



## Electoral Politics and Voting Behavior in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Comparative Analysis of ANP Vote Bank in 2008 and 2013

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**Abstract:** This paper endeavors to identify the level of difference in electoral politics of Awami National Party on account of vote bank received in general elections 2008 and 2013. The elections act as a bridge between political elites and common people, between polity and society, between individuals and state and democratic governance. The data collected for research with the objective is to compare the results of ANP in 2008 and 2013 general elections and were comparatively analyzed on the basis of certain reasons due to which ANP vote bank led towards downfall as compare to PTI in KP region. The unresolved socio-economic issues of common man, party mismanagement, politics of kinship and ethno-national feelings of ANP impacted the electoral results of the party inversely in 2013 election despite of political achievements post 2008 election and so voters opted for other options in elections of 2013.

**Key Words:** Awami National Party, Election, Vote Bank, National Assembly, Provincial Assembly Electoral Results, KP

### Introduction

Good democracy can be founded if it has a well-organized structure with functional capabilities along with codified rules and regulations depending upon the will of people who are acquainted with their rights and duties and only then the tensions between competitive claims of different groups would be mediated, uniformity and ideas of collectivism for national cohesion and solidarity will be ensured (Kubiak, 1992). In a democratic set up, besides, civil and political rights in which the citizens may contribute in the political life to safeguard diversity, pluralism and the right to think differently especially in heterogeneous societies through holding meetings, forming associations and political parties, there are some other rights as well, called 'Third Generation Rights' like the 'Right to Development' with a sense to reduce the gap which make the rich and poor apart from each other (Mor, 1998). One of the peculiarities of democracy is that it endeavors for devolution of power from central to regional and local level necessitated not only by the people but by the state as well for broadening the base of public participation in state affairs. Due to difference in demographics, economies and geographic locations, peculiar equipment is required to be established as social security, economic development and recognition of specific identity groups are the rights of all federating units. Political parties are vital components of a democratic political system. Democracy, Parliamentarianism and working federalism can flourish only if there is a functional political party with efficient leadership.

Electoral success in a democratic system on the one hand is the primary objective for any political party which entitles the party to dominate the government or make a coalition and enacts its proposals for which it was or is committed in order to achieve its goals (LaPalombara, 1974). On the other hand, election is scale that points sentiments of masses towards any specified party, leader or ideology and resulting manifesto An objection over the political parties is that they do not represent the general masses but social and economic classes in society as very few percent of voters belong to any national or regional party and

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those who are the members usually come in (middle or upper - middle income brackets) who are comparatively educated and have the view that they have at stake in the political process (Michels, 1978).

ANP, a Pakhtun nationalist party, originates its electoral support solely from the Pakhtuns, though the party offers membership statewide but its iron-grip is the Pakhtu-speaking section of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During last general elections of National Assembly (2008–2013), its electoral support has rotated around 20–25% of the votes in Pakhtun belt of KP. However, it couldn't appeal the non-Pakhtun electorate of Hazara region. The party had stable electoral support between 1988 and 1997. However, its vote bank reduced in the general elections of 2002, 2013 and 2018 respectively. However, the party came back enthusiastically in 2008 by winning the provincial elections and forming a coalition government. The party asserted that it was the major victim of terrorist attacks during the election campaign due to which it was not able to coordinate with its voters. Several of its workers and supporters were killed and injured during the terrorist activities, mostly in the province of KP. In a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan, it expressed its concern that it was not provided with a level playing field during the election campaign. The table demonstrates symmetry in terms of electoral support of ANP for the national and provincial elections. The party remained unable to attract the non-Pakhtun constituencies of the province over the years (ANP, 2013).

**Table 1**

*Detail of ANP electoral position in different elections*

Elections	National Assembly Elections			Provincial Assembly Elections		
	KP	Pashtun KP	Non-Pashtun KP	KP	Pashtun KP	Non-Pashtun KP
1988	17.67	26.26	0.58	15.98	21.69	1.20
1990	13.35	20.15	0	14.97	20.72	1.89
1993	14.34	21.75	0	15.39	21.47	0.95
1997	19.90	31.62	0	20.92	29.34	3.07
2002	9.39	14.00	0	11.34	15.88	1.26
2008	17.58	26.56	0.76	16.66	23.29	1.81
2013	7.66	10.99	0.41	10.34	12.77	2.18

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

ANP one of the ancient ethno-regional parties is strong enough to form coalition provincial governments more than once. However, its support is not comparable with MQM support in urban Sindh. The statewide parties/alliances had earned more electoral support than ANP in several elections. For instance, more votes in the Pakhtun region were polled to PPP than the ANP in the general elections of 1988 and 1990. Similarly, MMA (an alliance of Islamic parties) 'scored more than 50% votes in Pashtun belt and left no room for ANP to enter National Assembly in 2002.'<sup>34</sup> In 2013, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has won the elections in Pashtun region. However, ANP has demonstrated stable electoral support over the years. This investigation further illustrates that although the electoral support of regional parties like ANP is not equal to the national level parties, however ANP has kept up its existence in relevant regional centers for the decades. In 2008, political parties, their leaders, candidates and general workers utilized both print and electronic media, along with social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Emails) as a modern source of inter personal communication regarding assimilation and dissemination of information to counter competitors by respective political parties and leaders (Ahmed, 2014). Besides this, widespread billboards, handbills and posters were there on roads and streets (Eijaz, Eijaz2013). Polls were however conducted in peaceful manner.

### ANP's Election Manifesto 2008

What do the political leaders say and where do their party manifestos stand for are the question satisfied by an analysis of the manifestoes of major political parties for an election of 2008 by PILDAT to aware and benefit Pakistani nation that how much these parties are well informed regarding national issues confronted to state and to what extent these issues will be addressed by the political parties contesting the election of 2008. A detailed chart will clarify the party position that up to what extent the party has declared

its stance regarding crucial matter concerning the state and its people. While discussing economic issues PML (N) and PPPP have detailed policies while ANP being a regional party has a detailed note on Agriculture development and water resources on provincial bases, on a critical issue of energy PML and MQM have no stance while ANP has shown a general stance. While demanding provincial autonomy and transfer power of powers from federation to province, ANP manifesto has no description related to devolution of power, establishment of local government, youth, labor issues and relations with Islamic states while general perception on independence of judiciary, civil-military relations, countering terrorism and corruption and accountability. One of the most important issue not mention by any political party whether ANP or the other is the declining position of business competition in the globalized world.

**Table 2**

ANP total votes polled and %age (general elections 2008)

Party Name	National Assembly	%age of total vote polled	Balochistan	%age of total vote polled	KP	%age of total vote polled	Punjab	%age of total vote polle	Sindh	%age of total vote polle
ANP	704811	2.03	64231	4.77	578405	17.02	327	0.00	69138	0.80

Source: Election Commission of Pakistan

**Table 3**

Vote percentage of ANP in national assembly election 2008

Parties		Votes %age					General Seats			
ANP		2%					10			
Party	All KP Votes	Seats	KP 1 Malaknd Votes	Seats	KP 2 South Votes	Seats	KP 3 Peshawar Votes	Seats	KP 4 Hazara Votes	Seats
ANP	16%	10	17%	2	6%	2	38%	6	1%	0

Among the other national and regional level political parties, ANP was also one of the competitor in election 2008 securing 704811 votes by winning 10 seats of National Assembly with a percentage of 2.03 for NA. In province KP, high score was achieved by ANP getting 578405 votes winning with 17.02 percent of votes polled. Here it must be kept in view that the NA seats secured by ANP with votes %age ranging from (17-37%, table 22) and 16% (table 23) average from whole KP region can be explained as such that KP province is divided into four sections i.e KP1 Malakand from which 2 seats were won with 17% votes, KP2 South with 2 seats and 2% votes KP3 Peshawar 6 seats with 38% votes and KP 4 Hazara 0 seat with 0% vote. ANP though claims to be the only representative party of Pakhtun region but the result signifies that ANP has a strong hold only in Peshawar region and the rest of areas have vote banks of other political parties. This means that all Pakhtuns are neither the voters of ANP nor they believe in ethnic voting as claimed by the party.

**Table 4**

Seat performance to national assembly election february 18, 2008

Seat Performance									
Party	Total Recorded Votes Received	(as % of Total Votes Recorded)	Constituencies Won	(as % of total Assembly Seats)	Constituencies Won (Close-Margin)	(as % of Constituencies Won)	Constituencies Won (Wide-Margin)	(as % of Constituencies Won)	
ANP	704811	2.03%	10	3.68%	3	0.00%	2	20.00%	

**Table 5**

ANP candidates performance to national assembly election february 18, 2008

ANP Candidates Performance to National Assembly Election 2008								
Party	Contesting Candidates	(as % of Total Contesting Candidates)	% of Candidates Who Won	Runners-Up	% of Candidates Who Were 2nd Place	Third-Placing Candidates	% of Candidates Who Were 3rd Place	% of Candidates Remaining
ANP	40	1.82%	25.00%	10	25.00%	2	5.00%	45.00%

The Above tables, indicate that ANP got 3.68% of the total seats of National assembly with 2.03% of votes secured to it. ANP won two constituencies with close margin and three constituencies with high margin in KP for National Assembly. The remaining five constituencies were on second-place. Out of 40 contesting candidates, 10 were on running up and 2 of them were placed on third ranking as shown in table.

**Table 6**

Province WISE ANP position in 2008 election

Party	KP				Punjab				Sindh				Balochistan			
	Gen	W	N.M	T	Gen	W	N.M	T	Gen	W	N.M	T	Gen	W	N.M	T
ANP	33	9	1	43	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	3

ANP possesses a vast political and electoral history in the politics of Pakistan since its inception. A question was asked by the researcher that what are the causes of ANP successes in 2008 Election?. Answering this question, one of ANP's most prominent member stated, "ANP's successes in 2008 election was that Pakhtun nation was neglected both politically and economically in previous decades by central and provincial governments. Moreover, Pakhtun was greatly affected by war on terror and talibanization. ANP presented a decisive manifesto for 2008 election and did commitment that Pakhtun's grievances will be addressed. Moreover ANP was by itself affected by terrorism and therefore got success in 2008 election due to people's sympathies."

**Table 7**

Provincial seats performance by ANP in KP election 2008

Seat Performance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Provincial Election 2008								
Party	Total Recorded Votes Received	(as % of Total Votes Recorded)	Constituencies Won	(as % of total Provincial Assembly Constituencies Won)	(Close-Margin)	(as % of Constituencies Won)	Constituencies Won (Wide-Margin)	(as % of Constituencies Won)
ANP	578405	17.03%	31	31.31%	11	35.48%	4	12.90%

Provincial-wise seat performance of ANP is as such that 578405 votes were secured against 33 seats won by ANP in KP in which 11 seats were won by close margin and 4 seats were on high margin  
Party position in national and provincial assemblies (election 2008)

Political Parties	National Assembly	Balochistan Assembly	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly	Punjab Assembly	Sindh Assembly
ANP	13	4	48	0	2

(Associated Press of Pakistan)

Source: Associated Press of Pakistan <http://www.app.com.pk/election>.

### **ANP's Electoral Manifesto 2013**

Party's program is grasped as a prime manuscript through which political parties illustrate themselves and differ it to other parties in a political system (Smith, 2000). In Pakistan socio-political situation party's strategy does not perform imperative role in voting operation like established states of the globe. This was also advocated that other influences e.g. reputation of a candidate and the party in an electorate will be more vital than party declarations (Froman, 1966). Forthcoming general elections in 2013, manifesto will not play a chief character. At the present time, people deliberate guidelines and political posture of parties as their manifesto. Moreover, mass media has also reduced the prominence of party's manifesto. So in future elections, it will neither be eminent among public nor amongst contenders and parties (Jennings, 2016). In general elections key role is of top management. If an elected is 50 percent chosen for his personality, then 50%-60 percent of ballots would be polled because of party's leadership. Headship is very essential as an electoral runner cannot contact each voter in constituency. Party leaders must trace the electorate through media and put forward party's note on a huge scales in such a way that every candidate can be profited throughout campaign (Sheafer, 2006). ANP party manifesto strongly condemns terrorism and violence in the state and the writ of the state to be established in FATA and PA TA, purging terror networks from these areas and integrating them into the mainstream (Hussain, 2016). The ANP is the only party which deliberates on standard policy for reparation payments for victims of sectarian violence, terrorism and extremism. It also mentions modernizing and reforming existing security policies. In terms of commitment to democracy, the manifesto mentions working towards the strengthening of the democratic process. It also discusses holding local government elections as a "high priority" and implementation of the 18th amendment (Mirza, 2021). The ANP manifesto is perhaps the most decisive on the issue of minority rights and violence against them. It is the only party that categorically discusses reviewing and removing "all discriminations against religious minorities in the Constitution and the law" and ensuring "affirmative action to integrate religious minorities as equal citizens" (Malik, 2002). The manifesto specifically refers to the 1973 constitution and pledges to continue "efforts to repeal amendments concerning minorities to a secondary status". The manifesto also discusses prohibiting incitement to violence against citizens of other ethnicity, faith and religions (ANP Website, 2014).

Election of 2013 and its prospects were conditioned by four main factors. First, in accordance to the checkered political history of Pakistan, lingering fear of military intervention existed (Rizvi, 1976). The potential threat of military intervention is relevant in the context of fear and uncertainty for the elections. Although the threat did not materialize, the protest movement led by Dr. Tahirul Qadri created apprehensions as to the motivations and actors behind it, particularly the military. All of this created an uncertain electoral context which is important for purposes of this discussion. Various studies have explicitly analyzed the hegemonic role of Pakistan's army in politics (Rizvi, 1976). According to Shafqat, the armed forces have "a monopoly over tactical policy matters and decision making institutes in a state. It can influence and direct a conduct of political leaders and interest groups in a preferred track. In socio-cultural logic, public also displays better confidence and assurance in military as compared to political leaders. This belief advances legitimacy to military's hegemony in politics (Shafqat, 1997)." This hegemony generates 'alliance of the willing' of individuals, groups and political parties converge their dogma with that of army. PML (Q), MMA and MQM were the alternatives to mainstream political parties and gave a boost to discourse of politics in Pakistan under army (Siddiqua, 2007). Moreover the removal of Chief Justice of SC of Pakistan had not only shaken the foundation of political order 2002-2007 but also galvanized the protest of lawyers countrywide along with political workers of PML(N) and PPP which made General Musharrf to deal with Major political parties and to hold elections in 2007 which was delayed to February 2008 due to assassination of Benazir Bhutto (Ahmed, 2014).

Second the most terrible perception of escalated war on terror threatened the electoral campaign and election process. The threat had an uneven impact on voter turnout nationally. However, turnout in Punjab remained fairly consistent. Third the challenge presented by PTI in the shape of 'Youth Voters' - their inspirations and active participation may break the status quo of the established parties [PPP, PML(N)] and ANP on regional basis. Lastly the ECP by empowering it post 18<sup>th</sup> amendment with increased capabilities to play its role in democratic shift.



In contemporary politics, political leaders and reformers must be clear and convicted on the principles they stood for and to aware the masses through sending messages. In Pakistan very less number of political parties has clear cut ideology and party goals to be achieved. Most of them have no think tanks however party elites and other key members have some knowledge regarding issues of national importance on which strategies can be devised. The crux of these issues are however, reflected in their manifestoes before each election (Election Commission of Pakistan, 2014).

**Table 8**

*ANP vote bank in national assembly and provinces (election 2013)*

party name	national assembly	balochistan	kp	punjab	sindh
ANP	453057	31122	556525	1776	23722

**Table 9**

*Pakistan national assembly – 2013 general election results by party*

Party	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan	FATA	Islamabad	Total	Non-Muslims	Reserved seats Women	Total Party Seats
ANP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

ANP irrespective of the results of 2008 national assembly elections, in 2013, the party secured only one seat throughout all provinces which was a discouraging result attempted by ANP as the party had politico-electoral achievements in past elections 2008.

**Table 10**

*Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial assembly – results by province*

Party	General	Reserved Seats for Women	Reserved Seats for non-Muslims	Total Party Seats
ANP	3	1	0	4

As compared to national assembly elections 2013, ANP won three general seats of provincial assembly in KP, however the party position still in provincial election 2013 with comparison to 2008 results were not satisfactory and got very less number of seats. This strength decreased from 43 (33general, 9 women and 1 minority) to 4 (3general and 1 woman)

**Table 11**

*Comparative electoral performance of ANP's candidates in 2008 and 2013 provincial elections KP*

S. No	General Election	Contesting candidate	Constituency	Registered Voters	Valid Votes	Votes Polled	%sge of Votes
1	2008	Bashir Ahmad Bilour	PF 3 Peshawar	168809	34385	16648 Passed	20.62
	2013	Haroon Bilour	PK 3 Peshawar		49908	15293 Failed	30.64
2	2008	Pervaiz Ahmad Khan	PF 16 Nowshehra	72204	24621	9531 Passed	35.44
	2013	Pervaiz Ahmad Khan	PK 16 Nowshehra		41511	8807 Failed	21.21
3	2008	Fazle Shakoor Khan	PF 17 Charsadda	97752	29073	18587 Passed	30.16
	2013	Mohammad Ahmad Khan	PK 17 Charsadda		56248	12611 Failed	22.42
4	2008	Ameer Haider Khan	PF 23 Mardan	85992	25653	11009 Passed	30.88
	2013	Ameer Haider Khan	PK 23 Mardan		51082	16081 Passed	31.48

S. No	General Election	Contesting candidate	Constituency	Registered Voters	Valid Votes	Votes Polled	%sge of Votes
5	2008	Ghani Daad Khan	PF 25 Mardan	92462	30769	9692 Passed	34.38
	2013	Ghani Daad Khan	PK 25 Mardan		52760	7793 Failed	14.77
6	2008	Sarfaraz Khan	PF 36 Sawabi	92931	33490	9899 Passed	37.25
	2013	Sarfaraz Khan	PK 36 Sawabi		51582	6959 Failed	13.49
7	2008	Sardar Hussain	PF 77 Buner	88525	28039	10557 Passed	32.95
	2013	Sardar Hussain	PK 77 Buner		41895	10963 Passed	26.16
8	2008	Waqar Ahmad Khan	PF 82 Swat	111260	23323	7174 Passed	21.65
	2013	Waqar Ahmad Khan	PK 82 Swat		41619	9059 Failed	21.76
9	2008	Jafar Shah	PF 85 Swat	116401	26149	5573 Passed	23.24
	2013	Jafar Shah	PK 85 Swat		53324	14344 Failed	26.89

### Election Commission of Pakistan, Election 2013 Volume II

Fallouts of 2013 election shows that ANP lost almost all the constituencies in KP (enlisted in table 14 above) which it had won in 2008 election except PK 13 and PK 77 due to change in voting behavior of common public. ANP's chief, Asfandyar Wali Khan at the discouraging results in 2013 election proclaimed that a committee would be constituted by the party to probe out the facts which caused defeat to ANP in the current election and that committee was constituted later on but report was not published till yet that what made ANP defeated in 2013 elections. However, previously in 2008 ANP possessed 47 seats in KP assembly while results of 2013 provide ANP with 5 seats to KP assembly while PTI acquired 61 seats instead. ANP's vote bank in KP (578,405) in 2008 was decreased to (556,525) in 2013 irrespective of PTI which got 1,039,719 votes in 2013 election (Cookman, 2013).

**Table 12**

Vote bank of ANP in 2008 and 2013 in KP

Province	Registered Votes		Polled votes		ANP Vote Bank	
KP	2008	2013	2008	2013	2008	2013
	10,661,212	12,266,157	3,576,523	5,476,001	5,78,405	5,56,525

Source: Express Tribune

It is shocking for the high leadership of ANP that political party can be failed in an electoral contest by a wide margin when its workers presented sacrifices of their lives in a war against terrorism. ANP passed through worst of times, including suicide attacks on then senior members (Asfandyar Wali Khan, Bashir Bilour. Mian Ifthikhar, Haroon Bilour, Mian Iftelhar's son, Ghulam Ahmad Bilour's son, Afzal Khan Lala and such many others) in which some were put to death yet ANP's strength of mind was unshaken in the fight against militancy (Anwar, 2016). One of the most important factors that contributed a lot to failure of ANP in electoral politics is the rise of PTI as a new competitor in KP catching ANP off guard. A comparatively fresh party with Imran Khan's charisma and a well-managed youth campaign on electronic and social media along with slogan of 'change' gave a massive setback to all political parties in general and ANP in specific, the vote bank of which remained stagnant (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).



Besides internal political differences, ANP (Asfandyar) and ANP (Begum Nasim), the non-existence of internal accountability mechanism to make the workers and prominent members responsible for the mishaps done was another factor leading the party towards electoral declination in 2013 and onwards. Two power centers, one located in Wali Bagh (Charsadda) and other Hoti House (Mardan) diverted party politics in their respective interests. These centers treated the party politics as their own family business. Principles of intra-party election being violated and distribution of key party positions were ensured either among their domestic memberships or who showed unquestionable allegiance to power centers (Anwar, [2016](#)).

### Reasons behind the Declining Electoral Results

ANP moved in elections of 2013 with a vast anti-incumbency aspect and dishonesty contentions. Fictions of bribery were so public that even a common man was acquainted with the information that jobs were on deal during ANP rule and ostensibly governmental, political and non-political personnel of related party continuously engaged in lining their sacks. The level of bribery, in spite of declination increased more, during ANP's government. One western businessman involved in security construction field remarked that in the Middle East the level of corruption had never been seen quite like that in Peshawar while ANP ruling. So, the electoral accountability of KP's voters made it hard for ANP candidates to uphold the confidence of a common man to elect them for another term consecutively in 2013 (Anwar, [2016](#)).

ANP leaders and workers suffered in electoral campaign when faced with unrestricted socially revolutionary message from Taliban. As Taliban could only appeal to Pakhtun nationalist's aspirations against the disgust US presence in Afghanistan. So the nationalistic ambitions of ANP's rhetoric became a fiction by favoring US strikes against Taliban in Afghanistan. Most of ANP supporters and activists criticized the US aggression and illegitimate presence in Afghanistan but ANP hindered Taliban confrontation against US forces which seemed a start of civil war between Pakhtun nationalists and Pakhtun. In pre-election period (2013), the ability of candidates and political parties like ANP, PPP and MQM to engage voters freely was sharply undermined in certain areas of the state because of the great level of violence and threats of violence (Nieburg, [1962](#)). Violence and threats were targeted primarily at three parties: the ANP, MQM, and PPP. ANP faced maximum number of terrorist attacks between January 1 and May 15, 2013.

Political system of a state moves through well-organized political parties, through which issues are resolved and political differences come to an end. Political parties criticize matters of public interest; agitations are made and pressurize the executive authorities both within and without parliament (Issacharoff, [2001](#)). But if the political parties by themselves are suffering from undemocratic and elite culture so would neither be able to integrate the nation nor will be able to stabilize themselves in the electoral politics of a state (Afzal, [1998](#)). The political experts believe in intra-party democratic values; election of party leader, election of party decision makers and selection or election of the party candidates for general elections, all these processes must be based on democratic procedure. (Prasai, December 2005) A survey was conducted by the researcher regarding the democratic culture within political parties like PML (N), PPP and ANP, the conclusion of the public perception was as such; in an answer to the question that whether political parties of Pakistan are democratic in nature? 83% of the sample respondents answered in 'No' regarding ANP.

### Conclusion

Completion of tenure 2008-13 and transferring power was highly appreciated by the native people and abroad as well yet performance of the government, adverse relation between executive and judiciary, corruption allegations and countering terrorism were certain issues which changed the voting behavior of common people. According to new research in psephology, in order to win an election in developing societies, election candidate and party leadership do matter as compared to election manifesto (McCallum, [1954](#)). Electoral candidate if can't reach to everywhere in a constituency, it is the party leader who is in close contact with the people through print, electronic and social media supporting his candidate for upcoming election (Liang, [2013](#)). Although ANP was vital to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Pakistan, but since last election 2013, ANP has been accused for corruption and poor governance especially in

maintenance of law and order and peace which suffered KP almost in all aspects of life to the extent where the people started praising the days of MMA and Musharraf. Therefore, PTI in spite of ANP got victory in the elections of 2013 through the use of media war in politics.

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