

**EXONERATION AND NOMINALIZATION
IN POWER POLITICS: A CORPUS
ASSISTED DISCOURSE STUDY OF US
REPORTS ON AFGHAN WAR**

BY

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**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES
ISLAMABAD**

November, 2024

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M.A. English, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, 2020

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

In English (Linguistics)

To

FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

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**FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES
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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Exoneration and Nominalization in Power Politics: A Corpus Assisted Discourse Study of US Reports on Afghan War** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Exoneration and Nominalization in Power Politics: A Corpus Assisted Discourse Study of US Reports on Afghan War

Language is an effective communication tool and is widely used nowadays because of social media by people to put forward ideas in the best possible way. Most of the time, it is used to fabricate facts and distort reality to avoid responsibility and accountability for actions. The present study is an attempt to analyze language used in 04 of the American official documents on Afghan War (2001-2021) both quantitatively and qualitatively. The collected data was first run through Corpus tools: AntConc. 4.2.4.0. and UAM Corpus Tool 3.3 to find out the frequency and concordance of Nominalization and Exoneration instances. The found instances were then discussed through Fairclough's three-dimensional model (1989) to show how the US has positioned itself regarding actions and mistakes in the Afghan war. It's found that both the linguistic manipulation techniques: Nominalization and Exoneration have been used to avoid taking responsibility and accountability of wrongdoings or mistakes. The technique of Exoneration is used both in the present and past tense to avoid responsibility for actions. Nominalization is more used in the reports than Exoneration. However, Exoneration is in the way of gaining recognition with each passing day. Both the techniques are effectively used in masking the agent. Future research could explore how visual and multimedia elements in official reports, such as images and graphs, interact with linguistic strategies like Nominalization and Exoneration. Additionally, examining these strategies in real-time media, including news broadcasts and social media, could reveal how they adapt across platforms and influence public perception.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM.....	ii
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	x
DEDICATION	xi
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	5
1.2 Statement of the Problem	6
1.3 Research Objectives	6
1.4 Research Questions	6
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Delimitation	7
1.7 The Concepts Considered in the Study	8
1.8 Organization of the Study	8
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Linguistic Devices	11
2.2 Analysis of Political Discourse	11
2.3 Relevant Research Studies	12
2.4 Research Gap	23
2.5 Chapter Summary	24
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.1 Sampling	25
3.2 Data Collection Procedure	26
3.3 Data Collection Tools	26
3.4 Data Analysis	26
3.5 Corpus Linguistics	27
3.6 Corpus Development	28
3.7 Corpus Tools	29
3.7.1 AntConc 4.2.4.0	30
3.7.2 UAM Corpus Tool	30

3.8 Theoretical Framework	34
3.8.1 Description	34
3.8.2 Interpretation	34
3.8.3 Intertextuality	35
3.8.4 Explanation	35
3.8.5 Suitability of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model	35
3.9 Data Analysis	36
3.10 Chapter Summary	37
4. DATA ANALYSIS	38
4.1 Frequency of Nominalized Nouns	38
4.2 Frequency of Exonerative Tense	38
4.3 Analysis of Present and Past Exonerative Tense	39
4.3.1 Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (published in 2002)	39
4.3.2 Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act of 2007	43
4.3.3 Afghanistan War Powers Resolution, Congressional Record, 2011	48
4.3.4 Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief (published in May 2022)	51
4.4 Analysis of Nominalization	56
4.4.1 Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (published in 2002)	56
4.4.2 Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act of 2007	59
4.4.3 Afghanistan War Powers Resolution, Congressional Record, 2011	63
4.4.4 Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief (published in May 2022)	67
4.5 Findings	72
4.6 Discussion	77
5. CONCLUSION	79
5.1 Frequency and Distribution	80
5.2 Concordance	80
5.3 Positioning through Nominalization	81
5.4 Positioning through Exoneration	81
5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research	82
REFERENCES	84
APPENDIX	89

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	The Concordance Generated through Antconc Related to the Nominalization	89
Table 2:	The Table of the UAM Generated Result Related to the Exonerative Tense	42
Table 3:	Frequency of Nominalized Nouns Repeated More Than Once in the Reports	49
Table 4:	Frequency of Past Exonerative Tense in the Reports	50
Table 5:	Most Frequently Used Nominalized Nouns	88

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	The Addition of a Report to UAM Corpus Tool	42
Figure 2:	The Addition of all the 04 Reports to UAM Corpus Tool	43
Figure 3:	Analysis of Pre- and Post-Texts of the Past Exonerative Instances	44
Figure 4:	The Diagram of Three-Dimensional View of Discourse by Fairclough	45
Figure 5:	The Illustration of the Overall Model Is Formed through the Amalgamation of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model and Exonerative Tense	46

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PET: Past Exonerative Tense

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A very special thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr. Azhar Habib, whose mentorship, encouragement, and dedication were invaluable throughout this journey. His expertise, patience, and continuous support not only guided me academically but also inspired me to strive for excellence.

I am also grateful to the Dean, Dr. Arshad Mahmood, and the Head of Department, Dr. Farheen Ahmed Hashmi, for their support and leadership, as well as to all the committee members for their valuable input and guidance. The contributions of these esteemed mentors and leaders have been truly inspiring, and I am sincerely grateful for their roles in making my work stand out.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Aziz Ullah Khan for his outstanding guidance and unwavering support throughout this work. His profound knowledge, insightful feedback, and meticulous attention to detail were instrumental in shaping the direction of this research. I am also deeply thankful to Dr. Tahir Saleem and Dr. Aneela Gill for their valuable suggestions, which greatly enhanced the quality of my work. Their insightful comments and constructive feedback provided the clarity and direction needed to present my ideas effectively. Additionally, I am grateful to Dr. Islam Badshah for his invaluable help in understanding corpus tools, which greatly facilitated my research process.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my cherished family, with special reverence to my mother, Mah Bibi, and my father, Shad Muhammad Khan Khattak. My father, a steadfast educationist and a true feminist, has been a beacon of guidance and unwavering support. His tireless efforts to ensure our education, despite the challenges of our remote upbringing, have not only enriched our lives but also empowered the women in our family. His commitment to nurturing our minds and spirits stands as a testament to his enduring legacy.

I also dedicate this work to my beloved fiancée, Syeda Haleema Sadia, whose unwavering support and encouragement kept me focused throughout this journey. Her discipline, intellect, and sharp sense of humor inspired me and brightened even the most challenging moments. She kept me on track with her wisdom and made me laugh when I needed it most, ensuring I stayed in good spirits.

To my dear friends, your presence has been invaluable. Khalil-ur-Rehman, your optimism and evergreen support has been a source of strength. Shehryar Khattak, your sincerity has always been amazing, followed closely by the boundless energy and ever-readiness of Hammad-Ur-Rehman. Siraj-ul-Hassan and Umer Mastan, you brought color and vibrancy to every gathering. Abbas Khan and Ghayas Khan, your philosophies sparked countless thought-provoking discussions. Hasseb-ur-Rehman and Adnan Saeed, your naughtiness added the perfect touch of mischief and laughter to our times together. Aizaz Khattak, your care has been a comforting presence. And to Yaqoob Khan, your calmness mixed with just the right pinch of humor added a delightful blend to our circle. And to Dr. Ahmad Nawaz Khan, my brother-like cousin, your availability in this time of rush has been a pillar of support.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication through which viewpoints are presented and information is exchanged. It is produced with utmost care all around the globe, especially in official documents. A country's official representative body presents its stance in official reports after an incident takes place. Numerous linguistic techniques are used in language according to one's own perspective. Analyzing such techniques of manipulation within a language and its context comes under the study of discourse analysis.

Etymologically, the word 'discourse' dates back to the 14th century. The term is taken from the Latin word 'discursus', which means a 'conversation' (McArthur, 1996). Discourse is literally defined as a serious speech or piece of writing on a particular subject (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2001, p.388). It refers to the mode of communication, whether spoken or written, and its analysis in a specific context. The analysis of huge amount of data can be properly done in its context through the use of a corpus tool. Analysing data through a corpus tool falls under the study of Corpus Linguistics. Corpus Linguistics is the analysis of a huge amount of data of a language through a corpus tool. The term 'corpora' means a large collection of data that is then analysed through computing power. Understanding and analysing such patterns come under the study of Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). Such a study reveals more intricate information about such patterns in the use of language in the political and media discourses (Partington et al., 2013). Corpus linguistics is the analysis of language through a corpus tool. The term 'corpora' means a large collection of data that is then analyzed through computing power.

Multiple linguistic techniques: Exoneration and Nominalization are used while using language as it is a tool of communication through which ideologies are manipulated, facts are fabricated, and reality is distorted sometimes. According to my knowledge among other linguistic techniques, few of them have not been explored or entertained before in detail. Expressing views through the use of 'Exonerative Tense and Nominalization' has gained a considerable boom and attention in the last few decades in almost all discourses, especially in political discourse. Ideologies are presented, and arguments are developed in a very specific way by keeping their

meaning and impact on the readers in mind. The rationale behind the conduct of the Past and Present Exonerative study is to discover how ideas are propagated, and discourse is produced by exempting oneself from taking responsibility for an action. Along with that, Nominalization is also used to project and propagate ideas without bringing the social actors to the front. These constructions actually help the users of a language to avoid responsibility and stating an incident without mentioning the performer of an action. For this purpose, congressional reports of the US on the Afghanistan War (2001-2021) are analyzed and discussed through Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model.

The linguistic technique of Present and Past Exonerative Tense has been used for a very long time, but specific terminology for this was introduced back in 2007 by Blachor in 2020. It is quite obvious from the term itself that there is the use of the past tense along with exoneration and exemption from the responsibility of an action. Blachor (2020) writes in an online article that Past Exonerative Tense is actually a non-apology apology about an incident/event. Safire (2008) defines it too as “[a] passive-evasive way of acknowledging error while distancing the speaker from responsibility for it.” (p. 477). It is used to acknowledge a happening or an incident by exempting the subject. It points out a mistake or an error of judgment but blames no one for it. Along with that, past incidents can also be presented/expressed in the present tense. According to the Cambridge Dictionary website, present simple tense is also used to state an event that has happened in the past for example, The Minister of Foreign Affairs resigns. As the event of the resignation occurred in the past but it is stated in simple present. Thus, it provides an insight that language can be used in this way too. Such types of instances can also be used to exonerate oneself from taking responsibility for actions. Along with PET, Nominalization is also used for the same purposes of sidelining the doer of an action. It is the use of an adjective, verb, and adverb as a noun in a sentence (Stibbe, 2015). The specific word is either brought to the very front or it is made the headword of a sentence. Hence, the sole purpose of its use is semantic through which facts are fabricated, reality is distorted, and arguments are presented in a very general and casual way by hiding the social actors to avoid taking responsibility and maintaining dominance.

Bachlor (2020) in his article makes it quite clear that PET construction has long been used to dodge the readers and play with the facts for social and political

gains. Furthermore, he says that it was, first, used by white supremacist to maintain their dominancy but nowadays, numerous departments across the globe also use it in the press to shape their arguments. The black American movement just began after a horrific incident in which a black African American was choked to death, and a movement arose by the name of 'Black Lives Matter' (Britannica, 2022). That incident was presented in a way that the officer was exempted from the responsibility (Conklin, 2021). There are a lot of other examples of using such constructions in power politics. It, in general sense, implies that political action by a person or group which makes use of or is intended to increase their power or influence. The most prominent example of such construction is when an American president was asked about the mistakes and miscalculations in the Iraq War. Fallows (2015) quotes Ronald Reagan, President of the US as saying, “[s]ome mistakes were made.” (para. 5). He exempted the subject/doer from the responsibility to prevail dominancy and thus avoided taking responsibility for the actions. Nominalization is also used for such purposes as the term has long been used in Eco-Linguistics. Stibbe (2015) is of the view that it shows how the destroyer of the ecosystem has manipulated language for their own benefit. For example, if a person says Pollution of the ecosystem or degradation of the ecosystem instead of saying that X pollutes/degrades Y. Here, in this case, the social actor X has been erased and has not been mentioned. Thus, the actors have been exempted from the blame or responsibility.

The use of PET and Nominalization is gaining popularity day by day all around the globe. It helps influencers and high officials to state facts in a distorted way by exempting themselves from taking responsibility for the mistakes committed in the past. Conventionally, Passivization (generally) and Nominalization (in Eco-Linguistics) have been used for such purposes, but PET construction has not been identified, discussed, and explored explicitly in detail in the context of this research study.

PET and Nominalization are the techniques used in a language to not only exempt oneself from taking responsibility but also to maintain dominancy and supremacy. As Bachlor (2020) examines PET constructions and comes to the conclusion that such structures are produced to uphold supremacy. Social actors hide and overshadow themselves under the blanket of these two techniques and thus avoid and exempt themselves from the responsibility of doing and performing an action

maintaining their dominance all around the globe. Abstraction of the agent through the use of Nominalization, use of complex structures, and Past Exonerative Tense are more often used by the social, political, and economic elite to distort reality and delude the public. The purpose of this study is to find out the linguistic ways through which reality is distorted, and the public is deluded by presenting the actor in hidden positions. Thus, avoid taking the responsibility of an action/ actions to prevail their social, political, and economic dominance.

In this research study, the construction of PET and Nominalization is pointed out by using corpus tools in order to find frequency, concordance, POS tagging and passive construction in the US official reports on the Afghan war. Data for this study is taken from US reports on the Afghan War (2001-2021). The US government, through the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), published over 700 official reports related to the Afghan War from 2001 to 2022. Only 04 of the reports are selected by keeping its importance and relevance in mind. These reports are selected because they address key aspects such as freedom, security, and the War Powers Resolution, as well as the background of the war and US policy, covering essential elements of a country's stability and governance.

The documents are analyzed to point out Exoneration and Nominalization constructions through corpus tools. Such constructions are then critically analyzed using Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of critical discourse analysis to find out how and why PET and Nominalization have been used in the US official reports on Afghan war.

This research study helps us in finding out the linguistic ways used by the officials to overshadow and disguise themselves through the use of Exoneration and Nominalization by exempting themselves from taking responsibility for actions. This study also shows how language is manipulated and used to distort reality through the use of such constructions and techniques. No prominent research has been conducted on this subject, and related literature has been selected and studied collected from multiple sources. This research study gives us new parameters of manipulation of a language and distortion of facts for personal gains and benefits by avoiding responsibility and maintaining dominance through the use of Exoneration and Nominalization at a world stage in power politics.

1.1 Background of the Study

Exoneration and Nominalization have long been employed as linguistic strategies in political discourse to manipulate public perception and obscure accountability. Exoneration involves the use of language to downplay or remove the responsibility of individuals or groups, often achieved through passive voice constructions. A historical example of exoneration can be seen during the Vietnam War when officials frequently used phrases like ‘mistakes were made’ to deflect blame from military and political leaders, making it unclear who was responsible for strategic failures (Beard, 2000). By using such passive constructions, the language serves to obscure the actors involved, allowing those in power to evade direct accountability. Similarly, nominalization, which involves turning actions into abstract nouns, can mask agency and soften the impact of events (Fairclough, 2003). In economic policy discussions, for instance, terms like economic downturn or market adjustment, are often employed instead of directly attributing actions to policymakers or companies, thereby depersonalizing issues and reducing perceived culpability. These rhetorical techniques have been powerful tools in shaping how the public interprets and understands complex political events and decisions.

In the realm of power politics, the strategic use of exoneration and nominalization has been critical in constructing narratives that serve specific agendas. During the Iraq War, terms such as ‘collateral damage’ were used to downplay civilian casualties, shifting focus away from the human cost of military operations and instead framing them as unfortunate side effects of necessary actions (Chilton, 2004). By employing such language, governments and institutions can manipulate public discourse to minimize the perceived severity of their actions. Similarly, discussions about climate change often involve language that diminishes the human contribution to environmental issues, which in turn reduces the perceived need for immediate political action (Lakoff, 2010). By examining these rhetorical devices in US reports on the Afghan War, this study aims to uncover the subtle ways of how language is used to shape narratives, influence public opinion, and maintain dominance. Through a corpus-assisted discourse study, we can systematically analyze large datasets of text, identifying patterns and trends that may not be immediately apparent, thereby providing a deeper understanding of how language influences power dynamics in political discourse.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Language is produced with utmost care all around the globe especially in official documents. A country presents its stance after an incident takes place in the official reports through the careful use of language. The problem is that language is highly manipulated through the use of linguistic techniques and it becomes hard for the readers to know whether facts are stated as they are or fabricated. The US got involved in the War on Terror that lasted for twenty years from 2001 to 2021. This war was not like the one against Iraq, a decade ago, when the United States and its allies had a clear territorial objective that could be swiftly achieved. However, this time, many horrible incidents, mistakes, and miscalculations took place and were also confronted for a long period of time (Daalder & Lindsay, 2001). The US presented its point of view in the official reports published in regular intervals. The problem is that language is manipulated in multiple ways using different linguistic techniques to have an impact on the readers to mold their viewpoints. It's important to decode the used patterns to understand language properly. Thus, this study is conducted to analyse the linguistic techniques: Nominalization and Exoneration through which language is used and arguments are produced in the official documents of the US to evade the responsibility of actions and maintain dominancy.

1.3 Research Objectives

Following are the objectives of this study:

1. To analyze the frequency of distribution and concordance of Exoneration and Nominalization constructions in the US official report (2001-2022).
2. To explore the ways through which the US government positions itself in relation to the Afghan war through the use of Exoneration and Nominalization in the official documents.

1.4 Research Questions

The researcher seeks to find an answer to the following questions:

1. What is the frequency of distribution and concordance of Exonerative construction and Nominalization in the official reports of the United

States on the Afghan war?

2. How does the US government position itself in relation to the Afghan war through the use of Exoneration and Nominalization in the official documents?

1.5 Significance of the Study

In modern times, warfare is not waged through direct military standoffs but is conducted through misinformation, disinformation, and social engineering, PSSR. (n.d.). Thus, language has become more vital as information is presented to the readers either correctly or distorted through the use of multiple linguistic techniques. The significance is to find out linguistic ways through which reality is distorted, and the public is deluded by presenting the role of actors in hidden positions thus avoiding the responsibility for actions. That is how the social, political, and economic elites maintain dominance. Highlighting such techniques would help readers and listeners in decoding the said words of the speaker. They use Exoneration and Nominalization techniques in the language not only to exempt themselves from taking responsibility but also to maintain their dominancy and supremacy through its use. Social actors hide and overshadow themselves under the blanket of these two techniques. Thus, avoiding and exempting themselves from the responsibility of doing and performing an action and thus maintain their dominancy all around the globe. Abstraction of the agent through the use of Nominalization, complex structures, and Exonerative Tense are more often used by the social and political actors to distort reality and delude the public.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This research study is delimited to only the 04 US official reports on Afghanistan war published between 2001 and 2022. Following are the reports:

1. Afghanistan freedom support act of 2002, published in 2002
2. Cost of war against terrorism authorization act of 2002
3. Afghanistan freedom and security support act of 2007
4. Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief – published in May 2022

The official reports of the US are only taken as data because of the following three reasons. The US initiated the war against the terrorist groups operating within Afghanistan claimed by the Americans in response to 9/11, and they were the key stakeholders in this war. Secondly, NATO members took part in this combat in which the US is one of the key members and a dominant force. Thirdly, the US is a global superpower, specifically in terms of politics.

By focusing on these reports, the study aims to critically analyze the linguistic techniques employed, such as Exoneration and Nominalization, to frame narratives. This delimitation ensures the research remains focused on the socio-political and linguistic dimensions relevant to a superpower managing its global image while evading accountability for the war's consequences.

1.7 The Concepts Considered in the Study

The two concepts, Exoneration and the Nominalization, need an appropriate introduction so as to be apprehended with ease, which is as follows: The term 'Past Exonerative Tense' has been introduced by William Schneider, who is a political scientist. It is defined by Safire (2008) as "[a] passive-evasive way of acknowledging error while distancing the speaker from responsibility for it." (p. 477). The second term is Nominalization, which is considered as a process in which a verb is transformed into a noun (Fowler et al., 1979).

1.8 Organization of the Study

Following is the final layout of the five chapters:

The first chapter is concerned with the introduction of the present study by highlighting the background and the underlying notions regarding the current research project. It further takes account of the research questions, which are questions that the researcher wants to answer. Furthermore, the research objectives, the research problem, and the study's significance is discussed.

The second chapter covers all the pertinent literature related to the current study and how the previous study helps and relates to the study being carried out.

The third chapter includes discussion about the research methodology, that it is a mixed-method: both quantitative and qualitative, and Fairclough's three-dimensional model as the theoretical framework which serves the basis for conducting this study.

After that, multiple reports selected as data, and a corpus is designed to find out the constructions through corpus tools.

The fourth chapter involves the analysis of the examples pointed out manually or of the findings by analysing the data through corpus tools, i.e., AntConc. 4.2.4.0 and UAM Corpus Tool, in the light of the selected theoretical framework.

The final chapter concludes the study based on the data analysis and discussion. It also presents future prospects within the existing knowledge and eventually answers the research questions by bringing the study to a close.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review has core importance in conducting a research study. Considering this significant role, the research addresses the literature related to critical discourse analysis. During the last few decades, the tools of critical discourse analysis have been extensively employed in almost every sort of discourse. Remarkably, it is important to review all those research studies that have some relevance to the present study. Those pertinent research studies have applied critical discourse analysis by using linguistic elements, such as passive constructions and nominalization, as tools for the identification of target instances. Moreover, the concepts that the present research study is based on will also be considered, such as the Exonerative Tense and the Nominalization. Apart from this discussion, the research will also elaborate on the concepts related to corpus linguistics.

Political discourse often uses language in a way that can influence how people think and feel about certain issues. This is done by using words or phrases that soften the impact of harsh realities, such as saying ‘collateral damage’ instead of ‘civilian deaths.’ The way language is used in politics can shape how we understand and react to events. For example, political leaders might choose words that make their actions seem more acceptable or less harmful. As Orwell (1946) pointed out, political language is often used to make lies sound truthful. This kind of language manipulation can be powerful in shaping public opinion.

Another way that political discourse manipulates language is by controlling the conversation and limiting the range of viewpoints. By labeling certain opinions as ‘radical’ or ‘unpatriotic’, political figures can discourage people from exploring alternative perspectives. This tactic is a way of maintaining control over what is considered acceptable to discuss. Fairclough (1989) and other scholars in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have shown how language can reflect and reinforce power dynamics in society. More recent studies, like those by Hajer (2017) and Wodak (2018), emphasize that the way language is used in politics can have a big impact on how people understand and engage with social issues.

2.1 Linguistic Devices

Political discourse relies on a variety of linguistic and rhetorical strategies to shape public opinion, construct ideologies, and maintain power. These strategies are carefully chosen to maximize influence, manipulate perceptions, and elicit emotional or rational responses from audience. Some of the most prominent strategies employed below:

Political discourse encompasses a broad range of communicative strategies, the choice of grammatical constructions plays a crucial role in shaping meaning and influencing audience perception. One such feature is the use of exoneration, a linguistic device often employed in political discourse to achieve specific rhetorical effects. Blachor (2020) writes in an online article that Past Exonerative Tense is actually a non-apology apology about an incident/event. Safire (2008) defines it too as “[a] passive-evasive way of acknowledging error while distancing the speaker from responsibility for it” (p. 477). The strategic use of this construction can thus reflect broader power dynamics and ideological underpinnings within political language.

Additionally, nominalization, the transformation of verbs or adjectives into nouns (e.g., to decide becomes decision), is a powerful rhetorical strategy frequently employed in political discourse. It enables speakers to manipulate language in ways that abstract ideas, depersonalize actions, and control narrative focus, making it an essential tool for influencing public perception and framing political issues.

2.2 Analysis of Political Discourse

The analysis of political discourse involves examining how linguistic constructions (such as nominalization and Past Exonerative Tense) are used in political contexts to construct power, shape ideologies, and influence public opinion. This interdisciplinary approach draws from linguistics, sociology, political science, and media studies to uncover the strategies and structures that underlie political communication. Political discourse is not limited to speeches or debates; it includes reports, policies, media coverage, campaign materials, and even informal interactions.

One way to study political discourse is by employing a corpus tool which offers a systematic, data-driven approach to uncover patterns, trends, and recurring linguistic features in large collections of texts.

On the other hand, the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) produces rigorous findings. It is a qualitative approach that examines the relationship between language, power, and ideology. Rooted in interdisciplinary traditions, CDA focuses on how discourse shapes and is shaped by societal structures, highlighting issues of inequality, dominance, and resistance.

2.3 Relevant Research Studies

When conducting political discourse, especially on linguistic constructions, there are various past studies that have already analyzed political discourse from different perspectives. Following are the critically reviewed past studies.

Koosha & Shams (2005) have conducted a study on the depiction of Iran's nuclear program in prominent British newspapers to determine whether the idea has been propagated either positively or negatively by keeping in mind the strategy of US vs. THEM. Data for this study has been collected from the headlines of six prominent British newspapers and the study has adopted the theoretical approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1996). The study has concluded that, them, Iran's nuclear program, has been depicted negatively. In contrast, US and Britain have been presented positively to present themselves a dominant force at the world stage. Actions have been justified through the use of language like sanctioning or punishing Iran through sanctions or economic punishment.

Söğüt (2018) has conducted a research study to find out the frequency distribution and structures of active, passive, and marginalization constructions in both prominent American and British newspaper reports on the attacks in Ankara (2015). The study has adopted the theoretical approach of CDA associated with the works of Fairclough (1989) and Van Dijk (1996). The collected data has been analysed through a mixed method in which the frequency of the distribution of these structures have been determined qualitatively through a corpus tool. It has been found that British newspapers used more passive constructions than the American newspapers to hide the agent. In contrast, the qualitative study of the data presents a clear picture of the use of all the constructions in a particular context and various purposes of highlighting, deleting, and emphasizing ideologies. This research has provided insight and added to the current study by describing the ideological representation and manipulation of the language for multiple purposes.

Shojaei et al. (2013) have conducted a research study in the domain of media discourse to discuss the interpretation and demonstration of media stories. Ideas have been propagated through language and are manipulated in a particular way for different purposes. Van Dijk's approach of social cognition in Fairclough's intertextuality approach has been taken as a framework to analyse Western media Discourse while reporting about Iran sanctions, the nuclear deal, and the Syrian crisis. The study has helped in my research as it has found multiple linguistic tools, such as collocational patterns, intertextuality, free supposition modality, etc. These tools have been used for propagating ideas through language suiting particular audiences.

The above three studies have been utilized the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), drawing heavily on the works of Fairclough. It has helped me understand the correlation between language and power in a better way. As CDA has been instrumental in examining how discourse shapes and is shaped by power relations within society. Fairclough's model has focused on the dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures and the role of social cognition in discourse production and comprehension. These frameworks have been pertinent for analyzing media texts as they have provided tools to deconstruct how language perpetuates ideological stances.

Omotunde et al. (2018) have worked on political discourse to analyse the anniversary speeches of the Nigerian heads of government. They have taken the data for the study from the internet and other online media resources of the heads from 1965 to 2016. They have worked on different kinds of passive clauses and come to know that this form has been prevalent in use. They have analyzed six speeches in the light of the framework of SPG. They have pointed out that multiple passive forms have performed six different functions in the discourse and have been used for background and foregrounding information, and the short be form has the most commonly used.

Patricia (2012) has provided an overview of the field of political discourse analysis (PDA) in his article, Political Discourse Analysis: Exploring the Language of Politics and the Politics of Language, emphasizing its role within the linguistic and political shifts of the late 20th century. Dunmire (2012) has discussed various conceptions of what has constituted 'the political' and the appropriate objects of study for PDA, taking an inclusive approach to the concepts of politics and discourse. The

paper has also explored the relationship between PDA and critical discourse analysis (CDA), offering a review of studies that have analyzed political discourse in terms of theoretical and analytic frameworks, as well as the socio-political issues addressed in these studies.

Randour, et al. (2020) in the article, titled, *Twenty Years of Research on Political Discourse: A Systematic Review and Directions for Future Research*, offer a comprehensive review of political discourse analysis (PDA) over two decades. The authors systematically analyzed 164 articles, highlighting trends such as the focus on the discourses of political elites, especially within western contexts and on topics like defense and justice. They also identify gaps and biases in existing research and suggest areas for future exploration.

Molinaro (2015) has conducted a research study to find out cues of individuals telling the truth or lie. The purpose is to find out the cues of lying which mislead lay people and sometimes law enforcement persons. He proposes two different strategies for detecting lies in truth. Liars exonerate themselves and use more first-person pronouns, while truth tellers use fewer first-person pronouns. Three strategies were carried out to test the hypothesis: the first one was to analyse the verbal patterns of information and exoneration; and the second was to examine the patterns of guilty liars and innocent truth-tellers verbally; whereas the third study analysis of the written statements was taken. There he finds support for his first hypothesis, whereas limited support is found for the second hypothesis. This research article is highly beneficial in the investigation of law enforcement agencies and in courts. This research is related to my study in terms of exonerating oneself by deceiving others.

Bloor (2007) asserted that a language is a tool, assumed in Critical Discourse Analysis, used by people for constructing social reality, and ideas are propagated from a particular standpoint. Thus, it is used to examine the language of newspapers as it carries and passes on hidden ideas by the use of subtle and certain linguistic forms. These hidden ideologies can only be pointed out by analyzing different linguistic structures critically without focusing and relying only on the surface structure and the meaning of a language.

Fowler (1991) proposed that different choices of linguistic forms may consist of different lexical items propagating a specific ideology, metaphorical choices,

different expressions used in rhetoric, choice of a particular voice/visual aids, along with the choice of different themes in a clause complex.

Hamuddin (2012) and Sahat (2018) posited that discourse is a very complex study and is mammoth-like when it comes to interpretation. Many scholars and previous studies have explained this term as ‘very ambiguous’ after its use in modern sciences and a plethora of interpretations of a particular discourse. The use of a specific linguistic form at any level propagates multiple ideologies and meanings. Not only does language confuse or exploit the readers and listeners, but also the use of passive forms may also help free the doer of an action from responsibility and thus state information in a distorted way. There are some, Critical Discourse Analysis, analysts who study the use of biased language and help in legal and social settings by finding out the perpetrators using language according to one’s wish and purpose.

Fowler et al. (1997) claimed that passive constructions are used to hide the agents, subjects, or agency to let the doer or performer of action away from being responsible for the wrongdoings. This hiding is done in two ways: moving the subject at the end, which means dragging the doer into the background, or stating information without mentioning the subject at all. In an active voice, the subject is brought to light, and its appearance is made prominent in a sentence. Dijk (1998) contended that when concrete instances are presented at the forefront, it denotes that the performer of an action is overshadowed or made less prominent by shuffling or disturbing the structures. He came up with an example that ‘a suicide bomber killed several Afghan Children’ and shuffled or disturbed the structure by dragging the agent in the background and stated that ‘several Afghan children were killed by the suicide bomber.’ The agent can be overshadowed and can sometimes be kept out of the discourse in passive forms, such as ‘several Afghan children were killed’ or by the use of Nominalization. Through Nominalization the expression would become like ‘killing of Afghan children’. In this example, a verb has been used as a noun, and an agent has not even been mentioned. Thus, stating information through such a technique is extreme dishonesty or severe misconduct.

Discourse analysis, as explored by Hamuddin (2012) and Sahat (2018), is seen as a complex field with many interpretations. They explained how different ways of using language can convey multiple meanings and ideologies, sometimes confusing or manipulating readers and listeners. Fowler et al. (1997) argued that passive

constructions in sentences hide who is responsible for actions, either by putting the doer in the background or not mentioning them at all. Van Dijk (1998) agrees that a doer can be hidden by not including a by-phrase in a passive construction. Another kind of language manipulation, like turning verbs into nouns to avoid naming the agent (e.g., the verb 'kill' can be converted into the noun 'killing'), is seen as misleading and dishonest. The study highlights the importance of analyzing language critically to understand biases and their impact, especially in legal and social contexts where identifying responsibility is crucial and has a lot to learn in terms linguistic manipulation.

Renkema (2009) has said that a sentence cannot be affected grammatically by changing from active to passive voice. However, in this way, the selection of a subject is achieved and framing a flawless grammatical clause as Chris was killed in the city that he helped to save. Actually, in passive construction, the doer becomes a situation, and removing the situation from a clause is correct, and also it cannot affect the grammatical structure. Kazemian (2014) has argued that the study of Obama, a presidential candidate, speeches showed that he used passive sentences during his speeches to hide the subject's position and minimize the criticism of an agent or events. While in many cases, the subject would be removed from a clause completely. For instance, to give importance to the action or event, ignore accountability or accusation, or hide a specific person's faults. In international political discussions, using these kinds of linguistic skills brought vital and strong results.

Lingle (2018) has conducted a research study on agentless passive structures, Nominalization, and the mystification of the performer of an action. He is of the view that using passive constructions by hiding the agents and the technique of Nominalization have gained prominent attention from scholars in critical linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis. But the subject matter of his study is the mystification of social actors. Readers' comprehension of such texts has not been given proper attention to how such texts are comprehended or understood by the social actors. The focus is on the role of reader's comprehension, which has been highly reduced when it comes to media discourse. This study is about the capacity of readers who are looking for cues, background information, and points to make inferences from the text in which agents are overshadowed by passive structures or by Nominalization that has not been given proper attention in Critical Discourse Analysis.

The question of this study is to answer the question of whether the use of agentless passives and Nominalization hamper, affect or reduce the comprehension of the readers or reader's cognitive abilities in finding out the real meaning or not. Data for this study has been taken from Newspaper editorials on the Greek financial crisis. Such instances were pointed out, and volunteer readers were tested empirically on whether they could find out the missing agents or doers of the action or not. After studying the results, it was found that the majority of the readers pointed out the missing agents correctly through inferences and background knowledge. O'Halloran's framework (2003) has been used for the conduction of this study, and it was made clear that the comprehension of readers or readers' response to a particular instance in which an agent is deleted or reader's cognition should also be studied under the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Trew (1979) has described and analysed headlines in media discourse by focusing on an incident in which the event of shooting a black person is printed. The Newspaper headline says, Rioting blacks shot dead by police in such discourse, the use of such linguistic features (rioting blacks) legitimizing the killing of a black person and the illegal action or violence of the police personnel. He also came up with other examples in which the agent, action of police officers, has been deleted and news is published by not naming them, for example, Sunday's Killings, Eleven Africans were shot dead. Trew focused on the representation of an incident that has an influence on the readers' point of view. He is of the view that ideas can be exposed by focusing on the representation of social actors and the actions they have performed. It can also be exposed by highlighting the representation of such areas where there appears to be conflict in meaning, as we can point out the conflict of interest when it comes to the representation of Blacks in comparison to Whites. Ideology, in his conception, is neutral and all perception involves theory or ideology, and there are no raw, uninterpreted, theory-free facts (Trew 1979, p. 95).

Crain et al. (2009) conducted a research study on the development of verbal passive in children in the 1980s. Many scholars conducted studies and devised techniques to evaluate children's competence. There appeared a need to devise new techniques to fill the gap between the expectation of early language acquisition and prolonged or actual acquisition that was being evaluated by using the techniques that existed at that time. This article sheds light on the development of linguistic structures,

i.e., passive structures, which were thought to be developed later (Borer & Wexler 1987). The study compared elicited production's findings with other studies' findings through other tasks. It has been made clear that passive structures in children's language appeared before it was recognized. Thus, an experimental study is highlighted to prove the expectations related to child's language acquisition.

Ali et al. (2016) conducted a study to examine the linguistic structures used in Iraqi newspaper to legitimize the withdrawal of US forces and its relation to linguistic features. This paper depicts the expression of values and attitude of the Iraqi journalist towards the critical event. Data of this study is taken from two articles published by an Iraqi English newspaper, *Kurdish Globe*, in December 2011. This is the month in which the United States forces withdrawal occurs after 9 years of invasion. This paper conducts qualitative content analysis to reach to a valuable conclusion. The study analyses the use of language of the critical events from different dimensions without including Past Exonerative Tense and Nominalization. It is found that the three discursive structures of legitimation along with 05 processes are applied to represent legitimation.

Christopher et al. (2017) have conducted a study on political discourse to depict the Representation and propagation of Socio- Political ideologies. Data for this study has been taken from the Iraqi English newspaper, *Kurdish Globe*, published in 2017. Using qualitative content analysis personal and persuasive pronouns are examined to explain the representation of Socio-Political ideologies. The study is only limited to pronouns without exploring linguistic manipulation through other linguistic features. The newspaper has used personal and possessive pronouns to represent US forces positively. Whereas, negative representation of the actions of the Iraqi government has been depicted through personal and possessive pronouns.

Ethelb (2016) has conducted a study to analyse textual and linguistic devices in the political discourse. A single story is narrated in different ways to influence public opinion that is why this study has been carried out to find the difference in narrating the same story differently. Data has been taken from four news articles of *Al- Jazeera* and *Al-Arabiya* to analyse the textual and linguistic devices under critical discourse analysis to see how journalist structure the stories to come up with an ideological Stance in shaping world view of the readers. The study shows that both the news agency represent/express the same story differently depicting the political and

ideological leaning. Thus, language plays a vital role in depicting a story through the manipulation of language. Under the consideration of this study as having a lot in common with my research study: political discourse and linguistic manipulation etc., I can enhance quality of my work. The study is highly organized but is limited to few articles from only two newspapers.

Naeem and Rafi (2019) have conducted a study to realize the linguistic legitimization of power by Zia-Ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf in Association with the Afghan war. The data is collected from the official documents published on Afghan war during 1979 to 1988 and 2001 to 2008. The study is conducted by using Wodak and Meyer's (2001) nomination strategies and Social Actor Representation Model of Van Leeuwen's (2008). For the justification of their policies, social actors are further divided into the categories of inclusion or exclusion and activation and passivation to rationalize the concept of self or in group. The study considered few of the linguistic features to analyze linguistic legitimization of targeted notion in the collected data. Themes and sub themes of the collected data have been developed through the process of coding for further analysis. The result concluded that language has the power of shaping the targeted version of reality by using numerous linguistic strategies in the discourse in order to influence the readers. These findings are relevant to my research on linguistic manipulation and biases, offering insights into how language is used to influence perceptions and shape discourse to avoid taking responsibility.

Nordlund (2003) has engaged in research on linguistic manipulation in order to understand how language attitudes are expressed or displayed in news reporting or media discourse. The aim of the study is to find whether different newspapers use different linguistic techniques because of political divergent views or not. For the conduction of this study, data has been taken from three different newspapers: The Daily Telegraph (Conservative), The Morning Star (Communist) and The Guardian (Labour). This analysis studies Lexico-semantic features, syntactic features, and metaphors. The division among the newspapers is evident because of the different political affiliation. It is to be concluded that the division is prominent but in case of metaphors there is no significant difference. There are few cases where metaphors are used to propagate certain ideas to affect the readers.

Bodak (2018) has carried out a study on linguistic manipulation tools in

Romanian political discourse. He developed his argument from Aristotle's idea that we are all political animals. Language plays a vital role in shaping and propagating political ideologies. Politics without language is impossible as it needs effective communication to engage with the public. Alice, for this study, took the speeches of prominent Romanian parliamentarians. He further analysed the data under the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis discussed by Van Dijk. After analyzing the discursive dimensions of the manipulation of the language of the given data under the above discussed theoretical framework, it is concluded that their parliamentary debated has a higher frequency of the linguistic manipulation tools. Few of the techniques are discussed while others are not applied such as Past Exonerative Tense etc.

Karapetjana (2009) has investigated numerous dimensions of linguistic manipulation in political rhetoric. Three of the dimensions are explored namely allusion, metonymy, and metaphor. The data for this study has been taken from two different newspapers: The Baltic Times (2006) and The Times (2006). The collected data has been analyzed under the derived theoretical framework of the 20th and 21st century researchers of political discourse. The researcher concluded that phraseological allusion has been used to appeal to the imagination and figurative language is exercised to influence the readers. Along with that metonymy is used to propagate the political images effectively to the audience. He also came the role of metaphors into the play of building effective relationship between the images. The researcher concluded that linguistic manipulation is widely used specifically in political discourse. Here in this research study few of the linguistic techniques i.e. allusion, metonymy, and metaphor are discussed in order to answer the research questions and leaves other to be explored.

Gaschke et.al (2010) have undertaken a study in the field of media psychology. Media plays a vital role in shaping the world view of its readers and listeners. Their study is not only concerned about finding what is reported but how narratives are presented that affects the attitude of the readers. This study is conducted on 39 German undergraduates who are made to read news articles of the crimes of migrants. Data is collected from them for this experiment and a specific procedure has been applied to analyze the data. All the participants come up with answers after reading the newspapers regarding the crimes committed by the migrants. Linguistic

abstractness in newspaper regarding crimes of the minorities led to a higher estimate of criminal behavior among migrants. It is concluded that most abstract worded news articles lead to higher estimate of inappropriate behavior. This paper highlights the behavior of the readers and focuses on the impact of news articles upon the readers using a linguistic manipulation technique: abstractness.

Saifeddin and Al-shuaibi (2022) have carried out a study to show how language ideological features are propagated through the use of language in a particular way. A single event is to be presented differently by using language. This paper studied that how language is used differently by French and Russians to present Syrian crises in the middle-east as both the countries support contrary stakeholders. Data for this study has been taken from the headlines of two newspapers of different countries: French 24 and Russian Today. Ten English headlines have been taken from each of the news agencies between Dec.2018 to Feb. 2022 and that makes the data of total 20 headlines. The collected data is then analyzed through Fairclough's three-dimensional model: description, interpretation and explanation. It is found that both the news agencies have manipulated language according to their ideological affinities. This representation of the same event differently through the use of language support universality of human language.

Billig (2008), in the article, *The Language of Critical Discourse Analysis: The Case of Nominalization*, has explored how nominalization is used within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) itself. He argued that CDA scholars often critique the use of nominalization in other discourses for its ideological effects, such as obscuring agency and reifying processes. However, Billig pointed out that CDA practitioners frequently use nominalization in their own writing without critically reflecting on its implications, potentially replicating the same ideological effects they critique in other discourses .

Nataliia Dobzhansha and Voitka (2018) investigated the advertising slogans of numerous fast-food chains to understand the techniques of linguistic manipulation to attract the customers. Hiring health experts for the promotion of their fast food and businesses plays a vital role. The role of advertising cannot be ignored for the commercial success in the age of social media. Data for this study has been taken from 239 slogans of popular fast-food networks of 104 English speaking countries. The collected data is then analyzed through Butler and Grinder's classification of linguistic manipulative patterns: deletion, generalization, distortion of language to

influence the subconscious of addressees. It is concluded that language has been extensively manipulated by all of the fast-food networks to have an impact on the subconscious of addressees and to promote their businesses to achieve commercial success. Few of the linguistic manipulative techniques have been discussed while the rest are left untouched to be explored for further studies.

Ali and Bustan (2020) carried out a study on the exclusion and suppression of social actors from the text to propagate idea by manipulating texts accordingly. For the analysis of this study data has been taken from the headlines of three different articles of media houses of Rohingya on Aung San Kyi in order to understand the concepts of exclusion and backgrounding of social actors. Data of this study has been analyzed under the theoretical framework of Theo Van Leeuwen (2008-2009) according to him there are two kinds of exclusion: 1. Suppression and 2. Backgrounding. Exclusion is the complete deletion whereas backgrounding leaves the traces of social actors in a text. Analysis under CDA shows that media houses are not neutral exclusion passivisation strategy is applied to criticize Aung San Kyi because of ideological affiliations and differences. It is evident from the analysis that the real actors have not been foregrounded rather excluded from the scene through the use of language whereas Aung San Kyi is shown as a leader who is unable to solve the country's political crisis. Only one of the linguistic techniques of exclusion has been discussed by leaving others which can pave a way for further research in the domain of linguistic manipulative techniques.

Jendeya (2022) has examined the exclusion strategies through language in political discourse along with corpora to analyze the impact on reader's mind. Data for this study has been taken from ten newspaper articles. Five of them were from five different Arabic countries where as the remaining five were from top five selling newspapers in the United Kingdom. On the march of return in Gaza the collected data is read thoroughly for content comprehension and is analyzed under Van Leewen's model (2008) of exclusion which is further shown through suppression and backgrounding. Along with it two corpora are made to observe/calculate the occurring of such linguistic structures. The analysis is concluded that exclusion strategies are evident in the text of both English and Arabic newspapers. Thus, manipulation of the position of social actors in the representation could affect reader's view.

One of the linguistic techniques of exclusion is analyzed by Mursida and

Emanto (2019) to understand the use of language in online News blogs. As through the use of internet, people can easily access news to learn what is going on. Information reaches to people through online blogs and that is why it has a vital importance. This research has been conducted to understand the use of exclusion in language. Data for this has been taken from five different online newspapers about terrorist attacks on Riau Police Headquarters. The data is analyzed descriptively under the frame work of Theo Van Leeuwen in terms of exclusion. It was found out that exclusion is evident are used through passivisation, subordinate substitution and Nominalization. Through all these techniques, News reports legitimized one group and delegitimized another.

Farooq and Umar (2021) have conducted a study in the domain of Eco-linguistics to explore and investigated the concept of deletion in the discourse of environmental. For carrying out this research study, three of the textbooks on environmental science recommended by Higher Education Commission Pakistan for undergraduate program have been taken as a data. Stibbe's (2015) concept of erasure has been employed as a theoretical framework for the analysis of the given data. He further discussed 09 strategies through which erasure can be applied to a text but only two of these strategies: passivisation and nominalization were analyzed by the researches. It was found that both the strategies are used in the textbooks which damages the preservation of the ecosystem promotes the message of the destruction of the natural system. Such incautious use of language specifically in academic discourse damages the notion of the preservation of the ecosystem.

Some of the linguistic manipulative techniques of activation, passivisation, exclusion, inclusion, nominalization (in Eco-Linguistics) etc. have been discussed by leaving others which can pave a way for further research in the domain of linguistic manipulative techniques.

2.4 Research Gap

When it comes to the use Present and Past Exonerative tense, no prominent research has been carried out in this domain to highlight and discuss their role in manipulating and exploiting language in power politics to avoid taking responsibility and prevailing dominancy at the world stage according to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, the current study is an attempt at exploring a way of manipulation of

language in political discourse. Another feature of discussion is Nominalization, using verbs and adjectives as nouns to overshadow the role of an agent. This technique is widely used in Eco-linguistics. Thus, it is also a prominent technique to remove the agent from the forefront/ surface to hide identity. Both techniques are to be discussed to highlight how narratives avoid responsibility for actions, mistakes, and miscalculations in power politics. The study explores uncharted territory in Present and Past Exonerative Tense and Nominalization, analyzing their role in political discourse to manipulate language, obscure agency, and avoid accountability, ultimately shaping narratives of power and dominance.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter introduces corpus linguistics. Moreover, it reviews all the relevant studies related to the present study for the identification of the research gap. It also discusses the theoretical framework serving as a base for the conduction of this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides details on the research methodology that is used to conduct the present study in a systematic manner. It offers a detailed theoretical framework and details the research design. Furthermore, it explains the sampling technique, data collection process, and data analysis method. Finally, it outlines the development of corpus.

3.1 Sampling

The sampling for this study is purposive, focusing specifically on US official reports on the Afghan war published between 2001 and 2022. Purposive sampling was chosen to ensure the inclusion of reports that are directly relevant to the research objectives, focusing on US narratives about the Afghan War between 2001 and 2022. This method allowed for the deliberate selection of official documents rich in linguistic data, specifically Exoneration and Nominalization, to address the study's research questions effectively.

The following reports are selected among many because of their importance/significance as they are about assisting Afghans in getting freedom, security, continuation of direct military and economic support, and the overall US policy. Along with that these reports also cover the relevant time period of starting and end of the war (2001-2022) and address major aspects of a country, such as freedom, security, policy and power politics. Following are the official reports taken as data for this study:

1. Afghanistan freedom support act of 2002, published in 2002
2. Afghanistan freedom and security support act of 2007
3. Afghanistan War Powers Resolution, Congressional Record, 2011
4. Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief - published in May 2022

These documents are chosen because they span the entire duration of the war, from its inception in 2001 to its conclusion in 2022, and are relevant to the major political and security concerns that defined the US involvement in Afghanistan.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The primary data was collected from the official reports mentioned above. These reports were sourced from credible government publications and archives, ensuring the authenticity and relevance of the data. The selection process was guided by the importance of the reports in representing the US government's stance on the Afghan war, particularly in relation to freedom, security, policy, and power politics. Reports from other NATO members were excluded, as the focus of this research is on the US as the principal actor in the war.

The reports selected for this study were chosen based on their relevance to the US involvement in the Afghan War (2001–2022), spanning two decades to cover critical phases of the conflict. Only official US government publications were included to ensure authenticity and credibility. The content of the reports focuses on military actions, consequences, and strategic narratives, providing a rich dataset for analyzing linguistic techniques like Exoneration and Nominalization. Additionally, the reports were publicly accessible and available in digital formats, facilitating their inclusion in the corpus.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The data collection involved compiling the selected reports into a corpus consisting of approximately 90,000 words. The tools used for data collection and analysis are:

1. **AntConc. 4.2.4.0:** This tool was employed to analyze the frequency and concordance of key terms and structures within the corpus.
2. **UAM Corpus Tool 3.3:** This tool was used to identify and analyze instances of the Exoneration and Nominalization. It enabled the extraction of passive structures, which were then manually filtered to identify exonerative expressions. Additionally, UAM Corpus Tool facilitated the examination of pre- and post-texts surrounding these instances for a deeper contextual understanding.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods: mixed-method approach. Initially, the corpus was processed using AntConc

4.2.4.0 to determine the frequency and concordance of terms related to exoneration and nominalization. Following this, UAM Corpus Tool is used to delve deeper into the textual structures, focusing on passive constructions and their role in exoneration. Manual filtering is applied to refine the results, ensuring that only relevant instances are considered for further analysis. This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of how the US government utilized language in its official reports to shape narratives around the Afghan war, particularly in terms of distancing itself from responsibility through exonerative and nominalized constructions.

3.5 Corpus Linguistics

A corpus was designed for the analysis of the two linguistic techniques: Exoneration and Nominalization devices in the present study. In other words, it is a database of texts extracted with the help of computer-based applications, which is then primarily utilized for studying a language phenomenon. In the last two decades, this field has gained considerable significance as a methodological framework for the analysis of linguistic phenomena (Rundell, 2008). Corpus as a methodology helps compile and study a corpus in a short time with the assistance of a computer compared to manual exploration, which takes a lot of time. It is used as a methodological framework in almost all disciplines of linguistics as it focuses on the explicit instances of a language. It is mainly used by researchers in order to obtain answers to research questions concerning linguistic devices that are specific to a language. The identified patterns and instances through a corpus were then to be analysed through Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Understanding and analysing such patterns come under the study of Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). Such a study reveals more intricate information about practices in the use of language in the political and media discourse (Partington et al., 2013). It can also be used to find answers to the research questions pertaining to a particular register. Consequently, it can be assumed that it is used for describing a language.

As highlighted by Crawford et al. (2015), corpora can be general and specialized. The former corpora are intended for a larger audience and are designed to answer a larger set of research questions, while the latter has some restrictions, and that they are designed to answer the specific or limited research question(s) (Crawford et al., 2015). Apart from the aforementioned types, there are two major approaches that are worthy of discussion in corpus linguistics, such as corpus-driven and corpus-

based approaches (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). In the corpus-based approach, a researcher simply compiles a corpus (or corpora) for testing and verifying hypotheses and finding answers to research questions through a theoretical lens (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). Additionally, it also helps in refining a theory (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). In contrast to the corpus-based approach, the corpus driven approach uses a corpus to analyse some specific evidence wherein the entire corpus is the researcher's focus. Moreover, this approach “allows us to capture patterns in language from a neutral and unbiased perspective” (Goźdz-Roszkowski, 2018, p. 103).

When a corpus is compiled, every text included in the corpus varies in words, which needs a procedure to make the texts equal in size. This procedure is called normalization, which certainly makes the corpus suitable for linguistic analysis. This procedure is conducted during the stage of data analysis that certainly equals the size of selected texts in a corpus.

There is another aspect of corpus linguistics, i.e., corpus annotation. According to McEnery et al. (2011), corpus annotation is the process in which linguistic analyses are encoded in the corpus. For instance, when a researcher wants to annotate a corpus, he/she must encode it in a manner to show parts of speech, [by] assigning to each word the grammatical category (McEnery et al., 2011).

3.6 Corpus Development

A corpus has been designed for the analysis of these two linguistic techniques devices that are considered in the present study. It is compulsory to compile a corpus that can make it possible to obtain numerous and conclusive results. Corpus linguistics encompasses the compilation and analysis of collections of spoken and written texts as the source of evidence for describing the nature, structure, and use of languages (Kennedy, 2001). In other words, it is a database of texts extracted with the help of computer-based applications, which is then primarily utilized for studying a language phenomenon. In the last two decades, this field has gained considerable significance as a methodological framework for the analysis of linguistic phenomena (Rundell, 2008). Corpus as a methodology helps compile and study a corpus in a short time with the assistance of a computer compared to manual exploration, which takes a lot of time. It is used as a methodological framework in almost all disciplines of linguistics as it focuses on the explicit instances of a language. It is mainly used by researchers in

order to obtain answers to research questions concerning linguistic elements or devices that are specific to a language. The identified patterns and instances through a corpus are then analysed through Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Understanding and analysing such patterns come under the study of Corpus Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS). Such a study reveals more intricate information about practices in the use of language in the political and media discourse (Partington et al., 2013). It can also be used to find answers to the research questions pertaining to a particular register. Consequently, it can be assumed that it is used for describing a language.

As highlighted by Gavioli (2005), corpora can be general and specialized. The former corpora are intended for a larger audience and are designed to answer a larger set of research questions, while the latter has some restrictions, and that they are designed to answer the specific [or limited] research question(s) (Crawford et al., 2015). Apart from the aforementioned types, there are two major approaches that are worthy of discussion in corpus linguistics, such as corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches. In the corpus-based approach, a researcher simply compiles a corpus (or corpora) for testing and verifying hypotheses and finding answers to research questions through a theoretical lens. Additionally, it also helps in refining a theory (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). In contrast to the corpus-based approach, the corpus driven approach uses a corpus to analyze some specific evidence wherein the entire corpus is the researcher's focus.

When a corpus is compiled, every text included in the corpus varies in words, which needs a procedure to make the texts equal in size. This procedure is called normalization, which certainly makes the corpus suitable for linguistic analysis. This procedure is conducted during the stage of data analysis that certainly equals the size of selected texts in a corpus.

There is another aspect of corpus linguistics, i.e., corpus annotation. According to McEnery et al. (2011), corpus annotation is the process in which linguistic analyses are encoded in the corpus. For instance, when a researcher wants to annotate a corpus, he or she must encode it in a manner to show parts of speech, [by] assigning to each word the grammatical category (McEnery et al., 2011).

3.7 Corpus Tools

3.7.1 AntConc 4.2.4.0

AntConc is a corpus tool that is used to perform various functions. It has a simple interface, and is easy to use. In this research study, the function cluster is used to identify the nouns in the text, which are later refined for the instances of Nominalization.

Specifically, the corpus was first tagged, and then AntConc. 4.2.4.0. was used to identify the nouns through the following regular expression:

```
( \ w +( ation _NNP | ment _NNP | ance _NNP | ence _NNP | ity _NNP | hood _NNP | ness
_NNP | ism _NNP | ship _NNP | ery _NNP | cy _NNP | ion _NNP | ty _NNP | dom _NNP | ist
_NNP | ology _NNP | ure _NNP | itis _NNP | mentum _NNP | tron _NNP | phobia
_NNP | logy _NNP | logue _NNP | sion _NNP | tion _NNP ) \ b )
```

Table 1

The Concordance Generated through AntConc. 4.2.4.0. Related to the Nominalization

forward_RB to_TO ask_VB for_IN assistance_NN to_IN leave_NN On_IN international_JJ development_NN assistance_NN US_NNP and_CC of_IN that_DT development_NN assistance_NN halted_VBN with_IN the_DT due_IN to_IN emergency_NN assistance_NN from_IN international_NN United_NNP Nations_NNP assistance_NN mission_NNP in_IN and_CC stabilization_NN assistance_NN which_WDT averaged_VBD some_DT humanitarian_JJ assistance_NN those_DT funds_NNS and_CC other_JJ forms_NNS of_IN assistance_NN in_IN Afghanistan_NNP

3.7.2 UAM Corpus Tool

UAM Corpus Tool is a corpus tool that is used for annotating text of any sort through automatic and manual method. It has multiple functions, and the one that predominates is AutoCode. In this research study, this function has its importance for the identification of instances of Present and Past Exonerative Tense.

As far as the AutoCode function of UAM Corpus Tool is concerned, there are two segments. These two segments have their own strings, requiring some input. In

the context of the present research, the corresponding segment has been restricted to ‘*passive-clause*’ that can be witnessed in the rule tab in the following figure. Meanwhile, the second string has been given input in the form of ‘*clause containing immediately be% @ participle.*’ This formulated rule helps to generate the requisite result shown in the figure.

Table 2

The Table of the UAM Corpus Tool Generated Result Related to the Past Exonerative Tense

Pro-text	be%	%participle	Post-Test
Administrations, the United States	was	compelled	to become engaged in the
had in Afghanistan when the 9/11	were	Planned	against our Nation and our
past four years, 8,832 civilians	were	Killed	in the conflicts, with civilian
Afghan civilians, who, in 2010,	were	Killed	and injured in their homes

Figure 1

The Addition of a Report to UAM Corpus Tool

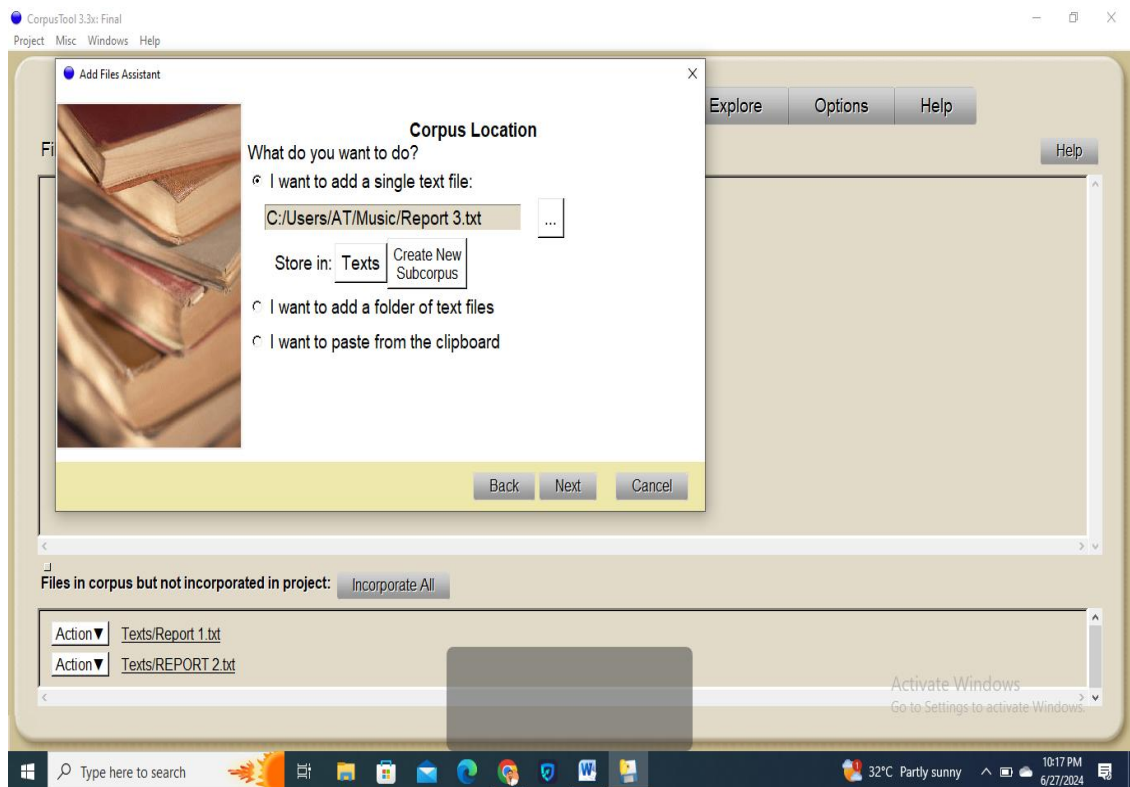


Figure 2

The Addition of all the 04 Reports to UAM Corpus Tool

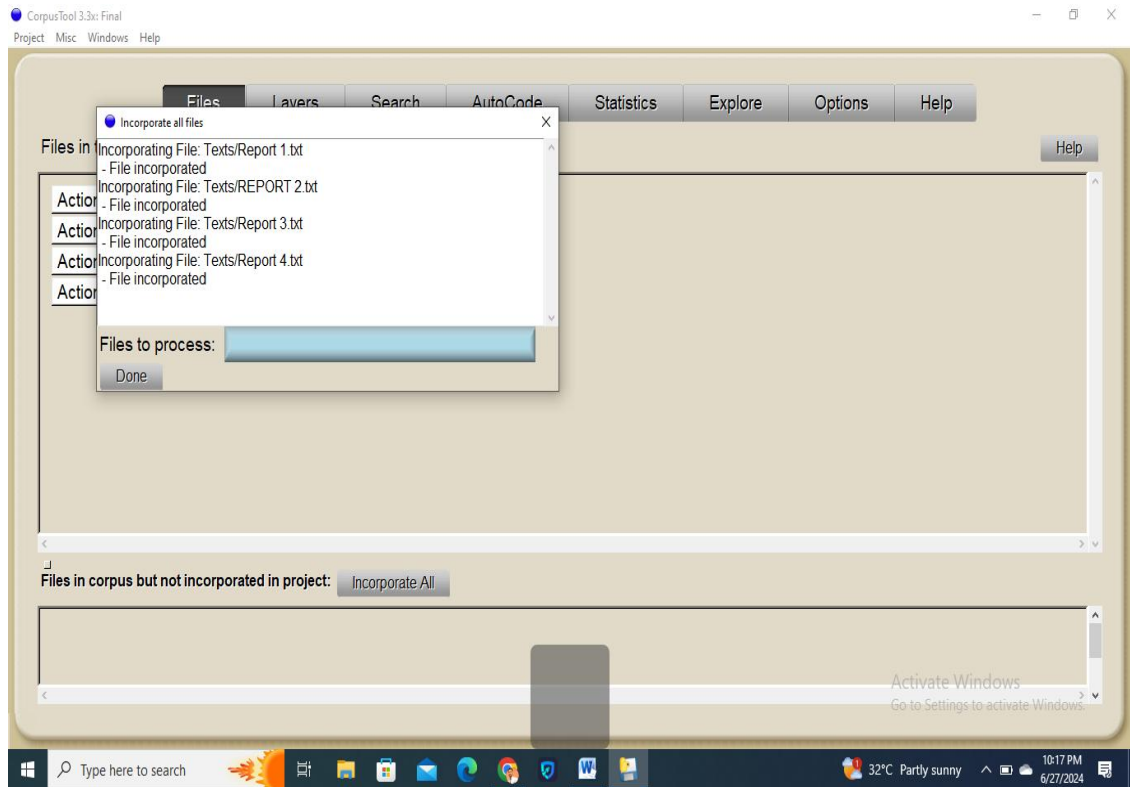
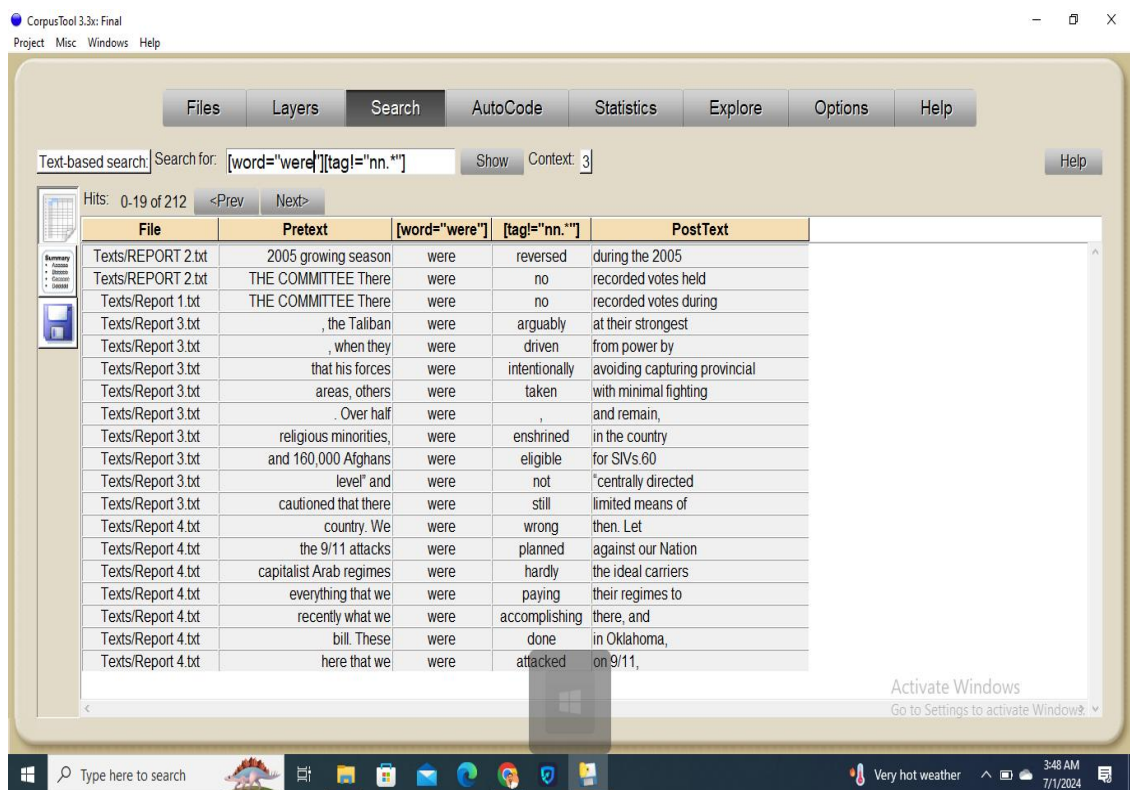


Figure 3

Analysis of Pre- and Post-Texts of the Past Exonerative Instance

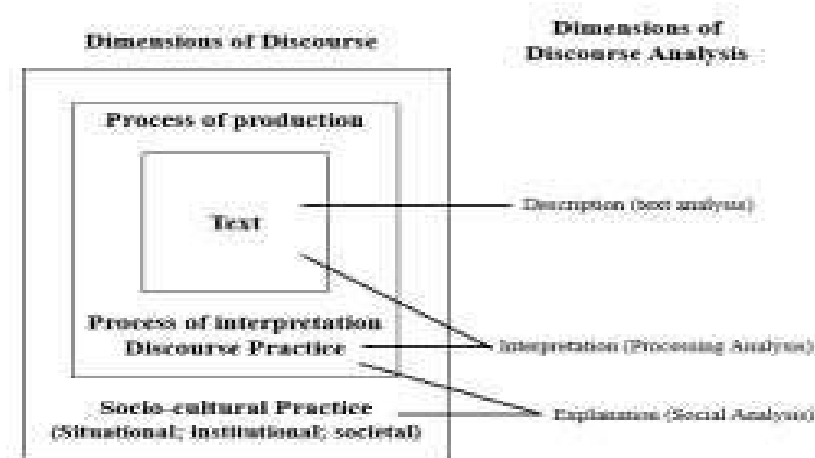


3.8 Theoretical Framework

The current research project is set within Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis. The prime concept, Nominalization, is included as an analytical tool. Moreover, Present and Past Exonerative Tenses are incorporated as a criterion for the identification of target passive constructions. The illustration of the model is displayed in Figures 3.9.1 and 3.9.2.

Figure 4

The Diagram of Three-Dimensional View of Discourse by Fairclough



Note: The figure is adapted from Fairclough, Norman. 1992. *Discourse and Social Change* (Page 93, Figure 5-2). Cambridge: Polity Press

The three-dimensional model of Fairclough is comprised of three distinct dimensions; textual, processing and social analysis, which are briefly introduced in the ensuing text.

3.8.1 Description

In this stage of analysis, linguistic features are analysed, which is underscored by Fairclough (1989) that description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of text (p. 26). Remarkably, the present study covers Nominalization and Present and Past Exonerative Tense.

3.8.2 Interpretation

For Fairclough (1989), "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of

production, and as recourse in the process of interpretation" (p.26).

3.8.3 Intertextuality

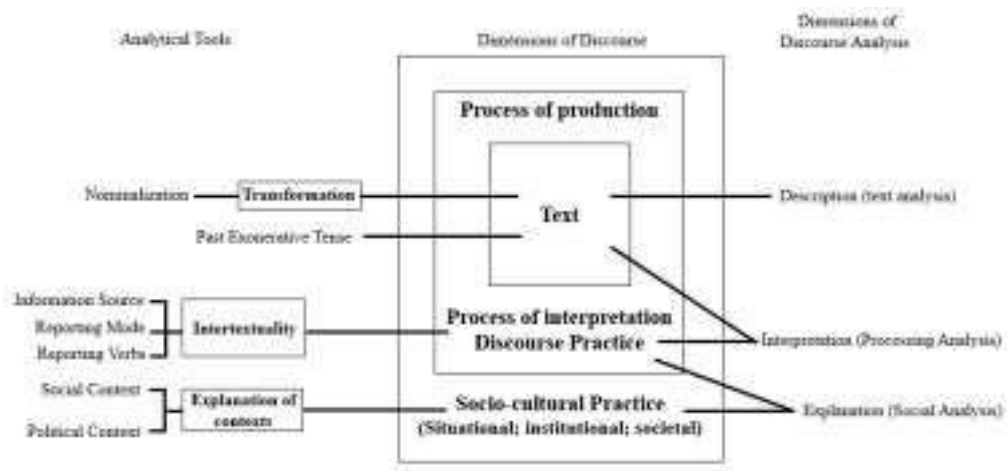
According to Fairclough (1995), intertextuality is the process in which a text is created by reference to other text(s). It mainly involves a source of information, reporting modes, and reporting verbs.

3.8.4 Explanation

According to Fairclough (1989) "explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determinants of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects" (p. 26). Moreover, it takes into account social and political contexts.

Figure 5

The Illustration of the Overall Model is Formed through the Amalgamation of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model and Exonerative Tense



3.8.5 Suitability of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough's three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is perfect for studying how exoneration and nominalization operate in Power Politics, particularly with regard to US Reports on Afghan War, because it offers a deep dive into how language shapes and reflects power. The textual analysis aspect helps us examine specific language features, like Nominalization and Exonerative Tenses, used in these reports. Nominalization can make actions seem less personal and less accountable, which is key in political language. Exonerative Tenses shift blame and

responsibility, showing how language can manipulate the perception of events.

The interpretation and social analysis dimensions help us understand the broader context. Interpretation looks at how the text connects to other texts and how it's received by different audiences. This is important for seeing how these reports fit into wider political and media discourses. Social analysis places everything within its political and historical setting, showing how these reports influence and are influenced by power structures and ideologies. This comprehensive approach reveals not just what is said, but how and why it is said, and its impact on politics and public opinion.

3.9 Data Analysis

As far as data analysis is concerned, the present study is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively, using a mixed-method approach. Firstly, the frequencies of the concerned structures, concordance, POS tags, use of Exoneration and Nominalization are found out. Whereas qualitatively, the found instances from the official reports are analyzed using Furlough's three-dimensional model to show the use of the Exoneration and Nominalization techniques in the context.

In the data analysis process the first step is the conversion of the collected data into a word document, text format, in order to make it compatible with the corpus tools; AntConc. 4.2.4.0. and UAM corpus tools that are used for this study.

The second phase of the data analysis process is the identification of the structures. In this step, the search is carried out through the use of the Clusters function and POS tagging of the tool, along with the identification of passive constructions. These functions are used to figure out the frequencies and distributions of PET structures and Nominalization.

The third phase of the analysis is that of the examination of the structures in the reports. In order to conduct this analysis, the N-grams function of the AntConc program is used: 2-word, 3- word, and 4-word N-grams are sorted, and each sorted occurrence will be analysed manually in order to decide whether they are PET structures or just random co-occurrences. After identifying the structures, the data is discussed and explained using the adopted framework: Fairclough's three-dimensional model.

3.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter explains the data collection process, which leads to the corpus development that is the hallmark of corpus methodology. The corpus incorporates the official reports of the US on the Afghan war. Moreover, the corpus tools that are used in the present study are AntConc. 4.2.4.0. and UAM Corpus Tool for the identification of Nominalization and Exoneration instances respectively. Finally, the chapter provides details on the data analysis procedure, which is conducted in three different stages so as to achieve the research objectives in an organized manner.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

The chapter contains two sections. Firstly, it contains the display of frequency of Nominalized nouns and Exonerative Tense. Secondly, it entails the analysis of Exonerative Tense and nominalized nouns; 20 instance each (40 in total). 05 examples, most significant, are taken from each of the reports of both the concepts for in-depth analysis and to answer the research questions.

4.1 Frequency of Nominalized Nouns

Table 3

Frequency of Nominalized Nouns Repeated More Than Once in the Reports

Nominalized Nouns	Frequency
Assistance	200
Presence	43
Commitment	31
Reconstruction	26
Opposition	22
Deployment	20
Destruction	17
Rehabilitation	11
Bombing	7
Departure	7
Growth	6
Surrender	3
Advancing	2
Devastation	2

The above table exhibits that there are eight nominalized nouns used to a greater extent. Though some nominalized nouns have the high prevalence in the reports, there are other nominalized nouns that have low frequency.

4.2 Frequency of Exonerative Tense

Table 4

Frequency of Exonerative Tense in the reports

Concept	Frequency
Exonerative Tense	36

The table shows that the considered reports contain thirty-six instances of Present and Past Exonerative Tense.

4.3 Analysis of Present and Past Exonerative Tense

Present and Past Exonerative Tenses are the use of present and past tenses while distancing the agent from responsibility for an action. Following are the Identified sentences in the given text:

4.3.1 Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (Published in 2002)

4.3.1.1 Instance

“The Committee has learned that international agencies are not taking narcotics control efforts adequately into consideration in their operations in Afghanistan.” (p. 12).

4.3.1.1.1 Textual Analysis

The text indicates that the Committee has acquired new knowledge. They have learned that international agencies are not sufficiently considering narcotics control efforts in their operations in Afghanistan. The use of the phrase "has learned" suggests a positive aspect of acquiring information, implying that the Committee now possesses awareness that was not present before. According to Fairclough's textual analysis, this specific wording can be seen as a discursive choice that frames the information positively, focusing on the Committee's newfound awareness rather than on any prior negligence by international agencies. The statement, by focusing on the newfound knowledge, does not explicitly attribute responsibility or blame for the previous lack of consideration by international agencies. The positive framing might indirectly exonerate these agencies from prior oversight.

4.3.1.1.2 Processing Analysis.

The discourse reflects a narrative where the Committee is expressing a positive

change in awareness regarding the oversight of narcotics control efforts by international agencies. The shift from not knowing before to now having knowledge implies a positive development in the Committee's understanding of the situation. In Fairclough's discursive practice analysis, the positive tone might downplay or indirectly exonerate international agencies by not explicitly highlighting any fault or accountability for their past lack of consideration.

4.3.1.1.3 Social Analysis.

The broader societal context involves the acknowledgment by the Committee that international agencies need to improve their consideration of narcotics control efforts in Afghanistan. The statement suggests a recognition of the importance of narcotics control efforts and a call for improved practices by international agencies. Fairclough's social practice analysis would note that the lack of explicit blame or responsibility in the statement may contribute to a less confrontational stance, potentially exonerating international agencies from being held accountable for their past shortcomings.

4.3.1.2 Instance

"Nearly \$300 million in FY2002 funding already announced and allocated from existing accounts this fiscal year (including from food aid, development assistance, economic support funds, and other accounts)." (p. 10)

4.3.1.2.1 Textual Analysis.

The text mentions the allocation of nearly \$300 million in funding from various existing accounts in the fiscal year 2002. The funds are already announced and allocated, suggesting a deliberate decision and action in utilizing resources from different accounts. According to Fairclough's textual analysis, the lack of detail on who made the decision obscures accountability, positioning the text as neutral rather than critical. This lack of specificity might contribute to a lack of accountability regarding the responsible parties.

4.3.1.2.2 Processing Analysis.

The discourse conveys a narrative of significant funding allocation from various accounts in the fiscal year. The specific mention of funds being allocated from different accounts implies a strategic decision-making process. Fairclough's

discursive practice analysis might interpret the absence of information about the decision-makers as a means to depersonalize the responsibility and the criteria used for selecting these accounts for funding allocation may contribute to an exoneration of responsibilities.

4.3.1.2.3 Social Analysis

The broader societal context involves the allocation of a substantial amount of funds from various accounts, indicating financial decisions impacting different aspects of society. Fairclough's perspective suggests that the text's lack of transparency limits accountability and reflects power dynamics. The decision to allocate funds from specific accounts could reflect broader economic and policy priorities. Without specifying the responsible individuals and entities behind the decision, the text might contribute to a lack of transparency and accountability in understanding the reasons for the allocation.

4.3.1.3 Instance

"Amounts withheld from an opium producing region by reason of the application of the preceding sentence shall be redistributed to qualifying opium-producing regions." (p. 6)

4.3.1.3.1 Textual Analysis.

Past tense is used in a way to distance the agent from withholding the amount with a reason given that it will be redistributed in a qualified region. The tone is more neutral and information is presented in a general way. The neutral tone suggests an impartial policy.

4.3.1.3.2 Processing Analysis.

The statement also sheds light on framing the policy that the amount is withheld for now but will be redistributed whenever the agent wants. The argument is framed in a neutral way as the amount is withheld but later on promise is made of redistribution to keep the balance. In Fairclough's discursive practice analysis, the generality of the statement suggests a strategy to avoid explicit commitment and responsibility of an action.

4.3.1.3.3 Social Analysis.

The sentence also sheds light on the power dynamics that the US has the

authority of withholding and restarting funds as its will. Thus, turns out to be the dominant force because of having resources and authority. Along with that its belief in nipping the evil in the bud is made prevalent as Afghanistan is one of the major opium producing countries and the US is showing its will to destroy the production by providing funds where needed.

4.3.1.4 Instance

“The witnesses described the immense needs and the desperate situation facing the Afghan people even after their liberation from the rule of the Taliban.” (p. 11)

4.3.1.4.1 *Textual Analysis.*

the sentence is in the past tense which is an attempt of exonerating itself from the current situation of Afghanistan even after the fall of the Taliban. The expression ‘witnesses described’ is showing that the argument is presented in a more general and abstract way as no specific individual is mentioned.

4.3.1.4.2 *Processing Analysis.*

The text shows an act of distancing from the act of liberating the people of Afghanistan from the rule of the Taliban as no one is mentioned that who actually liberated them. Along with that desperate situation of the people is described without mentioning the fact that who is responsible for the desperate and horrible condition of the people. Thus, In Fairclough’s discursive practice analysis, this lack of specificity implies a neutral stance.

4.3.1.4.3 *Social Analysis*

The statement is focusing on the liberation of the people but does not engage in the discussion of the ongoing horrible situation of the people thus possibly showing the desire of overcoming accountability and avoiding responsibility. The dominance is made prevalent by stating the people are liberated but the current situation is presented in a general and abstract with the use of past tense to make it look vague and detach itself from any responsibility and accountability. Fairclough’s perspective suggests that the text’s lack of transparency limits accountability and reflects power dynamics.

4.3.1.5 Instance

Since the fall of the Taliban, USAID has rapidly increased its program and presence, and is now equipping Afghanistan's classrooms and training its teachers, assisting the health system, exploring opportunities to rehabilitate the agriculture sector; and supporting the Interim Authority, by providing technical assistance for the Loya Jirga." (p. 11)

4.3.1.5.1 *Textual Analysis.*

In the given statement the political event of the fall of the Taliban is presented as something that has happened by itself without mentioning the agent who helped or caused the toppling of their government. Along with that numerous positive aspects are mentioned in which development has been made such as in education, agriculture sectors etc. and the credit for these developments is directly assigned to USAID.

4.3.1.5.2 *Processing Analysis.*

The happening of the fall of the Taliban is presented in the historical context and is shown as a blessing with a touch of alienation that after this change in government the country is going in the right direction as development is being made in almost all the key sectors like education, agriculture, health etc. with the help of USAID.

4.3.1.5.3 *Social Analysis.*

The US has presented its role positively framing itself as helping in the reconstruction of the country. Numerous sectors are mentioned which are being developed with the aid of the US thus showing itself as dominant and humanitarian agent by not only showcasing its detachment and alienation with the toppling of the Taliban government but also blaming them indirectly for the destruction of the key sectors. This discursive practice reinforces the US's role as a benevolent power, while socially contextualizing the Taliban as responsible for past destruction, thus manipulating public perception through strategic language use.

4.3.2 Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act of 2007

4.3.2.1 Instance

"...rampant corruption has impeded development and economic growth in Afghanistan and contributed to insecurity in the country." (p. 23).

4.3.2.1.1 Textual Analysis.

The root cause of all the problems of Afghanistan has been assigned to corruption. Present tense is used to pass on the information of what had been the situation of the country. All these issues are linked wisely with corruption without naming the agent and thus exonerating the agent from responsibility and accountability.

4.3.2.1.2 Processing Analysis.

War has devastated the country but all this destruction is blamed on corruption which can be one of the parts of the overall story in a way that none of the agents has been mentioned. Through this discursive practice, according to Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the US subtly shifts the blame for the obstructions in development of the internal administrative failures and financial mismanagement of the government by making the term 'war' abstract as to keep itself detached from the situation, avoiding direct responsibility.

4.3.2.1.3 Social Analysis.

The US has direct military involvement in Afghanistan whereas the Afghan government is assisted and supported in all major departments. Failure in development, economic growth, and lawlessness is blamed on the internal mismanagement. War is not mentioned and that is how the US has kept itself away from the responsibility and has detached itself from the destruction of the country.

4.3.2.2 Instance

"Since the liberation of Afghanistan from the Taliban and al-Qaeda, the country remains highly unstable." (p. 8).

4.3.2.2.1 Textual Analysis.

In the given statement the political event of the fall of the Taliban and the dismantling of Al- Qaida is presented as something that has happened by itself without mentioning the agent who helped or caused the toppling of their government and considers it as liberation of the people instead of invasion. Here intervention is named as liberation instead of invasion. The lexical choice and syntactic structure are used for the desired portrayal of the event.

4.3.2.2.2 Processing Analysis.

The happening of the fall of the Taliban is presented in the historical context and is shown as a blessing with a touch of alienation. After this change in government, the country will be going in the right direction but is now admitting that after the freedom from the Taliban, there still remains instability and uncertainty. Thus the US has detached and positioned itself away from not only the toppling of the Taliban government but also from the instability. Thus, In Fairclough's discursive practice analysis, this lack of specificity implies a neutral stance.

4.3.2.2.3 Social Analysis.

It was assumed that liberation from the Taliban will bring certainty and stability but was wrong. Information is provided without naming or blaming anyone of instability. 'Liberation' is used which carries positive weight, showing positive intent along with showcasing authority and power by admitting the unwanted consequences.

4.3.2.3 Instance

"Since September 11, 2001, after over a decade of neglect by successive Administrations, the United States was compelled to become engaged in the tragic situation in Afghanistan." (p. 2).

4.3.2.3.1 Textual Analysis.

The use of the term 'was compelled' refers that the United States is distancing itself from the war by blaming the external factors that actually such factors compelled it to engage in such a horrible event. The statement shows the inevitability of the involvement in the war by diminishing itself from the engagement. Whereas the phrase 'after over a decade of neglect' suggests that the action is the result of a prolonged inaction rather than immediate reaction. This aligns with Fairclough's textual dimension, where language choices are used to obscure agency and present actions as inevitable or natural.

4.3.2.3.2 Processing Analysis.

Stating a specific historic event of 9/11 provides a firm background with moral and legal support for its engagement in Afghanistan that because of this incident the US is unwantedly dragged into the war. Along with that it can also be noticed that

policy of the US regarding Afghanistan has evolved with time as previous administration avoided direct involvement in Afghanistan whereas the current one has unwisely decided to get engaged in the name of 9/11 attacks. This reflects Fairclough's discursive dimension, highlighting how intertextuality and the selective framing of events can justify and legitimize actions.

4.3.2.3.3 Social Analysis.

The responsibility of the engagement in Afghanistan is diffused and shifted in the name of compulsion. Thus, downplays its responsibility of the action by blaming defense and geo-strategic factors that led it to get involved in Afghanistan. This supports Fairclough's idea that language shapes power relations. It also shows how responsibility is aligned with dominant narratives.

4.3.2.4 Instance

"The attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York, Washington D.C., and the fields of Pennsylvania galvanized the nation into support for Afghan groups opposed to the cruel Taliban regime, which led to its downfall." (p. 2).

4.3.2.4.1 Textual Analysis

The use of the terms 'galvanized' and 'led to its downfall' presents the event as a historical occurrence and detaching it from present responsibility. Along with that using the phrase 'cruel Taliban regime' shows that the regime was not working for the people rather it was cruel. The toppling of the Taliban government is legitimized by calling it cruel and also by mentioning attacks of 9/11. The expression 'galvanized the nation into support' describes the event of toppling the Taliban government by the US as a response of the public because of the mentioned attacks instead of a proactive decision.

4.3.2.4.2 Processing Analysis

The statement gives us an insight of the people of the US that their view point is changed after the attacks of 9/11 and policy of the government has also evolved regarding Afghanistan. The US is also distancing itself from the direct involvement in Afghanistan by giving reasons of their involvement that firstly it's because of the public reaction and secondly the cruelty of the Taliban.

4.3.2.4.3 *Social Analysis*

The statement reveals reasons for supporting groups that are against the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Firstly, the attacks of 9/11 and secondly, the anger of the American citizens. Thus, the responsibility of toppling of the Taliban government is distributed and is made obscure in the discourse.

4.3.2.5 Instance

“Despite a successful start, including the establishment of a strong UN mission, the appointment of an interim government and the legitimate election of a President and a parliament, and the approval and expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) (later taken over by NATO under a UN mandate).” (p. 2).

4.3.2.5.1 *Textual Analysis*

The use of the past tense in the above phrase “progress has declined” is framing the event in historical context. No agent is made responsible that why and who declined the progress. According to Fairclough’s textual analysis, this reflects a discursive choice to omit blame, making the narrative appear more neutral. Along with this, the progress made is mentioned but the word ‘despite’ gives the indication that even a successful start does not help in the continuation of the progress.

4.3.2.5.2 *Processing Analysis*

Numerous happenings are mentioned without mentioning an actor that who has carried them out and whether conducting elections by a foreign country is legal or not. The steps taken towards success are mentioned but no reason is given for the failure and no one is made accountable or blamed for it. According to Fairclough's discursive practice analysis, could be seen as an effort to deflect responsibility.

4.3.2.5.3 *Social Analysis*

Talking about power dynamics that how things have shifted with time like taken over by NATO, conducting elections, and calling a government a legitimate one shows how dominant the US has presented itself that is has the authority of doing so. The narrative seems constructive as all the efforts are mentioned but no one is made responsible for the failures or because of whom progress has been stopped. In Fairclough’s social practice analysis, this narrative can be seen as reinforcing the dominant power of the US.

4.3.3 Afghanistan War Powers Resolution, Congressional Record, 2011.

4.3.3.1 Instance

“The war was as heatedly fought through propaganda and misinformation as it was in the battlefields.” (p. 6).

4.3.3.1.2 Textual Analysis

The statement highlights the intensity of the war which is fought through propaganda and misinformation. Past tense is used in a way that no agents are mentioned that who are indulged in this fierce battle.

4.3.3.1.3 Processing Analysis

The role of propaganda and misinformation has been included which suggest that the war has become more dangerous and violent. The use of past tense also suggests that the analysis has been made after the horrible events have taken place.

4.3.3.1.4 Social Analysis

The statement shows that the role of propaganda has been acknowledged in shaping and propagating ideologies and this is how power struggle continues. Thus, highlighting the role of media that winning war has moved out beyond military institution.

4.3.3.2 Instance

“From 1 January to 31 December 2010, at least 2,421 civilian Afghans were killed and over 3,270 were injured in conflict-related security incidents across Afghanistan.” (p. 7).

4.3.3.2.1 Textual Analysis

The statement presents facts and figures of the death toll of the Afghan civilians during 2010, reflecting Fairclough’s Textual analysis, where the language used conveys the severity and tragic casualties. The information is provided with the use of past tense that Afghans ‘were killed’ and ‘were injured,’ showing that people are killed and no one is made responsible for it.

4.3.3.2.2 Processing Analysis

Vulnerability of the civilians to injuries and killings is evident from the statement, aligning with Fairclough’s discursive practice. Facts and figures are

presented and events are placed in a specific time frame of 2010. Vulnerability of the civilians and lawlessness in the country is made clear and no agent is mentioned to avoid accountability of horrible incidents.

4.3.3.2.3 Social Analysis

Societal and cultural implications and consequences of the war are recognized in the statement, where civilians are at risk and most vulnerable, corresponding to Fairclough's social practice. Thus, admitting the fact that power struggle involves killing of thousands of civilians.

4.3.3.3 Instance

"...safe havens such as the ones they had in Afghanistan when the 9/11 attacks were planned against our Nation and our people." (p. 2).

4.3.3.3.1 Textual Analysis

The statement is written in past tense and responsibility is also evaded by simply stating that 9/11 happened just because safe heavens were provided to the planners in Afghanistan. According to Fairclough's textual level (or description), this analysis focuses on the linguistic choices made in the text. The use of passive constructions like 'were planned' avoids direct attribution of blame. The blame is shifted solely on those who are providing safe heavens. the phrase 'our Nation and our people' establishes a clear in-group identity, creating an us-versus-them dichotomy.

4.3.3.3.2 Processing Analysis

There is an implicit evasion of responsibility of the attack of 9/11 by blaming those who provided safe havens for the planners and attackers. Defending its land is their responsibility but no such thing is mentioned. Thus, shifting the focus to external factors rather than focusing on the internal defense system that failed completely. This aligns with Fairclough's discursive practice level, where the text's structure and omissions guide the audience's interpretation, emphasizing certain elements while downplaying others.

4.3.3.3.3 Social Analysis

The use of rhetorical strategy is widely used in political discourse to deflect blame and responsibility of an action and failures. This discourse helps in shaping the world view of the public and creates a positive image of the national defense policies

and strategies. This reflects Fairclough's social practice level, where discourse not only represents social practices but also actively shapes societal attitudes and power relations, reinforcing dominant narratives.

4.3.3.4 Instance

“Nearly 1,500 US troops have died since the fighting began in 2001.” (p. 2).

4.3.3.4.1 *Textual Analysis*

The statement presents factual claim about the number of soldiers who have lost their life since the beginning of the war in 2001. This linguistic expression does give us any clue that why are they killed and who are the killers.

4.3.3.4.2 *Processing Analysis*

The statement is produced in past tense regarding the killing of soldiers in a way to frame the information as historical fact to overshadow the current situation. The statement does not acknowledge the current and ongoing situation thus downplay the current policies and strategies. Along with that it seems that the statement is made to evade the responsibility of starting the war which was actually started by the United States back in 2001.

4.3.3.4.3 *Social Analysis*

The use of past tense in order to evade responsibility is the part of a broader socio- cultural practice through which information is strategically put in front of the readers to shape their perceptions and opinions. Along with those stating casualties of the past is to impact the public sentiment while mitigating the urgency of addressing current situation.

4.3.3.5 Instance

“Over the weekend, after a NATO bombing killed nine children.” (p. 2).

4.3.3.5.1 *Textual Analysis*

The statement presents information in the past tense that this incident is happened in the past and is now part of history. Along with that NATO is mentioned to consider it a collective action rather than blaming any specific country.

4.3.3.5.2 *Processing Analysis*

The information is provided in a way to frame it a concluding event. It deflects the readers from any ongoing investigations and details of the horrible event. Collective responsibility is taken by mentioning NATO as a whole which is an alliance of 40 countries and thus individual responsibility of event is evaded and no country is blamed for it.

4.3.3.5.3 *Social Analysis*

The event is stated in the past tense to minimize the urgency of taking immediate steps. Along with it the agent is highly generalized and is mentioned collectively so as not to blame any individual for the committed crimes and maintain moral and legal dominancy in the eyes of the public.

4.3.4 Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief (published in May 2022)

4.3.4.1 Instance

“Systems formerly in place to support survivors of gender-based violence have been dismantled.” (p. 7).

4.3.4.1.1 *Textual Analysis*

The text highlights the issue of a social evil, gender-based violence. The term ‘formerly’ shows that a system of gender equality was prevalent but has now been dismantled. Along with that no agent has been mentioned who has dismantled the support system. According to Fairclough’s textual level, the use of such language lacks clarity and avoids accountability.

4.3.4.1.2 *Processing Analysis*

Agent is nowhere present in the text. Doer of the action has been made abstract and is evading responsibility. This lack of clarity of agents who has dismantled the support system is used as discursive strategy to shift focus away from the responsible entities, potentially contributing to a lack of accountability.

4.3.4.1.3 *Social Analysis*

The removal of the support system for the survival of gender-based violence is evident. People are now more vulnerable to this problem as the society now lacks any

system. The change in addressing the social practice of gender inequality is made clear and is indicating fluctuation in policy and priority. The action of dismantling the support system of gender-based violence has not been associated with any agent, keeping the public in darkness. According to Fairclough's social practice level, this discourse not only represents the change in policy but also influencing societal attitudes and power relations.

4.3.4.2 Instance

“in early 2022 that girls’ secondary schools, effectively shuttered in most of the country since the August 2021 takeover, would reopen with the start of the new school year in late March 2022.” (p. 8).

4.3.4.2.1 *Textual Analysis*

The text mentions the issue of closure of the educational system of girls since August 2021. ‘Effective closure’ is the phrase used to highlight a significant obstacle in re-opening of the educational institution. It does not explicitly assign the responsibility of such social issue to any agent and no light has been shed on the takeover in August 2021. Lack of information contributes in evading the responsibility and avoiding accountability of shuttering girls’ educational institution.

4.3.4.2.2 *Processing Analysis*

The narrative clarifies the closure of institutions and shows the anticipation of re- opening after a specific time period. It also shows the change in authority by using the word ‘takeover’ but does not talk about it in detail. There is lack of information as no agent is mentioned because of whom girls’ institutions are closed.

4.3.4.2.3 *Social Analysis*

The change in broader societal context is evident as girls’ educational institutions are closed and expected resumption is shown. Political and social change in the Government authority is made clear. The text doesn't provide insight into the reasons behind the closure and the decision to reopen, potentially contributing to a lack of transparency regarding who is accountable for the disruptions in girls' education.

4.3.4.3 Instance

“During this same period, an elected Afghan government replaced the Taliban

and, with significant US and international support, made modest but uneven improvements in most measures of human development, though Afghanistan remained one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries.” (p. 1).

4.3.4.3.1 Textual Analysis

The use of past tense in the statement such as, ‘replaced, made, and remained,’ indicates that the event is of historical importance. In the beginning credit is taken by saying that Afghan government was established and improvement were made but in the last part no one is credited for making Afghanistan the poorest and most corrupt nation on earth by simply using the word "remained".

4.3.4.3.2 Processing Analysis

The statement does not assign responsibility for keeping and making Afghanistan the most corrupt and poorest nation on earth. In the first part credit has been taken by talking about its support but later on exonerated itself from the vulnerable and devastated situation of Afghanistan. The use of the term "though" implies a concession or acknowledgment of the contradiction between improvements made and the persistent challenge.

4.3.4.3.3 Social Analysis

In a broader social and political context, events are presented historically without blaming anyone for the current situation of Afghanistan. Using the expression "significant US and international support" indicates foreign intervention and credit is taken for the improvements made but later on no one is blamed for the current situation and challenges that Afghanistan is facing.

4.3.4.4 Instance

“The Afghan government against which the Taliban fought was weakened by deep internal divisions, factional infighting, and endemic corruption.” (p. 1)

4.3.4.4.1 Textual Analysis

The statement is written in the past tense showing that the event of weakening of the government has happened in the past and has no current relevance. Reasons behind this failure are mentioned such as ‘internal divisions,’ factional infighting, and endemic corruption. The Afghan government is shown as an independent institution of all the foreign interventions.

4.3.4.4.2 *Processing Analysis*

The Afghan government is foregrounded and is shown an independent and sovereign institution by keeping its support and military alliance aside. It is evident from the statement that only Afghan government was at war with the Taliban and reasons for failure are mentioned such as ‘internal divisions, factional infighting, and endemic corruption’ without stating the fact that Kabul fell to the Taliban because the US ended its support and is blaming only the Afghan government for the defeat.

4.3.4.4.3 *Social Analysis*

The US is exempting itself from the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. The US is blaming the Afghan government solely for the defeat and fall of Kabul to the Taliban so as to maintain its dominancy and supremacy in broader socio-political context.

4.3.4.5 Instance

“The Afghanistan in which the Taliban came to power in August 2021 was in many ways a different country than the one they last ruled in 2001.” (p. 7).

4.3.4.5.1 *Textual Analysis*

The given statement is stated in past tense by exonerating itself from the responsibility of losing Afghanistan to Taliban. It seems that they came to power with no resistance and opposition from the Afghan govt. that was supported and backed by the Allied Forces in general and the US in specific. Along with that a comparison between the Taliban governments back in 2001 and 2021 is made to exempt itself from the responsibility of leaving Afghanistan to the Taliban by considering it different from the one toppled back then. According to Fairclough’s textual level, the choice of tense and language plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative and influencing the reader’s perception of accountability.

4.3.4.5.2 *Processing Analysis*

The event is simply stated, leaving room for interpretation. No such details are given that why the country is fallen to the Taliban without public consent/by any other democratic means. The tone is neutral and descriptive in nature as no one is blamed for the invasion of the Taliban. Comparison is also drawn in a way that gives the indication that the US considers the new Taliban government better than the previous one whom they toppled in the name of terrorism and human rights violation in 2001.

Thus, In Fairclough's discursive practice analysis, this lack of specificity implies a neutral stance.

4.3.4.5.3 Social Analysis

Presenting an event descriptively without taking any side indicates journalistic objectivity or academic neutrality. Neither actual reasons behind this invasion are given nor is anyone blamed for letting the Taliban invade Afghanistan. Thus, the stance of impartiality is evident from the statement as no one is assigned that because of whom Taliban came to power thus exonerated itself. According to Fairclough's social practice level, this approach to discourse shows how language can maintain a neutral tone, subtly shaping audience interpretation.

4.4 Analysis of Nominalization

4.4.1 Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (published in 2002)

4.4.1.1 Instance

“The United States will be required to maintain strategic focus in order to overcome the magnitude of poverty, destruction and economic distress in Afghanistan.” (p. 10).

4.4.1.1.1 *Textual Analysis*

In the given sentence the word ‘destruction’ is used without naming the agent of the action. Destruction, which is nominalized, magnitude of poverty, and economic distress are the expressions indicating the horrible situation of the country. This lack of explicit attribution aligns with Fairclough’s Textual Level, where language choices serve to obscure agency and responsibility

4.4.1.1.2 *Processing Analysis*

The US report is continuously portraying its role in Afghanistan as productive to uplift the situation of a war-torn country. All the major problems that Afghanistan is facing are stated without mentioning the actors because of whom the situation is worst. This omission reflects Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level, where the structure of the text is purposely designed to get the desired results.

4.4.1.1.3 *Social Analysis*

The statement clearly shows the domination of the US that it has got the resources and brain power to set things up. There is a hint of domination and hegemony which are to be perceived. This corresponds to Fairclough’s Social Practice Level, where discourse not only reflects social power dynamics but also reinforces them.

4.4.1.2 Instance

“The United States has an essential role to play in Afghanistan’s recovery from the horrific conflict and devastation of the past 30 years.” (p. 12).

4.4.1.2.1 *Textual Analysis*

The statement explains that Afghanistan was devastated and destroyed in the

time frame of 30 years without naming those who have done all this destruction. The devastation is nominalized as no agent has been named for such a horrible situation. This nominalization obscures responsibility, making the event seem impersonal and detached from specific actors, as noted in Fairclough's Textual Level.

4.4.1.2.2 Processing Analysis

In the above statement 'United States' is highlighted through foregrounding in order to show its positive role in the construction of an already war-torn country. Its devastation has nothing to do with them as they are here to help Afghanistan in recovery. This focus on the US diverts from the destruction's causes, reflecting Fairclough's Discursive Practice Level, where text structure shapes the narrative.

4.4.1.2.3 Social Analysis

It can be found out from the above excerpt that US is far away from the evil of destruction and devastation and really wants to help rebuilding Afghanistan. There exists this sense of alienation, as devastation is not only nominalized but also backgrounded to keep itself away from taking responsibility of such actions. This, narrative, frames the US positively. Thus, distancing it from past harms, reflecting Fairclough's Social Practice Level, which shapes power dynamics.

4.4.1.3 Instance

"...authorizing assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan with a particular emphasis on meeting the educational, health, and sustenance needs of women and children to better enable their full participation in Afghan society." (p. 3).

4.4.1.3.1 Textual Analysis

In this excerpt the words 'rehabilitation and reconstruction' are nominalized without giving any indication towards those who have destroyed it to the core that not only it needs reconstruction but also rehabilitation.

4.4.1.3.1 Processing Analysis

The statement highlights highly productive role of the United States in rebuilding Afghanistan not only its infrastructure but in number of ways. The mentioned departments are used quite thoughtfully as education and health is the basic needs of a modern society.

4.4.1.3.2 Social Analysis

The excerpt reflects the humanitarian nature of the United States that they are really concerned about the horrible situation of Afghanistan and to assist children and women in getting education and health facilities along with others.

4.4.1.4 Instance

“The witnesses described the immense needs and the desperate situation facing the Afghan people even after their liberation from the rule of the Taliban.” (p. 11).

4.4.1.4.1 Textual Analysis

In the given statement word liberation is a nominalized form of the verb liberate. Here the act of liberation is presented as abstract and no actor has been attached to such action that who liberated the people. Whereas ‘needs and desperate situation’ implicitly gives us the indication that the natural outcome of liberation from the Taliban as no one is made responsible for it. According to Fairclough’s Textual Level, this nominalization obscures the agency behind the act of liberation. Thus, detaching responsibility from specific actor.

4.4.1.4.2 Processing Analysis

No agent is made responsible for the desperate situation of the Afghan people after liberation from Taliban. The desperate situation is made evident by stating viewpoints of the people without naming anyone for making situation of the country that worse. This aligns with Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level, where text structure avoids blame, focusing on outcomes rather than the actions behind them.

4.4.1.4.3 Social Analysis

Historical event of toppling of the Taliban government has been mentioned and are linked it with desperate situation of the people. Their government was toppled by the US, but has now marginalized itself, as situation of the people remains the same: desperate and in dire need of assistance. The tone is sympathetic as situation of the people is worst but agent in nowhere mentioned in the text. This reflects Fairclough’s Social Practice Level, where discourse maintains a sympathetic tone, avoids direct responsibility, and distances the US from ongoing problems.

4.4.1.5 Instance

“A description of existing efforts to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the reconstruction assistance.” (p.).

4.4.1.5.1 *Textual Analysis*

Words monitoring, evaluation, and assistance are nominalized without mentioning that who are going to perform all these actions to drive the country on the right track. Agent is not mentioned by clearly stating that such efforts are to be taken for assisting the process of reconstruction.

4.4.1.5.2 *Processing Analysis*

The language is used is quite appealing as all the factors are mentioned through which improvement can be made. Words through which improvement can be achieved are used so as to mention efforts of the US without giving any clue of those because of which Afghanistan needs all these actions to be performed by a foreign country.

4.4.1.5.3 *Social Analysis*

Afghanistan is devastated by war but no historical background is stated that because of this Afghanistan needs assistance. Not only any agent is mentioned for such destruction but also sympathy is shown in terms of assisting the process of reconstruction.

4.4.2 Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act of 2007

4.4.2.1 Instance

“There is an emerging consensus that the opium trade **is** supporting the Taliban insurgents and other terrorist groups and, without a successfully implemented counter-narcotics strategy, our reconstruction programs in Afghanistan will not succeed.” (p. 4).

4.4.2.1.1 *Textual Analysis*

Reconstruction is nominalized in the above sentence which is used and placed quite artistically to project a soft and effective image of showing concern. Other terms like Opium trade and Taliban insurgents are also used to highlight that these are the main reasons behind all the chaos in the country. This nominalization, as noted in

Fairclough's Textual Level, serves to abstract the concept of reconstruction, making it seem like a neutral, unquestionable process.

4.4.2.1.2 Processing Analysis

In the beginning of the construction of the sentence reasons are given of the destruction, mess, and chaos in the countries because of Opium trade and Taliban insurgent. Thus, alienate itself from any involvement of the current situation and blaming only the above discussed reasons. Along with that possessive pronoun 'our' is used with reconstruction program is used to emphasize on its positive role in rebuilding Afghanistan. Fairclough's Discursive Practice Level highlights how such language choices direct focus away from US actions, instead emphasizing its constructive role.

4.4.2.1.3 Social Analysis

The above statement shows alienation of the US by associating the deteriorated situation of the country only to Opium Trade and Taliban Insurgents. Along with that they portray themselves as a concerned only key player in the reconstruction of the country and link their success with the elimination of the above, mentioned, reasons. According to Fairclough, this discourse frames the US as benevolent while downplaying its responsibility, reinforcing power dynamics.

4.4.2.2 Instance

"The findings describe the need for continued commitment from the United States and the international community to support the growth of the Afghan economy, the security of the country through increased assistance to the Afghan army, police, and counter-narcotics forces, and to show a long-term commitment to support the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights in Afghanistan." (p. 9).

4.4.2.2.1 Textual Analysis

The words 'commitment, assistance, and growth' are nominalized for the positive portrayal without mentioning reasons of the deteriorated situation and why such support is required for uplifting the people of Afghanistan. Along with that, adjectives like continued, increased, and long-term are also used to show their firm commitment of uplifting the lives and making life of the people better by ignoring the fact that why their life is so much in chaos. According to Fairclough, these

nominalizations and adjective choices shape the discourse to focus on the positive aspects, avoiding the deeper issues at hand.

4.4.2.2.2 Processing Analysis

The propagation of democratic principles; protection of human rights, etc., is highlighted so as to legitimize its intervention in the affairs of another country and to show their constructive role in improving lives, without mentioning the fact that intervention is both morally and politically wrong and is against democratic principles. It shows that the US has the capacity and will power of transforming not only lives but ideologies of the people through their sheer commitment and will power along with resources. Fairclough's Discursive Practice Level emphasizes how this selective highlighting and omission guide the interpretation towards viewing intervention as justifiable and beneficial.

4.4.2.2.3 Social Analysis

There is a hint of domination overshadowed by humanism that the dominancy is for the welfare of the people all around the globe. This aligns with Fairclough's Social Practice Level, where discourse often masks power dynamics with a veneer of benevolence, portraying domination as a means to achieve global welfare.

4.4.2.3 Instance

"Subsection (a) provides a Sense of Congress that supports ongoing programs to provide assistance to families of Afghan civilians who have suffered a serious loss during military operations carried out by the United States in Afghanistan." (p. 16).

4.4.2.4.1 Textual Analysis

Nominalization, a technique of language manipulation is used to avoid taking responsibility of their wrong doings in Afghanistan by using the term 'assistance'. Other words like innocent Afghans and serious loss of loved ones are used to show sympathy so as to show how much they feel the pain and are really concerned with all this.

4.4.2.4.2 Processing Analysis

The horrific situation and loss of loved ones by the Afghan people are overshadowed by showing apathy through financial assistance without mentioning the fact that everything happened just because of their invasion back in 2001 due to which

millions of people are damaged and displaced along with thousands civilian casualties and the name of military operation is given to it. Thus, wrong doings are mentioned but justified by calling them as military operations.

4.4.2.4.3 Social Analysis

The statement indicates that conducting military operations in foreign country is justifiable and the US has every right to conduct it but in reality, it is not. Thus, showing its dominancy and will power of make look wrong as right and vice versa.

4.4.2.5 Instance

“The rates of recruitment, retention, and absenteeism in the Afghan National Army and the extent to which insurgents have infiltrated such forces.” (p. 17).

4.4.2.6.1 Textual Analysis

Recruitment, retention, and absenteeism are used as nominalized nouns with which only information is provided without pointing out those who are responsible for the presence of such rebels in the Afghan forces. All flaws in the forces are presented by detaching and alienating itself from the Afghan forces.

4.4.2.6.2 Processing Analysis

Issues in the security forces agencies are mentioned so as to blame factors for not achieving set goals of defeating Taliban and strengthening its ally, the Afghan government. Such reasons are made responsible for prolonging its military presence without maintain peace and is making room for military intervention.

4.4.2.6.3 Social Analysis

Evidences and reasons are provided for the failure of the Afghan National Army in maintaining peace and order. The Army is marginalized and is blamed for such unwanted happenings. The statement is made for gaining political gains as Afghan army and security forces are demoralized to legitimize US intervention.

4.4.2.7 Instance

“A plan to identify and implement critical reconstruction programs, by project, including in the areas of security, rule of law, counter-narcotics, power, rural development, education, health, and governance and anti-corruption.” (p. 43).

4.4.2.7.1 Textual Analysis

Identify and implement are the nominalized nouns in the above statement through which agent is made abstract. All major departments are mentioned in which there is the need of foreign assistance but no one is named that who will be going to perform the actions of identification and implementation of the programs.

4.4.2.7.2 Processing Analysis

The statement implicitly gives the indication that all major sectors of Afghanistan are destroyed and is in dire need of foreign assistance. This assistance can also be considered as intervention as certain conditions will be placed upon the receiver. This intervention in major departments is wrapped and presented as providing assistance. Departments regarding military are mentioned first whereas human development programs are discussed after so as to legitimize military interference.

4.4.2.7.3 Social Analysis

A country needs reconstruction after it is destroyed first. Destroyed country leads us to the discussion of reconstruction. The US is shown as a country that has nothing to do with the destruction of the country but it is here just to reconstruct. Assisting the country is a political move as it gives the license of interference because numerous world organizations interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states in the name of financial assistance.

4.4.3 Afghanistan War Powers Resolution, Congressional Record, 2011.

4.4.3.1 Instance

“Of the 66 wounded severely enough to be evacuated overseas in October, one- third lost a limb.” (p. 18).

4.4.3.1.1 Textual Analysis

The information is presented more abstractly without mentioning the doer of the action ‘wounded’ is nominalized through which abstraction is evident. The text presents outcomes rather than naming agents. This aligns with Fairclough’s Textual Level, where nominalization serves to obscure agency, making the situation seem detached from direct human actions.

4.4.3.1.2 Processing Analysis

The statement undermines human aspect by providing only statistics. Along with text clinical information is provided without naming agents. Readers are placed at a distance for the emotional impact of the war and thus creating a sense of objectivity. According to Fairclough's Discursive Practice Level, this distancing effect shapes the audience's interpretation, downplaying the emotional and moral implications of the content.

4.4.3.1.3 Social Analysis

More abstract and formal tone is evident through the use of Nominalization in the text. Agent/ agents are made obscure as no one is made responsible for the injuries of the soldiers' injuries. This reflects Fairclough's Social Practice Level, where the discourse maintains a formal tone, potentially reinforcing power structures by avoiding accountability.

4.4.3.2 Instance

"Wounds to the genitals and lower urinary tract—known as genitourinary injuries—accounted for 11 percent of wounds over the last seven months of 2010, up from 4 percent in the previous 17 months" (p. 18).

4.4.3.2.1 Textual analysis

'Wounds and 'genitourinary' injuries are nominalized. Both phrases make the tone more abstract and formal. Along with that 'accounted for', a passive construction shifts focus from the doer of the action to the result. According to Fairclough's Textual Level, this use of nominalization and passive construction serves to obscure agency and create a more detached tone.

4.4.3.2.2 Processing Analysis

Objectivity and detachment from the action is made through Nominalization and passivation. The text reduces the emotional human aspect categorizing wounds and presentation of the information statistically. Explicit agent is made abstract and direct statistical processing help in explicitly observing what or who caused injuries to the soldiers. Fairclough's Discursive Practice Level suggests that such linguistic choices guide the reader towards a clinical interpretation, minimizing emotional engagement with the content.

4.4.3.2.3 Social Analysis

Both the used techniques serve ideologies functions as it frames information that emphasizing more on statistics as a whole over individual soldiers. The name is also depersonalized and objectified shaping the text to undermine causation and accountability. As per Fairclough's Social Practice Level, this reflects the broader social and ideological contexts that prioritize abstraction and formality, potentially to maintain a distance from the human costs of war.

4.4.3.3 Instance

“After nearly a decade of conflict, political opposition to the battle breaks sharply along partisan lines, with only 19 percent of Democratic respondents and half of Republicans surveyed saying the war continues to be worth fighting.” (p. 2).

4.4.3.3.1 Textual Analysis

In the given statement ‘opposition’ is nominalized to present it more general and abstract idea. Along with that political parties are mentioned without associating opposition of the war with people directly.

4.4.3.3.2 Processing Analysis

Opposition to the war is made abstract and general by mentioning only affiliated members of political parties and minimizes the role of the individuals in surveys. Here the US is trying to hijack the rights of its own people to present itself look good by only talking about those who are in favor of the battle that going on in Afghanistan without mentioning those who oppose it. It is depersonalizing the stance by distributing it across the political spectrum. Thus, the US is supporting the continuation of war through abstraction, generalization, and Nominalization here.

4.4.3.3.3 Social Analysis

Here the US is showing its intent to keep on fighting the battle in Afghanistan by mentioning the fact that all of our actions are supported by the people of the country and make it more collective rather than only an act of few individuals. Thus, the US is presenting itself a highly civilized nation caring about the democratic principles.

4.4.3.4 Instance

“Military commanders expect the United States to have a significant presence in Afghanistan for another eight to 10 years.” (p. 11).

4.4.3.4.1 *Textual Analysis*

‘Presence’ in this sentence is nominalized as it is used as a noun to make the concept more general and abstract. The action is highly generalized to meet the purpose rather than stating the active participation of its military in Afghanistan. Thus, military presence is obscured to justify its active participation in Afghanistan. Fairclough’s Textual Level shows how nominalization here serves to mask the agency and direct involvement of military forces, presenting a more neutral or benign concept of presence.

4.4.3.4.2 *Processing Analysis*

The statement is highly generalized and the action is made more abstract by using the word ‘presence’. The US is portraying itself as a peace keeper by potentially masking the active military involvement in Afghanistan. Thus, strengthening its position and presenting the idea in a way to legitimize the action. According to Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level, this abstract language shapes how the audience perceives the US’s role, framing it as neutral or positive while downplaying the militaristic aspect.

4.4.3.4.3 *Social Analysis*

The statement reflects neutrality of the US that their military has nothing to do with the war rather they are present just to prevail peace and harmony. Along with that Military establishment of both the US and Afghanistan are mentioned that actually they want us to stay for almost a decade. Fairclough’s Social Practice Level highlights how this discourse aligns with broader ideological goals, portraying military presence as benign and widely supported, thereby masking the complexities of military intervention.

4.4.3.5 Instance

“Over the weekend, after a NATO bombing killed nine children, Afghan President Hamid Karzai demanded that international troops stop their operations in our land.” (p. 2).

4.4.3.5.1 *Textual Analysis*

Here in this instance the action of dropping a bomb is made more abstract by using the noun bombing by nominalizing the verb. Thus, the focus is shifted from the agent who has done it to the event that what has happened as the result of the action. The term ‘NATO’ is also of significance as it is a collective term for the alliance of almost 40 countries, depersonalizing the agent. According to Fairclough’s Textual Level, nominalization and the use of collective terms obscure direct responsibility, focusing the narrative on the consequences rather than the perpetrators.

4.4.3.5.2 *Processing Analysis*

The information is presented in a way to make the agent of the action more general and abstract as a face-saving act. No country is blamed for the action rather it is considered as a collective action for which none can be blamed. Along with that the agents are even more generalized by stating international troops. Here it can be said that the US has exempted itself from the action of killing children by sidelining its role. Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level explains how this generalization shifts the audience's perception, reducing the sense of accountability and distributing responsibility across a broader group.

4.4.3.5.3 *Social Analysis*

The US has alienated and detached itself from the action of killing children. Thus, prevailing its moral and political supremacy and dominance all around the globe. Sense of alienation, isolation, detachment, and separation of an action is evident from the instance in order not to avoid taking the responsibility of an unwanted action. Fairclough’s Social Practice Level suggests that this detachment serves to reinforce ideological dominance, ensuring that the US's global image remains untarnished by controversial actions.

4.4.4 Congressional Research Service; Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief (Published in May 2022)

4.4.4.1 Instance

“Much of the development assistance halted with the Taliban’s August 2021 takeover, leading the country’s economy to contract by over 20% in 2021.” (p. 10)

4.4.4.1.1 Textual Analysis

The text is linking the halt in the developmental assistance with the Taliban takeover in 2021, presenting cause and effect relationship. It does not put explicitly responsibility of the action and is naming no agent. The absence of an agent gives us the indication of exoneration from responsibility and avoiding accountability of the halt.

4.4.4.1.2 Processing Analysis

The statement is linking halt in the developmental assistance to that of economic contraction. Cause and effect model is evident: the Taliban's takeover is the cause of economic contraction. No party and agent are made responsible for discontinuation of economic assistance, exonerating those who are responsible for the halt in assistance.

4.4.4.1.3 Social Analysis

The text highlights impact of Taliban's takeover, specifically its impact on economy. This disruption in assistance is because of external factors i.e. Taliban's takeover. No agent is mentioned who made the decision of halting economic assistance, evading accountability.

4.4.4.2 Instance

According to the State Department, the number of US citizens it has identified in Afghanistan has fluctuated in the midst of continued relocations and because of cases in which additional US citizens come forward to ask for assistance to leave.” (p. 8)

4.4.4.2.1 Textual Analysis

Responsibility has not been attributed to anyone for the fluctuation in number of identified citizens of the United States. Information is provided as it happens by itself without blaming anyone for it. Details of the issues in the evacuation process are absent in the text.

4.4.4.2.2 Processing Analysis

Information regarding change in the identified citizens of the US is conveyed. Fluctuation is linked with new assistance request and relocations. The text is not

naming relevant parties for slowing down the process of evacuation. Thus, it is evading agents from potential accountability.

4.4.4.2.3 Social Analysis

In broader context, the text talks about US efforts in tracking down citizen amid evolving and changing situation. A responsive approach of the US government is evident to the problem of fluctuation in the number of US identified citizens amid chaos.

4.4.4.3 Instance

“The deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops...” (p. 1)

4.4.4.3.1 Textual Analysis

Here in this instance the verb ‘deploy’ has been nominalized to ‘deployment’ to manipulate language. Along with it no specific number is given rather hundreds of thousands is used to highlight its military power. Fairclough’s Textual Level illustrates how nominalization and vague quantifiers can obscure agency and emphasize power.

4.4.4.3.2 Processing Analysis

The expression highlights positive aspect of its military operations and actions without mentioning the agent that who is basically behind this illegal military operation. Another thing is that this entire action is taken by the NATO allies: comprised of 40 countries but US is taking all the credit by not mentioning them and by showcasing its power that it has the abilities and capabilities to achieve legal and illegal goals all around the world. Hundreds of thousands of troops does not give specific number rather it shows the huge military power that US is capable of achieving its goals no matter what it takes. Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level explains how such language choices shape public perception, focusing on power and minimizing the role of other actors.

4.4.4.3.3 Social Analysis

The statement shows that the US has the military power and will to do whatever they want to meet their legal and illegal goals in every corner of the world. There is a hint of domination and the expression of hegemonic behavior. Fairclough’s Social Practice Level suggests that this language reinforces US dominance, presenting

its actions as justified and inevitable.

4.4.4.4 Instance

“[T]he surrender or departure of government forces (and the handover of their weapons) with payments or through the mediation of local elders seeking to avoid bloodshed.” (p. 2).

4.4.4.4.1 Textual Analysis

Here, the verbs ‘surrender’ and ‘departure’ have been nominalized and such terms are associated with the government forces. Along with it, mediation, local elders, and avoiding bloodshed are the words that are skillfully without affiliation. Fairclough’s Textual Level highlights how nominalization and the lack of explicit agency obscure the responsibility and the role of external actors.

4.4.4.4.2 Processing Analysis

This instance shows non-affiliation of the US with the government forces as it has set itself aside. The failure of the government forces is solely their loss by not mentioning the fact that these forces are trained and used by them. Along with that the role of locals is mentioned to give itself an edge that forces have decided to surrender just to avoid bloodshed but in fact this was done throughout these twenty years. Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level suggests that the selective representation of events is used to distance the US from the failure, shifting the focus onto local actors.

4.4.4.4.3 Social Analysis

There is the formal proclamation of disunity, division, and detachment of US forces from the government forces as they surrendered without any resistance and fighting. Thus, the US has detached itself from the failure of the government forces to avoid acceptance of failure and portraying the fact that it’s totally their loss. Fairclough’s Social Practice Level illustrates how this narrative reinforces the idea of US dominance and control, deflecting accountability while shaping public understanding of the events.

4.4.4.5 Instance

“Advancing protection of women’s and other human rights has been another major US policy goal in Afghanistan since 2001; the Taliban have taken numerous

actions to roll back those rights since retaking power.” (p. 6).

4.4.4.5.1 Textual Analysis

Here the word ‘Advancing’ is used as a nominalized verb without mentioning the agent as to highlight its positive attitude and role in Afghanistan. Women’s protection is foregrounded whereas the US is backgrounded. According to Fairclough’s Textual Level, this use of nominalization and selective foregrounding/backgrounding serves to shape the reader’s perception, focusing on positive outcomes while obscuring agency.

4.4.4.5.2 Processing Analysis

US has always portrayed itself as the champion of human rights that is why "Advancing protection of women’s and other human rights has been foregrounded. Most of its actions are done under the shadow of human rights protection and violation. Here it is indirectly supporting and proving its invasion valid that it has invaded Afghanistan solely for the sake of protecting human rights whereas people are not safe under the Taliban’s rule. In line with Fairclough’s Discursive Practice Level, the strategic foregrounding of human rights serves to legitimize US actions while backgrounding any critical reflection on those actions.

4.4.4.5.3 Social Analysis

The instance clearly shows benevolence, sympathetic, concerned, and thoughtful nature of the US for the people of Afghanistan to claim its moral right of actions it has taken in the past. It shows domination in terms of morality by portraying itself as the soft power. Fairclough’s Social Practice Level indicates that this discourse is designed to construct a narrative of moral superiority, reinforcing the US’s hegemonic position while framing its actions as ethically motivated.

4.5 Findings

A corpus of more than ninety thousand words has been designed for the conduction of this study. Four relevant official reports, published online by US government on Afghan War between 2001 and 2022, are selected. The collected data is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Both nominalization (164 instances) and exoneration (36 instances) are found and located in the data through corpus tools. The number of possible nominalized nouns and the frequency of each of the nominalized word are given as shown in the figure: 4.1. Following are the most used nominalized words found in the collected data through AntConc. 4.2.4.0:

Table 4

Most Frequently Used Nominalized Nouns

Nominalized Noun	Frequency
1. Assistance	200
2. Presence	43
3. Commitment	31
4. Reconstruction	26
5. Opposition	22
6. Deployment	20
7. Destruction	17
8. Rehabilitation	11
9. Bombing	7
10. Departure	7
11. Growth	6
12. Surrender	3
13. Advancing	2
14. Devastation	2

These 14 instances of nominalized words have been tabled down, leaving others as they are not repeating more than once. It shows that Nominalization which is a language manipulation tool is widely used while stating and sharing information. Such staggering numbers of the use of Nominalization instances in the text reflects its importance and significance. Following are some examples of another language

manipulating technique: Exoneration. These examples shed light on how they have been incorporated while making a discourse in the development of arguments to express ideas in a proper way.

Table 5

Examples of Past Exonerative Tense

1. had in Afghanistan when the 9/11	Were Planned	against our Nation and our
2. past four years, 8,832 civilians	Were Killed	in the conflicts, with civilian
3. Afghan civilians, who, in 2010,	Were Killed	and injured in their homes

Such instances occur less frequently in the discourse but the concept is highly important as horrible incidents are put in front of the readers by distancing itself from the action or actions. The concept of Nominalization has more been used as compared to the Exoneration to make the agent abstract and avoid taking responsibility of an action/actions. Thus, the quantitative analysis shows the number of occurrences of both the concepts of Nominalization and Exoneration that leads us to their importance that such techniques are used while generating a discourse and are of immense importance to consider. Further understanding needs the analysis of the occurrences qualitatively so as to unfold the significance.

The most important occurrence that has been found is that words that are usually used in negative connotation are mostly nominalized. Horrible information is propagated and presented to the readers are propagated through the use of Nominalization so as to detach the agent from the action and to make it look more abstract. Words like poverty, destruction, conflict, deployment, bombing, destruction etc. are mostly used in negative connotation and such words are incorporated and used in the discourse through the technique of Nominalization. Thus, language is designed in a way to use it for achieving the goal of presenting itself in either neutral or positive way by not taking responsibility of the destruction and deplorable situation of the public and country.

In the first report, words widely used in negative connotation such as poverty, destruction, devastation, conflict, surrender, reconstruction etc. is nominalized. These are the nominalized instances which are qualitatively analyzed while the rest of the instances are quantitatively stated without being discussed in detail. Through

such instances the US has positioned itself either neutral or away from the responsibility of the horrific situation of the country. The use of such words describes the actual situation of the country but no agent has been named as if everything has happened by itself and there is no one that can be blamed and made accountable for what the people and the country is going through.

The responsibility of every illegal, unjustified, and immoral action has been avoided. The US has justified its presence in Afghanistan without considering the opposition of its own people against the war in Afghanistan in the report published in 2011 through the use of Nominalization. Opposition, presence, bombing etc. are the words used as nominalized nouns. Information is fabricated as the presence of its military in a foreign land justified that the presence is not what is wanted but it is because the US has been compelled. Along with that opposition of the American people is considered but majority of the people who are against the war are left whereas those are mentioned who are in favor of the war. Wars are fought at the cost of human lives for which those are responsible who are fighting. But here the action of killing of the children is made more general and more of a collective action so as to bypass accountability. Thus, it is found that the use of Nominalization has helped the US in positioning itself detached and pushed away from taking responsibility of such events.

Before the end of war, the US deployed troops in Afghanistan which is presented through Nominalization using the word 'deployment', making the action agentless. Whereas, the war ended in 2022 after a peace deal is finalized and signed in Doha, Qatar between the US and Taliban. The US decided to leave Afghanistan by propagating the idea that the Afghan government and its military is well trained and has the ability to defend itself against the Taliban. But the Taliban has taken over the country in a matter of few weeks. It is found in the report that the surrender of the Afghan forces to the Taliban has been stated by keeping itself at a distance that the surrender or departure (nominalized nouns used in report) is purely the act of the Afghan government and they have nothing to do with it, thus placing blame elsewhere.

Another interesting finding concerning the use of Nominalization is that not only it is used to escape accountability and responsibility but also for portraying its role as positive and effective. The US has made commitments to assist Afghanistan in growing and reconstructing. Commitment, assistance, growth, reconstruction etc. are

used as nominalized nouns to showcase its supportive and constructive role. Its affirmative contribution in the development of a war-torn country has been made loud and clear but no light has been shed on the other way around. Thus, naming no agent responsible for the destruction because of which it needs assistance and help.

Exoneration from responsibilities has been made not only through Nominalization but along with that Instances are found and analyzed of Exoneration through which responsibilities are evaded also. Instances like ‘bombing killed’ and ‘attacks were planned’ are used to pass on information without naming any agent/agents. In both these examples through the use of past tense, responsibility has been evaded. In the first instance bombing is made evident and responsible for the killing of people as it is clear that a bomb cannot explode and kill people on its own. There must be someone who instigate and make this happen. And if we look at the other instance in which it is stated that attacks were planned, it seems that the planning of such a heinous act has been done on its own without mentioning and naming the agent.

Furthermore, withholding financial assistance has also been made through its use without mentioning the fact that who actually withhold the amount. Drugs destroy societies and if financial assistance of stopping the production and distribution of it is curtailed and that too of a country which is going through a worst phase is another sign of danger. But no agent is mentioned that who is withholding the amount and leaving the people of Afghanistan exposed to drugs. It is stated in the reports that ‘amounts withheld’ from opium producing region from which no agent can be identified. Through the use of such technique the US has positioned itself away from the responsibility of such actions so as to influence the readers by playing with language. Not only such evasion is made through the use of past tense but present tense has also been used in order to get away with the blame and to deceive accountability of crimes, errors, and mistakes.

Another interesting fact is found that exoneration from a responsibility can also be made by stating an event happened in the present tense. Since the fall of the Taliban, ‘troops have died’ and ‘progress has declined’ etc. are in examples through which responsibility is evaded. As the government of the Taliban did not and cannot fall on its own, troops did not die in wars without been killed, and no progress means that someone is responsible for declining it. In the above discussed instances, it

is evident that no one is made responsible for toppling the Taliban government, killings of troops, and the decline of the progress.

In few of the found instances, exoneration is either made without naming an agent or has mentioned them through the use of both present and past tense but detaches itself from them. Events are stated like attacks were planned, bombing killed, amounts withheld etc. are instances in which statements are given by making the agent abstract and is nowhere visible in the text. Through the use of such linguistic manipulative technique language is used to hide information by foregrounding the happening. Thus, responsibility of such happenings is evaded quite skillfully through by making the agent invisible through the use of Exonerative Tense. Along with that the same technique is also applied for hiding the agent such as the fall of the Taliban, troops have died, progress has declined etc. through the use of present tense as well.

US has got allies while fighting war with the Taliban. The Afghan government is one of the key allies as it has got the support of the US in key sectors like defense and finance. But when the US decided to leave Afghanistan and Taliban took over Kabul in a matter of few weeks then all the blame was put on others. In stating such events agents are mentioned in a way that it looks their failure totally by detaching its connection to them. When Taliban was attacked the US installed a new administration with its support. The statement made in the reports shows that the Afghan government was the one replacing the Taliban and US had nothing to do that by saying that Afghan government replaces the Taliban. And when the Afghan security forces failed to defend Kabul then Afghan government was blamed for it without stating that the US ended its support and resultantly Kabul went into the hands of the Taliban. Here agent for the action is mentioned and blamed without by detaching itself as it was directly involved militarily in Afghanistan. After that when Taliban took over by conquering Kabul then the event is stated as 'Taliban came to power'. The statement shows that coming of the Taliban to the power has nothing to do with the US and its allies. Thus, it is evident from the above discussion that not only the US has evaded responsibility of its failure but has also blamed others.

4.6 Discussion

The current study expands on the body of research that examines the role of language in shaping political discourse, particularly in the context of US reports on the Afghan War. In this regard, a study by Lingle (2018) has attempted to conduct research on agentless passive structures, Nominalization, and the mystification of the performer of an action. He has noted that using passive constructions by obscuring agents and employing Nominalization has gained significant attention from scholars in critical linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). While Lingle's (2018) study focuses on the mystification of social actors, it does not explore in depth the implications for readers' comprehension or how these constructions influence cognitive processes. This gap is partly addressed in the present study, which aligns with Lingle's (2018) investigation by also examining how linguistic strategies mask agency. However, this study extends the discussion by integrating the perspective of readers' interpretive challenges, particularly in media discourse, as highlighted through empirical testing of comprehension abilities.

Similarly, Trew (1979) has explored passive constructions in headlines, emphasizing how such structures legitimize controversial actions, such as police violence, and obscure agency. Like Trew's (2018), this study identifies the rhetorical power of Nominalization and passivization in framing narratives. However, where Trew's (2018) work is primarily qualitative, this study incorporates quantitative corpus methods to provide a systematic analysis of frequency and concordance, offering a more robust empirical foundation.

Crain et al. (2009) have investigated the development of passive constructions in children, focusing on cognitive processes and linguistic acquisition. While their research is developmental in nature, it underscores the broader significance of passive structures in shaping understanding, which resonates with the present study's exploration of how such constructions affect readers' comprehension in political discourse. This connection bridges the gap between developmental linguistics and CDA, illustrating the cross-disciplinary relevance of passivization. Unlike Crain et al.'s (2009), this research applies these insights to adult comprehension in the area of political texts, emphasizing how linguistic features such as passivization and Nominalization influence cognitive engagement and interpretative accuracy.

Furthermore, Söğüt (2018) has analyzed active and passive constructions in media narratives of the Ankara attacks, which finds ideological manipulation through differential use of these forms. This study aligns with Söğüt's (2018) findings by demonstrating similar manipulative strategies in the US reports on the Afghan War but diverges in its focus on the interplay between Exoneration and Nominalization. While Söğüt (2018) examines ideological framing, this research delves deeper into the erasure of agency and its cognitive implications for readers. Additionally, by integrating the dual concepts of Exoneration and Nominalization, this work broadens the scope of linguistic analysis and offers a more subtle understanding of how these strategies operate synergistically to influence public perception.

Specifically, the theoretical underpinnings adopted in these studies, particularly Fairclough's CDA model and Van Leeuwen's social actor representation, have been pivotal in shaping the methodological approach of the present study. Moreover, this study builds on these foundations by integrating a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative corpus tools with qualitative analysis, thereby filling gaps identified in earlier research. For instance, Koosha and Shams (2005) focus on the binary framing of 'Us vs. Them,' this study explores how linguistic manipulation constructs broader narratives that transcend binary oppositions.

Importantly, this study contributes to the existing literature on linguistic manipulation, which is due to the reason that it highlights how the US government strategically employs Exoneration and Nominalization to shape public perception and evade accountability. This study adds to the critical discourse on linguistic manipulation by providing a detailed, systematic analysis of how language in US reports constructs specific narratives about the Afghan War. To underscore the fact, this study reinforces the significance of CDA in understanding media and political rhetoric and offers new insights into the specific linguistic mechanisms that perpetuate power dynamics in international relations. Ultimately, the findings highlight the subtle ways in which language not only reflects power structures but actively sustains as well as reproduces them in global political discourse.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, it can be said by keeping the above discussion in mind that the US has exonerated itself from responsibilities of mistakes, errors, and failures through the use of a) past tense b) stating a past happening in present tense c) abstracting the agent and d) blaming others by naming them.

Effective communication requires proper understanding of a language. Information is shared and ideologies are propagated through its usage. An event can be stated in more than one way depending on the view point and goal of the speaker or a writer. By achieving the goal of influencing the readers and listeners through language, multiple linguistic techniques are incorporated. Most of the time, these techniques are used by speakers to present themselves positively without accepting blame of any of the wrongdoings. The focus of this study is to analyze and understand the use of two of the linguistic techniques such as Nominalization and Exoneration.

The use of Nominalization and Exoneration has been discussed to understand how the US has positioned itself regarding happening in Afghanistan during its presence in Afghanistan in the official reports. Nominalization is the use of a verb or an adjective as a noun. Words are nominalized so as to make the agent abstract. This technique is used in the reports to detach itself from the happenings and to avoid accountability. Along with that Exoneration, the use of present and past tense to avoid taking responsibility of an action, has also been identified and discussed to understand how facts are fabricated and ideas are distorted to exonerate the responsibility of an action.

When it comes to Exonerative tense, no prominent research has been carried out in this domain to highlight and discuss its role in manipulation and exploitation of language in power politics to avoid taking responsibility and prevailing dominance at the world stage according to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, the current study is a fresh attempt at exploring a new way of manipulation of language in political discourse. Another feature of discussion is Nominalization, using verbs and adjectives as nouns to overshadow the role of an agent. Thus, it is also a prominent technique to remove the agent from the forefront/ surface to hide identity. This technique has widely been used in Eco-linguistics along with its role in the destruction and

preservation of ecosystem. But here it is discussed in order to know how US has positioned itself at a world stage regarding happenings in Afghanistan because of its presence. Both these techniques are to be discussed in order to highlight narratives that how to responsibility of actions, mistakes and miscalculations is avoided. Following are the answers of the research questions:

5.1 Frequency and Distribution

5.1.1 Nominalization

164 instances of nominalization have been identified in the designed corpus. The most frequent nominalized nouns are "Assistance" (200 occurrences), "Presence" (43 occurrences), "Commitment" (31 occurrences), "Reconstruction" (26 occurrences), among others.

5.1.2 Exoneration (PET)

36 instances of exoneration have been found. This involves linguistic constructions that obscure responsibility, such as "bombing killed" and "attacks were planned," where responsibility is minimized or hidden.

5.2 Concordance

5.2.1 Nominalization

Nominalized terms are identified and examined with their surrounding context. It abstracts actions and responsibilities, generalizing and depersonalizing the narrative. For example, terms like "Deployment" and "Surrender" shift focus from specific agents to general actions, thus obscuring direct responsibility.

5.2.2 Exoneration

PET constructions provide a passive-evasive way of reporting events. They shift responsibility away from specific agents by emphasizing the action or outcome rather than who performed it. For example, using phrases like "bombing killed" avoids specifying who conducted the bombing. This reveals that exoneration techniques are used to evade direct accountability and create a narrative that centers on the events rather than the actors.

Nominalization is used more frequently than exoneration. This reflects a

tendency to abstract and depersonalize the language surrounding US actions in the Afghan War, minimizing direct responsibility and focusing on broader concepts or outcomes.

5.3 Positioning through Nominalization

5.3.1 Neutralization and Justification

By nominalizing terms like "Presence," "Assistance," and "Commitment," the US frames its involvement in a neutral or positive light. For instance, "Presence" abstracts the active military involvement, portraying it as a benign or neutral factor rather than an aggressive action.

5.3.2 Positive Portrayal

Words like "Advancing" and "Reconstruction" are used to emphasize positive contributions and downplay the negative aspects of military operations, presenting the US role as supportive and constructive rather than destructive or controversial.

5.4 Positioning through Exoneration

5.4.1 Avoidance of Responsibility

Exoneration techniques obscure the agency involved in actions like bombings and attacks, thus distancing the US from responsibility. The use of passive constructions and agentless statements makes it difficult to pinpoint accountability, reinforcing a narrative that avoids direct culpability.

5.4.2 Blaming Others

The US positions itself as less responsible by attributing negative outcomes or failures to local actors, such as the Afghan government. For instance, describing the Afghan government's failure to defend against the Taliban without acknowledging US support and its withdrawal distances the US from the direct consequences of these failures.

The US government uses nominalization and exoneration to position itself in a way that minimizes accountability and emphasizes a positive or neutral role. Nominalization abstracts and generalizes actions, while exoneration shifts blame and obscures responsibility, thus crafting a narrative that justifies and rationalizes US

actions and policies in the Afghan War.

5.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The study is limited to only 04 reports published by the United States on Afghan war published between 2002 and 2022. A more extensive study would require a larger dataset to provide a deeper understanding of the concepts under investigation. Corpus tools are used while conducting this study. The tools help in finding specific structures which are further analyzed manually. The study is further conducted manually just because of the fact that there is no corpus tool that gives us nominalized and exonerative structures on a single click. Although the study has been conducted carefully, the manual analysis introduces the potential for human error. Along with that, no prominent literature is available on Present and Past Exonerative Tense to develop a firm base for the conduction of the study. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the use and understanding of linguistic manipulation in political discourse, particularly in relation to Exoneration and Nominalization.

The study is unique because the concept of Nominalization is mostly used in the domain of Eco-linguistics and has never been used in the understanding of language in power politics. Along with that exoneration is another concept that has never been explored before. Both these concepts are highly used but no study has been conducted on it so far. And the use of Corpus tools in the conduction of the study makes it more authentic, scientific and interesting.

Future research could explore the role of visual and multimedia elements in official reports, examining how images, graphs, and videos interact with linguistic strategies like nominalization and exoneration to shape narratives. Additionally, investigating the use of these language strategies in real-time media coverage, such as news broadcasts or social media updates, could provide insights into how these techniques are adapted for different platforms and audiences, influencing public perception on a broader scale. Along with that a quantitative analysis across academic genres can also be conducted to determine which genre has high frequency of Nominalization and Exoneration for evading responsibility.

Language is most of the times used to reflect view point both on individual and at a world level regarding a happening. Language plays a vital role in showing the

position of those who are producing it regarding the happening. Fifth generation war is nowadays fought through language as social media is used more than ever before. Thus, careful use of language through social media platforms is the key to influence readers and listeners in an effective way. Along with that, worldly affairs are understood through language as ideas are distorted and facts are fabricated through its use.

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APPENDIX

Report 1 (Published in 2002)

TITLE I—ECONOMIC AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN

SEC. 101. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

Congress makes the following declarations: (1) The United States and the international community should support efforts that advance the development of democratic civil authorities and institutions in Afghanistan and the establishment of a new broad-based, multi-ethnic, gender-sensitive, and fully representative government in Afghanistan. (2) The United States, in particular, should provide its expertise to meet immediate humanitarian and refugee needs, fight the production and flow of illicit narcotics, and aid in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. (3) By promoting peace and security in Afghanistan and preventing a return to conflict, the United States and the international community can help ensure that Afghanistan does not again become a source for international terrorism. (4) The United States should support the objectives agreed to on December 5, 2001, in Bonn, Germany, regarding the provisional arrangement for Afghanistan as it moves toward the establishment of permanent institutions and, in particular, should work intensively toward ensuring the future neutrality of Afghanistan, establishing the principle that neighboring countries and other countries in the region do not threaten or interfere in one another's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence, including supporting diplomatic initiatives to support this goal. (5) The special emergency situation in Afghanistan, which from the perspective of the American people combines security, humanitarian, political, law enforcement, and development imperatives, requires that the President should receive maximum flexibility in designing, coordinating, and administering efforts with respect to assistance for Afghanistan and that a temporary special program of such assistance should be established for this purpose. (6) To foster stability and democratization and to effectively eliminate the causes of terrorism, the United States and the international community should also support efforts that advance the development of democratic civil authorities and institutions in the broader Central Asia region.

SEC. 102. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.

The purposes of assistance authorized by this title are— (1) to help assure the security of the United States and the world by reducing or eliminating the likelihood of violence against United States or allied forces in Afghanistan and to reduce the chance that Afghanistan will again be a source of international terrorism; (2) to support the continued efforts of the United States and the international community to address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and among Afghan refugees in neighboring countries; (3) to fight the production and flow of illicit narcotics, to control the flow of precursor chemicals used in the production of heroin, and to enhance and bolster the capacities of Afghan governmental authorities to control poppy cultivation and related activities; (4) to help achieve a broad-based, multi-ethnic, gender sensitive, and fully representative government in Afghanistan that is freely chosen by the people of Afghanistan and that respects the human rights of all Afghans, particularly women, including authorizing assistance for the rehabilitation

and reconstruction of Afghanistan with a particular emphasis on meeting the educational, health, and sustenance needs of women and children to better enable their full participation in Afghan society; (5) to support the Government of Afghanistan in its development of the capacity to facilitate, organize, develop, and implement projects and activities that meet the needs of the Afghan people; (6) to foster the participation of civil society in the establishment of the new Afghan government in order to achieve a broad-based, multi-ethnic, gender-sensitive, fully representative government freely chosen by the Afghan people, without prejudice to any decisions which may be freely taken by the Afghan people about the precise form in which their government is to be organized in the future; (7) to support the reconstruction of Afghanistan through, among other things, programs that create jobs, facilitate clearance of landmines, and rebuild the agriculture sector, the health care system, and the educational system of Afghanistan; (8) to provide resources to the Ministry for Women's Affairs of Afghanistan to carry out its responsibilities for legal advocacy, education, vocational training, and women's health programs; and (9) to foster the growth of a pluralistic society that promotes and respects religious freedom.

SEC. 103. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 512 of Public Law 107–115 or any other similar provision of law, the President is authorized to provide assistance for Afghanistan for the following activities:

(1) URGENT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.—To assist in meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (A) emergency food, shelter, and medical assistance; (B) clean drinking water and sanitation; (C) preventative health care, including childhood vaccination, therapeutic feeding, maternal child health services, and infectious diseases surveillance and treatment; (D) family tracing and reunification services; and (E) clearance of landmines and other unexploded ordinance.

(2) REPATRIATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS.—To assist refugees and internally displaced persons as they return to their home communities in Afghanistan and to support their reintegration into those communities, including assistance such as— (A) assistance identified in paragraph (1); (B) assistance to communities, including those in neighboring countries, that have taken in large numbers of refugees in order to rehabilitate or expand social, health, and educational services that may have suffered as a result of the influx of large numbers of refugees; (C) assistance to international organizations and host governments in maintaining security by screening refugees to ensure the exclusion of armed combatants, members of foreign terrorist organizations, and other individuals not eligible for economic assistance from the United States; and (D) assistance for voluntary refugee repatriation and reintegration inside Afghanistan and continued assistance to those refugees who are unable or unwilling to return, and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, including those persons who need assistance to return to their homes, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations charged with providing such assistance.

(3) COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS.—(A) To assist in the eradication of poppy cultivation, the disruption of heroin production, and the reduction of the overall supply and demand for illicit narcotics in Afghanistan and the region, with particular emphasis on assistance to— (i) eradicate opium poppy, establish crop substitution programs, purchase non-opium products from farmers in opium-growing areas, quick-

impact public works programs to divert labor from narcotics production, develop projects directed specifically at narcotics production, processing, or trafficking areas to provide incentives to cooperation in narcotics suppression activities, and related programs; (ii) establish or provide assistance to one or more entities within the Government of Afghanistan, including the Afghan State High Commission for Drug Control, and to provide training and equipment for the entities, to help enforce counternarcotics laws in Afghanistan and limit illicit narcotics growth, production, and trafficking in Afghanistan; (iii) train and provide equipment for customs, police, and other border control entities in Afghanistan and the region relating to illicit narcotics interdiction and relating to precursor chemical controls and interdiction to help disrupt heroin production in Afghanistan and the region; (iv) continue the annual opium crop survey and strategic studies on opium crop planting and farming in Afghanistan; and (v) reduce demand for illicit narcotics among the people of Afghanistan, including refugees returning to Afghanistan. (B) For each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2006, \$15,000,000 is authorized to be appropriated to the President to be made available for a contribution to the United Nations Drug Control Program for the purpose of carrying out activities described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A). Amounts made available under the preceding sentence are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes.

(4) REESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD SECURITY, REHABILITATION OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH CONDITIONS, AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE.— To assist in expanding access to markets in Afghanistan, to increase the availability of food in markets in Afghanistan, to rehabilitate the agriculture sector in Afghanistan by creating jobs for former combatants, returning refugees, and internally displaced persons, to improve health conditions, and assist in the rebuilding of basic infrastructure in Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (A) rehabilitation of the agricultural infrastructure, including irrigation systems and rural roads; (B) extension of credit; (C) provision of critical agricultural inputs, such as seeds, tools, and fertilizer, and strengthening of seed multiplication, certification, and distribution systems; (D) improvement in the quantity and quality of water available through, among other things, rehabilitation of existing irrigation systems and the development of local capacity to manage irrigation systems; (E) livestock rehabilitation through market development and other mechanisms to distribute stocks to replace those stocks lost as a result of conflict or drought; (F) mine awareness and demining programs and programs to assist mine victims, war orphans, and widows; (G) programs relating to infant and young child feeding, immunizations, vitamin A supplementation, and prevention and treatment of diarrheal diseases and respiratory infections; (H) programs to improve maternal and child health and reduce maternal and child mortality; (I) programs to improve hygienic and sanitation practices and for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria; (J) programs to reconstitute the delivery of health care, including the reconstruction of health clinics or other basic health infrastructure, with particular emphasis on health care for children who are orphans; (K) programs for housing (including repairing homes damaged during military operations), rebuilding urban infrastructure, and supporting basic urban services; and (L) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed combatants into society, particularly child soldiers.

(5) REESTABLISHMENT OF AFGHANISTAN AS A VIABLE NATIONSTATE.—(A) To assist in the development of the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to meet the needs of the people of Afghanistan through,

among other things, support for the development and expansion of democratic and market-based institutions, including assistance such as— (i) support for international organizations that provide civil advisers to the Government of Afghanistan; (ii) support for an educated citizenry through improved access to basic education, with particular emphasis on basic education for children who are orphans, with particular emphasis on basic education for children; (iii) programs to enable the Government of Afghanistan to recruit and train teachers, with special focus on the recruitment and training of female teachers; (iv) programs to enable the Government of Afghanistan to develop school curriculum that incorporates relevant information such as landmine awareness, food security and agricultural education, human rights awareness, including religious freedom, and civic education; (v) support for the activities of the Government of Afghanistan to draft a new constitution, other legal frameworks, and other initiatives to promote the rule of law in Afghanistan, including the recognition of religious freedom in the constitution and other legal frameworks; (vi) support to increase the transparency, accountability, and participatory nature of governmental institutions, including programs designed to combat corruption and other programs for the promotion of good governance; (vii) support for an independent media; (viii) programs that support the expanded participation of women and members of all ethnic groups in government at national, regional, and local levels; (ix) programs to strengthen civil society organizations that promote human rights, including religious freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of association, and support human rights monitoring; (x) support for Afghan and international efforts to investigate human rights atrocities committed in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime, opponents of such regime, and terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, including the collection of forensic evidence relating to such atrocities; (xi) support for national, regional, and local elections and political party development; (xii) support for the effective administration of justice at the national, regional, and local levels, including the establishment of a responsible and community-based police force; (xiii) support for establishment of a central bank and central budgeting authority; and (xiv) assistance in identifying and surveying key road and rail routes essential for economic renewal in Afghanistan and the region, support in reconstructing those routes, and support for the establishment of a customs service and training for customs officers. (B) For each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2005, \$10,000,000 is authorized to be appropriated to the President to be made available for the purposes of carrying out a traditional Afghan assembly or “Loya Jirga” and for support for national, regional, and local elections and political party development under subparagraph (A)(xi). (6) MARKET ECONOMY. To support the establishment of a market economy, the establishment of private financial institutions, the adoption of policies to promote foreign direct investment, the development of a basic telecommunication infrastructure, and the development of trade and other commercial links with countries in the region and with the United States, including policies to—

Report 2 (Published in 2007)

TITLE I—ECONOMIC AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR AFGHANISTAN

SEC. 101. DECLARATION OF POLICY.

Congress makes the following declarations: (1) * * * * * (4) The United States should support the objectives agreed to on December 5, 2001, in Bonn, Germany, regarding the provisional arrangement for Afghanistan as it moves toward

the establishment of permanent institutions and, in particular, should work intensively toward ensuring the future neutrality of Afghanistan, establishing the principle that neighboring countries and other countries in the region do not threaten or interfere in one another's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence, including supporting diplomatic initiatives to support this goal. (5) The special emergency situation in Afghanistan, which from the perspective of the American people combines security, humanitarian, political, law enforcement, and development imperatives, requires that the President should receive maximum flexibility in designing, coordinating, and administering efforts with respect to assistance for Afghanistan and that a temporary special program of such assistance should be established for this purpose. (6) To foster stability and democratization and to effectively eliminate the causes of terrorism, the United States and the international community should also support efforts that advance the development of democratic civil authorities and institutions in the broader Central Asia region. (4) While the election of a President and the establishment of a National Parliament for Afghanistan concluded the process begun in December 5, 2001, in Bonn, Germany, the United States needs to continue to work with the Government of Afghanistan and other friendly countries to ensure that Afghanistan's neighboring countries and other countries in the region do not threaten or interfere in one another's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence, including supporting diplomatic initiatives to support this goal for the establishment of an independent and neutral Afghanistan. (5) The United States must continue to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the people of Afghanistan by sustained assistance and the continued deployment of United States troops in Afghanistan with the support of the Government of Afghanistan as Afghanistan continues on its path toward a broad based, multi-ethnic, gender-sensitive, and fully representative government in Afghanistan. (6) To foster stability and democratization and to effectively eliminate the causes of terrorism, the United States and the international community should also support efforts that advance the development of democratic civil authorities and institutions in Afghanistan's neighboring countries and throughout the Central Asia and South Asia regions. (7) While rampant corruption has impeded development and economic growth in Afghanistan and contributed to insecurity in the country, the United States should support all efforts to fight corruption in all levels of government in Afghanistan and assist in promoting an efficient and effective Government of Afghanistan.

SEC. 102. PURPOSES OF ASSISTANCE.

The purposes of assistance authorized by this title are— (1) * * * (2) to support the continued efforts of the United States and the international community to address the humanitarian crisis; the continuing humanitarian needs in Afghanistan and among Afghan refugees in neighboring countries; (3) to fight the production and flow of illicit narcotics, to control the flow of precursor chemicals used in the production of heroin, and to enhance and bolster the capacities of Afghan governmental authorities to control poppy cultivation and related activities, and to establish a pilot program to test the effectiveness of a crop substitution combined with an appropriate offset policy and to provide practical information on the measures needed to implement such a policy with the potential of scaling up the pilot program for large-scale deployment; * * * * * (7) to support the reconstruction of Afghanistan through, among other things, programs that create jobs, facilitate clearance of landmines, and rebuild the agriculture sector, the energy sector, the health care system,

and the educational system of Afghanistan; * * * * *

SEC. 103. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President is authorized to provide assistance for Afghanistan for the following activities:

(1) URGENT; CONTINUING HUMANITARIAN NEEDS.—To assist in meeting the urgent; continuing humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (A) * * * * *

(3) COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS.—(A) To assist in; To assist in the apprehension of individuals who organize, facilitate, and profit from the drug trade, the eradication of poppy cultivation, the disruption of heroin production, including the destruction of drug laboratories, and the reduction of the overall supply and demand for illicit narcotics in Afghanistan and the region, with particular emphasis on assistance to— (i) * * * * *

* * * * * (B) To establish a pilot program to test the effectiveness of a crop substitution combined with an appropriate offset to encourage legitimate alternatives to poppy production for Afghan poppy farmers within an area in which poppy production is prevalent, such as in the Helmand or Nangarhar provinces, by providing— (i) seeds for alternative crops for which there is internal market demand and in an areas in which there is adequate infrastructure for access to market; (ii) technical assistance to such Afghan poppy farmers on how to best plant, grow, and harvest the alternative crops utilized; and (iii) an appropriate offset that would significantly address the difference in income that such Afghan poppy farmers would otherwise earn had they continued to grow and sell poppy. (B) (C) For each of the fiscal years 2003 through 2006; 2008 through 2010, \$15,000,000 is authorized to be appropriated to the President to be made available for a contribution to the United Nations Drug Control Program for the purpose of carrying out activities described in clauses (i) through (v) of subparagraph (A). Amounts made available under the preceding sentence are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes. (ii) For each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2010, \$10,000,000 is authorized to be appropriated to the President to carry out activities described in subparagraph (B). (iii) Amounts made available under clauses (i) and (ii) are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes. (D) Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Afghanistan Freedom and Security Support Act of 2007, and every 180 days thereafter through the end of fiscal year 2010, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the status of the implementation of the activities described in subparagraph (B). The report required by this subparagraph may be included in the report required by section 304 of this Act.

(4) REESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD SECURITY, REHABILITATION OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, IMPROVEMENT IN HEALTH CONDITIONS, AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE.— To assist in expanding access to markets in Afghanistan, to increase the availability of food in markets in Afghanistan, to rehabilitate the agriculture sector in Afghanistan by creating jobs for former combatants, returning refugees, and internally displaced persons, to improve health conditions, and assist in the rebuilding of basic infrastructure in Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (A) * * * (B) extension of credit; (B) increased access to credit, savings, and other financial services and to farm management and business advisory services; * * * * * (K) programs to train medical personnel, including doctors, nurses, physicians' assistants, and midwives; (L) programs to provide equipment to primary and secondary clinics and hospitals; (K); (M) programs for housing (including repairing homes damaged during military

operations), rebuilding urban infrastructure, and supporting basic urban services; (L) (N) disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed combatants into society, particularly child soldiers; and (M) (O) assistance in identifying and surveying key road and rail routes that are essential for economic renewal in Afghanistan and the region and support for the establishment of a customs service and training for customs officers; and (P) rebuilding and constructing rural and urban roads and highways, including secondary and tertiary road systems. * * * * *

(5) EDUCATION, THE RULE OF LAW, ANTI-CORRUPTION, AND RELATED ISSUES.—(A) * * * (B) RULE OF LAW.—To assist in the development of the rule

of law and good governance and reduced corruption in Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (i) * * * * * (v) support to increase the transparency, accountability, and participatory nature of governmental institutions, including programs designed to combat corruption and other programs for the promotion of good governance, such as the development of regulations relating to financial disclosure for public officials, political parties, and candidates for public office, and transparent budgeting processes and financial management systems; (vi) support for establishment of a central bank and central budgeting authority; (vii) support for international organizations that provide civil advisers to the Government of Afghanistan; and (viii) support for Afghan and international efforts to investigate human rights atrocities committed in Afghanistan by the Taliban regime, opponents of such regime, and terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan, including the collection of forensic evidence relating to such atrocities; (viii) support for the implementation of the Afghan Action Plan on Transitional Justice, including examination of abuses by all parties as specified by the document with a view to establishing truth, reconciliation, and justice; and (ix) support for land titling programs and reconciliation of land rights.

(C) ANTI-CORRUPTION ASSISTANCE.—To combat corruption, improve transparency and accountability, increase the participatory nature of governmental institutions, and promote other forms of good governance and management in all levels of government in Afghanistan, including assistance such as— (i) providing technical assistance to the Government of Afghanistan to assist in the efforts to ratify the United Nations Convention against Corruption and assistance in creating implementation legislation and a monitoring mechanism to oversee implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption; (ii) supporting the establishment of audit offices, inspectors general offices, third party monitoring of government procurement processes, and anti-corruption agencies; (iii) promoting legal and judicial reforms that criminalize corruption and law enforcement reforms and development that encourage prosecutions of corruption; (iv) providing technical assistance to develop a legal framework for commercial transactions that fosters business practices that promote transparent, ethical, and competitive behavior in the economic sector, such as commercial codes that incorporate international standards and protection of core labor standards; (v) providing training and technical assistance relating to drafting of anti-corruption, privatization, and competitive statutory and administrative codes, and providing technical assistance to Afghan governmental ministries implementing anti-corruption laws and regulations; (vi) promoting the development of regulations relating to financial disclosure for public officials, political parties, and candidates for public offices; (vii) supporting transparent budgeting processes and financial management systems; and (viii) promoting civil society's role in combating corruption.

Report 3 (Published in 2011)

SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN.

Pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)), Congress directs the President to remove the United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan— (1) by no later than the end of the period of 30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted; or (2) if the President determines that it is not safe to remove the United States Armed Forces before the end of that period, by no later than December 31, 2011, or such earlier date as the President determines that the Armed Forces can safely be removed. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 2 hours, with 1 hour controlled by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) or his designee and 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) be allowed to control half of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) will control half the time allocated to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH). There was no objection. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida. b 1100 Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield myself such time as I may consume. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution, as it would undermine the efforts of our military and our international partners in Afghanistan and would gravely harm our Nation's security. Insanity has been described as doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. Three thousand people died on September 11 because we walked away once from Afghanistan, thinking that it didn't matter who controlled that country. We were wrong then. Let us not make the same mistake twice. Completing our mission in Afghanistan is essential to keeping our homeland safe. As Under Secretary of Defense Michele Flournoy stated in testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee earlier this week, "The threat to our national security and the security of our friends and allies that emanates from the borderland of Afghanistan and Pakistan is not hypothetical. There is simply no other place in the world that contains such a concentration of al Qaeda senior leaders and operational commanders. To allow these hostile organizations to flourish in this region is to put the security of the United States and our friends and allies at grave risk." To quit the area before we have routed out the terrorists would not only hand al Qaeda a propaganda victory of immeasurable value, it would cede them a sanctuary from which they could mount fresh strikes at the west with virtual immunity. To withdraw from Afghanistan at this point, before we finish the job, is to pave the way for the next 9/11. Therefore, the question that we must consider is, Can we afford to abandon our mission in Afghanistan? General David Petraeus, commander, International Security Assistance Force, ISAF, commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan, stated, "I can understand the frustration. We have been at this for 10 years. We have spent an enormous amount of money. We have sustained very tough losses and difficult, life-changing wounds. But I think it is important to remember why we are there." This is about our vital national security interests, Mr. Speaker. It is about doing what is necessary to ensure that al Qaeda and other extremists cannot reestablish safe havens such as the ones they had in Afghanistan when the 9/11 attacks were planned against our Nation and our people. The enemy, indeed, is on the run. It is demoralized and divided. Let us not give up now. Let us not betray the sacrifices of our men and women serving in harm's way,

and they ask for nothing in return, except our full support. Dedicated servants such as my stepson Douglas and daughter-in-law Lindsay, who served in Iraq—and Lindsay also served in Afghanistan. Dedicated servants such as Matt Zweig and Greg McCarthy of our Foreign Affairs Committee majority staff, who just returned from serving a year in Kandahar and Kabul. And we thank them for their service. Let us follow the lead of our wounded warriors who, after long and arduous recoveries, volunteer to return to the battlefield to finish their mission. I urge our colleagues to oppose this dangerous resolution. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time. Mr. KUCINICH. I yield myself 2 minutes. In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that the American people oppose this war by a margin of two to one. I will enter into the RECORD this Washington Post poll that was published on March 15 which says that nearly two-thirds of Americans say the war isn't worth fighting. In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that we are spending \$100 billion per year on this war. There are those who are saying the war could last at least another 10 years. Are we willing to spend another \$1 trillion on a war that doesn't have any exit plan, for which there is no timeframe to get out, no endgame, where we haven't defined our mission? The question is not whether we can afford to leave. The question is, can we afford to stay? And I submit we cannot afford to stay. In the next 2 hours, we are going to demonstrate that the counterintelligence strategy of General Petraeus is an abysmal failure, and it needs to be called as such. So I want to conclude this part of my presentation with an article by Thomas Friedman in The New York Times, which says, "What are we doing spending \$110 billion this year supporting corrupt and unpopular regimes in Afghanistan and Pakistan that are almost identical to the governments we are applauding the Arab people for overthrowing?" [From The Washington Post, Mar. 15, 2011] POLL: NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS SAY AFGHAN WAR ISN'T WORTH FIGHTING (By Scott Wilson and Jon Cohen) Nearly two-thirds of Americans now say the war in Afghanistan is no longer worth fighting, the highest proportion yet opposed to the conflict, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. The finding signals a growing challenge for President Obama as he decides how quickly to pull U.S. forces from the country beginning this summer. After nearly a decade of conflict, political opposition to the battle breaks sharply along partisan lines, with only 19 percent of Democratic respondents and half of Republicans surveyed saying the war continues to be worth fighting. Nearly three-quarters of Americans say Obama should withdraw a "substantial number" of combat troops from Afghanistan this summer, the deadline he set to begin pulling out some forces. Only 39 percent of respondents, however, say they expect him to withdraw large numbers. The Post-ABC News poll results come as Gen. David H. Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Afghanistan, prepares to testify before Congress on Tuesday about the course of the war. He is expected to face tough questioning about a conflict that is increasingly unpopular among a broad cross section of Americans. Petraeus will tell Congress that "things are progressing very well," Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said Monday. But because of battlefield gains made by U.S. and coalition forces since last year, Morrell told MSNBC, "it's going to be heavy and intensive in terms of fighting" once the winter cold passes. The poll began asking only in 2007 whether the Afghan war is worth fighting, but support has almost certainly never been as low as it is in the most recent survey. The growing opposition presents Obama with a difficult political challenge ahead of his 2012 reelection effort, especially in his pursuit of independent voters. Since Democrats took a beating in last year's midterm elections, Obama has appealed to independents with a middle-of-the-road approach to George W. Bush-era tax cuts and budget

negotiations with Republican leaders on Capitol Hill. He called a news conference last week to express concern about rising gasoline prices, an economically pressing issue for many independent voters. But his approach to the Afghan war has not won over the independents or liberal Democrats who propelled his campaign two years ago, and the most recent Post-ABC News poll reinforces the importance of Republicans as the chief constituency supporting his strategy. The results suggest that the war will be an awkward issue for the president as he looks for ways to end it. Nearly 1,500 U.S. troops have died since the fighting began in 2001. During his 2008 campaign, Obama promised to withdraw American forces from the Iraq war, which he opposed, and devote more resources to the flagging effort in Afghanistan, which he has called an essential front in combating Islamist terrorism targeting the United States. After a months-long strategy review in the fall of 2009, he announced the deployment of an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan—taking the total to more than 100,000—and a July 2011 deadline for the start of their withdrawal. The number of respondents to the PostABC News poll who say the war is not worth fighting has risen from 44 percent in late 2009 to 64 percent in the survey conducted last week. Two-thirds of independents hold that position, according to the poll, and nearly 80 percent said Obama should withdraw a “substantial number” of troops from Afghanistan this summer. Barely more than a quarter of independents say the war is worth its costs, and for the first time a majority feel “strongly” that it is not. Obama, who met with Petraeus on Monday at the White House, has said he will determine the pace of the withdrawal by assessing conditions on the ground. At the same time, U.S. and NATO forces have come under sharp criticism from the Afghan government. Over the weekend, after a NATO bombing killed nine children, Afghan President Hamid Karzai demanded that international troops “stop their operations in our land,” a more pointed call than previous ones he has made following such deadly NATO mistakes. The telephone poll was conducted March 10 to 13 among a random national sample of 1,005 adults. Results from the full poll have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. The survey also asked respondents to assess Obama’s performance in managing the political changes sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa. Overall, 45 percent of respondents approve of his handling of the situation, and 44 percent disapprove. In Libya, where Moammar Gaddafi is battling a rebel force seeking to end his 41-year rule, Obama is under increasing pressure to implement a no-fly zone over the country to prevent the Libyan leader from taking back lost territory and to protect civilians from government reprisals. Nearly six in 10 Americans say they would support U.S. participation in a no-fly zone over Libya, the poll found, despite recent warnings from Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates that doing so would be a “major operation.” But the survey found that American support dips under 50 percent when it comes to unilateral U.S. action, as Democrats and independents peel away. When told that such a mission would entail U.S. warplanes bombing Libyan anti-aircraft positions and “continuous patrols,” about a quarter of those initially advocating U.S. participation turn into opponents. After a meeting Monday with Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Obama said, “We will be continuing to coordinate closely both through NATO as well as the United Nations and other international fora to look at every single option that’s available to us in bringing about a better outcome for the Libyan people.” In general, Americans do not think that the changes in the Middle East and North Africa will prove beneficial to U.S. economic and security interests. More than seven in 10 respondents said demonstrators are interested in building new governments, although not necessarily democratic ones. Almost half of those surveyed view the turmoil as

undermining the United States' ability to fight terrorist groups in the region. [From the New York Times, March 6, 2011] THE \$110 BILLION QUESTION (By Thomas L. Friedman) When one looks across the Arab world today at the stunning spontaneous democracy uprisings, it is impossible to not ask: What are we doing spending \$110 billion this year supporting corrupt and unpopular regimes in Afghanistan and Pakistan that are almost identical to the governments we're applauding the Arab people for overthrowing? Ever since 9/11, the West has hoped for a war of ideas within the Muslim world that would feature an internal challenge to the violent radical Islamic ideology of Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. That contest, though, never really materialized because the regimes we counted on to promote it found violent Muslim extremism a convenient foil, so they allowed it to persist. Moreover, these corrupt, crony capitalist Arab regimes were hardly the ideal carriers for an alternative to bin Ladenism. To the contrary, it was their abusive behavior and vicious suffocation of any kind of independent moderate centrist parties that fueled the extremism even more. Now the people themselves have taken down those regimes in Egypt and Tunisia, and they're rattling the ones in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Oman and Iran. They are not doing it for us, or to answer bin Laden. They are doing it by themselves for themselves—because they want their freedom and to control their own destinies. But in doing so they have created a hugely powerful, modernizing challenge to bin Ladenism, which is why Al Qaeda today is tongue-tied. It's a beautiful thing to watch. Al Qaeda's answer to modern-day autocracy was its version of the seventh-century Caliphate. But the people—from Tunisia to Yemen—have come up with their own answer to violent extremism and the abusive regimes we've been propping up. It's called democracy. They have a long way to go to lock it in. It may yet be hijacked by religious forces. But, for now, it is clear that the majority wants to build a future in the 21st century, not the seventh. In other words, the Arab peoples have done for free, on their own and for their own reasons, everything that we were paying their regimes to do in the "war on terrorism" but they never did. And that brings me back to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last October, Transparency International rated the regime of President Hamid Karzai in Afghanistan as the second most corrupt in the world after Somalia's. That is the Afghan regime we will spend more than \$110 billion in 2011 to support. And tell me that Pakistan's intelligence service, ISI, which dominates Pakistani politics, isn't the twin of Hosni Mubarak's security service. Pakistan's military leaders play the same game Mubarak played with us for years. First, they whisper in our ears: "Psst, without us, the radical Islamists will rule. So we may not be perfect, but we're the only thing standing in the way of the devil." In reality, though, they are nurturing the devil. The ISI is long alleged to have been fostering anti-Indian radical Muslim groups and masterminding the Afghan Taliban. Apart from radical Islam, the other pretext the Pakistani military uses for its inordinate grip on power is the external enemy. Just as Arab regimes used the conflict with Israel for years to keep their people distracted and to justify huge military budgets, Pakistan's ISI tells itself, the Pakistani people and us that it can't stop sponsoring proxies in Afghanistan because of the "threat" from India. Here's a secret: India is not going to invade Pakistan. It is an utterly bogus argument. India wants to focus on its own development, not owning Pakistan's problems. India has the second-largest Muslim population on the planet, more even than Pakistan. And while Indian Muslims are not without their economic and political grievances, they are, on the whole, integrated into India's democracy because it is a democracy. There are no Indian Muslims in Guantanamo Bay. Finally, you did not need to dig very far in Egypt or Jordan to hear that one reason for the rebellion in Egypt and protests in

Jordan was the in-your-face corruption and crony capitalism that everyone in the public knew about. That same kind of pillaging of assets—natural resources, development aid, the meager savings of a million Kabul Bank depositors and crony contracts—has fueled a similar anger against the regime in Afghanistan and undermined our nation-building efforts there. The truth is we can't do much to consolidate the democracy movements in Egypt and Tunisia. They'll have to make it work themselves. But we could do what we can, which is divert some of the \$110 billion we're lavishing on the Afghan regime and the Pakistani Army and use it for debt relief, schools and scholarships to U.S. universities for young Egyptians and Tunisians who had the courage to take down the very kind of regimes we're still holding up in Kabul and Islamabad. I know we can't just walk out of Afghanistan and Pakistan; there are good people, too, in both places. But our involvement in these two countries—150,000 troops to confront Al Qaeda—is totally out of proportion today with our interests and out of all sync with our values. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH), the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution, and I do so as one who does firmly believe that we need to, as soon as we responsibly can, end our military engagement in Afghanistan. The cost is very real. I represent Joint Base LewisMcChord, which includes Fort Lewis Army Base, and we have lost many soldiers in Afghanistan. The families understand the cost. We need to wind down this war as quickly and as responsibly as we can. Unfortunately, this resolution does not give us the opportunity to do that. And we have clear national security interests in Afghanistan. While I may agree with many of the statements about the troubles and challenges that we face in that region, the one thing that you will hear today that I cannot agree with is the idea that we have no national security interests in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or that we somehow do not have a clear mission. We have a clear mission. We do not want the Taliban and their al Qaeda allies back in charge of Afghanistan or any significant part of Afghanistan from which they could plot attacks against us, as they are still trying to do in the parts of Pakistan that they are in. We need to get an Afghanistan Government that can stand up, and they are going to need our help to get there. Now there are many who have argued—and I am sure some on both sides of the aisle would be sympathetic with the notion that we need to reduce our commitment there—that a full-scale counterinsurgency effort, or 100,000 U.S. troops and 150,000 NATO and U.S. troops combined, is too much. Let's go with a much lighter footprint. Many have advocated that. Focuses on counterterrorism, focuses on going after the terrorists, and allows the Afghans to take the lead on everything else. And there is a plausible argument for that. This resolution does not allow that. I want the Members of this Chamber to understand this resolution requires complete withdrawal of all U.S. forces by the end of this year. And I can tell you, as the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, that is not in the national security interest of this country. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired. Mr. BERMAN. I yield the gentleman 1 additional minute. Mr. SMITH of Washington. We may have a legitimate debate about what our presence should be, how we should change it, but the notion that we can simply walk away from this problem, as Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN pointed out, is simply not true. And it is a problem that, believe me, I, as much as anyone in this body, would love to be able to walk away from. It is an enormous challenge. And what Mr. Friedman has to say about the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan is spot on.

Report 4 (Published in 2022)

Introduction

The aftershocks of the Taliban's August 2021 return to power continue to reverberate in Afghanistan and the United States alike. This report provides background information and analysis on developments in Afghanistan and implications for U.S. policy, including the Taliban's government and the impact of their rule on terrorist groups, human rights, and the ability of U.S. Afghan partners to leave the country; regional dynamics; and the intersecting humanitarian and economic crises facing the country. The report also provides information on legislation and other congressional action related to Afghanistan. The challenge at the heart of many U.S. policy debates over which Congress has influence (including humanitarian assistance, U.S. sanctions, and the status of U.S.-based central bank assets) is how to prioritize and, if possible, reconcile two U.S. interests: supporting the Afghan people and refraining from bolstering the Taliban's rule.

Background: Taliban Takeover

The chapter of Afghan history that ended in 2021 arguably began in 2001, when the United States, in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, led a military campaign against Al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban government that harbored it. In the subsequent 20 years, the United States suffered thousands of military casualties in Afghanistan, mostly at the hands of the rising Taliban insurgency, and Congress appropriated over \$146 billion for reconstruction and security forces there. During this same period, an elected Afghan government replaced the Taliban and, with significant U.S. and international support, made modest but uneven improvements in most measures of human development, though Afghanistan remained one of the world's poorest and most corrupt countries. At the outset of 2021, the Afghan government was a close U.S. counterterrorism partner, the result of nearly 20 years of substantial U.S. and international support, including the deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops and the provision of tens of billions of dollars in assistance. President Donald Trump had withdrawn all but 2,500 U.S. troops, the lowest U.S. force level since 2001, in advance of the full military withdrawal to which the United States agreed in the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement.¹ U.S. officials committed to continue to provide financial support to Afghan forces and expressed confidence about their capabilities vis-a-vis the Taliban, while conceding that those forces remained reliant on U.S. support.² At the same time, the Taliban were arguably at their strongest since 2001, when they were driven from power by U.S., international, and U.S.-backed Afghan forces, having steadily gained territory and improved their tactical capabilities over the course of their resilient two-decade insurgency. The Afghan government against which the Taliban fought was weakened by deep internal divisions, factional infighting, and endemic corruption, and Taliban forces enjoyed certain advantages over their Afghan government counterparts, including greater cohesion and financial sustainability, according to one January 2021 outside assessment.³ Several weeks after President Joseph Biden confirmed that international forces would depart Afghanistan by the fall of 2021, Taliban forces began a sweeping advance that captured wide swaths of the country's rural areas, cementing the group's hold on some districts in which it already had a significant presence. The Taliban's seizure of other districts was more significant: some northern areas had successfully resisted the Taliban militarily when the group was in power in the 1990s, making their rapid 2021 fall to the Taliban particularly significant.⁴ The speed of the Taliban's

advance reportedly surprised even some within the group, with one commander saying that his forces were intentionally avoiding capturing provincial capitals before the scheduled departure of U.S. forces.⁵ The Taliban's advance was secured through both combat and negotiation. While the Taliban faced stiff, if ultimately unsuccessful, resistance from government forces in some areas, others were taken with minimal fighting.⁶ In many of these areas, the Taliban reportedly secured the surrender or departure of government forces (and the handover of their weapons) with payments or through the mediation of local elders seeking to avoid bloodshed.⁷ The Taliban captured their first provincial capital on August 6, after which the collapse of the Afghan government and its security forces accelerated. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, whose seven-year tenure was characterized by electoral crises, pervasive corruption, and the gradual deterioration of Afghan forces, fled the country on August 15 and reportedly remains, as of November 2022, in the United Arab Emirates.⁸ Taliban fighters began entering Kabul that same day, taking effective control of the country.

Taliban Government

On September 7, 2021, the Taliban announced a “caretaker government” to rule Afghanistan. The Taliban refer to their government, as they have for decades referred to themselves, as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.⁹ The Taliban, who did not enact a formal constitution during their 1996- 2001 rule, have said they intend to govern according to Islamic law (sharia) but have not, per a June 2022 U.S. State Department report, established “a clear and cohesive legal framework, judicial system, or enforcement mechanisms.”¹⁰ Haibatullah Akhundzada, Taliban leader since the 2016 killing of his predecessor in a U.S. drone strike, holds supreme power as the group's emir. He has made few reported public appearances and only one photograph of him is known to be publicly available.¹¹ Nearly all members of the government are former officials from the Taliban's prior rule or longtime loyalists. All are male, the vast majority are ethnic Pashtuns (Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, which represents a plurality of the population), and most are from southern Afghanistan. Over half were, and remain, designated for terrorism-related U.S. and/or U.N. sanctions, including the Acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani. The U.S. Department of State has for years offered a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to the arrest of Haqqani, who is the head of the Haqqani Network, a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) that is responsible for numerous attacks against U.S. and other international targets in Afghanistan. In the initial days of the transition, some observers had speculated that the Taliban might reach out to former Afghan government officials or to others from outside the movement as part of the Taliban's promise to establish an “inclusive government.” The Taliban have not, however, reached beyond their own ranks to fill government positions and are reportedly staffing ministries with military and/or religious figures with little relevant experience, exacerbating the group's administrative challenges and some internal tensions.¹² Some reports since the Taliban takeover have indicated dissension in the group's ranks along various lines. While the Taliban have a history of effectively managing internal disputes, governing Afghanistan presents new and unique challenges to the group's consensus-based decision-making.¹³ Points of tension reportedly exist between members of the group's political wing (such as Baradar) and its military leaders (such as the Haqqanis) over who deserves the most credit for the group's victory;¹⁴ between a leadership that seeks stability and rank and file fighters who are struggling to adjust to post-conflict life;¹⁵ and between those

with different ideological perspectives and ethnic identities.¹⁶

Current and Potential Opposition

While the Taliban's August 2021 takeover was swift, its triumph, according to many analysts, did not reflect massive popular support for the movement so much as a lack of support for the former government.¹⁷ Many elements of Afghan society, particularly in urban areas, appear to view the Taliban with skepticism, fear, or hostility, and small numbers of Afghans have demonstrated nonviolently to advocate for their rights and express opposition to the Taliban.¹⁸ The Taliban appear to have monitored most protests, and violently dispersed some.¹⁹ The Taliban face organized armed opposition from two very different quarters. The first is the National Resistance Front (NRF), made up of figures aligned with the former Afghan state. NRF leaders have appealed for U.S. and international support and have retained Washington, DC-based representation.²⁰ They have not won public backing from any foreign countries, perhaps due to the Taliban's relatively stronger military position and closer Taliban ties with regional powers, including some that formerly supported Taliban opponents in the 1990s, such as Russia and Iran. The NRF has claimed numerous attacks against Taliban fighters, mostly in and around the central province of Panjshir, but it is difficult to assess the veracity of such claims, which the Taliban dismiss as "propaganda."²¹ Still, the NRF does not appear to have either the military capabilities or the broad-based public support that would likely be necessary to seriously threaten the Taliban's position.²² An arguably more potent armed threat to the Taliban is the local Islamic State affiliate (Islamic State-Khorasan Province, ISKP, also known as ISIS-K), a longtime Taliban adversary. ISKP has opposed the Taliban since its 2015 establishment, viewing the Taliban's Afghanistan-focused nationalist political project as counter to the Islamic State's universalist vision of a global caliphate. Since the Taliban takeover, ISKP's ranks have swelled to as many as 4,000 fighters despite a concerted Taliban offensive, and ISKP has claimed responsibility for a number of major attacks in 2022 (many targeting Afghanistan's Shia minority, the Hazaras).²³ Experts disagree about the potency of the ISKP threat and the Taliban's self-asserted ability to counter the group without external assistance.