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Article:	**US Foreign Policy and Iconization of A Terrorist Through Hollywood Films: A Content Analysis of Afghan and Iraq War in Pre & Post 9/11 Movies (1995 To 2015)**
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Abstract

The study is about the cinematic representation of war on terror and explores the relationship between Hollywood productions and US foreign policy. It includes 14 Hollywood productions for cinema screen regarding Afghan and Iraq war during the era of 1995 to 2015. Content analysis of selected movies is done to find out how the 'Other' characters are presented on screen. The observation concludes that the Hollywood has hand in gloves with Washington to propagate the state agenda throughout the world. The image of enemy on cinematic screen is shaped and reshaped following the patterns which suit the US government as obvious in the case of Afghan and Iraq war. It is also found that the terrorist Middle Eastern and Afghan Muslim characters are mostly non-uniformed, covered head, armed, veiled, wearing upper/ jackets and wear in formal dresses. Moreover, they are iconized as animalistic, uncivilized, aggressor and have no family roles. On the contrary, the 'Other' characters which are supportive to American army are mostly presented as un-barbaric, civilized, defender and having family roles and they are mostly uniformed.

Keywords*:* Hollywood, "Other" Characters, US foreign Policy, War on Terror, Cinematic Representation.

Introduction

Movies have great impact on human brain and behavior. They can change or alter the overall human behavior or opinion about some particular aspects or agendas of life. Movies are also made to incorporate some new ideas or purpose in existing set of believes. With reference to a terrorist portrayal through Hollywood movies/films, it is observed that the heroes of past have turned into villains of today. This image shift has motivated the researcher to explore this aspect of dream machine i.e. Hollywood.

The states contact the media to propagate their foreign policy and to make their deeds legitimate. The US can be affirmed to be the country that uses this technique frequently (Deger, 2011).

Many studies are substantiating that Hollywood remains in relation and is continuously influenced by different state agencies particularly by the CIA. Academic discussions on semiotic propaganda appears to be entirely retrospective and whilst many commentators have directed the attention of public towards Hollywood longstanding and open relationship with the Pentagon, as such our study is exploring the field of what Pieter Dale Scott "Deep Politics"; namely the activities that cannot be understood comprehensively in the recent time due to the hidden hands of shadowy power players (Cunninghm, 2014).

The media help people to shape opinion by telling them current development and enable them to read the international scenario and foreign policy of different countries (Ridzuan, Abdul Rauf , 2014).

Selected Movies

A long list of war movies, are available but the defined era and category, mostly includes the major theme of the study, are focused here. Following movies are selected purposively and observed by the researcher for studying according to research questions.

Green Zone, Lone Survivor, Lions for Lambs, United 93, Executive Decision, American Sniper, Three Kings, The kingdom, A Mighty Heart, Zero Dark Thirty, Jarhead 2, Stop-Loss, Body of Lies, The Hurt Locker (www.imdb.com).

Rationale of the Study

Referring to "a terrorist" depiction in Hollywood, it is seen that the American cinema has been depicting a terrorist throughout the Bi-Polar clash. With the breakdown of USSR, world entered into a phenomenon called War against Terrorism. This image-shift triggers researcher's mind to study and analyze the process of iconization which at times, has taken 180 degree shift.

Objectives

- The objective is to get the understanding why and how cinema makes and breaks the image of a terrorist.
- The purpose is to read the cinema screen of Hollywood with reference to American foreign policy and how much useful it has been.
- The goal is to read the psychological warfare of US government through film lens.
- The purpose is to study the portrayal of supposed enemy of America in Hollywood movies after 9/11 with special reference to movies regarding Afghan and Iraq War.
- It is also part of this research to examine screen presentations of terrorist and their conduct in Hollywood movies.

Research Questions

R1: To what extent does Hollywood iconize the image of a terrorist?
R2: How does Hollywood construct and break the image of a terrorist?
R3: Does Hollywood works as a mouth organ of American foreign policy?

Literature Review

US foreign policy throughout the history is not the same. Chomsky (2005) narrates that it is widely believed that the US foreign policy moves between the two doctrines or

conflicting ideologies as <u>w</u>ilsonian idealism with noble intentions and sober realism which is a hurdle in the way of the good intentions.

The US had always been the symbol of terror and fierce actions that caused a lot of damage since 1947 and this had always been carried out at the name of freedom, enhancement of democracy and justice (Mayor, 2001).

These are the international business corporations and business interests which influence the experts who decide the foreign policy as per their own interests and public opinion does not make much difference for the policy makers (Jacobs, 2005).

Hollywood and Washington have shared the marriage of convenience for nearly a century. The politics of cinema is a demonstration of an apolitical action, based on which there is an outbreak of flu, in the market, based on the control of contexts and the ability to transmit the policy explicitly in the field (Giglio, 2007).

Four hundred films were annually being produced and released and more than 4 billion tickets were being sold during the World War 2 (Bottomore, 2007).

Hollywood cinema and US government enjoyed a close relationship to gather the public around the desired policy. The nature of relationship between USA and USSR decided the screen representation of US foreign policy and discourse of Hollywood films in the Cold War era (Sengul, 2005).

The terrorism was not the phenomenon for which September 11 incident paved the way, because terrorism primarily was fuelled by religious activism of 1980s; but it is an obvious truth that representation of Muslim in Hollywood was more negative than pre 9/11 images of the screen. Furthermore, he tells that the continuous development of Middle Eastern terrorists in films circumfuse almost ten years before 9/11. He founds that the instant years after 9/11 witnessed the Cinematic representations of Muslim terrorists as positive individuals who were misguided by religious fanatics and the years after 2007, Hollywood imaged these terrorists as self-interested and willful participants of extremism (Reid J. W., 2013).

Reid J.W. (2015) elaborated that onscreen Muslim villains are dangerous, unsympathetic individuals full with revenge and hatred have no regards for innocent people even. Post-9/11 films portrayed Muslims as inherently innocent and misguided individual whose harmful act is not in willingly done. The villain of this era was given some sorrowful past and back story to alleviate the severity of the extremity. However, from 2007 onwards, Hollywood screen was moving the same pre 9/11 images of jihadists who were agents of Islamic militancy.

The Agency worked with Hollywood clandestinely in the Cold War era to show capitalist ideologies more pleasant to international viewers and in the Post-Cold War and Post-9/11times, the CIA changed its onscreen outlook and working pattern with Hollywood for its image building. The shift in Hollywood policy of CIA was to reassure the Americans that the agency still have a vital role in Post-Soviet era (Jenkins, 2009).

The global power system is on the route of anti-Americanism to Post-Americanism and mentions that the reports of 2006 and 2007 listed 124 countries including more than 30 countries in Africa, had been progressing at pace of 4 percent a year (Zakaria, 2008).

The US army manually defines the terrorism mentioned in Middle East Illusions of Noam Chomsky of 2003 as:

Terrorism is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature……through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear (Kaysen, 2003).

The desires can be shaped, directed, and redirected through the images. The wish for Mercedes and heroic presentation does not born with the child but the social advancement is reason behind it. Through social and cultural beliefs, desire is managed. The US was missing

the focal point after the collapse of Soviet and found the new enemy to fulfill the national interests due to the war on terrorism. The images of terrorists were shadowed after the iconic figures of Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin laden. These terrorists cannot be figured out as per nationality; however, they are ethnically Middle Eastern. The political necessity produces images of the enemy in our News, literature, and films that strengthen the sense of nationalist adherence by simplifying and accumulating the different threats (Hulsey, 2005).

All parties in modern warfare realize that the media is vital in the battlefield for propaganda and as a battleground to "win hearts and minds." (Zelizer, Stuart Allen and Barie, 2004).

Films before 9/11 and post 9/11 portray the pictures of Muslim terrorists differently. Even the discourse analysis of films post 9/11 further divides this image building process. The films before 2007 are a bit sympathetic towards the Muslim terrorists screen images and portrayal but there is a shift again in Hollywood policy regarding this visual presentation of terrorists (Reid J. W., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Propaganda Model

After twenty years of Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's originally proposed Propaganda Model, many theorists state that the model can be seen more broadly to comprehend political discourse (Herman and Chomsky 2002).

Herman (2003) and Chomsky (2006) opine that their Propaganda Model could be used for wide range. Alford (2008) proposed 'Hollywood Propaganda Model' which have its root in the original Propaganda Model, telling us why films avoid to challenge what is said 'bounds of the expressible' about the role of US in the international politics.

There are five filters in the model;

- Ownership concentration
- Advertising as a source of income.
- The control of the government on the source of information.
- The powerful players who can issue flak.
- A prevailing concept of a superior 'Us' versus a backward 'Them'– which provides the selected truth and information best suited to the established powers (Herman and Chomsky,2002).

To check this theory, the researcher watched mainstream Hollywood films that depicted the invasion of US forces overseas. It was observed that there were number of films that actively affirmed the legitimacy of US war against officially announced enemies which is contradictory to the oft-cited posture of Hollywood as 'anti-American' (Alford 2008, 2011).

The model can be applicable if each filter is checked for appropriateness before criticizing the original model and, especially, its derivative.

Application of Propaganda Model

From above given discussion, it is obvious that the Propaganda model has its application on film message. Each and every filter in the original Propaganda Model has some sort of relevancy towards Hollywood. Since the Hollywood Propaganda Model provides a satisfactory clarification for the conventional nature of Hollywood cinema, therefore, it would in fact be useful for knowing the parameters of the debate about the war on terror declared by President Ronald Reagan in 1985 and given a reboot by the Bush administration in 2001. But, here in this study, the researcher would apply only the 5th filter and will see who is constructed as the "Other" through film lens in the recent era or how a terrorist/enemy of American seems to be on film screen.

Method

Content analysis has been selected as the best-suited method for this research work. The primary data regarding US foreign policy of intervention post 9/11 will be obtained through the policy statements and speeches of President Bush. So content analysis of different Hollywood films related to Iraq and Afghan war will be done to conduct this study.

Universe

The Universe of this research comprises of Hollywood movies based on the subject of War against terror released for the era of January 1995 to Decamber 2015. These movies include fictional and drama thriller only. Researcher has selected fourteen movies randomly from the list of films released during the said era.

The sources such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) as well as additional online reviews are employed for exclusion and inclusion of these movies. *IMDB* is the largest, most comprehensive, well-known, and publicly available database of motion pictures available at this time (imdb.com, 2009). The final sample (N = 14) is exhaustive and time-bound as it represents the known major motion pictures relevant to the subject from 1995 to 2015 and thus constitutes a sample population.

Time Frame

The selected era for the said study starts from January 1995 to December 2015 that starts from the immediate years before 9/11 and ended 14 years era after 9/11. Immediate years after and before 9/11 are fourteen years having seven years before and seven years after 9/11. The last seven years include years from 2009 to 2015 when the Iraq and Afghan wars were in their prolonged phase with no end in sight.

Unit of Analysis

In this research the units of analysis are:

- Characters other than American.
- Other Characters' Appearance.
- Conduct of Other Characters.

These Categories have been developed to assign the specified codes to visual content.

Coding Categories

Mostly characters are identified as supportive and non-supportive. The "Character Appearance" unit of analysis has been further divided into 3 sub categories i.e. dress, get up and residence or hideouts and these 3 subcategories are further divided. In the same way the conduct unit of analysis is further divided in 4 sub categories as barbaric/non-barbaric, civilized/uncivilized, aggressor or defender and family role.

Coding Unit of Analysis

This study focuses the images of characters other than American to study the patterns of image construction or depiction of enemy through visuals of movies produced by Hollywood.

Contextual Unit of Analysis

In the current research study the whole movie is the contextual unit of analysis.

Data Collection

The data required for the research study was being collected by the researcher himself through a well-designed coding sheet.

Statistical Analysis

Statistics are used to explain and analyze the data collected. Statistical analysis would be more helpful to furnish the conclusive statements and to answer the research questions.

Data Presentation

The data is presenting after applying the statistical analysis and different charts, graphs and tables are drawn.

Results

The study of selected movies tells that Hollywood cinematic screen provides a lot of material which is supportive to US foreign policy. Hollywood represents the terrorists' images to shape the viewer's opinion suitable to American government interventionist policy. Graphical presentation of data and statistical tests concludes that the 'Other' characters in selected movies are mostly non supportive and terrorists. They do not wear uniforms and wear informal dresses as Shalwar/Qameez and pent shirts. They are veiled, covered head, beard and armed persons living mostly in urban area. The data says that these 'Other' characters mean terrorists are barbaric, aggressor, uncivilized and have no family roles. The detailed description and explanations is provided in below mentioned graphical presentation and statistical analysis.
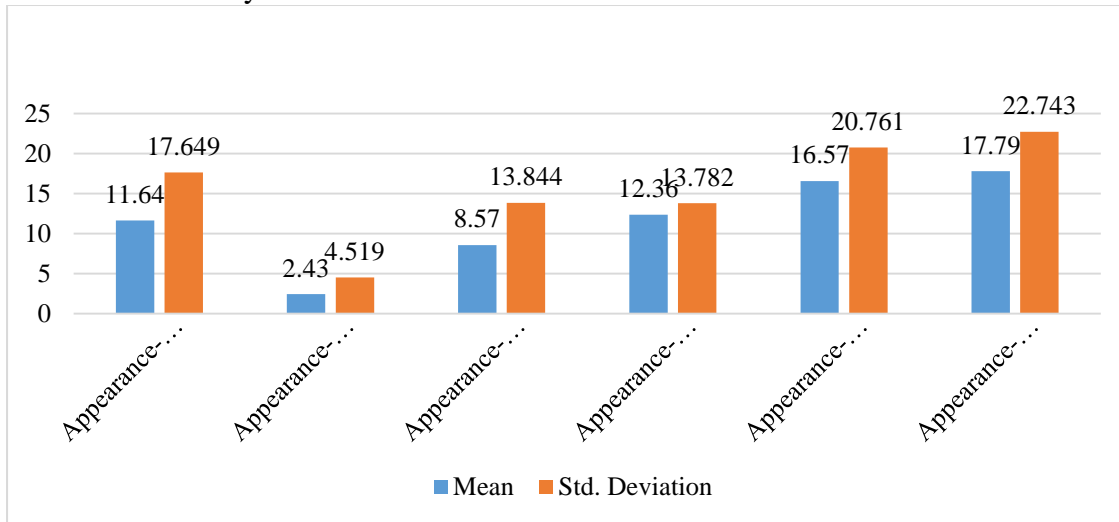

Figure.01: Appearance Projecting Terrorists through Dress Code

Graphical description shows appearance of characters in movies through dress codes. Categories of un-uniformed dress codes are Shalwar/Qameez, Pent Shirts, Turban and Caps etc. Graph shows other characters in Shalwar/Qameez are 11.64 while pent shirts are 12.36. The mean of turban caps is 8.57 whereas this value in characters wearing upper and jackets is 16.57. In veil scarf characters' value is 17.79. The mean of uniformed (other characters) is 2.43 that is significantly very low as compare to un-uniformed. On average value shows characters of terrorists are mostly un-uniformed in movies.
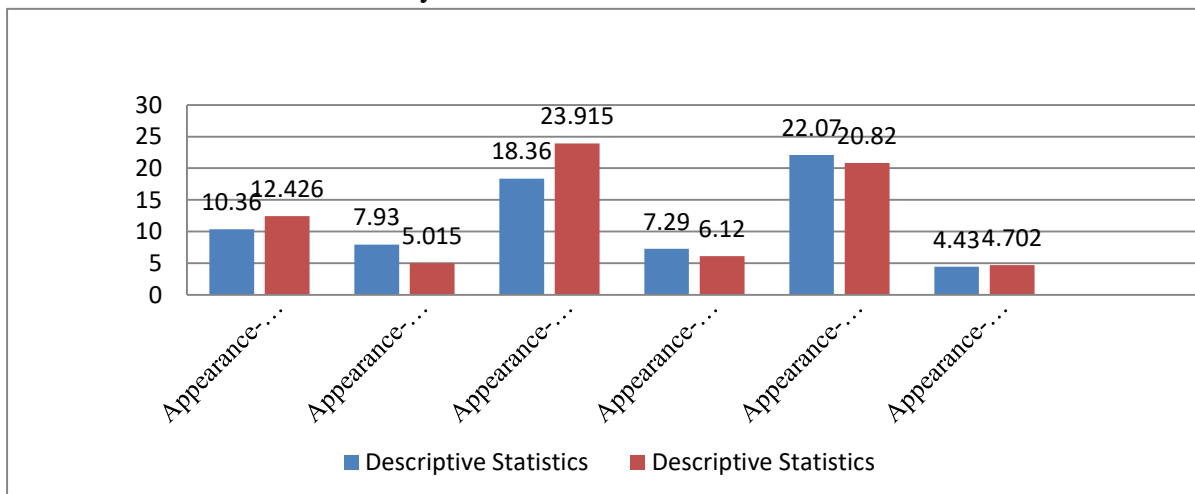

Figure 02: Appearance through getup

Graph indicates the descriptive statistics of appearance getup of other characters in movies. The mean of beard/un-beard are 10.36 and 7.93 consecutively, covered head and un-covered head are 18.36 and 7.29. Similarly mean of armed and un-armed are 20.07 and 4.43. Consequently it shows that the characters with beard, covered heads and arms are more in numbers than un-beard, un-covered heads and un-armed characters.

Table 01: Conduct of "Other" characters

	Descriptive Statistics	
	Mean	*Std. Deviation*
Conduct-Barbaric	19.93	20.356
Conduct-Un-barbaric	6.5	5.215
Conduct-Civilized	3.93	4.548
Conduct-Uncivilized	22.5	21.378
Conduct-Aggressor	22.93	20.503
Conduct-Defender	2.86	3.278
Conduct-Family Role	1.93	2.336
Conduct-No Family Role	24.21	18.721

Table of conduct of "Other" character is barbaric/un-barbaric, civilized/un-civilized, aggressor/defender and their family roles. The numbers of "Other" characters showing barbaric, un-civilized, aggressor and no family role conduct are more than those who are un-barbaric, civilized, defender and having family role.

Table 02: Residence of "Other" characters

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Hill Areas	5	35.71429	35.71429
Plains	7	50	50
Hill & Desert	1	7.142857	7.142857
Hill & Plain	1	7.142857	7.142857
Total	14	100	100

Descriptive statistics shows the residence/hide outs of other characters in movies. It is obvious that the most of characters are living in hilly areas and plains.

Statistical Analysis
Table 03: Supportive and Non supportive
Test Statistics[b]

	Number of Non-Supportive Characters - Number of Supportive Characters
Z	-2.860[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.004

A Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the appearance of supportive and non-supportive characters, z= -2.54, p =0.004. The mean of non-supportive characters (21.86) was significantly greater than the mean of supportive characters (5.00).

Table 04: Armed and Un-armed
Test Statistics[b]

	Appearance-Getup-Unarmed - Appearance-Getup-Armed

Z	-2.512^{a}
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.012

A Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the appearance getup armed and appearance getup unarmed, z= -2.512, p =0.012. The mean of appearance getup armed (22.07) was significantly greater than the mean of appearance getup unarmed (4.43).

A Chi-square signed rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the rural residence and urban residence, X2= -1.143, p =0.285, that was significantly less than the p-value (0.5).

Table 05: Barbaric and Un-barbaric

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Conduct-Barbaric - Conduct-Un-barbaric	13.429	21.550	5.760	0.986	25.871	2.332	13	0.036

A paired sample T-test was conducted to evaluate the conduct of other characters scoring on barbaric un-barbaric, t= 2.332, sig. (2-tailed) =0.036 that is less than p-value. The mean of barbaric (19.93) was significantly greater than the mean of un-barbaric (6.50).

Table 06: Civilized and Uncivilized

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences						
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Conduct-Civilized - Conduct-Uncivilized	-18.571	23.167	6.192	-31.948	-5.195	-2.999	13	0.010

A paired sample T-test was conducted to evaluate the conduct of other characters scoring on barbaric un-barbaric, t= 2.999, sig. (2-tailed) =0.010 that is less than p-value. The mean of un-civilized (22.50) was significantly greater than the mean of civilized (3.93).

Table 07: Aggressor and Defender

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
				95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the			Sig. (2-
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	tailed)
Conduct-Aggressor - Conduct-Defender	20.071	20.749	5.545	8.091	32.052	3.619	13	0.003

A paired sample T-test was conducted to evaluate the conduct of other characters scoring on barbaric un-barbaric, t= 3.619, sig. (2-tailed) =0.003 that is less than p-value. The mean of aggressor (22.93) was significantly greater than the mean of defender (2.86).

Table 08: Family Role

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

	Conduct-No Family Role - Conduct-Family Role
Z	-3.297[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001

A Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the conduct family role and conduct no family role, z= -3.297, p =0.001. The mean of no family role (24.21) was significantly greater than the mean of family role (1.93).

Table 09: Appearance Covered and Uncovered Head

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

Test Statistics[b]

	Appearance-Getup-Un-Covered Head - Appearance-Getup-Covered Head
Z	-.881[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.378

A Wilcoxon signed rank test revealed a statistically significant difference between the appearance getup covered head and appearance getup uncovered head, z= -0.881, p =0.378. The mean of appearance getup covered head (9.5) was significantly greater than the mean of appearance getup uncovered head (5.5).

Summary and Discussion

Since the World War II, 9/11 has been a significant event that has an influence on the people worldwide particularly on the Western populace. These 9/11 attacks may not be proved a change point in terrorism from politically motivated activities to religion based terrorism but they have changed the cinematic depiction of terrorists, and afterwards, viewers' perceptions about them. The people who were watching news coverage of September 11 attacks at televisions, perceived these scenes as part of the promotion trailer for a Hollywood production, therefore, from the very first moment a strong relation has been built up between the Western cinematic screens and public perceptions of these attacks (Reid J. W., 2013).

This research finds cinematic presentation of terrorism in Hollywood films and examines the way the "Other" characters in films are constructed as enemy to justify the American policy to the public through conduct, roles, story plot and appearance. Following weeks of the September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush made many speeches to the nation. His speeches carry stereotypical portrayals of Arabs and Muslims as evil, barbaric, bloodthirsty and animalistic terrorists. Bush's speeches starting from his public statements on September 11, 2001, till the January 29, 2002. State of the Union address, carries the same enemy image as constructed in the films and media.

This study approves the Bush's verdict as terrorist conduct shown in films is barbaric and uncivilized. The observations substantiate that they are aggressor and have no family role. Research question about American cinema as mouth organ in US foreign policy gets answer in affirmation. On September 20, 2001 Bush addressed the joint meeting of congress and while answering his question who attacked us? He clearly said that all past terrorist activities are done by some Arab groups and clearly pointed out Taliban as evil doers. Bush stated in his speech of September 21, 2001:

Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated (Editors, 2019).

The "Other" that these movies bring forward is different from the past as that they were German, Japanese, Russian and the Communists in last century but recently they are terrorists. The movies about Afghan war carry the images of terrorists having turban on head with veil and scarf, carrying arms, wearing upper or jackets mostly with Shalwar/Qameez. The terrorist characters in Afghan war movies are seen wearing trousers and un-beard a lot of time but only in those movies which carries story plot regarding Pakistani part of this war. The terrorists images are shaped in these movies are constructed mostly as they look alike the iconic figures of Osama Bin Laden, Mulla Umar, and Taliban leadership of Afghan ethnicity. The Iraqi chapter of this war against terror carries the portrayal of terrorist mostly same in appearance with same getup but changed a little bit in dressing and ethnicity as they are Arabs. The terrorists in Iraq war movies are covered head mostly having veil but wears trouser shirts. They are armed and also wear upper or jackets mostly. Terrorist characters who are seen beard in Afghan war movies have a bit longer or thick beard than those of Iraq war movies. The difference between the number of beard and un-beard terrorist characters is phenomenal and not signified because the most of the terrorists in movies are veiled, therefore, they can't be identified as beard or un-beard. But the trend in depiction of major characters leads towards the assumption that they must be mostly beard (Totman, 2009).

This study also concludes that the Hollywood movies not only propagating the American-stance after 9/11 but also tilting the lenses towards the biased images of war. The study approves the stance of Reid J. W (2015) that immediate Post-9/11 films portrayed Muslims as misguided individual whose harmful act is not willingly done till the first movie United 93 which directly discussed 9/11.This era also have very less number of movies or even movie scenes which are directly discussing or representing the war against terror or 9/11. However, from 2007 onwards, Hollywood was depicting the same pre 9/11 images of jihadists as presented in Executive Decision and Three King who were agents of Islamic militancy because America decides to prolong war in Afghanistan and Iraq as Harlow (2009) mentions that the intentions of President Obama are clear that the U.S. foreign will be assertive, when he says, "*we are ready to lead once more.*"

Conclusion

The Hollywood propaganda movies are pro American and propagate the American stance on War against terror. If the American want that the NATO must evacuate the Iraq, the Green Zone is there to tell that there are no weapons of mass destruction. The American

officials and Army officers are depicted superior and willful man with heavy deployments and portrayed more brave, sympathetic, full with nationalism and responsible with family roles. The screens of Hollywood movies always portray negative images of Muslims suitable to American foreign policy as the American movies are seen worldwide, therefore, these movies are used as a psychological war tool throughout the world for American leadership role and acceptance for interventions on international fronts. The Muslims characters in Hollywood movies are depicted derogatory, as they are hated by audience and get no sympathies that leads the audience towards negative images of Muslim suitable to American agenda in real life . To conclude, a mutual relationship exists between Hollywood and American government, through this cinematic presentation, the government tries to construct its identity and gets approval for its actions to be legitimized; while Hollywood does not present the reality in actual but a pseudo reality.

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