led to the partition of historical land of Palestine and Israel appeared on the world map. Israel's creation also led to the expulsion or the mass exodus of Palestinians into the neighbouring countries. There is a considerable amount of disagreement on these events. Therefore, the study will not rely on any official sources from either the Palestinians or the Israelis, as was indicated in the literature review. Instead, the study will rely on information from historians and political analysts from both sides of the divide so that alternative solutions or information can be brought to mainstream. The reason why this method has been adopted is because the mainstream information has not produced any productive results and one should look for other means of information based on rigorous analysis of possibilities, rather than themes that advance status quo. Israeli historians such as Ilan Pape¹⁶ and Tom Segev etc have brought a lot of information in to public debate

¹⁶ See: Ethnic cleansing of Palestine - Pape, Ilan. (2006).

"So, for when the moment arrived, he helped draw up Plan Dalit. It was – as the Israeli historian Ilan Pape puts it – "a detailed description of the methods to be used to forcibly evict the people: large-scale intimidation; and laying siege to and bombarding population centres". In 1948, before the Arab armies invaded, this began to be implemented: some 800,000 people were ethnically cleansed, and Israel was built on the ruins. The people who ask angrily why the Palestinians keep longing for their old land should imagine an English version of this story. How would we react if the 30m stateless, persecuted Kurds in the world sent armies and settlers into this country to seize everything in England below Leeds, and swiftly established a free Kurdistan from which we were expelled? Wouldn't we long forever for our children to return to Cornwall and Devon and London? Would it take us only 40 years to compromise and offer to settle for just 22 per cent of

about these events which state that Jewish paramilitaries were involved in ethnic cleansing in 1948 so that a predominantly Jewish state could be carved out of historical land of Palestine. The 1967 war proved to be another disaster in terms of refugee problem as it triggered another exodus of Palestinian civilians. It is not expected from the media to give the historical background every time. But when reporting about the negotiations, there can be a brief yet clear mention of these events. The idea behind negotiations should be to redress the suffering of the people through a solution that is just and feasible. Therefore, in this theme the study will attempt to examine how many times the historical background was explained and in what way. The second sub-theme for this study is:

- b. Core issues that are a source of contention between the Israelis and Palestinians
i.e. Status of Jerusalem, borders, settlements, water, right of return and security.

It will be interesting to see how many times the media refers to the core issues and in what way. Greg and Philo (ibid:111) further note that passing comments on core issues regarding this conflict such as right of return etc, presupposed a level of knowledge on part of viewers, which according to their study was not present in the audience. Rest of the sub-themes for the study are:

- c. The history of previous talks
- d. The humanitarian situation in Gaza and West Bank
- e. Hamas versus Fatah and Hamas versus Israel
- f. Hamas truce offer and the Arab peace initiative

The information about this conflict in form of sub-themes developed for this study constitutes the dynamics without which it's hard to understand the issues and power

what we had?" <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/johann-hari-israel-is-suppressing-a-secret-it-must-face-816661.html>

The '48 Nakba and the Zionist quest for its completion
<http://www.ilanpappe.org/Articles/The%20%2748%20Nakba%20&%20The%20Zionist%20Quest%20for%20its%20Completion.html>

politics at play in this conflict. These aspects are quite interrelated and should at least be included in clarity if not in detail in the coverage by the media. Therefore, if the news networks provide a context for this conflict with the ongoing negotiations that will be peace journalism otherwise it will be termed as war journalism.

The first two categories are going to be helpful in order to understand how reality is being presented about a particular conflict. In order to analyse the information provided in the news reports, it's important to see if some events are reported in absence of the other. If this is the case then the ability of the news reports to provide a complete picture about the conflict is compromised. Furthermore, it is further severely restricted if the information about the most pressing issues of the conflict is not explained or referred to in a very clear manner. This leads to de-contextualisation of reality and by analysing the data on these grounds the study can then analyse if only the 'apparent political reality' is being reported or it is a combination of 'apparent political reality' and 'the potential reality' as well.

Power asymmetry:

The power asymmetry was operationalized in the theoretical framework. The power asymmetry between the Palestinians and Israelis in terms of their economic and political development is nothing short of staggering. Israel not only enjoys a stronger political and economic position but is also the occupier of the West bank and Gaza strip. It also enjoys strong and unwavering American support that extends not only to political, economic and diplomatic channels but is also makes it quite likely for the United States to favour Israeli position when it acts as a mediator between the Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore these factors would be mentioned in the news reports, if it is to follow peace journalism. Therefore, if the new reports fail to mention this disparity, it is war journalism which is zero sum oriented. And justifies this zero sum game by implying for instance, us/them approach where violence from one side is retaliation and other side is a direct assault on the freedom. It is victory oriented and views peace only through crushing the extremists or through a ceasefire. On the other hand, peace

journalism explores all the nuances of this power asymmetry giving a better picture of how a peaceful transformation of the conflict can be brought in place after addressing the grievances of the most vulnerable to violence and occupation, be it Israeli civilians or Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza.

Discourse:

For this aspect of the study, discourse analysis will be used. Galtung and Vincent (2004:123) proposed that the discourse in the news reports should be deep i.e. it should explore all the nuances and dimensions of a particular incident that is to be covered. It was discussed in the introduction, that sometimes media choose to represent the reality that conforms to the status quo and do not explore an alternative explanation. Both Galtung and Vincent (ibid:97) take use of Ogden's triangle to explain how one can analyze the media discourse and determine if that discourse conforms to the status quo reality or it is actually explaining the potential reality or alternative view. The adequacy of the discourse should be measured in terms of it accommodating empirical reality and potential reality or how Galtung refers to it as Discourse expansion. (ibid: 120, 150) That way Ogden's triangle will help in determining if the news reports employ discourse that presents only the apparent or empirical reality or also the discourse what presents new solution or potential reality.

Ogden's triangle proposes a very simple explanation to see what kind of reality is presented in a discourse. First off, a term is coined for a referent, which gives it a meaning. In various cultures, languages emerge this way and this is the first step in building the language. The discourse we use is based on our thoughts and is used to explain reality. Discourse helps in statement construction, which is a proposition for the state of affairs. The referents belong to the reality that we can perceive with our senses and the abstract referents belong to our construction of reality. Reality in turn can be seen as assembly of vast state of affairs expressed through statements or propositions that can be tested for their possible truth, confirmation and validity. Hence Ogden's triangle is a useful way of discourse analysis. Like speech, a discourse accommodates

thought and refers to reality, but discourse is not speech; it is a framework for speech. Speech is here identified with any kind of verbal behaviour, whereas discourse is a framework within which speech can be spoken. A discourse is a construct that accommodates thoughts, a house for many thoughts within itself. Speech is verbal raw material out of which discourse frames its thoughts, thus a discourse is not observed; it is inferred. Just as a discourse can be constructed, it can also be deconstructed to show that what kind of thoughts it can accommodate. The deconstruction can also bring to light the kind of thoughts this discourse subjugates, relegating them to margins and making it transparent.

Discourse used in media should have two important aspects, expressing thoughts (not only the ones consenting to status quo but also the dissenting ones) and reflecting reality not only opaque and empirical reality but also the potential reality. The discourse failing to do so will be considered inadequate; thus reinforces journalism catering to conflict¹⁷. A discourse should be able to reflect a potential reality that is not there or not quite there, yet.

The discourse analysis for this part of the study will then focus on determining how the reality is presented in the news reports. Is it conforming to the status quo? Or does it exclude the alternative explanation or potentials reality? Glasgow Media University Group's research was able to explain this. Just as the coverage of the conflict is based on "hot" live action and immediacy of the report rather than explanation of the underlying causes of the events, the news reports about peace negotiations followed the same pattern. A BBC journalist, who was part of this research, said: "'explainers' are not required; it's all about 'bang bang stuff'" while explaining the kind of information that was to be presented in the news reports (Philo and Berry, 2004:102). The coverage for negotiations was taken up mainly with the comings and goings of the key figures and reports on the lack of progress in negotiations for the peaceful resolution of the

¹⁷ See appendix 6

conflict. (ibid: 104) This finding by Glasgow University Media Group, when viewed in light of discourse analysis proposed by Ogden's triangle, it is quite easy to see that the coverage lacks the alternative explanation and focuses on reality conforming to the status quo.

This also gives departure point for this study and the way news reports explain the two sides and the kind of discourse used, is also very important to analyse. If the news reports present one side more favourable than the other, then there is mechanism involved which is worth an explanation¹⁸. Following are a set of indicators for detecting presence of bias and these indicators form the sub-themes for this study.

- a.** Incomplete debate where one party's claims are mentioned and other's are just excluded.
- b.** Sources used – elite oriented. Which side ends up getting more attention in the use of sources? (measure the frequency with which a certain party's view is given in the reports) For this sub-theme respective tables were made that are given in appendices along with the criteria for the classification of sources into Palestinian, Israeli and independent.
- c.** Good versus evil – dehumanization of the enemy. "Us versus them" approach
- d.** How critical the news report is of what both parties are saying? Does the report end up with an uncritical view? How the actions of the negotiators are explained or are the ramifications mentioned?
- e.** How was the peace process covered? Did the news reports explain the hardcore issues for this conflict or tended to give mundane details of how conference went about?
- f.** Direct and indirect ratification of one party's version of events. E.g. if the reporter directly says in a hypothetical news report: unless rocket attacks cease,

¹⁸ The process whereby bias is incorporated in news reports is also explored by FAIR. See following <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=121>

peace will not come – is a direct acknowledgement of Israeli side of the story in reporters own words. However if an Israeli or Palestinian official is used to give their respective views, it is indirect.

If there are false dichotomies such as, one side being the evil villain and the other is presented innocent, then it will be taken as war journalism. On the other hand, if the news report was able to escape these false dichotomies, then it will be considered that it followed peace journalism. Furthermore, if the narration in the news reports was nuanced and contained varying perspectives in all their honesty in relation to the ground realities, then not only did the report escape the traps of bias but presented an alternative view. It, thus, followed the tenets of peace journalism.

Unit of analysis:

The unit of analysis for this study is the news reports (or reports in form of opinion pieces) from the online sites of BBC World, Guardian Unlimited, CNN and Al-Jazeera.

Sampling:

Purposive sampling was used for this study. The news coverage of CNN, Guardian Unlimited, Al-Jazeera and BBC world was selected for the Annapolis Peace Summit. The sample period was from November 19th, 2007 till December 9th, 2007. Since the study is academic in nature, only the given time period could be used that is the reason why purposive sampling was employed. Web based news services from these networks were selected for data analysis, due to accessibility reasons.

The web based news services by all the news media in the study uploaded more than one news report especially during the time Annapolis summit was taking place. The study has collected all the news reports that fell in the sample period.

Chapter 5

Data analysis:

This chapter will discuss the respective news reports from the selected news media by commenting in the categories explained in the methodology. There are four categories and their respective sub-categories (or sub-themes) in this study. The data analysis will commence with a few comments on the number of news reports within the sample from each network and then will proceed with the general discussion.

Sample data from the selected news media:

The coverage by BBC World was quite extensive and looked at a host of issues regarding the Annapolis Summit, speeches by Israelis and Palestinians and the role of the US and wider international community in the peace process. The coverage from Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera for this study was also quite extensive during the sample period. Of all the news organizations selected CNN was the only one that gave Annapolis summit minimum coverage.

News networks	Units
BBC	27
Guardian	35
CNN	11
Al-Jazeera	34

The comparative analysis for the news media and the respective categories is as follows:

Events reported in the sample:

Appendix 1 has been prepared with the details of all the events that occurred in the sample period for this category. This category will divide the events into three parts. The first related with the peace talks, the second is related to the actions by both parties in accordance with the peace talks and lastly of ensuing violence between the two parties. There is one important thing to be mentioned here, in the sample period, there were a few commitment that were not kept by Israelis and no instance of such kind on part of Palestinians. Therefore, it is important to point out what events were reported and what were not. Omission of events, as explained in the theoretical base is considerably a big hurdle to cross in news making and makes it harder to employ the principles of peace journalism.

Despite extensive coverage by BBC World and Guardian Unlimited, there were some important events that were not reported by these networks, including CNN. Al-Jazeera's was the most thorough and elaborate reporting for this conflict within the sample. The four networks covered events regarding the Annapolis summit in its entirety. Therefore the first part for this category got coverage from all the networks. However, the second part that dealt with actions by both parties in accordance with agreements reached at Annapolis, CNN, BBC World and Guardian Unlimited had some omissions. As for the last part that dealt with violence by Israelis and Palestinians, all the networks reported the Israeli attacks on Hamas operatives and but none of the networks reported the settler attacks on the Palestinians. There were kidnappings carried out by the Israeli armed forces, which was mentioned once by Al-Jazeera and Guardian Unlimited. Following are the two instances:

“Why report that three times as many political prisoners were arrested by Israel as were released in its ‘goodwill gesture’ for Annapolis.” (GU¹⁹ Opinion piece “We have not given up” 26.11.07)

¹⁹ GU is abbreviation for Guardian Unlimited

Marwan Bishara, Al-Jazeera's senior political analyst: "Where the Israeli Prime Minister, then as now, took the higher moral ground and spoke about the Israeli suffering, when Israel is an occupying force for the last 40 years, of the Palestinian people. Whereas, president Abbas took the practical road, without any of the conscientious discourse that we heard by the Israelis, whereas it is the Palestinian people under occupation. We heard the names of the three [kidnapped] Israeli soldiers held by the Palestinians and the Lebanese, but we didn't hear a single name of the ten or eleven thousand Palestinian prisoners by Abbas." (AJ²⁰ "Annapolis analyses" 27.11.07)

The following discussion is only in reference to the events that were not reported by the news media Guardian Unlimited, BBC World and CNN are mentioned, which are:

a. Immediately afterward the Annapolis summit, the Israeli construction and housing Minister, Zeev Boim snubbed US demands to not only curb the settlements. Furthermore, the Israeli Prime Minister refused to meet the deadline set in the Annapolis summit that sought creation of a Palestinian state by the end of 2008. The Israeli Prime Minister in a cabinet meeting openly said that we are not to be held accountable for meeting the deadline for the creation of the Palestinian state. This was not reported in the sample period by CNN, BBC World and Guardian Unlimited. Only one news report titled "Israel 'lax on demolition orders'" (04.12.07) by BBC mentioned that Israeli authorities are lax on settlement demolition.

b. The United States had also presented UN Security Council with a resolution, which was later withdrawn due to Israeli pressure. The resolution sought the goals of the summit to be presented at the UN and sanctioned in a resolution but the Israelis were not comfortable with the involvement of the UN. This was only reported by Al-Jazeera and no other news network. Two reports by Al-Jazeera discussed this issue, one was titled "US withdraws Annapolis resolution" (01.12.07) and the other titled "Olmert denies peace timetable" (03.12.07). An excerpt from the latter news report read as:

²⁰ AJ is abbreviation for AlJazeera

“Although Israel apparently had no problems with the uncontroversial text, it said a resolution was inappropriate. Analysts suggested it was worried a formal resolution would get the UN too involved in Middle East conflict resolution efforts.”

It is important to mention the breadth of events that were covered by each news organization, as it helps to better understand the context that is constructed by the news reports. By omitting certain events and then writing about a particular issue in absence of that, results in a lot of confusion and a less informed analysis. The aspect of self-censorship was used mainly to analyze how the omission of events can have a negative impact on the news coverage. Looking at the events that were not reported by the news media selected in this study, it seems the important events were not covered that had to do with Israeli violations or denial of the commitments promised at Annapolis. This omission can be termed a bias, or just another news item that was not considered important as per the editorial policy. To determine that is not the aim of the study. The only reason why it is being pointed out is that comprehensive coverage presents solutions to the problem. Therefore if the correct chain of events is not reported it leads to confusion and lack of essential information that may aggravate the unresolved issues. Furthermore, this omission leads to de-contextualization of events in favour of the party whose actions in contravention to the deal are not being reported.

Therefore if the news media is to follow the guide lines of peace journalism then the reports should be made carefully while dealing with problems posed by both Palestinian and Israelis in same length and time. The findings for this category suggested that problems posed by Israelis were not reported by Guardian Unlimited, BBC World and CNN.

The historical context for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

The study intends to use very basic quantitative means for this category and will focus more on the discussion. The first sub-theme in this category was the information about the events of 1948 and 1967. The frequency with which these events were reported by each network will be mentioned first and then the discussion will follow

News networks	Units	Mentioned
BBC	27	7
Guardian	35	3
CNN	11	0
Al-Jazeera	34	8

BBC World in its 27 news reports mentioned the historical background in form of events of 1948 and 1967, only 3 times, whereas the Israeli occupation of 1967 in connection to the Syrian Golan Heights was mentioned 4 times. The news reports by Guardian Unlimited were particularly lacking in providing the historical context but they were much more nuanced in explaining contemporary context for the Annapolis summit. This was distinctly a positive feature of Guardian's coverage compared to BBC. Interestingly enough CNN's reports never mentioned the historical background for this conflict. Lastly, Al-Jazeera was the only network out of the other selected news organizations that delved into this aspect comparatively in depth. Some examples from each network about the first sub-theme are as follows:

Three news reports on Nov 26th, Nov 21st and Nov 20th by BBC World, gave passing remarks on the historical background and so did Guardian Unlimited. All three news reports by BBC mentioned above used the exact same discourse to describe the historical background for this conflict, as:

“Israel and Palestinians are divided over the fate of West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, occupied by Israel in 1967, and the Palestinian refugee problem dating back to the establishment of Israel in 1948”. (BBC “Final push for Middle East talks” 26.11.07. Same discourse was used in other two news reports one on Nov 20th, titled “Olmert optimism on peace chances” and the other on Nov 21st, titled “US confirms Middle East peace talks.”)

“Syria’s position remains unclear. It has been holding out for a reference to the Golan heights, still occupied by Israel 40 years after the 1967 war.” (GU “Bush wins crucial Saudi support for first Israeli-Palestine peace talks in seven years” 24.11.07)

It should be noted here that in the first quoted news by the BBC, the problem of refugees that started in 1948 has been mentioned only with reference to Israel’s occupation or establishment and does not take into account the severity of the refugee problem. People in their tens and thousand were rendered homeless and expelled from their land through a process of ethnic cleansing. Benny Morris, an Israeli historian acknowledges the suffering of the Palestinian people in 1948 but states that the expulsion of Palestinians was not deliberate. Norman Finkelstein²¹ and Ilan Pape²² both disagree and say that ethnic cleansing was deliberate and pre-planned by the Jewish paramilitaries. Finkelstein and Pape have reached this conclusion after obtaining Israeli declassified documents from that period. It is important to clarify how the refugee and land problem for this conflict originated. This issue of historical background is directly linked with the core issues and will be discussed in the next sub-theme. For now the data in this sub-theme for BBC and Guardian Unlimited suggests that information about the historical background was rarely mentioned and when it was it did not take into account the exact context for it. CNN, on the other hand, never did mention the events of 1948 or 1967.

Another important comparison to be drawn here in this sub-theme is between BBC and Guardian reports that covered the Israeli Prime Minister’s interview with Ha’aretz that warned of a South African style struggle in the occupied territories.

“Israel is sensitive to any comparison to former apartheid South Africa, but Olmert has aired such views before. When he was deputy prime minister under Ariel Sharon four years ago, he favoured a withdrawal from most of the territories occupied in 1967 war that could leave

²¹ See – Finkelstein, G. Norman. (1995) Image and reality of Israel-Palestine conflict

²² See footnote 16

Israel with a ‘maximum’ number of Israelis and a ‘minimum’ number of Palestinians.” (GU “State of Israel could disappear, warns Olmert” 29.11.07)

“‘If the day comes when the two-state solution collapses and we face a south African style struggle for equal voting rights, then, as soon as that happens, the state of Israel is finished,’ Mr Olmert is quoted saying in Ha’aretz newspaper.” (BBC “Olmert warns of end of Israel” 29.11.07)

The very blunt acknowledgement by Olmert (the Israeli Prime Minister) of Israel’s exclusion toward other ethnicities is not mentioned in the BBC report as opposed to Guardian’s. On the other hand, Al-Jazeera’s coverage was completely different from other news media in this category. The most interesting feature of Al-Jazeera’s coverage was that without being one-sided, it applied many of the guidelines of peace journalism. Some examples are:

“A census from 1967 showed that nearly one million Arabs lived in these lands at the time. Figures from Badil, an organization that runs the Resource Centre for the Palestinians, show an estimate of 430,000 Palestinians fled their homes in 1967. More than 190,000 were being displaced for the second time. Forty years on, a survey from Badil puts the number of Palestinian refugees from the 1967 war at 834,000. The war reshaped the region, establishing Israel as a substantial military power, increasing its territory and as such contributing substantially to the issues that divide the Palestinian and Israeli delegations travelling to Annapolis.” (AJ “Key concerns could hold up talks” 26.11.08)

“The majority of displaced families fled their homes in 1948 – known as Al-Nakba, or The Catastrophe – with the establishment of Israel, but the war in 1967, when Israel launched an attack against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in response to threats from Egypt, caused further displacement.” (AJ “Key concerns could hold up talks” 26.11.08)

This report by Al-Jazeera puts the context for the events in 1948 and 1967 in a proper order by referring to the Palestinian displacement. The other news media failed to provide the proper context. This again could be cautious omission or simply due to the restrictions of time and space while making news reports. However, the emphasis here is that the media can present the alternative view and further the cause of peace by proposing solutions while thinking outside the box. The news reports especially by

CNN, BBC World and Guardian Unlimited did not mention details of the events on 1948 and 1967, when the tenets of peace journalism could easily be incorporated while talking about one of the most important issues in this conflict, as is exemplified by Al-Jazeera. The absence of the proper context into the historical events of this conflict triggers a chain reaction as it does not explain how the refugee problem started or the issues related to borders. This will be discussed in detailed in the following sub theme.

Core issues for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

The second sub-theme is about the core issues, which include: Borders (Plus end of the occupation and the Wall erected by Israel around the West Bank), Settlements, Status of East Jerusalem, right of return for refugees, Water and Security for both Palestinians and Israelis. Following table gives the frequency with which the core issues were mentioned by each of the news media.

News Networks	Units	Mentioned
BBC	27	10
CNN	11	11
Guardian	35	7
Al-Jazeera	34	13

In the news reports by BBC World, the core issues were uniformly referred to as the reason that “scuppers the negotiations”, for instance:

“Both sides have said that those core issues will include the thorny so-called ‘final status issues’ – the future of Jerusalem, borders, water, refugees and settlements – which have scuppered previous attempts at a peace deal.” (BBC “Olmert warns end of Israel” 29.11.07)

Out of 7 references there were only two instances where the Guardian’s reports gave a proper context for some of the core issues involved, these are as follows:

“As Miliband was driven from Jerusalem to Jericho, cranes loomed over the nearby Jewish settlement of Maale Adumin, which threatens to split the West Bank in two if the building work continues.” (GU “Blair unveils huge jobs plan to bolster Middle East peace talks” 19.11.07)

“Earlier today, the head of the UN agency for Palestinians refugees attacked a separate Israeli plan for a new system of checkpoint terminals across the occupied West Bank. Karen AbuZayd, Head of UN Relief and Works Agency, said Israeli authorities have told them of plans to install six specially built terminals to check people and cargo, including deliveries of aid, calling this ‘an insidious new regime to limit freedom of movement’.” (GU “Israeli concessions boost peace hopes” 19.11.07)

The examples from the coverage by Guardian for the core issues, shows its coverage was better off than BBC’s or CNN’s for that matter. The reports by Guardian show that Israeli policies in regards to check points and settlement construction are causing numerous problems for the Palestinians. By referring to the nature of problems the reports open room for discussion as to how these issues can be addressed. CNN mentioned the core issues about 11 times and all of these references were quite brief except for one. That reference to the core issues was in connection to the right of return and is more relevant to that last category in the sub-theme called ‘how peace process was covered’ and will be discussed there. As for Al-Jazeera, all the references made toward the core issues were nuanced compared to the other news media’s approach to this sub-theme. Some examples are:

“The Jewish settlers, however, see the West Bank as their god-given birthright. They do not believe in the road map or the two-state solution as the way to resolve the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Dani Dayan, head of the settler’s council, said: ‘it is equating the struggle against the terrorists which want to explode in a crowded coffee shop or discotheque in Tel Aviv killing hundreds or dozens of people, with my daughter for instance who wants to build her home next to mine’. The Jewish settlers think that Annapolis will solve nothing. They say that they will gather support and fight any promises made by the Israelis.” (AJ “Settlements of contention” 26.11.07)

“With the two sides unable to agree to a joint declaration before the gathering, expectations for the Annapolis talks are not high. But in theory at least, the Palestinian’s right of return is

already agreed. In December 1948, the UN general assembly passed resolution 194 as part of the attempt to deal with the region of Palestine as it stood at the end of 1948 Arab-Israel war. The ‘right of return’ is enshrined in article 11, which ‘resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date’. It also states that compensation should be paid to those who choose not to return, as well as damage or the property. Israel accepted the resolution, essentially because acceptance of it was made a condition of Israel’s entry into the UN. But there has been much dispute over interpretation of the resolution, with its critics saying it can not be applied in any practical way and threatens the existence of Israel. Many displaced Palestinians still live in refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon, as well as in Gaza, but others have established themselves elsewhere, in Europe, the US, across Middle East, with Palestinians in Jordan making up an important part of the country’s economy.” (“Key concerns could hold up talks” 26.11.08)

The aforementioned reports show a clear difference between Al-Jazeera’s reporting in comparison to the other news organizations. From the two excerpts of the news report quoted above, it is quite obvious that it addresses the grievances of both sides and uses a people-oriented approach, which is at the heart of peace journalism. That was something not used by the other three selected news organizations, especially in regards to this category. It should be pointed out that the last excerpt does an excellent job of point out the legal basis for resolving the issue of right of return for the Palestinian refugees. The legal basis for the resolution of core issues was not discussed by other networks, especially BBC and CNN. Due to space restrictions not all examples can be quoted from the coverage by Al-Jazeera, but following is one more example where the report employs a solution-oriented approach towards the resolution of the core issues namely, status of Jerusalem and borders.

“The same needs to apply to Jerusalem – an open city and the capital of two states. Any changes on the borderline must be negotiated on the basis of exchange of territories equal in quality and quantity.”(AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

In the categories and sub-themes discussed thus far, only Al-Jazeera’s reporting adhered substantially to the principles of peace journalism and also the two most important tenets, people-oriented and solution-oriented approach, compared to the other

news media selected in the study. As mentioned especially in case of BBC and CNN, the reference towards the events of 1948 and 1967 was either brief or none. These brief references do not take into account the root causes of the two of the most pressing issues i.e. occupation and refugee problem. Similarly, when the core issues are mentioned, instead of giving the relevant information as to how the needs of both parties can be met, it is reported, for instance by the BBC that the core issues lead to a stalemate in the negotiations. This style of reporting basically promotes status quo as it does not mention any reasons for the stalemate, let alone any solution.

If this is compared to Al-Jazeera's coverage, then it is obvious that the reports should have mentioned the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in 1948 and 1967, precisely because it sets the record straight for the historical events and makes it easier for the reader to understand that if occupation is ended and refugee problem is resolved then two cores issues are dealt with in a just manner. It should also be interesting to mention that in not a single news report by BBC, CNN or Guardian the UN resolution 242 is referred to, which clearly states the inadmissibility of land through occupation. The occupation of Palestinian territories has crippled the life there and civilian population is subjected to intense humiliation²³. This leads people with extreme views to resort to

²³ "Israeli law-enforcement authorities and security forces have made the entire Palestinian population pay the price for protecting Israeli settlement in the city. To this end, the authorities impose a regime intentionally and openly based on the "separation principle", as a result of which Israel created legal and physical segregation between the Israeli settlers and the Palestinian majority." http://www.btselem.org/English/Publications/Summaries/200705_Hebron.asp

"The older ex-soldier is Yehuda Shaul, who does indeed "know how it is in Hebron", having served in the city in a combat unit at the peak of the Intifada, and is a founder of Shovrim Shtika, or Breaking the Silence, which will publish tomorrow the disturbing testimonies of 39 Israelis – including this young man – who served in the army in Hebron between 2005 and 2007. They cover a range of experiences, from anger and powerlessness in the face of often violent abuse of Arabs by hardline Jewish settlers, through petty harassment by soldiers, to soldiers beating up Palestine residents without provocation, looting homes and shops, and opening fire on unarmed demonstrators. The maltreatment of civilians under occupation is common to many armies in the world – including Britain's, from Northern Ireland to Iraq. But, paradoxically, few if any countries apart from Israel have an NGO like Breaking the Silence, which seeks – through the experiences of the soldiers themselves – as its website puts it "to force Israeli society to address the reality which it created" in the occupied territories." <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/our-reign-of-terror-by-the-israeli-army-811769.html>

measures that target innocent Israeli civilians²⁴. Once the context for the violence is put in place then one can see that occupation needs to be ended so that there is peace and security for Palestinians and Israelis alike. This, however, is understood that the media are not expected to give the background every time due to the space or time restrictions.

History of the previous peace negotiation or talks:

Following table shows the frequency with which the history of previous talks was mentioned by the news media.

News networks	Units	Mentioned
BBC	27	3
CNN	11	15
Guardian	35	5
AL-Jazeera	34	8

One remark out of the three references to the previous talks by BBC was very brief. It was carried in a news report on Nov 28th, titled; “Mid-East leaders in fresh talks.” The report read: “Expectations going into Annapolis have been low because every other attempt at negotiation between Israelis and the Palestinians has failed, says that BBC’s Jeremy Bowen at the conference.”

Just as the coverage in the previous category was vague by the BBC, the same pattern can be observed here. The core issues are viewed in the BBC coverage as something

²⁴ “Since the beginning of the al-Aqsa Intifada, there has been a sharp increase in the number of attacks perpetrated by Palestinian organizations against Israeli civilians. These attacks have killed hundreds of Israelis and wounded thousands, including many minors, inside Israel and in the Occupied Territories. Attacks aimed at civilians undermine all rules of morality and law.” http://www.btselem.org/English/Israeli_Civilians/Index.asp

that “scupper” peace talks without going into specifics why, the reports toward analysis of the peace is similar. The report maintains that previous attempts at negotiations have failed without explaining any reason for that failure. By giving vague statements or views on this conflict’s most pressing issues the coverage is actually lacking in means through which the media can play a positive role in conflicts. There were two other instances that had vague references but for the sake of brevity only one of them is going to be discussed here. The news on Nov 24th, titled; “What Palestinians want at Annapolis”, reads:

“If the experience of 2000 is anything to go by, a failure at talks can give momentum to those, on both sides, who want to pursue violence to achieve their aims. The collapse of peace talks sponsored by US president Bill Clinton, were followed by the launch of the second Palestinian uprising and an Israeli re-invasion of large areas of the West Bank controlled by the Palestinian Authority”.

The first sentence from the report is quite neutral if read independently of the statement that follows. But it is interesting to note how events are presented in the aftermath of the collapse of Camp David accords. Philo and Berry (2004: 93, 117) have explained through their study that the news reports implied the unrest among Palestinians was only after the collapse of negotiations and the violence on part of Palestinians led to the reoccupation of the West Bank and Gaza. According to both Philo and Berry, this approach fails to take in to account the Palestinian side of the story who view the Oslo accords as a continuation of Israeli land grab policy and after 7 years of Oslo accords when there was no peace for them, the provocative visit by Sharon, considered by Palestinians a war criminal, to Masjid-ul-Aqsa (Temple Mount as referred to by Palestinians in Arabic) culminated into the second uprising.

On a separate note this is also related to the category power asymmetry and is going to be taken up there for further discussion. However for the moment, suffice it to say, the end of peace talks in 2000 were the breaking point of Palestinian patience who had been subjected to continuing occupation since 1967. It should also be brought to light that the quoted part of the news report says: “The collapse of peace talks sponsored by

US president Bill Clinton, were followed by the launch of the second Palestinian uprising and an Israeli re-invasion of large areas of the West Bank controlled by the Palestinian Authority” quite misleadingly gives an impression that occupation after the Oslo accords was lifted from West Bank. This could be a direct ratification of Israeli point of view but it could have been supplemented by a Palestinian view, which the report obviously failed to mention.

For the news reports by Guardian Unlimited, the reference to the previous talks was also very brief in nature. The news reports referred to past four initiatives, the first being the Madrid Peace Conference and likened the nature of that conference with the Annapolis Summit. The second reference was to the Clinton initiative formerly known as Camp David peace accords that were held in 2000. The third being the Oslo accords carried out in 1993. The last reference was to the road map to peace launched by the so called Quartet including the US, UN, Russia and the EU. Some instances of the way previous talks were referred to in the news, read as follows:

“It is billed by the US as the launch-pad for ambitious negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, seven years since Bill Clinton’s efforts failed, triggering the violence of the second Intifada that claimed the lives of 4,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis .” (GU “Bush wins crucial Saudi support for first Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in seven years” 24.11.07)

“It was a long way from the famous scene on the White House lawn when Bill Clinton brought Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin together after their ill-fated Oslo agreement in 1993.” (GU “Peace there won’t be, but you look well” 28.11.07)

In the reports by CNN, the previous talks were also mentioned very briefly. The references were to the “road map to peace” devised by Quartet including US, EU, UN, and Russia and the other reference was to the Camp David accords in 2000. One example is as follows:

“Some of the contentious issues are addressed in the ‘road map’ to peace established in 2003 by the Mideast Quartet, composed of the US, The UN, Russia and the EU.” (CNN “Retired US general to tackle Israeli-Palestinian security issues” 28.11.07)

In this sub-theme once again Al-Jazeera carries the distinction compared to other networks, of explaining what went wrong in the previous negotiations. The reportage was solution oriented, again one of the hallmarks of peace journalism. Following are some examples:

“Enough said, though it is important to note that the road map was devised to blunt international criticism of the US for abetting Israel’s horrendously disproportionate attacks against the Palestinian population at that time. The US was in ‘fight terror’ mode following the 9-11 attacks, and its war machine was zeroing in on Saddam Hussein’s Iraq. The road map thus had more to do with lessening scepticism among ‘moderate’ Arab governments to join the ‘coalition of the willing’ against Iraq as they could show their domestic critics that American cared about Palestine.” (AJ Opinion Piece “A footnote in history” 26.11.07)

“Clayton Swisher, Al-Jazeera’s Middle East analyst, said Syria’s participation will symbolise the importance of Hamas’ involvement in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said: ‘it brings back memories of 1991 Madrid conference when the PLO wasn’t allowed to attend the conference but other countries were allowed to represent the group, namely through Jordan’.” (AJ “Saudis to attend Annapolis summit” 23.11.07)

“Like all previous attempts before it, the 1993 Oslo Accords signed in Washington, the 1995 Interim Accords signed at Cairo as well as the 2002 International Road Map, have tried and predictably failed to attain peace through a bilateral process dictated by Israel and supervised by its American ally.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“By offloading 8,000 or so Jewish settlers there who had hijacked the lives of 1.4 million Palestinians, Israel was able to win the admiration of Washington. When the international community replied, as well as the Israeli courts, that effective control of Gaza had not been relinquished by Israel – that Gaza occupation still legally remained, Secretary Rice appeared in November 2005 to broker the Agreement on Movement and Access. (AMA) She failed miserably in her first test of pressing Israel on performance; in violation of that agreement, not a single bus load of Palestinians ever made it from Gaza to the West Bank, while Palestinians harvests never made it to the market. A Pollyannaish few believed that after the disengagement, Gaza would become a vibrant economic powerhouse, like Dubai. Indifference to the AMA, plus America’s decision to punish the entire population of Gaza for democratically electing Hamas, is why Gaza today more resembles Mogadishu.” (AJ Opinion Piece “A footnote in history” 26.11.07)

If these excerpts are to be compared with the reports from the other networks, it is pretty obvious that Al-Jazeera's reports give an elaborate discussion on the history of the previous talks giving e.g. what went wrong. The reports explain that strong US pressure on both sides is required to have the goals met that are set in the negotiations. Furthermore, most of the negotiations were carried out in response to political needs rather than with an aim to resolve the conflict. However, the reports from other networks particularly lacked the details that could clear the context for this sub-theme.

The studies given in the literature review seem to suggest that the peace talks could not materialize into peace mainly because there was no just solution for the Palestinian refugees, for the settlements, the status of East Jerusalem and the ongoing violence in form of occupation by Israel and attacks by Palestinians on Israelis. No doubt the issues of security for both ordinary Palestinians and Israelis are critical. Israel and Palestinian authorities should do their best to guarantee security for their citizens. The key to achieving lasting peace between the parties is to address each other grievances. But when Palestinians are expected to renounce their rights in regards to two of their most important grievances, right of return and land concessions to Israelis, then this is not a just solution for many thousands of people who have been languishing in refugee camps without equal rights and many under occupation. If the mediator can not do anything about it, and the media also do not explain for the viewers what is really going on in the peace process, then there will be significant confusion about the core issues related to this conflict.

Humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank:

Following table shows the frequency with which the

News networks	Units	Mentioned
BBC	27	1
CNN	11	0

Guardian	35	11
Al-Jazeera	34	7

The humanitarian situation in Gaza was commented on only once in the entire sample of BBC reports. Otherwise the reference to Gaza and West Bank was only in reference to protests or reported deaths of the militants by the Israeli armed forces. One brief reference was in a report on Dec 3 titled “Israel hits Gaza amid fuel fears”.

Guardian Unlimited in its reports referred to the situation in Gaza and West Bank about 11 times. Four times the reference was in absence of the humanitarian crisis in occupied territories. Three of the news reports thoroughly discussed the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. While the rest of the reports were polemical in nature, engendering divides rather than providing any solution. First, the reports that carried polemical or divisive remarks will be discussed and later on, the ones that had detailed analysis.

“There is no credible alternative to the peace process that Annapolis is designed to set in motion. But that doesn’t mean the 1.4 million Gazans – who are locked out of talks that will take place next week by dint of the fact that they are ruled by a rejectionist group, Hamas – can be forgotten.” (GU “Déjà vu, again” 24.11.07)

“But in the Gaza strip, sealed off by Israel and controlled by Abbas’s bitter enemy, Hamas, thousands of women demonstrated against Annapolis, waving banners that read: ‘enemy knows only the language of force’.” (GU “Boost for middle East summit as Syria joins in” 26.11.07)

This is interesting, as the context which may explain why there is so much hostility by Gazans toward Israel, is missing. View this in connection with another report by Guardian which read as:

“The rest of 1.4 million Gazans, however, are much more vulnerable and it is they who are worst affected. The closures not only prevent Palestinians from travelling in and out of Gaza, they have also curtailed import and export of cargo, from medical equipment and spare parts, to carbon dioxide for soft drinks, to agricultural exports. Only a restricted amount of food is

now allowed in to Gaza and the economy has seized. The statistics make a stark account of life in Gaza today. Around 1.3 million are reliant on the UN food handouts, 85% of the population. Unemployment runs to at least 50% and in the past five months the private sector has collapsed: 80,000 workers have lost their jobs. Many of the unemployed have signed up to the Hamas police force or the militant groups, one of the few sources of income still available for young men and glaring proof if any was still that economic frailty breeds militancy.” (GU “Sick are in the frontline as supplies and hope drain away for isolated Gazans” 27.11.07)

The above quoted paragraph the new report is a clear example of peace journalism and shows that how important it is for the media to highlight the fall out of conflict and its toll on the civilians. Without this the discourse would easily be reduced to a frenzied game of blame and endless violence. Peace journalism identifies the underlying root causes for the conflict and opens debate for better solutions that not only help resolve conflict but promote goodwill and dignity among people, as is exemplified by this report. This quoted excerpt quite accurately describes the worst humanitarian situation in Gaza and provides the context for the resentment expressed toward Israel. However, the first quotes that show Gazans agreeing to the use of force against Israel, is without context and is very one-sided. Not all examples can be listed but a few more of the news reports that talked in detail about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and West Bank by Guardian Unlimited are as follows:

“Palestinian olive producers have faced enormous difficulties as Israeli authorities have confiscated or denied access to land, uprooted ancient trees and controlled water resources. The building of the security barrier has cut off some farmers from their live groves. Once the wall is completed, 10% of West Bank will fall on the Israeli side of the border”. (GU “War of words over an Oil named peace” 07.12.07)

“Aid officials working in Gaza say that reality of life here is barely understood abroad. ‘You must be on the ground for days and weeks to begin to understand the full horror of the situation,’ said John Ging, Gaza director of the UN Relief and Works Agency which works with Palestinian refugees, in a speech in London last week. ‘By what other definition or name can these sanctions be described, other than arbitrary collective punishment of a civilian

population, helplessly caught in middle of a conflict?” (GU “Sick are in the frontline as supplies and hope drain away for isolated Gazans” 27.11.07)

Despite a few instances, compared to BBC or CNN, Guardian’s reportage on the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories was more comprehensive. None of the reports by CNN ever mentioned the worsening situation in Gaza or the West Bank. Al-Jazeera’s coverage for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza was the most elaborate and detailed like Guardian’s. Some of these references were brief yet took into account for instance the hospital condition in wake of fuel cuts by Israel, while other references took on the issue in quite an elaborate fashion. Some examples are:

“Israel’s collective punishments and Jewish settlements expansion, which tripled since the beginning of the diplomatic process, have emerged as the engine of instability and violence. Those policies increased tensions and deepened the antipathy toward the negotiations among Palestinians and Israelis alike.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“Israel withdrew troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, but continues to control all its imports. Cutting utilities is preferable to mounting a bloody invasion to stop Palestinians firing make shift short range rockets, Israel claims. Hamas has condemned the sanctions as ‘blackmail’ and hinted that Gaza’s privations could stoke Israeli-Palestinian violence.” (AJ “Israeli court backs Gaza fuel cuts” 30.11.07)

“Hardened by a year of economic turmoil, Gazans have been stocking up on the fuel supplies for weeks but worry their supplies may run out in the near future. Since Hamas seized control of Gaza in mid June, Israel has sought to isolate the strip in response to continuing rocket fire from the territory. Israel and Palestinian human rights groups had appealed to the Israel’s Supreme Court to halt the fuel cuts, calling them an act of illegal collective punishment that endangers civilians. But on Friday the court said the state could continue with the restrictions, saying was possible to do so without affecting the humanitarian situation in Gaza.” (AJ “Gaza hit by Israeli curbs on fuel” 02.12.07)

This again is a piece of reporting that shows tenets of peace journalism. It sheds light on ongoing situation in Gaza and also explains the Israeli view. The standards of objectivity are met and it is up to the viewer to form an opinion. The problem with BBC’s or CNN’s coverage was that it was mostly the Israeli view that got attention and

the Palestinian view when given, was more fragmented or de-contextualised. This promotes the culture of war rather than conciliation and resolution. More of Al-Jazeera's reports followed peace journalism showing its people oriented approach rather than elite oriented. One report looked at the rise of child labour due to economic blockade of Gaza. Due to space restriction one example of the people oriented approach is as follows:

“It is only a few days since the talk was of prospects for peace and renewed hope for the future of Palestinians. But for a generation of Palestinian children, things may only be getting worse. In the streets of Gaza, isolated by the Palestinian government and much of the world, growing numbers of children are being sent out to work. With 70% of people in Gaza living below the poverty line, children are being forced to take on the role of provider for their struggling families. Statistics show that 7% of children in Palestine, where 52% of the population are under the age of 18, are now working.” (AJ “Gaza’s Child Labour on the rise” 02.12.07)

For this sub-category, Guardian and Al-Jazeera's reporting was nuanced and explained both sides objectively, compared to CNN and BBC's coverage that was at first minimal and secondly did not serve any purpose in terms of proposing solutions.

Hamas versus Fatah and Hamas versus Israel:

Hamas's rejectionist image was reinforced without an exception in all the news reports by BBC that referred to it. That will be looked at in detail in the last category but to summarize here, Hamas was considered the impediment towards peace and therefore, it was necessary to circumvent its participation for Annapolis summit. The constant reference of Hamas take-over of Gaza was de-contextualised and did not mention how Fatah had been receiving funds by the US and the Israel to plot against Hamas overthrow²⁵. Hamas's relation with Israel was also conflict prone according to the BBC

²⁵ As reported by Jonathon Steele in the Guardian. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,,330064429-103552,00.html>

Also by Ali Abunimah of Electronic Intifada <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article7030.shtml>

And lastly by Democracy Now http://www.democracynow.org/2007/6/15/as_hamas_seizes_full_control_of

reports, by suggesting that it does not recognize Israel and uses terror to advance its aims. In none of BBC's 27 reports was there a mention of Hamas peace offer²⁶ though, the Arab peace initiative was mentioned once ("US welcomes Saudi Summit Pledge" 24.11.07) and at the same time the report did not explain that why it was rejected by Israel. One example of how Hamas was referred to in the BBC reports is as follows: "Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organization by the US, EU and Israel, is not represented at Annapolis at all." ("Hamas dismisses Middle East peace talks" 26.11.07)

Guardian followed the same pattern for this sub-theme, like BBC. Mostly Hamas was portrayed as a violent group that rejects Israel's existence and employs terror tactics. Hamas compared to Fatah was considered Islamist whereas Fatah was explained as its bitter enemy. The reports that had neutral reference toward Hamas are:

"A Hamas official, Sami Abu Zuhri, called the announcement 'a great shock for Palestinians because it opened the door for direct normalisation with the occupation amid its continued escalation and aggression'." (GU "Hamas warns of violence after talks" 25.11.07)

"Ismail Haniyeh, the deposed prime minister of Hamas, in control of Gaza strip, warned that any agreement reached by Abbas would be invalid." (GU "Bush tried to bridge divides ahead of summit" 26.11.07)

"In series of statements delivered from both Damascus and the Gaza Strip, which Hamas controls, the organization piled more pressure on a meeting that most commentators have suggested has little chance of producing any concrete moves towards Palestinians statehood." (GU "Hamas warns of violence after the talks" 25.11.07)

It came to the notice of this researcher that, Guardian employed less demonizing adjectives for Hamas compared to BBC or CNN for instance. It referred to Hamas as a rejectionist or Islamist group and one that advocates use of force against the "Zionist enemy" ("Hamas warns of violence after talks" 25.11.07). At one time, one of the

²⁶ The truce offer – or Hudna by Hamas has been made throughout the 1990s and also right after Hamas's victory in parliamentary elections. Khaled Hroub (2006) and Azzam Tamimi (2007) have documented the truce offers by Hamas in their works. Hamas has offered to recognise Israel, if Israel recognises Palestinian rights and also offered ceasefire many times.

reports referred to Hamas operatives as Hamas “security men” (“State of Israel could disappear, warns Olmert” 29.11.07), compared to BBC that without an exception used the word “militants” for Hamas operatives. Similarly, all the references made toward Hamas in CNN reports were similar to BBC’s that reinforced Hamas’s negative image. One such example is:

“Abbas is currently in a bitter power struggle with Hamas for control of Palestinian territory. Hamas, which currently controls Gaza, opposed negotiations and supports continued armed resistance against Israel.” (CNN “US cannot impose vision on Middle East, Bush says” 29.11.07)

Hamas’s military wing has indulged in activities that have targeted Israeli civilians. This is condemnable just as Israeli operations within the occupied territories are. Israel has used collective punishment on Gazans and has also subjected Palestinians in the West Bank with a system that is referred to by Desmond Tutu²⁷ and Jimmy Carter²⁸ as apartheid. If the news reports chose to condemn Hamas’s violence without ever mentioning Israeli violence, then the reporting is obviously lacking objectivity and wants to reinforce ‘us versus them’ divides. It should also be mentioned again that CNN’s report were lacking the most in providing essential details for this conflict, such events on 1948 and 1967, history of previous of talks and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories. In absence of this important context, any extremist position held by

²⁷“Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who labeled the Israeli system as worse than his country’s former apartheid regime, endorsed divestment. What drew the ire of Israel and the Israel lobby the most, however, is a resolution by the British University and College Union (UCU) at its congress 30 May. The UCU resolution encourages its members to “consider the moral implications of existing and proposed links with Israel academic institutions,” and to forge closer relations with Palestinian universities.” http://www.pacbi.org/boycott_news_more.php?id=605_0_1_0_C

²⁸ “But Israelis have not liked him since he wrote the book "Palestine: Peace not Apartheid." Israel is not ready for such comparisons, even though the situation begs it. It is doubtful whether it is possible to complain when an outside observer, especially a former U.S. president who is well versed in international affairs, sees in the system of separate roads for Jews and Arabs, the lack of freedom of movement, Israel's control over Palestinian lands and their confiscation, and especially the continued settlement activity, which contravenes all promises Israel made and signed, a matter that cannot be accepted. The interim political situation in the territories has crystallized into a kind of apartheid that has been ongoing for 40 years. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/974893.html>

Hamas toward Israel is without its proper context and serves to reinforce the “us versus them” approach.

The last sub-theme for this category presented interesting analysis for Al-Jazeera’s coverage as it was by far the most nuanced in this sub-category, compared to other networks. The reportage was very balanced where it did present the rejectionist view of Hamas but with its due context. It did not present Hamas as the only extremist group in the equation. It was only Al-Jazeera’s coverage that talked in details about the hardliners on both sides. Other news media in this study failed to do so and concentrated mainly on Hamas as the only extremist group. The hardliners in Israel are as opposed to peace process or even more so towards any peace deal with Palestinians compared to Hamas, which has proposed truce to Israel. BBC, CNN and Guardian, despite its nuanced coverage, were uniform in reinforcing Hamas’s rejectionist stance. Hamas rejects Israel, but Hamas’s view of that rejection was never given in their respective reports, which is rooted not only in the occupation and economic blockade of Gaza but also towards Israel’s denial of the most basic Palestinian rights. In absence of this context, the three aforementioned networks portrayed Hamas as an organization against Israel just because it’s Israel. However, as the discussion will show, Al-Jazeera gave proper coverage to hardliners from Palestinians and Israelis alike. It gave a comprehensive context for Hamas’s rejection of Israel and the views of the settlers on peace process. Following are some examples by Al-Jazeera:

“Gathering at the western wall – the holiest site for Jews to pray - they also prayed that the talks would fail. Al-Jazeera’s David Chater, at the scene of protests in Jerusalem, said the demonstrators were the voice of minority but that voice was loud and could threaten Olmert’s coalition government. Members from the government coalition party Yisrael Beitenu attended the protest, as did Zeev Elkin, a member of Olmert’s Kadima party.” (AJ “Expectations low for Annapolis” 27.11.07)

This news report should be compared with BBC’s report on Nov 28th, 2007; titled “New Mid-East peace drive launched”: “In Jerusalem, Israelis gathered at the western wall on Monday to protest against the conference.”

There are two interesting points here that need to be mentioned. Firstly, the report mentioned 'Israelis' in Jerusalem and does not mention that they are settlers. Secondly, the report also leaves out the mode of protest used by Israeli settlers that seems to indicate the extreme opposition of this particular group to peace process.

More news reports by Al-Jazeera are as follows:

“Moreover, Israel’s undermining of all outside mediation, and specifically of the bridging proposals by James Wolfensohn, International Quartet (US, EU, UN, Russia) special envoy and Condoleezza Rice, US secretary of state, compelled the ever disenchanted Palestinians to hand Hamas a majority of the legislative council.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“Instead of engaging with Hamas through dialogue, the US and Israel enraged the Palestinians by sanctions that crippled Palestinian economy and deepened the political tensions between an Islamist party eager to govern, and a power-addicted secular Fatah eager to rule.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“Jacky Rowland, Al-Jazeera’s correspondent in Gaza, said: ‘people are delivering a very strong no to Annapolis, in Gaza’. They say ‘no’ to recognizing the state of Israel and they say ‘no’ to any compromise on those key Palestinian rights, like the status of Jerusalem and the right of Palestinian refugees to return.” (AJ “Hamas says ‘Annapolis doomed’” 27.11.07)

“The previous day, Mahmoud Al-Zahar, the former Palestinian foreign minister from Hamas, told Al-Jazeera that nothing positive would come from the talks. He questioned the sincerity of US, saying that after leaving aside the Middle East conflict for seven years, the Bush administration was now trying to ‘make an impression that something can be squeezed out by such a meeting... in the last moment’.” (AJ “Arab leaders hold mini-summit” 22.11.07)

The reports show that the rejection of Annapolis and the no to recognition of Israel is mainly or primarily because Israel denies Palestinians of their rights enshrined in numerous UN resolutions. Israel does have a right to exist but at the same time so do the Palestinians. For the sake of peace, Hamas should change its stance on Israel, which it offered to do through its truce offers, only to be rejected by Israel. The last two excerpts from the coverage by Al-Jazeera are interesting because they suggest the actual reasons for Hamas’ opposition to the recognition of Israel. The reports by Al-

Jazeera, Guardian Unlimited and CNN (though, only once) also discussed the weak position of both Olmert and Abbas. The examples are:

“Olmert is facing police investigations over alleged corruption, which he has denied and the result of an official inquiry into his handling of the 2006 Lebanon war. Fatah, led by Abbas, was driven out of Gaza Strip in June by the rival Hamas movement. Hamas, however, remains sidelined from the conference and the territory it controls has ground to a halt under the weight of international economic sanctions.” (AJ “Blair unveils Palestinian projects” 19.11.07)

“Heavy pressure from hardliners at home fuelled profound scepticism about the prospects of a breakthrough once the negotiations begin.” (GU “Bush tries to bridge divides ahead of summit” 26.11.07)

“Abbas is currently in a bitter power struggle with Hamas for control of Palestinian territory.” (CNN “US cannot impose vision on Middle East” 29.11.07)

The overall findings from this category and the first one suggest that the information presented in the news reports was thoroughly de-contextualised in favour of Israelis. The context for this conflict was built in absence of discussion on core issues, humanitarian situation and historical background. In this context, Israel presented no problem to the peace talks and Hamas was the only source of trouble. The coverage by BBC, CNN and Guardian’s coverage failed to explain the root causes of intense hostility shown by Hamas toward Israel. Guardian however did better in its coverage compared to BBC and CNN while covering the humanitarian situation in Gaza and employed minimal “us versus them” approach in regards to Hamas. Al-Jazeera’s reports on the whole in terms of this category showed more tenets of peace journalism not least regarding: solution and people oriented approach.

This approach of de-contextualisation lacks the crucial information and fails to show the basic relation between the Palestinians and the Israelis i.e. occupied and the occupier. This power asymmetry is going to be dealt with in the following category.

Power Asymmetry:

The methodology and the theoretical base attempted a brief sketch for the operationalization of power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Furthermore the departure point for the analysis in this category is taken from the study carried out by the Glasgow Media University Group. According to the findings of their research, they found that many of their respondents did not know who were the occupiers and the occupied in this conflict (Philo and Berry, 2004:118). This study came across similar patterns. The discussion from the first two categories, effectively builds the case that power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis was concealed especially by BBC and CNN. The coverage by CNN and BBC as discussed, did not give the due information especially about the events on 1948 and 1967, Palestinian dispossession and the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories. This de-contextualisation effectively hinders in explaining the dynamics of power between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

By going through the many reports from the sample in this study especially of BBC and CNN, it became clear that the coverage did not explain the occupation and the severe military nature of it along with its consequences. There were remarks in the news report that this conflict is intractable but why is it so, this question was never explored and explained with reference to the occupation. This then raises a significant point that in absence of such discussion Israeli tactics are presented as retaliation (which is the Israeli point of view) rather than as an extension of military control or occupation (which is how the Palestinians see it) (ibid:128). This favours Israeli position over the Palestinian position. This retaliation logic excludes:

- a. Palestinians seen as resisting the occupation
- b. And destroys any possibility of statehood for Palestinians, as it becomes the argument that until they curb violence there will be no peace and hence no state for Palestinians. (ibid:164)

Hence, the significance of these observations from this study's point of view is two fold. At first there is power disparity between the Palestinians and the Israelis and this power asymmetry is never fully discussed which raises significant doubts towards the

objectivity standards professed by this particular network. Secondly, the Israeli perspective of security is favoured by the journalists, which leads to the exclusion of consequences of military occupation, being the Palestinian point of view. It is understandable that the media want to be neutral, but if one side's view point is altogether missing from the discourse, it is quite obviously, one sided. This is essentially a conflict between two parties in an asymmetric relation and there is an uneven war where ragtag militias sometimes use violent means in order to rid off an occupying power that happens to be one of the world's most powerful armies. It should be stated by the media, objectively. However, in attempts to be neutral, this reality is lost about the conflict. Given the abundance of varying views for this conflict, it is not easy to present all the sides. Both sides use propaganda, but what media (The study by Philo and Berry included BBC one and ITV news) fail to do, is to present this conflict in light of Israeli occupation and the outcome for the ordinary Palestinians. (ibid: 260)

It is important to mention that the Guardian's coverage for the first two categories and its discussion gives a mixed picture of the context it provided for this conflict. Furthermore, Guardian's coverage for the sample period did not cover some important events that indicated Israeli errors and did not quite give a better understanding of core issues and the historical background. However, this did not affect the news reports ability to comment on the power asymmetry unlike BBC. The news reports in detail explained the weak political position of both President Abbas of PLO and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel. By explaining in quite elaborate and nuanced fashion the situation in Gaza, news reports did quite an excellent job of informing the readers about the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel and how the Palestinian civilians are then subjected to various modes of suppression. The reports also were very clear on the critical role played by the US in this regard. One report quite openly suggested that without sanctions on anyone who fails to live up their obligations, the peace process will not move forward and this in regard US can play a much better role than anyone else.

“But there is no explicit US commitment to press either side publicly for not complying. The Quartet, comprising of EU, UN and Russia as well as the US, appears to have been excluded.”
(GU “Bush takes Middle East peace bid to White House” 28.11.07)

It is generally believed that the unwavering support of the US to Israel despite its history of reneging on commitments made during peace processes, results in giving it a green signal to continue with this policy. However, slamming of Gaza with sanctions hurts no one but the ordinary Palestinians who have not many options left but to work for Hamas, a very few sources of income earning left. Guardian’s reports did manage to elaborate on these issues and did effectively shed light on dynamics of power asymmetry crucial to the understanding of this conflict

The CNN reports in this category also lacked the standards of peace journalism. CNN’s reportage was by far the most polemical in the sense that it did not give a lot of coverage for this conflict in this sample and the events where Israelis reneged on their promises were not reported. However Hamas’s negative image was reinforced without ever mentioning the historical background or its truce offers. There were occasional remarks on core issues and at the same time the humanitarian situation was not mentioned. This did not in any way explain the power disparity between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

On the contrary, it was particularly the reports by Al-Jazeera that clearly mentioned the power asymmetry between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Again it should be pointed out that in its reports Al-Jazeera also explained the frustrations of the Israeli civilians. It used more of people-oriented approach than elite-oriented, a trademark of peace journalism. Some examples are:

“Unlike peace based on the balance of power, such as between Israel and Egypt, the diplomatic process between Israel and the Palestinians reflects a chronic and continuous imbalance between an aggressive occupation that can not impose its will and bruised Palestinians who will not surrender. So instead of arriving at a comprehensive peace agreement, Israel insisted on interim accords that allow it to dictate the pace of progress in a

transitional process where agreements are reached in phases and implemented in stages with Israel holding veto power at each junction.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“In short, the ‘peace process’ produced a precarious mode of equilibrium characterized by instability and recurring violence between occupier and occupied. It also led to intra-national instability for both Israel and the weaker Palestinians.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

The reports were solution oriented in this regard as well and quoted one Palestinian official who explained the remedy for this power asymmetry.

“Mustafa Barghouti, the former Palestinian information minister, said Annapolis was ‘deja vu’ and it was unlikely any real agreement would be reached ‘as long as there is no serious pressure on Israel to end occupation... and be forced to respect international law’.” (AJ “Pessimism overhangs Annapolis talks” 27.11.07)

A clear instance of peace journalism employing people-oriented approach was in the following report:

“Dissatisfied Israelis changed six governments in dozen years while one of their assassinated former premier Yitzhak Rabin. Feeling betrayed the Palestinians grew more bitter and more divided as a vicious cycle of violence fed onto accusations against Fatah doing Israel’s dirty work, and contributed to Hamas’s popularity as the political underdog and the spokesman for the marginalized and the forgotten. One dozen years later, the misery of the besieged Palestinian territories is paralleled only by the anxiety of a deadlocked Israeli society. The more Israel segregates the Palestinians behind high concrete walls and barbed fences, the more it ghettoizes Jewish communities and settlements behind the security towers.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

It is quite evident that none of the dynamics related to power asymmetry were discussed in the news reports by CNN and BBC. This may again be so due to the news composition or editorial choice that can at best be classified as subtle censorship. However, it should also be noted that absence of this important issue along with proper context for this conflict, provides a natural basis for injecting discourse that is prone to war journalism and that is going to be discussed in the next category.

Discourse:

The discussion for the respective sub-themes is as follows:

Incomplete debate:

There were reports that have incomplete debate i.e. view or the case for one side was provided without giving a voice to the other side and its views. The coverage by BBC had such instances of incomplete discussion. Some examples are:

“The economic embargo was lifted in the West bank, which Fatah controls, and the Middle East conference was proposed partly to bolster Mr. Abbas’s standing amongst his own people. Implicit message from the West to the Palestinians was stick with Abbas and your lives will get better”. (BBC “What Palestinians want at Annapolis” 24.11.07)

The explanation provided by the new report quoted above suggests that the fate of ordinary Gazans can get better if they chose to overthrow Hamas. It should be pointed out again that BBC mentioned the humanitarian situation in Gaza²⁹ only once in whole sample. The measures taken against Gazans by Israelis are deemed collective punishment³⁰ by the UN and have taken the people on that tiny strip of land controlled thoroughly by Israel, to the worst humanitarian situation. The point missing here is that

²⁹ UN aid chief warns Gaza is at e verge of humanitarian Crisis <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/732995.html>

UN blames Israel for the Gaza Humanitarian Crisis <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3272830,00.html>

UN warns of humanitarian crisis as Israel seals Gaza crossings.<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/946066.html>

Israel ignores UN report of humanitarian crisis in Gaza and further cuts fuel.

<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article198>

³⁰ Israel guilty of “collective punishment” in Gaza: UN http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=26491

“Collective punishment” for Gaza is wrong – UN <http://www.reuters.com/article/featuredCrisis/idUSN18325600>

UN: collective punishment of Gazans has failed.<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3535112,00.html>

the situation has been worsened and the blame lies on Israeli policies of collective punishment which according to the Geneva conventions are a precursor to genocide. Therefore to blame Hamas and that it is the only reason why Gazans are suffering, is misleading and fails to bring the other aspect of reality into the debate which explains the role of severe measures taken by the Israelis.

Furthermore, another report by the BBC read as follows:

“Mr. Haniya was dismissed by Mr. Abbas from his position of prime minister of a national government in June shortly after Hamas seized control of Gaza Strip from the president’s Fatah Movement. He was appointed to the role following his group’s landslide victory in the January 2006 legislative election. Hamas, which is designated a terrorist organization by the US, EU and Israel, is not represented at Annapolis at all.” (BBC “Hamas dismisses Middle East talks” 26.11.07)

In the entire report there was no mention of the truce offer by Hamas. The discourse used in the report constructs a narrative that since Hamas is considered a terrorist organization and defected out of a national unity government, it shows that it is belligerent and does not want to co-exist peacefully with Fatah. The US, Israeli or EU position on is to sideline Hamas in the peace talks due to its belligerence. This could be the direct acknowledgement of Israeli or Fatah’s view on Hamas. This should have been supplemented by Hamas’s view which is obviously missing in the report.

First, the report misleadingly suggests that Hamas pulled out of unity government to take control of Gaza but as has already been indicated this take over was in response to Fatah’s plan to oust Hamas. Secondly, it does take into account the actual reasons for not including Hamas in the negotiations. According to the news report, the terrorist nature of Hamas is a solid reason for it to be not included in the talks. However, most analysts see the collective punishment enforced on Gazans by Israel is because they “voted the wrong way”³¹. That is why it is being sidelined in the peace talks. This

³¹ “Meanwhile, in order to punish the population of Gaza for voting "the wrong way", the Israeli army are not allowing past the checkpoints any replacements for the pipes and cement needed to keep the sewage system working. The result? Vast

qualifies as the Israeli or Fatah view on Hamas. But Hamas's view on this is not represented in the news report. Hamas has proposed peace offers and also proposed a ceasefire. These proposals have been rejected by Israel and until recently by Fatah as well. No doubt the violent tactics employed by Hamas against Israeli civilians can never be justified. What one wonders about is the fact that, Israeli armed forces and Fatah's security services are engaged in similar violations of humanitarian law for which media does not write a single word of condemnation.

The case of hardliners on both sides has been discussed earlier in the data analysis. To add to it very briefly, there were reports that explained reaction of opposition parties from Palestine and Israel towards Annapolis summit. Examples are: "Israeli opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu labelled the meeting 'a continuation of one-sided concessions'." (BBC "New Middle East peace drive launched" 28.11.07) In the similar report Hamas supporters in a rally in Gaza are reported saying: "Abbas is a traitor" and "We will not recognise Israel".

The news report constructs a narrative in which Israel is seen as making one sided concessions to Palestinians who do not even recognise Israel. Like Ogden's triangle explains just as discourse is built it can also be deconstructed to explain which reality is left out. This discourse deconstruction sheds light on the view conveyed through the report and is very misleading. In light of discussion from previous categories, BBC news reports effectively conceal the power disparity and also the truce offers by Hamas. It promotes a rejectionist view of Hamas and at the same time portrays Israelis as giving concessions. Palestinians are also pressured into making concessions in form

stagnant pools of waste are being held within fragile dykes across the strip, and rotting. Last March, one of them burst, drowning a nine-month-old baby and his elderly grandmother in a tsunami of human waste. The Centre on Housing Rights warns that one heavy rainfall could send 1.5m cubic metres of faeces flowing all over Gaza, causing "a humanitarian and environmental disaster of epic proportions"

<http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/johann-hari/johann-hari-israel-is-suppressing-a-secret-it-must-face-816661.html>

of relinquishing some of their most fundamental rights such as right of return and East Jerusalem, which is not pointed out the report. Similarly, in another report:

“Already Hamas in Gaza is saying that it will not respect any agreement. In Israel, the Likud opposition has denounced the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for agreeing to discuss core issues without insisting, as a spokesman put it, ‘on the Palestinians first of all breaking up the terrorist infrastructure’.” (BBC “Annapolis the end of the beginning” 28.11.07)

Again this can be looked from many different angles but chiefly what it lacks is that Palestinians are equally in need of security or even more so compared to the Israelis who live in relative calm in their communities without any danger of tank incursions or apache air strikes. Therefore if the security needs of only the Israelis are put across and Palestinians needs are marginalized then it is a case of incomplete debate. Only once in the entire sample timeframe BBC included a Hamas official who explained the problem in light of Israeli occupation. The report read as follows:

“Another senior Hamas leader in Gaza, Mahmoud Zahar, told the BBC that even if the group has been invited, it would be pointless participating because Israel was not prepared to end the occupation of Palestinian land.” (BBC “Hamas dismisses Middle East talks” 26.11.07)

Another interesting case of incomplete debate was the constant referral of peace viability to the existence of Israeli state. The viability of peace is dependent on many things, not just the existence of Israel. It could also be dependent on, for instance, the Israeli refusal to stop building settlements or expropriating more land in form of building walls etc. Here it is interesting to note that Hamas is always criticized for its rejection of Israeli state but no criticism or even mention of how Israel keeps expropriating Palestinians land, in defiance of international law. There is no denying that Hamas’s stance for the rejection of Israel serves no purpose and is an extremist policy. But this has to be looked at in its due context. Hamas in its truce offers has offered cessation of violence and recognition of Israel, if it stops its annexation policy. Hamas views Israeli annexation policy as an act of not recognising Palestinian sovereignty. This was never mentioned in the news reports, not even once. The absence of this context

seems to be evidence of one sidedness on part of BBC and can be termed war journalism as it is creating us versus them approach.

In case of coverage by Guardian Unlimited, there were occasional cases of incomplete debate. The instances of incomplete discussion were found in reports that dealt with Hamas particularly. The reports that mentioned Hamas, failed to give proper information as to why it took control of Gaza. There were occasions where the discussion was incomplete, are:

“More sharply, could Abbas really topple Hamas and ride back into power in Gaza on the back of an Israeli tank? Even Israel’s sunniest officials concede that Gaza is the ‘Achilles heel’ of the process.”(GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)

Again if the reader is unaware of that many details about this conflict they would not be able to know what exactly it is about Gaza that is problematic. Yitzhak Rabin once wished that Gaza be swallowed by sea, because military operations in Gaza and to subdue its population have always backfired and has led to indescribable misery for the ordinary Palestinians³². The cases of incomplete discussion were mostly with reference to Hamas. Throughout the coverage, especially for the Annapolis summit, the reports were supplemented with a lot of critical views in Guardian’s reports, as will be discussed later.

There were very few instances of incomplete debate in CNN’s coverage. It should be pointed out here that the units from CNN for this sample period were only 11 therefore

³² “Escaping from Gaza has been an age-old Israeli dream, growing in persistence since the first *intifada*. The late Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin wished “the sea would swallow Gaza”, but it is the current political machinations of the occupiers — and the increased international complicity with them — that convinced Israel that “disengagement” would not resemble a second “south Lebanon”. Gaza will be cut off from the rest of Palestine by walls and fences, with “disengagement” serving as a distraction from the real aims of the Israeli occupation.” <http://www.greenleft.org.au/2005/640/33888>

“Dehumanizing the Palestinians has been necessary for Israel to justify its actions ever since, and even before, the state was declared on destroyed historic Palestine in 1948 and then in 1967 when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Taken together, they indicate the historic effort to destroy Palestinian national aspirations and this is what Israel is trying to do in Gaza, which Nobel Prize winner and late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin once wished would be swallowed by the sea. Gaza is no stranger to devastation. In 1956, for example, former Israeli prime minister and war criminal Ariel Sharon moved troops under his command into the town of Khan Younis where a massacre was committed.”
<http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9361.shtml>

there was not a lot of instances that could have been taken up for possible discussion. The cases of incomplete discourse were observed when the reports dealt with the issue of violence between the Israeli armed forces and Hamas operatives. One example is as follows:

“In separate development, Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinian militants who first opened fire on them, in Gaza early Monday, an Israeli Defence Forces spokesman said. Hamas security sources said the men were members of the Hamas military wing.” (CNN “Israel releases hundreds of Palestinian prisoners” 03.12.07)

The report adds sources from both sides. Israeli armed forces spokesman maintains that the Israeli soldiers were fired at first. Hamas source confirms that killed were members of its military wing. But it’s interesting that Hamas source is not quoted either confirming or refuting Israeli version of events. Furthermore the lack of information towards the core issues, historical background and the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories could also be termed as incomplete discussion on part of CNN’s reports. Chiefly because the news reports should at least give some information if not detailed, about some of the most relevant and thus far sidelined or marginalized issues about this conflict.

For Al-Jazeera the study could not find any instance of incomplete discussion in reports by Al-Jazeera. What was very interesting and different in its reports compared to other news organizations selected for this study, was the fact that it gave the Palestinian and Israeli perspective with details and supplemented the reports with the legal or the international view. The reports were very well informed and left the reader to make up his or her own mind about a particular issue. All in all, Al-Jazeera’s coverage was again better than other news media selected in this study.

Sources used:

The table for the sources used by BBC in the news reports is given in appendix 2. In all the news reports, Palestinian sources were 33 that comprised both of PLO officials and Hamas. The Israeli sources were 37 that comprised of Israeli government officials and

spokesmen/women and the opposition members. The independent neutral sources were 44. Independent sources critical of Israelis were 5 and there were no independent sources critical of Palestinians. In the coverage by Guardian Unlimited, the news reports had 35 Palestinian sources. The Israeli sources were 45 and independent sources critical of Israel were 5. However the independent sources critical of Palestinians were none. Independent neutral sources were 53. For detailed description of use of sources along with the news reports by The Guardian, see appendix 3.

The table of sources used by CNN in its reports is prepared in appendix 4. CNN used 22 Palestinian sources and 27 Israeli sources. However the independent neutral sources were 24. There were no independent sources critical of Israel, as the events that led to Israel condemnation i.e. building of more settlements was not reported by CNN. (See appendix 4) There were no sources critical of Palestinians as there were no actions by them in contravention to the accords during the sample period. In Al-Jazeera reports, about 61 Palestinian sources were used compared to 51 Israeli sources. Independent sources critical of Israel were 6 and independent neutral sources were 48. Appendix number 5 was prepared for Al-Jazeera's sources.

The most important aspect of this category was to see if the news reports carried more of official sources i.e. from Israeli or Palestinian government and Hamas or supplemented these sources with NGO officials, civilians or independent observers. It was observed that BBC and CNN gave more official sources. The use of official sources is called elite-oriented by Johan Galtung and is one of the most important indicators of war journalism. On the contrary Al-Jazeera and Guardian relied on civilian sources, UN officials that are independent sources, and NGOs etc. Only once BBC reported the findings of Peace Now, an NGO that keeps track of Israeli illegal settlements in the West Bank etc.

“Good versus evil” or “us versus them” approach:

In the news reports by BBC, this approach was rampant whenever the news reports referred to Hamas and compared it to either the Israelis or Fatah. In all the news reports

that dealt with Hamas, its image as a rejectionist and terror organization was reinforced. All the sources from Hamas, that were included in the news reports, either denounced Israel or dismissed the peace process. Not once the truce offer by Hamas was mentioned nor was any information provided of the attempt by Fatah to oust Hamas were included. One of the classic examples of “us versus them” was when one news report read as follows:

“Hamas won a landslide victory in the January 2006 legislative election but is designated a terrorist organization by the US, the EU and Israel. The government has been subject to economic and diplomatic sanctions by Israel and its allies in the West.” (BBC “Cautious hope for Mid East talks” – dated 27.11.07)

“Some political analysts believe that if Mr. Abbas returns from Annapolis empty-handed it will only serve to boost Hamas – something Israel and the West say they do not want to happen.” (BBC “What Palestinians want at Annapolis” 24.11.07)

“Annapolis can be seen as a way of trying to support the moderates. The strategy is to show Palestinians that talks can produce results and that the confrontation promoted by Hamas in Gaza is not the way forward.” (BBC “Will Annapolis fail like all others?” 20.11.07)

There are many issues that are left unaddressed in the above reports, if the tools from Ogden’s triangle are to be followed. First, it presupposes since Israel and its western allies have the same democratic values, Hamas due to its terror policies is to be marginalized in any way possible. Secondly, it mentions Hamas is subject to these sanctions by the West. Israel has been engaged in activities that are state terrorism (See literature review) then by the same standards reserved for Hamas why Israel is not subject to same sanctions by the West? Thirdly, Hamas is thoroughly demonized even when it had offered truce and after its election it did observe ceasefire when sanctions were imposed by the Israelis and the western world. It was also subject to intense pressure from Fatah that was getting arms and money to oust Hamas from power. Therefore, when the above news reports are read in light of the above discussion it is quite easy to see that Hamas is thoroughly demonised. It is quite misleading to suggest that it is only Hamas that is promoting confrontation as this can be also be termed as

direct ratification of Israeli view of the situation and also disregards the Palestinian view on this situation who think Israeli polices are promoting confrontation.

Fatah was constantly referred to as a moderate organization, when its own security apparatus has been known for its stringent measures against ordinary Palestinians. Officials from Fatah are also facing corruption scandals as well. The new reports quoted above explain that Hamas's disqualification from peace talks is primarily due to the confrontation promoted by it. BBC's coverage never fully discussed the truce offers by Hamas and then presented Hamas as the only impediment towards peace. Hamas's use of force against Israeli civilians can not be justified under any premise. But again the BBC reports are one-sided as it only focuses on Hamas and exonerates Fatah and Israel of any mistake. By presenting Hamas as an organization disliked by the West and Israel, BBC news reports were thoroughly laced with "us versus them" approach. Experts on Hamas have discouraged this policy isolation and have attempted to give an objective picture that is not emotionally charged or biased.

According to experts on Hamas, such as Khaled Hroub (2006: xviii), its political wing has been providing a lot of social services and is popular among ordinary Palestinians for standing up for their rights. Though, Hamas officials may have misunderstood this popularity for their political views to be the same for their ideological views, which presents itself as a problem. Though, it should also be mentioned that Christian and secular people also voted for Hamas, because of corruption in Fatah and its failure to secure Palestinian rights in peace talks. There is considerable amount of varying literature on Hamas, some present it as a terror organization devoid of any values that West has and others have taken a different stance, explaining how one first needs to understand the very rationale of Hamas in order to understand its policies and thus work towards lasting peace.

Similarly, Alastair Crooke of conflict forums (Quoted in Tamimi, 2007) explains that western nation-states after the Treaty of Westphalia (that led to the emergence of nation-states and start of the Enlightenment era) have viewed any non-state actor using

force or violence with considerable disdain, Hamas or Hezbollah being the prime examples. The western states have used violence but regard it as legitimate, e.g. as recently as in Afghanistan or Iraq. But the use of violence by non-state actors is taken as a direct challenge to western model of political progress and awareness. Crooke (Ibid) further elaborates this concept of nation-state and Enlightenment for Arabs is very different as their national boundaries were drawn by colonial powers and that also led to their land being exploited. For western world their political order is characteristic of freedom and democracy while Arabs view it as subjugation and do not consider it something they can live with or accept.

Hence, when the west contemplates a movement such as Hamas that seems to contradict Enlightenment certainties, its first demand is that it should renounce violence and disarm and it should follow the western ideas of democracy. This for Hamas, especially when it views itself as liberating its people from the dominant world order of the western world, is actually acceptance of the same order it is seeking to replace. However, Crooke (Ibid) also explains that this opposition by Hamas of “western values” should not be taken as anti-westernism. Hamas states that they only want to end the occupation in Palestine and bring a political order that is not based on exploitation. If this political order is different from western, then through cooperation (symmetrical distribution of power, especially in negotiations) between both western states and Palestinian people, it can directed towards a better end result. And this difference should not be treated as virulent anti-westernism. Therefore rather than building good versus evil divides, the same energies can be used for the better so that many innocent lives can be saved in form of conflict resolution.

There have been mistakes on part of Hamas just as there have been mistakes on part of Fatah or Israel for that matter. The problem with BBC coverage was that it only presented Hamas as the problem for peace. It is obvious here that Hamas is presented as the enemy that is terrorizing the Israeli civilians. Therefore the logical conclusion after the construction of this paradigm by BBC news reports is that the exclusion of Hamas from the talks is justified and if nothing comes out of those negotiations then

Hamas will have a strong position which is not good for peace as it is a terror organization. The deconstruction of this paradigm, as explained by the Ogden's triangle, shows that how the views of the experts on Hamas discussed above have been carefully sidelined. This marginalization led to demonization of Hamas as the enemy, a key indicator of war journalism. And it was present in the news reports by BBC coverage.

There was no specific case of any Guardian report good versus evil or us versus them approach employed by The Guardian. However, the reports did present Hamas in a negative light by referring to it as a rejectionist group; that too without explaining truce offers by Hamas, which were actually rejected by Israel. Some examples are:

“Other weaknesses were even more obvious. Missing from the Annapolis feast was Hamas, which governs half of the territory of the future Palestinian state. They and their followers made their views known with mass demonstrations in Gaza and the West Bank on Tuesday, declaring: ‘the only dialogue with the enemy will be with rifles and rockets’. If the men of violence were to revert to type, seeking to derail progress by launching an attack on Israeli civilians Ehud Olmert would respond fiercely.” (GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)

Hamas's reaction to the summit is presented along with its “supporters” in absence of the dire conditions that prevail in Gaza. Furthermore, Israel has rejected many truce offers and as this report puts Hamas as the initiator of violence, it reinforces the retaliation logic used by the Israelis that implies that Israel has to resort to violence after Hamas initiates the round of violence. Secondly, the right wing in Israel itself is opposed to talks and hopes for a greater Israel. It seems quite one sided that the news reports will only focus on violence by Hamas and fail to mention the severe nature of Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Similarly, one more piece by Guardian Unlimited that was polemical along the exact lines explained above:

“Of all the weak leaders present, none will be more so than the Palestinian president. He does not have to be dragged to the table, as Arafat was to Camp David in 2000. But he goes to Annapolis as the leader of only half of his people. To the other half, who are locked up in a

prison called Gaza; Mr. Abbas has to show that engagement with Israel brings concrete benefits. Hamas argues that only force works with Israel. Mr. Abbas has to show that politics can bring down roadblocks.” (GU “Déjà vu, again” 24.11.07)

One additional thing to add here is in reference to the above news report where it reads – “he does not have to be dragged to the table, as Arafat was to Camp David in 2000”. In the run up to Camp David, Arafat had only been trying to indicate that the situation was not ripe for discussions but that did not mean he was not interested in cutting a deal³³. One can deconstruct the reality the news report portrayed in the way the chain of events is presented in it (through the use of Ogden’s triangle). First, Palestinians are reluctant in peace making and they have to be dragged to the negotiating table. Israelis want peace as Hamas, representative of half of the Palestinians will not stop the use of violence. Second, this mediated reality leaves out, how Israelis have rescinded in their commitments made in the peace deals and how their use of violence is also a source of contention in this conflict.

The divisive tone of “us versus them” or “good versus evil” was very carefully brought in by the CNN reports. Some examples from the data are:

“When asked about whether the peace process can overcome opposition from Hamas, Bush said, ‘the best way to defeat those terrorists and radicals... is through a vision based upon liberty’.” (CNN “US cannot impose vision on Mideast, Bush says” 29.11.07)

³³ The momentum began when in June 2000 Denis Ross came to Middle East to prepare the ground for the formal talks when the official US delegate was to come to the region headed by Madeline Albright. In the initial stages Palestinian authority did its best to clarify that situation was not ripe for a trilateral summit. However after deliberations with Israelis, Albright gave the green signal for the summit preparation. President Clinton gave hopes to Palestinians who had from the start expressed grave concerns, that Ehud Barak had a new offer. The American peace team rejected the concerns of the Palestinians and was clearly in tune with Israeli agenda. (Hanieh, 2001) According to Hanieh, Americans were extremely reluctant in responding to Palestinians demands based on international law and their rights. Americans when confronted by Palestinians would urge for the need of pragmatism however there was no indication if there was same expectation from the Israelis. President Clinton went as far as claiming that Palestinians are to be held responsible for wasting an historic opportunity when his team was actively trying to persuade Arafat to give away Jerusalem in name of a Palestine state. Arafat stood his ground claiming that UN resolution call of the Palestinian state and proclaimed “Do not expect me to betray my people, I will not sell Jerusalem, I will not sell the Muslims and I will not sell the Christians.” (ibid:90)

“Israel foreign minister Tzipi Livni said Sunday the conference will draw a line between moderates and extremists in the Arab world. ‘There will be those who are here, those who support the process and then there are those who are shouting— Hamas Iran, Hezbollah,’ she said. ‘They will be on the outside trying to stop this conference from happening’.” (CNN “Inclusion of Arab world in summit raises hopes” 25.11.07)

“There are hurdles, however, Regev said. Iran, Lebanon-based Hezbollah militants and Gaza-based Hamas Militants would like to ‘torpedo’ the peace process.” (CNN “Retired US general to tackle Israeli-Palestinian security issues” 28.11.07)

The last two are the quotes by the Israeli officials. There should be no objection if CNN gave the views of the Israeli officials. However, there was no counter argument given by Hamas in the same reports. To quote one side extensively and give marginal coverage to another is at the heart of war journalism. It can, then, be argued that CNN’s reports showed more and more tendencies of war journalism.

In regards to the excerpts quoted above, there are a few things that need to be mentioned here. First, Hamas’s image of a terror organization was reinforced without ever mentioning its truce offers. Secondly, in absence of a fair and objective picture of the contemporary context in the news reports, Hamas actions and that of Iran and Hezbollah were rendered dangerous for the peace process. The contemporary context as indicated by Guardian and Al-Jazeera painted a different picture than that of CNN’s. Both Guardian and Al-Jazeera explained in their respective news reports that this conference was basically carried out to isolate Iran and counter its growing influence in the region. Furthermore, this conference was also carried out to change the image of Bush administration in the Arab world, especially in the bloody aftermath to the Iraq war. Third, there was no alternative views given when, Bush or Israeli official gave their views on Hamas etc. This effectively painted a picture of good versus evil where Hamas, backed by Iran, is bent of destroying Israel and the summit was a place for moderates who want to bring democracy to the region. No where did the reports

mentioned that except for Israel and Palestine democracy is rare commodity in Middle East. And those so called “moderates” aligned with the US are dictators with worst human rights record. There was also no explanation provided of larger real-politick game prevailing in the region (To counter’s Iran’s influence through the Annapolis summit), as discussed earlier. In this regard the divisive approach by CNN can easily be termed as war journalism.

For Al-Jazeera’s coverage in this sub-theme, there were no instances of “good versus evil”. Hamas was referred to as an Islamist organization, which is true given its extreme views on religion. Its operatives were referred to as fighters not as militants – a word prevalent in BBC and CNN’s reports.

How peace process was covered:

The BBC news reports particularly in regards to the Annapolis summit were surprisingly without any proper analysis especially in terms of contemporary context at the backdrop of which the summit took place. The new reports mostly gave information about the coming and going of leaders, schedule for talks etc which seemed quite ordinary to mention when viewed in light of the coverage by Al-Jazeera or Guardian Unlimited. Their coverage gave solid analysis for the pros and cons of the summit and explained the contemporary context. Only one news report on Nov 28th by BBC, titled “Annapolis end of the beginning” had a critical beginning but even that quickly shifted gear and held Hamas responsible for the ensuing conflict.

“Annapolis is the end of the beginning for the new Middle East peace talks not necessarily the beginning of the end. That was the easy bit. Now for the hard work! All the old unresolved issues have to be tackled – borders of Israel and the new state of Palestine, Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, and Palestinian refugees. A pessimist, a realist maybe, can look at the target date for an agreement – December 2008, the end of the Bush presidency – and say that the agenda is too large and the room for manoeuvre too little for success to be likely, let alone assured.”

The similar report proceeded as, “already Hamas in Gaza is saying that will not respect any agreement.”

At times editors and correspondents claim that there is always too little time and space to include everything in a tiny news report. It is understandable for the TV news reports. But for web based news media this should not present much of a hassle except the journalists have to meet deadlines. However, it came to the researcher's notice that many a times the news reports contained repetition in discourse either from other news reports from the same day or from the previous day. This is of importance to mention in connection to the observation that most of the news are to describe events occurring during the summit that have hardly any significance for conflict resolution. If the space can be used for material that is repetitive or to explain who is leaving and who is coming in the summit, then it can be argued that the news report can take use of the same time and effort to provide a better analysis for the situation or circumstances. BBC and CNN's coverage rarely mentioned the opinion expressed by analysts and was particularly lacking in analysis as it failed to give informed comment on the possibilities, challenges or ramifications of the Annapolis Summit. Therefore their reporting failed to give the contemporary context at the backdrop of which this conference took place.

However, there were two reports by CNN that did take a critical approach while covering the proceedings of the summit.

“Al-Omari and other Palestinians officials who helped fashion the joint declaration said the statement arose from compromise included mentioning a timetable for establishing a peace agreement – something the Israelis did not want. The statement did not mention the details of the Arab initiative – something Al-Omari said the Palestinians were pushing for. The initiative includes specifics on the fate of Palestinians refugees and the status of Jerusalem.” (CNN “Palestinian official: Little substance in Bush statement” 28.11.07)

“Arabs and Palestinians have opposed calling Israel a Jewish state because, they say, it would preclude many refugees from returning to Israel, and the label fails to account for thousands of Arabs residing there.” (CNN “Israelis, Palestinians agree on framework for peace talks” 27.11.07)

Yet, a totally contrasting picture of Annapolis summit was presented by Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera. Where BBC and CNN generally focused on upbeat and

optimistic statements by the participants, Guardian and Al-Jazeera also presented some of the impossible challenges faced by the participants. Both provided extensive information to describe the current context at the backdrop of which this summit took place. At first the examples from Guardian will be discussed.

“The announcement carried echoes of similar efforts by previous presidents. While during most of his presidency Bush has remained distant from the difficult problem, he now argues that the time is right for both sides to reach an accord.” (GU “Bush to Visit Middle East” 05.11.07)

In other reports:

“Analysts say that Annapolis is taking place because after years of neglecting the conflict, President Bush is trying to repair the damage done by the Iraq war before he leaves office next year. Others accuse Washington of seeking to appease Arab states to build support in the crisis over Iran’s nuclear ambitions.” (GU “Frantic Bid to bridge Middle East divide” 27.11.07)

“So now we know: this is what soon-to-be-ex-presidents do. Bill Clinton spent his final hours in the White House trying to patch together a deal between Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat and now George Bush promises to spend his last year in the same way.”

In the similar report:

“The reasons to be cheerless are too numerous to count. Start at the top, with the Americans who will preside over the process, which was given a formal launch at the White House yesterday. You don’t have to succumb to the snobbish observation that, on Tuesday’s evidence, Bush still can’t quite pronounce the names of the leaders he is meant to bring together to have a serious misgivings. The president promised his ‘personal commitment’ to the Herculean task, yet he dashed away from Annapolis three hours after he arrived, leaving Condoleezza Rice in charge. Not a huge crime, but a sign that Bush has no intention of immersing himself in the details as Clinton did – an effort which was surely pivotal in bringing the two sides as close as they were by the end of 2000.” (GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)

President Bush after the end of Annapolis summit announced that he will visit Middle East in a bid to show his engagement with the peace process. The summit, on the other

hand, was carried out after 7 years of deadlock in this conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Furthermore, the degree of President Bush's commitment was evident from the fact that he left only a few hours after the summit had begun. The reports also discussed that, this summit was more an opportunity for Bush to improve his standing in the region in the aftermath to the Iraq war. Moreover, the summit was also a means to appease the Arab countries and isolate Iran and counter its growing influence in the region. These aspects were never discussed in BBC and CNN's reportage.

More instances of how Guardian described the peace process in its reports are:

“Serious negotiations do not normally take place at international conferences. They happen before or after them. If negotiations before hand have been fruitful, a conference is a venue to publicise and formalise what has been agreed, or sometimes to settle one or two very difficult matter beyond the competence of the advance teams. On the test, Annapolis has not been a success.” (GU “Still waiting for peace” 29.11.07)

“Troubling too is the US designation of itself as sole judge and jury of the parties performance. It seems as if Washington has quietly killed off the quartet, in which it took such decisions jointly with the UN, EU and Russia.” (GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)

Compare this news report by Guardian with BBC's analysis on US assuming the role of 'Judge' to monitor the progress made by the Palestinians and the Israelis.

“Someone looking for hope could point to a new element in this process – the involvement of the Unites States. This will be seen in a mechanism under which the US will be the judge of whether both sides are living up to the commitments they made sometime ago in the so-called road map. This foresaw an incremental approach under which security and confidence would be established before the final issues were tackled. [...] the role of the US as 'judge' means that neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority will be able to declare unilaterally the obligations have not been met.” (BBC “Annapolis the end of the beginning” 28.11.07)

BBC and Guardian actually give entirely different reasons for the involvement of the Unites States in the peace process. Guardian explains that US being the only judge to monitor the peace process sidelines rest of the quartet members like the EU, Russia and

the UN. Whereas BBC report paints a different picture of US involvement by suggesting that Israelis and Palestinians will not be in a position to unilaterally declare that the other partner has not met the obligations. Studies included in the literature review that traced the involvement of mediators like the US and Norway shed some light on this phenomenon. Being weak and quite dependent on foreign aid, the Palestinians can easily surrender to the pressure and demands by the mediator in favour of Israel. Al-Jazeera too gave similar views like Guardian on this subject. Following is the report by Al-Jazeera.

“Judging from its high attendance and low expectations, Annapolis is more likely to help three sitting ducks, Olmert, Abbas and Bush, than advance the cause of peace in the Middle East. The summit also helps the ‘peace president’ silence his domestic Iraq policy detractors as the ‘war president’ tries to isolate his Middle East rivals like Iran who reject a Pax-Americana in the region.[...] However, once the ceremony ends and real diplomacy begins, Annapolis 2007 will enter the diplomatic lexicon as another summit that sacrificed peace for the sake process.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

The difference is clear in which Guardian and Al-Jazeera reported the role of US in the peace process compared to BBC’s news report. Without going into the specifics of power politics or real-politick in the region, the ability of the news reports to give informed analysis is critically undermined, as is evident from BBC and CNN’s coverage.

More reports by Guardian Unlimited:

“Negotiators for the two men worked till 4 am on Tuesday and were still haggling minutes before Bush took to podium with a text that, in the end, dodged every point of contention.” (GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)

“If you want bad symbolism, you need look no further than the venue. The US naval academy of Annapolis is the current representation of unrestrained global supremacy, from where young cadets are being sent forth to occupy Arab lands by force of arms.” (GU “We have not given up” 26.11.07)

The above mentioned excerpts from the news reports are entirely different from the way BBC and CNN covered the summit. The reports candidly discuss the challenges and achievements in the Annapolis summit. The reports cover a range of events starting with how difficult it was to come up with the joint statement, which fell short of the high hopes originally associated with the summit, as the negotiators from both sides failed to come up with a joint declaration of principles discussing the core issues. This will be discussed in the next sub-category. The analysis towards the Annapolis summit gave a clear picture of the contemporary context to a great degree. It explained the shortcomings of the Annapolis summit and the motive of Israel and US to hold this Summit. Interesting to note is the last quote listed above that quite interestingly explains the Arab view of American involvement in the region, which is neo-imperialism. The deconstruction of discourse as proposed by Ogden's triangle shows here that Guardian's coverage was nicely supplemented with alternative views that resulted in better analysis of the situation.

Al-Jazeera also gave very well informed coverage that set straight the contemporary background for Annapolis summit, rather than BBC's or CNN's style of reporting as discussed earlier. The reports explained why Bush administration wants to undertake the peace talks and also the commitment of the administration. The coverage also explained the challenges for the parties and proposed solutions as well, which indicates that the principles of peace journalism were employed. Some excerpts from the reports are:

“For any future diplomatic process to succeed, it must be short on process and long on peace. This is possible if three important conditions are met. First, the negotiations must be based on solid legal ground with a limited timeframe and well-defined endgame of two states solution separated by 1967 borders. Second, the security measures should be implemented as part of an integrated and bilateral commitment to safeguard life and property, not as unilateral means to demean the Palestinians and take over their property. Lastly peace must be comprehensive to be lasting and therefore should include the Gaza strip and the Golan Heights.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

This aspect of American policy to isolate Iran was never discussed by BBC and CNN. Furthermore, the report also explains that all the three leaders have problems to face in their own countries in form of formidable opposition. And this could also have repercussions for the peace talks as well. The report did not stop at that but also proposed how to circumvent these problems. The solution-oriented approach was also not a part of coverage by BBC and CNN. Following are some more examples of how the peace process was covered by Al-Jazeera.

“Al-Jazeera correspondent Rob Reynolds said: In what could be interpreted as a symbol of how deep his commitment to the process really is the US president did not stay for the rest of the conference, leaving Annapolis as soon as the speeches were over.” (AJ “Middle East peace deal ‘by 2008’” 28.11.07)

“In a draft of the joint statement, published on Thursday in the Israeli daily Ha’aretz, Israel’s proposals make no mention of the main issues and avoid any talk of a timetable for negotiations. The draft is said to reflect wide differences with the Palestinian people. [...]However, Al-Faisal insisted that he would not allow ‘theatrics’ like handshakes with Israeli officials, saying that gathering must make serious progress. Until Friday, Saudi Arabia, which had no diplomatic relations with Israel, was reluctant and wanted assurance that Israel would negotiate the most difficult issues of the Israel-Palestinian conflict – namely the final borders of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem and the fate of Palestinian refugees.” (AJ “Saudis to attend Annapolis summit” 23.11.07)

This report should be compared with the how CNN and BBC referred to the Arab participation. The latter networks only focused on “Arab reluctance” (BBC news titled: “US welcomes Saudi summit pledge” 24.11.07) to join the summit and also commented that except for Egypt and Jordan, no other Arab state has diplomatic relations with Israel. CNN quoted an unnamed Israeli official who said that, “Saudis won’t shake our hands; the Syrians won’t say nice things about us,” said the Israeli official. “But they are here” (“Israelis, Palestinians agree on framework for peace talks” 27.11.07).

The Arab reluctance to join the summit is reported without giving the original reason for the “reluctance”, it portrays Israel to be facing hostility chiefly for the reason of its existence. This can be termed one-sidedness. However, Al-Jazeera’s coverage shows

that this reluctance to attend the summit is based on the Israeli history of not fulfilling its commitments under the previous peace talks. One of the opinion pieces in Al-Jazeera's reports mentioned specifically the power struggle between Fatah and Hamas and explained how it impacts the peace process. This aspect was never touched by any other network in the sample.

“The world has heard how the Palestinian Authority must internally reform; more vigorously ‘fight terror’ (i.e. crush Hamas, give up resistance to occupation and do Israel’s security bidding) ‘elect new leaders’ (i.e. ones palatable to the United States); pursue democracy (i.e. broadly defined as empowering the losing party’s armed forces so they can confront legitimately elected opponents); provide basic services to the local population. (AJ Opinion Piece “A footnote in history” 26.11.07)

It can thus be argued that in this sub-category the coverage by Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera exercised the tenets of peace journalism in their reporting, as both networks explored the reasons for the rationale behind this conflict as opposed to BBC or CNN that focused events having minimum relevance to the dynamics in respect to this conflict.

How critical were news reports of what both parties were saying?

BBC's news reports again, with respect to this category, failed to incorporate the standards of peace journalism. Whenever the news reports mentioned the core issues for this conflict it was suggested that these “scupper negotiations”. It is not only a case of incomplete debate but also shows that it was produced without any critical analysis. This statement does not explain what exactly about the core issues always lead to a stalemate in the peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis. More examples are: “Mr. Olmert said Israel would not build new settlements and would start removing outposts. It will also release 450 prisoners.” (BBC “What Palestinians want at Annapolis” 24.11.07)

The above report should be compared with another one by Guardian Unlimited.

“Ehud Olmert, the Israeli premier, pledged not to build any new settlements in the West bank. But all a traveller on the road to the West Bank town of Jericho would have seen yesterday was the furious pace of construction of Israeli existing settlements blocks, which effectively cut the West Bank into two halves. Every time a big international push gets under way to establish a future Palestinians state, life on the ground gets worse for Palestinians and the contours of a future state visibly shrink. What Palestinians see happening in front of them, traditionally makes a nonsense of historic statements and grand gesture in US venues.” (GU “Building not blocks” 20.11.07)

The report is in stark difference to the one quoted above by BBC. The official Israeli policy is to build more houses in already existing settlements but the plans for new housing blocks in other places in the West Bank are put on the halt. The report by BBC mentions ‘new settlements’ but it fails to clearly state the policy. However, to BBC’s credit it discussed in detail the settlement issue in another report.

“In the past 10 years, nearly 3,500 demolition orders were issued but just over 100 were observed, the Peace Now group says, citing government figures. [...]According to Peace Now, the Israeli military handed in 3,449 files on illegal buildings in settlements over the past decade but only 107 have been dismantled. A further 171 structures were evacuated by their tenants. ‘On the one hand Israel promises not to build new settlements and not to develop the existing settlements... but in reality the construction works continue vigorously,’ the group said in its report.” (BBC “Israel ‘lax on demolition orders’” 04.12.07)

Furthermore, settlements are illegal under the international law and are of extreme trouble for Palestinians in the West Bank, disconnecting one village from another and reducing the territory in form of Bantustans. Palestine now is only 22% of the historical land and rest has been annexed by Israel. More examples by BBC where its reports presented critical analysis:

“Instead there has been a new argument – about an Israeli demand that Israel should be recognized as ‘Jewish state’. This is something fundamental for Israelis but Palestinians see it as taking one of their cards, the refugees – off the table in advance”. (BBC “Will Annapolis fail like others” 20.11.07)

“But previous talks broke down in 2000 over Israel’s demand to keep the eastern shore of Galilee; Israel’s main source of water”. (BBC “Syria to attend peace conference” 25.11.07)

The last excerpt quoted above gives half the explanation. The report talks about issue of water and why talks broke down over Golan Heights. Water is a scarce source in Middle East and if Israel were to hand the Golan Heights back to the Syrians then it would have faced water shortages. Other than the excerpts mention above, the news reports by BBC hardly ever mentioned the ramification of what the parties were offering and no critical analysis of any proposition was undertaken. Similarly CNN news reports did not provide a critical view on what the parties were saying. The reports were quite bland and hardly ever presented a good analysis compared to Guardian or Al-Jazeera. There was no information provided for the contemporary context at the backdrop of which the summit took place and also the reports failed to mention the ramifications of the summit and did not discuss any solution for the core issues. There were two occasions where the respective reports did actually take a critical position. Following are the instances:

“The statement did not mention the details of the Arab peace initiative – something Al-Omari said the Palestinians were pushing for. The initiative includes specifics on the fate of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem. Al-Omari said that the Israelis dropped their demand calling for a ‘Jewish state’ in the joint declaration two days ago. Arabs and Palestinians have opposed calling Israel a Jewish state because, they say, it would preclude many Palestinian refugees returning to Israel, and the label fails to account for thousands of Arabs who are living there.”(CNN “Palestinian official: Little substance in Bush statement” 28.11.07)

“The cabinet overwhelmingly approved Olmert’s proposal to release 441 prisoners. Although the release would be the largest in years, it fell short of Palestinian calls to free 2000 prisoners. Israel holds an estimated 9000 Palestinian prisoners.” (CNN “Israel OKs release of 441 Palestinian prisoners” 19.11.07)

Contrary to BBC and CNN’s coverage, Guardian once again presented critical analysis of what a party said and did look at it from an international perspective by quoting UN officials. The reports offered alternative view and it can be argued that they quite easily met the criteria for peace journalism in this sub-category. For sake of brevity some examples are mentioned as follows: “Why report that three times as many political

prisoners were arrested by Israel as were released in its ‘good will gesture’ for Annapolis”. (Opinion Piece “We have not given up” 26.11.07)

Many thousand prisoners languish in Israeli jails. In Gaza Palestinian parliamentarians have been kidnapped as well. The Israelis released 450 prisoners, which was significantly less in number as was anticipated by the Palestinian authorities. One of the BBC news reports used the word ‘detainees’ for the Palestinian prisoners held by Israel (Title: “Joy as 429 prisoners released” – dated 03.12.07). Detainee is one of those jargons used by the armies to tone down the negative connotations associated with prisoners that are held without charge³⁴.

More examples by Guardian Unlimited:

“On Tuesday the Palestinian president and Israeli prime minister pledged to secure a peace treaty by the end of 2008 but the Maryland conference did nothing to dispel doubts about their ability to reach agreement on the core issues of the conflict in the face of domestic opposition.” (GU “Iran leader dubs summit a failure” 29.11.07)

“There are 563 physical obstacles, from permanent checkpoints to earth mounds, in the West Bank alone. These throttle the free movement of goods and people – including the 50,000 Palestinians stuck on the wrong side of the West Bank barrier.” (GU “Buildings not blocks” 20.11.07)

This was something particularly lacking in CNN and BBC reportage that they failed to shed light on the core issues that lie at heart of this conflict. Without going into details

³⁴ The statistics do not include individuals held on criminal counts.

http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/Detainees_and_Prisoners.asp

“In the course of the operation, following the surrender of the individuals who had barricaded themselves inside the prison, Israeli soldiers forced the detainees to undress and led them out clad only in their underwear. Images of the naked detainees were broadcast in the electronic media, and published widely in the press in Israel and throughout the world. In testimonies given to B’Tselem, detainees stressed the humiliation they felt as a result of their naked images appearing in the media.”

http://www.btselem.org/English/Press_Releases/20060316.asp

such as those in the excerpts quoted above, the ability of new media to be a positive part in conflict transformation is impaired to quite an alarming degree. In another report, it said:

“Neither Olmert nor Abbas offered any news ideas and the meeting began with a hastily concluded, pared down ‘joint statement’ because they had been unable to agree a more detailed declaration of principles despite weeks of frantic diplomacy.” (GU “Bush takes Middle East peace bid to White House” 28.11.07)

“Agreement has been bedevilled so far by conflicting needs: the Palestinians want a detailed text on specific issues with a timetable; the Israelis prefer something more vague and general.” (GU “Bush optimism about Middle East conference” 26.11.07)

The delay in the preparation of joint statement led to considerable pessimism toward the summit. Even after a lot of diplomatic activity, the end statement avoided all the contentious issues. The news reports also candidly discussed the demographics within Israel and in the occupied territories and also discussed reasons why one-state solution might become the hope of the Palestinians as two-state solution after years of one failed peace process after another, has proved elusive.

“Israel has a 20% Arab minority who are citizens and can vote, although they are frequently discriminated against and are described as a ‘demographic threat’. Within a few years the number of Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories is expected to equal, and then exceed, the number of Jews in Israel and the settlements. Some Palestinians argue that they should campaign for a so called one state solution: equal voting and citizenship rights within a larger country that includes Israel and the occupied territories and in which Palestinians will soon have a majority.” (GU “Israel faces apartheid struggle if two-state solution fails” 30.11.07)

“Israeli historian Tom Segev wrote in yesterday’s Ha’aretz: ‘It is not easy to understand why so many Israelis still believe that a large Israel without peace is better than a small Israel with peace.’ Israel had the most to lose, he said. ‘With every settler who moves to the territories and with every Palestinian child who is killed by the Israel Defence Forces fire, Israel loses some of the moral justification that led to the decision on the November 29, 60 years ago. The Palestinians have already lost almost everything they had.’” (GU “Israel faces apartheid struggle if two-state solution fails” 30.11.07)

These two excerpts actually explain the dilemma in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel wants to maintain its Jewish majority within its borders. However, by occupying the West Bank to get water and annex more land, Israel risks its Jewish nature as a state. Palestinians who are denied their most basic rights and face a brutal apartheid system may well demand equal rights within one state. That will not be acceptable to Israelis as Palestinians will soon outnumber Jews in one state. The dilemma is if Israel leaves the occupied territories than it has to evacuate the settlements home to 450,000 settlers amid 2.5 million Palestinians and relinquish control of water sources. Tom Segev explains that is why ‘It is not easy to understand why so many Israelis still believe that a large Israel without peace is better than a small Israel with peace.’

A few examples of peace journalism that focused on the people rather than the elite are:

“Peace is really quite simple. The Israelis have to hand over the 1967 territories, which even with land swaps, means massive evacuations, not just trimming far flung settlements, as well as something like half of Jerusalem. The Palestinians have to agree that no – or very few – refugees will go back to Israel. The Americans have to push and on occasion coerce. Otherwise the new peace process will become again what the old one was in the 90s: a means of avoiding peace rather achieving it.” (GU “Still waiting for peace” 29.11.07)

“Yes, these are tired politicians without valour who are holding the reins of power in Palestine, the Arab world and the west. And there has never been a more visible rapture between governments and the ordinary citizens all over the world than we witness today. But this also reveals a more hopeful reality: ordinary citizens all over the world have not given up on Palestinians and the Palestinians have not given up on themselves. They are not going to create a national consensus and democratic representation, calling for steadfastness and courage: this general will is manifest everywhere today except Annapolis.” (GU “We have not given up” 26.11.07)

As for Al-Jazeera’s coverage, the reports were similar to that of Guardian’s. The study found that Al-Jazeera’s reportage was equally critical of both parties when it came to what they had proposed for peace, for instance:

“Marwan Bishara, Al-Jazeera’s senior political analyst: ‘where the Israeli prime minister, then as now, took the higher moral ground and spoke about Israeli suffering, when Israel is an occupying force for the last 40 years, of the Palestinian people. Whereas president Abbas took the practical road, without any of the conscientious discourse that we heard by the Israelis, whereas it is the Palestinian people under occupation. We heard the names of the three [kidnapped] Israeli soldiers held by the Palestinians and the Lebanese, but we didn’t hear a single name of the ten or eleven thousand Palestinian prisoners by Abbas’.” (AJ “Annapolis analyses” 27.11.07)

“David Chater, Al-Jazeera’s correspondent: ‘it was, in a way, a disappointment that the joint understanding was a feeble statement about how negotiations would go. Interestingly, the Israeli prime minister said they would stand by all obligations - that means a freeze on settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including natural growth... demolition of the outposts, illegal even under Israeli law. But he also mentioned that certain areas may not be completely withdrawn to pre-1967 borders’.” (AJ “Annapolis analyses” 27.11.07)

As discussed earlier, the discussion on the core issues about this conflict is necessary and essential part of the peace process. Al-Jazeera and Guardian in their news reports provided the most current information about the most pressing issues and analysed what both parties were negotiating about. More examples from Al-Jazeera are:

“According to the Israeli government, the handicapped Palestinian Authority must destroy the ‘infrastructure of terror’ by outlawing the likes of Hamas and imprisoning fighters. Short of a civil war, this can only lead to setbacks rather than breakthroughs.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“Likewise, no solution is possible without Israel admitting its historical and moral responsibility for the refugee question in a spirit that paves way towards the implementation of their rights for return in a fair and creative way.” (AJ “Short on peace, long on process” 26.11.07)

“Several Jewish settlements East Jerusalem, notably Maale Adumim, have already cut across land which could form an essential part of any Palestinian state. The population of Jewish settlers now numbers more than 450,000, including those of East Jerusalem, in the middle of 205 million Palestinians. [...] The Israeli government is set to announce a freeze on all expansion, even for so called natural growth, at the Middle East conference in Annapolis. The Israelis have made promises before to freeze all settlement activity in the occupied west bank,

but these promises have been broken. This time for Annapolis they are characterizing it as concession. However, it is not. It is an obligation under the first stage of Middle East peace road map. Kofi Annan, the UN's former secretary-general, said the consolidation of the Israeli settlements on occupied land was the main reason for the mistrust and frustration felt by ordinary Palestinians, which often find their outlet in violence. Manuel Bessler, the UN office for Co-Ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said: 'it is important to put a stop in place. And I hope very much that we will have this freeze and the Israelis will live up to their promises'.'(**AJ** "Settlements of contention" 26.11.07)

The basis for a just solution is when the grievances of the most vulnerable to violence have been addressed. There has to be a curb on violence from both sides and furthermore, no action should be taken in contravention to international treaties. If the peace process is going on then the media should report on this. Al-Jazeera's reportage successfully covers the power politics between Hamas and Fatah and also between Israelis and Hamas. It also sheds light on the isolation of Hamas and the repercussion if Fatah continues to isolate it at the behest of Israelis. Furthermore, core issues such as settlements and occupation etc should be brought to an end and the right of return for Palestinian refugees granted. These were the dynamics essentially missing in the analysis of what parties were saying in the coverage by BBC and CNN.

Direct and indirect ratification of one party's version of events

The use of quotes by Israeli, Palestinian and independent sources has been documented in the appendix 2. This category is chiefly interested in indicating if there was a direct ratification of one party's view point in the news reports in absence of other's. In reports by BBC World, there were instances where the report had a direct ratification of the Israeli point of view and the study failed to find any direct endorsement of Palestinian view point except once which is: "But the prospects of major breakthrough at the conference have been dampened by both Israel and the United States." (**BBC** "What Palestinians want at Annapolis" 24.11.07)

This sub-category suggests that Israeli position was favoured by the news reports. To conclude, BBC world's reports in the use of discourse suggested heavy tendencies of

war journalism. Some examples of the direct confirmation in the reports of Israeli view point have already been discussed in detail but are summarised here:

“Most either study or work aboard, but had been trapped since June, following the Hamas take over of the territory” (BBC “Israel hits Gaza amid fuel crisis” 03.12.07)

Confrontation promoted by Hamas. (BBC “Will Annapolis fail like all others?” 20.11.07)

The coverage by Guardian in this sample only produced direct ratification of Israeli point of view towards Hamas. These two instances have been mentioned and discussed in the sub-theme good versus evil.

“If the men of violence were to revert to type, seeking to derail progress by launching an attack on Israeli civilians Ehud Olmert would respond fiercely.” (GU “A small slender chance for peace in Middle East” 29.11.07)³⁵

“But he goes to Annapolis as the leader of only half of his people. To the other half, who are locked up in a prison called Gaza; Mr. Abbas has to show that engagement with Israel brings concrete benefits. Hamas argues that only force works with Israel. Mr. Abbas has to show that politics can bring down roadblocks.” (GU “Déjà vu, again” 24.11.07)

The last excerpt is very interesting to mention because it firmly concludes that Hamas argues only by use of force, a claim put forth by Israeli officials time and again. However, the report clearly fails to mention Hamas’s stance and its truce offers. In case of CNN’s coverage, the study could not find any instance of direct approval of one party’s view. This again may be due to the fact that in the sample the units were considerable less in number compared to other news media. As for Al-Jazeera’s, the study could not find such instances.

To conclude, Al-Jazeera and Guardian Unlimited in their coverage used more and more tenets of peace journalism. In comparison BBC World and CNN in their coverage tilted more towards war journalism. The Guardian’s coverage was multidimensional as it had

³⁵ Some quoted excerpts had language issues that have been used without correction.

hint of war journalism when it came to Hamas while at the same time covering the Annapolis summit, it reported alternative views in greater frequency. Guardian and Al-Jazeera in their coverage took a break from the status quo and gave missing political themes in its reports especially in regards to providing the contemporary context at the backdrop of which Annapolis summit took place. This was essentially lacking in CNN and BBC's coverage.

Chapter 6

Conclusion:

The study was carried out to see whether or not the media is incorporating the alternative political themes in the news reports by using the guidelines of peace journalism. The differing political leanings of the selected news networks proved to be very useful for the study in this regard, as it gave many dimensions for the data analysis. Media, possessing the most powerful tools of manufacturing public opinion and construction of a reality consistent with status quo has to play a responsible role. The discussion for each of the networks clearly shows if media takes a balanced approach as did Al-Jazeera and The Guardian, the issues about a conflict deemed intractable can be seen in a different light and there can be an alleviation of the situation for the better. The sample was approximately for three weeks, and hence the findings of this small sample can not be generalised to conclude that all the networks always follow a specific pattern. However, the findings do help in understanding the dangers of war journalism and help to see that the use peace journalism in the reports can lead the media to play a positive role in conflict resolution.

In order to conclude the study will now discuss some findings in light of views by some noted historians and analysts. One of the most important themes was the reference to Hamas by the selected networks. Guardian Unlimited, BBC World and CNN reports were similar in their style while referring to Hamas. The rejectionist image of Hamas was reinforced in absence of its truce offers. Analyst and former Knesset member, Uri Avnery (2007), explains that in response to ceasefire offer, Israel has further tightened the blockade of Gaza, rendering the life of ordinary Gazans “inhuman”. Israel has been able to use its stronger position in order to impose its solution on its counterparts from Palestine. This is not good for the peace process, as Avnery (2007) in another article opines, military strike into Gaza will be disastrous for both Israel and Palestinians (After the Annapolis summit Israel has carried out many strikes into Gaza). The blockade has

not worked at all in curbing the rocket attacks. Therefore a logical option would be to engage with Hamas especially when it is offering a ceasefire.

The consequences of not involving Hamas in the discussions were also not discussed by BBC and CNN. Avnery (2007) himself explains the repercussions of not including Hamas in the peace talks and that there were big miscalculations on part of the organizers. The absence of Hamas, arguably the representative of half the population of Palestinians, is a major set back. The lack of openness and myopic vision displayed by the three key participants, The US, Israel and PLO, to not an extend invitation to Hamas, will take its toll on this peace summit, which was more or less an opportunity of photo ops for the American president, George Bush.

BBC World and CNN in their reports gave quite generic and uncritical discussion of various challenges and ramifications of the Annapolis Summit. The summit took place in an atmosphere of considerable pessimism which was documented by Guardian Unlimited and Al-Jazeera. BBC and CNN tended to give details of the peace summit in form of schedules etc and mostly relied on official statements from Palestinians, Israelis and Americans that were upbeat given the severe challenges they were facing. Jim Lobe (2007) describes the atmosphere of hostility prevailing in the run up to the summit. He explains that there has been fervent opposition on part of neo-conservatives and Likud members from Israel towards Annapolis Summit, primarily because it feared that ultimately Annapolis will lead to some territorial concessions by Israel. Much of the efforts by Condoleezza Rice to jump start the peace process have been criticized by Neo-cons and also by reporters for major publications such as Wall Street Journal, Jerusalem Post and Washington times, deriding Secretary of the State Rice's initiatives as "Condi's Folly, called Rice a zealot who has lost any sense of reality," and compared Rice to Jimmy Carter, who off late has come under attack after writing a book called, Peace not apartheid. (ibid)

CNN, BBC and Guardian emphasized on Hamas rejection of the peace process, with lesser or little emphasis on right wing opposition within Israel. Al-Jazeera, on the other

hand, gave a balanced coverage in this regard. One report explained that many Israelis gathered around the Western Wall to protest and they prayed so that Annapolis fails. Al-Jazeera did point out that this is a minority, albeit with strong voice. This approach by other networks in regards to Hamas was missing, as they did not mention once that Hamas proposed truce or how it was subjected to Fatah's operations funded by the US and Israel to oust Hamas from Gaza. This is discussed in detail by Ali Abunimah (2007) of Electronic Intifada. Hamas has repeatedly offered Israel a long-term ceasefire and negotiations exactly on the Northern Ireland model that prescribe equal rights for all. Despite an overwhelming desire among Palestinians for unity, Abbas, blackmailed and bribed by the EU and US, refuses to talk to Hamas to heal the rifts caused by the efforts of Fatah militias armed and supported by Israel and the US to overturn the results of the January 2006 election won by Hamas. There can be no serious peace talks without Hamas on board.

As far as the humanitarian situation was concerned, Guardian and Al-Jazeera gave reports that explained the dire nature of the circumstances in the occupied territories. Though, the West Bank situation was marginalized in the reports by all the networks. Gideon Levy (2007) explains that with all the attention towards the peace process and the UN reports that talk of humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the condition of Palestinians in the West bank has been marginalized in the media discourse. By promoting the notion of peace and west friendly PLO that is in control of the West Bank, the suffering of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) is actually absent from realms of political thinking.

The dynamics of the peace offers by the negotiators in the Annapolis summit were discussed in detail only by Guardian and Al-Jazeera. There occasional references were there in BBC's and CNN's reports but were minimal compared to the reportage by The Guardian and Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera was the only network that gave detailed discussions about the events of 1948 and 1967. Furthermore, its reports also discussed what went wrong in previous negotiations, which was missing in reports from other networks. CNN and BBC used discourse in their reports that presented the peace

process in an optimistic way. Al-Jazeera and Guardian's report weighed all the pros and cons. Former Palestinian Cabinet Minister and an activist, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti (2007) attaches a lot of scepticism to the Annapolis summit. He explain that after a period of 7 years with no negotiation between the Palestinians and the Israelis and "increasing numbers of Israeli settlers, an economic blockade in Gaza and an intricate network of roadblocks and checkpoints stifling movement in the West Bank" has given rise to despair and distrust. The reluctance of Israel to live up to its side of promised compromises in form of end of occupation, killings and incursions, right of return for Palestinian refugees and status of Jerusalem, has led to more and more doubt in maintaining two state solution, as an option. If this inequality continues Palestinian leadership has no choice left but to ask for a democratic one state with equal rights for its subjects. (ibid)

Similarly, Stephan Lendman (2007) documents the futility of previous peace accords and explains that without pressure on Israel to live by its commitments, it seems unlikely that there will be a solution to this conflict. He explains that one recurring theme in these failures is the fact that there has never been an honest effort to address the core issues, such as the right of return, status of Jerusalem and occupation, and bring a just solution for all parties involved. This aspect was only touched upon by, Al-Jazeera and The Guardian.

The reporting about this conflict should not concern itself with being neutral as Ilan Pape³⁶ explains; it should be focused on bringing to light the circumstances befalling the innocent civilians. He says that it was unthinkable for anyone to be neutral about the South African Apartheid, why then the apartheid policies implemented in occupied territories by Israel should be treated differently. Therefore, it is evermore necessary to keep the focus on how the conflicts take its toll civilians, which is the key aspect of

³⁶ <http://fanonite.org/2007/04/12/an-interview-with-professor-ilan-pappe/>

peace journalism. Otherwise, if the focus is on preserving status quo that perpetuates the conflict, a key aspect of war journalism, the media is essentially serving as an agent of conflict aggravation and also promotes a situation of power asymmetry that is to the detriment of the weaker party.

To conclude if the media chooses to follow the guidelines of peace journalism then it has the potential to bring new ideas into mainstream that may challenge status quo. The channeling of the missing political themes into the public domain that may be missing in the governmental policies, will open ways for new solutions that are just and address the grievances of both sides. The reports by Al-Jazeera and Guardian Unlimited were the most balanced among other selected networks and followed the tenets of the peace journalism i.e. gave the views of both parties and yet produced the alternative political thoughts and gave missing political themes about this conflict serving as a break from status quo.

Appendix 1:**Events that took place in the sample period:**

The sample period started with former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair formally initiating various economic projects for occupied territories. Ehud Olmert, Israeli prime minister met with Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian Prime Minister, in order to build a positive environment ahead of talks. Arab league met as well to get a broader consensus from Arab states. Prior to the summit, held on Nov. 27th, the Palestinian and Israeli delegate were in negotiation to work out a joint declaration to be announced at the summit. This, however, proved quite laborious a task and it was not until the very end a joint statement was produced rather than a joint declaration. This delay caused a lot of speculation about the viability of this summit. The participant negotiating teams from Israel and occupied Palestine were hopeful about the summit however the analysts did not share the same optimism, precisely because of the earlier delay in hammering out a joint declaration. Israeli negotiators were quite keen to suggest that this summit only launches the peace negotiations and it should not be treated as negotiation summit.

US formally confirmed the Annapolis summit on Nov 21st which was immediately followed by denunciation by Hamas that dismissed Annapolis talks as a farce. The formal confirmation was also followed by steady acceptance from Arab states, chiefly Saudi Arabia and Syria. About more than 40 countries and organizations participated in the Annapolis summit. The consensus between Arabs states came about after a mini summit of Arab states to decide on this particular issue as to attend Annapolis or not. Right till the start of the summit both Israeli and Palestinian delegates could not agree on the joint declaration but after constant diplomatic efforts on part of the Americans a joint statement was hammered out at the eleventh hour. However at the summit, Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime minister, Ehud Olmert, agreed to a deadline that set end of 2008 for the creation of viable Palestinian state side by side with Israel. President George Bush, of United States of America, pledged firm support for the peace process and appointed General James Jones, former commander of

NATO, to oversee the steps taken by Palestinians and Israelis in accordance with the agreement. In this regard US submitted a resolution for the UN about Annapolis summit but later on, it was withdrawn to the approval of Israelis and was not taken well by the Palestinians.

Amid talks and afterwards there were two incidents of violence involving Israeli armed forces attack on Gaza that killed Hamas members. Also in separate incidents of violence Palestinian police cracked down on protestors in Hebron killing a Palestinian. The humanitarian situation worsened in Gaza and the situation in West Bank remained no different for ordinary Palestinians. There were no attacks on Israeli civilians in this time period (Nov 19th – Dec 9th 2007). However, the Israeli armed forces and settlers indulged in numerous illegal acts under the international law during this period³⁷ i.e.

³⁷ <http://cosmos.ucc.ie/cs1064/jabowen/IPSC/php/timeline.php?option=listAllEvents>

08.12.07 - [Association for Civil Rights in Israel publishes a report on the dramatic increase in racism against Palestinian citizens of Israel.](#)

07.12.07 – Israeli soldiers attack journalists at a demonstration against the wall; two injured.

06.12.07 - Female Israeli Settlers from E.lon Moreh attack Palestinian olive pickers.

06.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade several villages in Hebron area; Kidnap civilians, harass and intimidate local population.

06.12.07 – World Food Program (WFP) reports that food imports into Gaza are only sufficient to meet 41% of the demand.

05.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invades Beit Syra, menaces locals, destroys property and kidnaps civilians.

05.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces kill Palestinian resistance fighters

05.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade Jenin, menace locals and kidnap civilians.

04.12.07 – Israel implements a cut off of fuel supplies to Gaza.

04.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade Nablus, harass locals and kidnaps civilians.

04.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade Tubas, menace locals and kidnaps civilians.

03.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade several towns in West bank and kidnap civilians.

02.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade several Palestinian cities, harass locals, damage houses and kidnap a civilian.

01.12.07 – Israeli occupation forces demolish Palestinians houses in the village Za'atra

27.11.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade Al-Ram and Shufat R.C., harass local population and kidnap civilians.

violation of Palestinian territorial integrity through constant incursions, attacks on civilians and kidnappings, property destruction etc. The news networks do mention the two incidents where the armed forces killed Hamas members, once in November and the other in December. However the specific attacks that deliberately targeted civilians by Israeli armed forces and the settlers are not mentioned at all.

Furthermore after the talks Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert denied that Israel could be held responsible to observe the deadline agreed upon at the Annapolis summit, in a briefing to his cabinet. However Israel did release some of the prisoners held in its jails, mostly Fatah supporters to give a boost to Mahmood Abbas, the Palestinian president, in West Bank. Furthermore after this good will gesture, Israel announced more settlements in Abu Ghneim (Har Homa – as referred to by Israelis), part of East Jerusalem. It drew quick condemnation from Palestinians, Americans and the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon. Israelis however asserted their position that they can build settlements and overlooked the criticism by the international community. At about the same time, President Bush also announced that he will visit Middle East in a bid to show that he is committed to the peace process.

26.11.07 – Israeli paratroopers invade the village of Kafr Dan, harass and brutalise the local population.

25.11.07 – Israeli settlers attack the village of Al-Funduq.

25.11.07 – Israeli occupation forces kidnap BirZeit Univeristy student leader.

22.11.07 – Israeli occupation forces invade and harass several West bank towns and Kidnap Palestinian civilians.

Appendix 2
Sources used in BBC news reports:

Date			Sources		
	Palestinian	Israeli	Independent critical of Israel	Independent critical of Palestinians	Independent neutral
Dec 5	1	1			1
Dec 4	2	2	3		
Dec 3		2			
Dec 3	1	2			
Dec 2	2	3	2		1
Nov 29		3			3
Nov 28	2	2			
Nov 28					5
Nov 28	4				1
Nov 28	3	4			4
Nov	3	1			1

28					
Nov 27	2	3			5
Nov 27	4	3			
Nov 26					2
Nov 26	4	1			3
Nov 25		4			3
Nov 24	4	1			
Nov 24					5
Nov 23					2
Nov 21		1			2
Nov 21		3			1
Nov 20	1	1			3

Nov 19					3
Total	33	37	5		44

Criteria for classification of sources

Palestinian sources: If report had a statement or reference to a statement made by Palestinian officials from Hamas or Fatah etc.

Israeli sources: Similarly statements from Israeli government officials or opposition leaders etc

Independent sources: Any party other than Israelis and Palestinians e.g. UN, human rights organizations or officials from other governments participating in Annapolis etc.

Appendix 3
Sources used in The Guardian news reports:

date			Sources		
	Palestinian	Israeli	Independent critical Israel	of Independent critical Palestinians	of Independent neutral
Dec 7			3		1
Dec 5	2	5			1
Dec 5					1
Nov 30		3	2		
Nov 29	1	6			
Nov 29	1				1
Nov 29					2
Nov 28					1
Nov 28					1
Nov 28	2				3
Nov 28					
Nov 27	3		2		
Nov 27	3	3			5
Nov 27	1	3			4

Nov 27	3	2			3
Nov 26	4	1			3
Nov 26	4	1			2
Nov 26	1	1			1
Nov 25	5	2			2
Nov 24	1	3			4
Nov 23					1
Nov 23	1	1			3
Nov 22	1	1			2
Nov 22	1	1			
Nov 21					1
Nov 20	1	2			2
Nov 20			1		1
Nov 19					2
Nov 19		2			3
Nov 19		3	1		2
Nov 19		4			2
Total	37	44	9		56

Appendix 4
Sources used in CNN's news reports:

Date			Sources		
	Palestinian	Israeli	Independent critical Israel	of of Palestinians	Independent of neutral
Dec 4					1
Dec 3	1	3			
Nov 29	1	1			2
Nov 28	6				4
Nov 28	3	4			6
Nov 28		5			
Nov 27	2	5			3
Nov 27	1	2			3
Nov 25	3	2			2

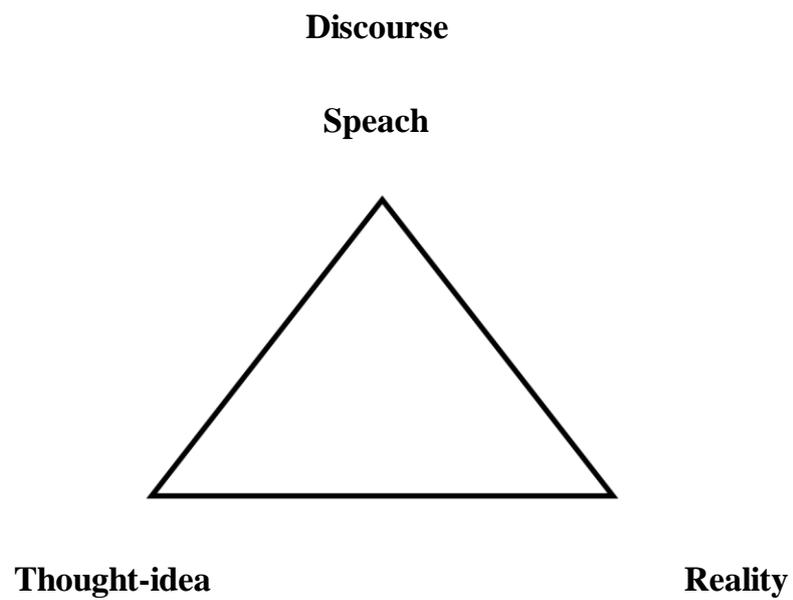
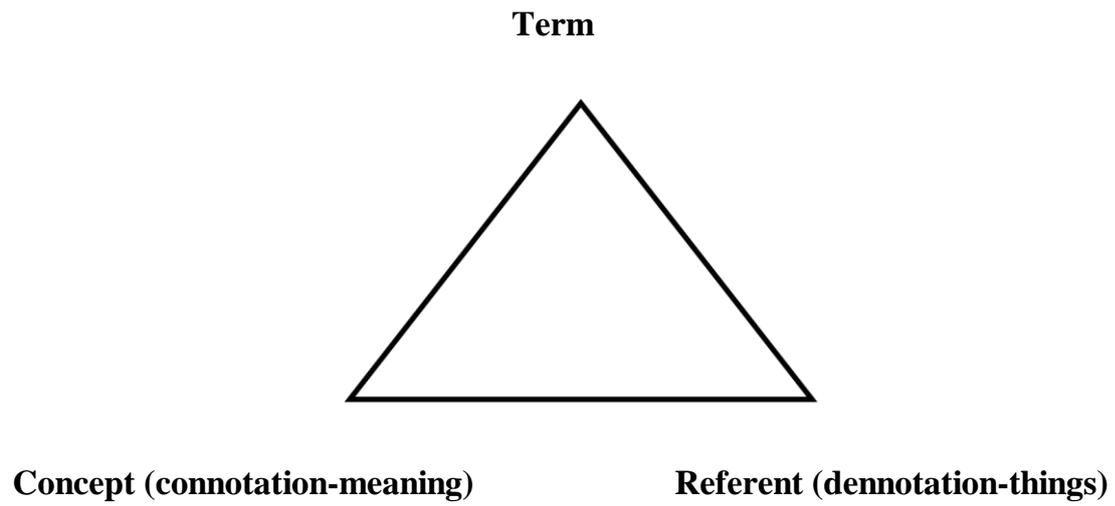
Nov 20	1	1			3
Nov 19	4	4			
Total	22	27			24

Appendix 5:
Sources used in Al-Jazeera news reports

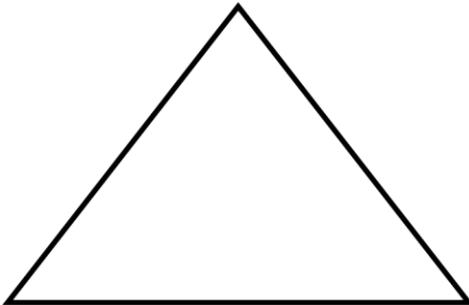
Date			Sources		
	Palestinian	Israeli	Independent critical Israel	of of Palestine	Independent critical of neutral
Dec8	2	4	3		
Dec 5	4	4	1		1
Dec 5	2	2			
Dec 4		1			2
Dec 3	2	5			
Dec 3	1	3			
Dec 2	6		1		
Dec 1	2	2			1
Dec 1	4				
Nov 30	2	2			
Nov 29	1	2	1		4
Nov 28	2	4			4

Nov 28	1	1			3
Nov 27	4	4			2
Nov 27	3				
Nov 27	3	2			2
Nov 26	6	1			3
Nov 26	3				
Nov 26	3	1			3
Nov 26					1
Nov 26	2				
Nov 25		1			1
Nov 25		2			1
Nov					3

23					
Nov 23		1			2
Nov 22	2				3
Nov 21		1			2
Nov 21	5	1			2
Nov 21		3			2
Nov 19	1	2			2
Nov 19		2			
Total	61	51	6		48

Appendix 6**Ogden's triangle**

Statement



Proposition

State of affairs

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