

India's Hybrid Warfare Strategy: *Implications* *for Pakistan's Security*

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Abstract

The Indian Hybrid Warfare entails conventional and unconventional means, proxy wars, covert operations, cyber warfare, fake news, propaganda, media warfare and surgical strikes. It is evident that fighting a total or limited war is risky in nuclear environment. This is the reason that the Indian strategic thinkers brought huge doctrinal shift from Sunderji doctrine to cold start doctrine/proactive military operations and from limited war to Surgical Strikes. At the same time India also launched renewed hybrid war and covert operations under Technical Support Division after 2008. Since then Indian government launched defensive-offense operations in which they supported non-state actors, carried out offensive diplomacy to isolate Pakistan at regional and global level. In addition, India resort to surgical strikes and offensive operations which entails greater risk of escalation in nuclear south Asia. It is imperative for Pakistan to take into account all these emerging threats under the Indian Hybrid warfare strategy and come up with solid response at all levels to mitigate these challenges in future.

Keywords: Indian Strategic Thinking, Hybrid Warfare, Surgical Strikes, Covert Operations, Offensive Diplomacy and Media Warfare

1. Introduction

Hybrid warfare between India and Pakistan is not a new phenomenon. Both countries have been involved against each other since 1947. But after 2008 India launched renewed hybrid warfare against Pakistan to undermine Pakistan's internal security and to establish its strategic dominance in the region. According to Former Ambassador and Executive Director of an Islamabad based think tank CISS, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, "The Indian military has repeatedly failed to support its country's ambitions for regional hegemony, such as the Indian Army's defeat against China in 1962 and its adventures against Pakistan in 1965 and 2019. Considering their Army's incompetence, Indian leadership has long pursued a "hybrid warfare" policy against Pakistan to achieve its national interest. The hybrid threat that Pakistan is currently facing from India includes economic and political blackmailing via different institutions, as well as its sponsoring of terrorism, extremism and separatism through fake news and false propaganda. However, through its effective diplomacy, robust security and defense mechanism, Pakistan has managed to counter India's hybrid warfare strategy at global, regional, and domestic levels" (Naqvi, 2022).

Pakistan and India fought three wars and a skirmish at Kargil in 1999, in all these wars Pakistan did not lose more than 15000 men in total but after 2001, Indian hybrid warfare strategy Pakistan lost more than 80,000 innocent civilians, 6000 soldiers and economic loss of up to \$150 billion USD (Akram, 2021). Hybrid warfare proved to be more effective than direct war. Direct war entails greater risk and cost. Escalation of direct war in a nuclear environment is dangerous phenomenon which every nuclear state would like to avoid. According to Former Ambassador and Executive Director of an Islamabad based think tank CISS, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, "Skirmishes and hit

and run strikes could be expected. But, with Pakistan's quid pro quo plus strategy, India would not want to engage in such sneaky air strikes as it did in Balakot in February 2019. However, things could escalate beyond anyone's control. A large-scale war is in no one's interest. With the restructured battle groups, India cannot launch a massive attack through land or air. Pakistan has got a battlefield nuclear weapon, the Nasr missile, to counter land attacks. A massive attack would always involve nuclear weapons, which naturally deter an adversary from engaging in such an adventure since the costs of such action can be disastrous for both countries" (Naqvi, 2022).

This is the reason that India introduced many war fighting doctrines after 1971, including Sunder Ji Doctrine of the 1980s and Cold Start Doctrine or proactive military operations after 2001 failure of Operation Prakram. India could never attack Pakistan after the nuclearization of South Asia. It is believed that Pakistan developed nuclear deterrent in between 1982-86. During this period Pakistan conducted almost 24 cold tests to check its nuclear device (Futter, 2015). It is also believed that two nuclear crude bombs were ready by 1986 and Pakistan Air Force also modified its F-16s to deliver those weapons (Douglas Lovelace, Kristen Boon, Aziz Z. Huq, 2011). The pre 1998 era is considered as covert nuclearization in which Pakistan deterred Indian aggression on many occasions.

But after 1998 overt nuclearization strategic dynamics changed in South Asia. Both countries fought a small scale limited war on LOC in 1999 and introduced the concept of limited war under the nuclear overhang. Indian policy makers after 2004 worked on limited war concepts of Cold Start Doctrine and Proactive military operations which aimed at quick, swift limited operations within 48-96 hours to attack Pakistan on multiple fronts in case of any alleged terrorist attack in India or in IHK (Pant, Handbook of Indian Defence Policy: Themes, Structures and Doctrines, 2017). India could not operationalize the same concept in 2008 Mumbai attacks. Indian military's

operational weakness, lack of offensive elements, inadequate air fire power, MBTs, air Defense and other offensive weapon and equipment for any quick operations required for CSD or proactive military operations (NDTV, 2010). This was a major turning point in the Indian strategic thinking. This study would focus on post 2008 Indian military's renewed hybrid warfare strategy, how it evolved after 2008 and how it impacted Pakistan's overall security.

2.1. The Concept of Hybrid Warfare and its Theoretical Roots: Arthashastra

The concept of Hybrid warfare is as old as the human race. The Indian strategic culture and thinking is influenced by Chanakya Kautilya's *Arthashastra* which talks about statecraft, war and diplomacy. In this masterpiece Kautilya says that war is of three types. First is open war, which means all-out war in which either you win or lose (Boesche, 2002). In a nuclear environment of south Asia this type of warfare is risky and may destroy both countries. However, both states would avoid direct clash because of the nuclear factor. Second type of warfare Chanakya Kautilya mentioned in his book is secret war which focusses on surprised, sudden attack, quick and swift warfare. It focusses on multi front attacks without specifying time or place. This type of warfare in modern times could be linked with Cold Start, proactive military operations or surgical strikes. India through these secret war operations wanted to undermine Pakistan's security but after the induction of Tactical Nuclear Weapons- (TNWs) in 2011 this option was also not feasible for India (Ahmed D. M., 2016). Third kind of warfare mentioned in *Arthashastra* by Chanakya Kautilya was 'Undeclared Warfare'. This warfare emphasizes on "use of secret spies and occult practices against the enemy" (Leavitt, 2022).

This concept of undeclared warfare is directly linked with the concept of renewed hybrid warfare by India, in which it is using spies and covert operations to subdue Pakistan. The pertinent example of Indian hybrid warfare against Pakistan is dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. Indian Research

and Analysis Wing- (R&AW) executed undeclared war against Pakistan, carried out fake propaganda, trained, nurtured and funded 150,000 Mukti Bahini militants and ultimately capitalized on Pakistan's political, economic, geographic, ethnic and strategic vulnerabilities (Islam, 2019). Later on India also carried out hybrid warfare in Balochistan in the 1970s to further dismember Pakistan (Khetran, 2017). In the later years many Indian spies were captured in Pakistan which clearly depict that Indian hybrid warfare is not a new phenomenon in Indo-Pak context. The next part of the study would discuss in details that how the post 2008 renewed hybrid warfare is different from part and how it is undermining Pakistan's internal security.

2.2. Renewed Hybrid Warfare after 2008: Doctrinal Shift

Mumbai attacks in 2008 were triggering point for the Indian policy makers to revisit their strategy against Pakistan. Indian policy makers believed that terrorist outfits based in Pakistan carried out Mumbai attacks and would continue to do so if not stopped. The Indian strategic planners after 2008 experience revised their military strategy and took some steps to launch renewed hybrid warfare strategy to maintain their strategic dominance vis-à-vis Pakistan. "Indian Hybrid Warfare against Pakistan has been going on for a very long time. In the present politico-economic conditions of Pakistan, this is the biggest threat as waging hybrid war in such a situation is very easy and already existing fault-lines can be conveniently exploited. Unfortunately, our actions in the present time seem to be providing fertile ground to India. Unless we put our house in order and take concrete steps, this threat will continue to grow and damage and threaten Pakistan's internal security" (Arain, 2023).

2.2.1. Technical Support Division: Secret Cell

Technical services division was a secret unit in the army to execute three operations. First operation with the code name 'operation seven sisters' was launched to tackle Naxalite insurgency in the

eastern belt of India. Second operation with the code name operation *Rehber-I* and *Rehber-II* was in the Indian Held Kashmir- (IHK) to buy the loyalties of Kashmiris. Third operation was code names as 'Operation Deep Strike' which was against Pakistan. The idea was to exterminate the core leadership of Lashkar-I-Tayyaba including Hafiz Saeed and his inner circle (Baweja, 2013). Allegedly, the TSD got success in 2013, when Indian agents abducted security chief of Hafiz Saeed in 2013 and killed him after getting necessary information (Jafri, 2013). Indian Navy's senior serving officer disguised as a civilian carried out covert operations from Chabahar, Iran and undermined Pakistan's internal security.

He accepted in his confession that he was involved in many heinous crimes which included funding, arming and nurturing BLA militants, sabotaging peace in the financial capital of Pakistan Karachi, and ultimately planned to disrupt CPEC. The presence of a Navy Commander in Chabahar, Iran depicts that he was planning to carry out maritime attacks on Pakistan bound oil tankers, merchant ships, or Gwadar port. It is assumed that apparently BLA would accept the responsibility for such attacks but in reality it would have been work of Indian R&AW. But luckily he was captured in 2016 from deep inside Mashakhel area of Balochistan. India denied that he was active navy officer. Indian government said that he was a mere businessman working in Chabahar Iran.

- i. First if he was innocent civilian, why he was carrying two passports with fake name Mubarak Hussain Patel. Whereas his real name was Kulbushan Yadav?
- ii. Secondly more than 4000 Indians are living in Iran, but what was so special about him that he was allegedly kidnaped by Pakistan?
- iii. Why he travelled to Balochistan more often?

In fact, his confession, call records, evidence on ground clearly show that he was high profile operative officer of the Indian Research and Analysis Wing. He was deployed in Chabahar to undermine peace and security in Balochistan, equip and fund BLA militants and create volatility in Karachi to disrupt maritime interests of Pakistan in the Arabian sea to fail Gwadar port. This was the example of modern hybrid warfare by India in which Pakistan faced huge losses in past few years. The Indian Renewed hybrid warfare was not just confined to Kulbushan Yadav only. According to Commodore (retd) Asif Saleem, "the Indian intelligence footprint in Afghanistan is quite evident as Pakistan has rendered numerous dossiers to the UN and the international community documenting Indian involvement with hostile and separatist elements such as TTP, BLA, BLF, etc. India as part of the US-led China Containment Policy has a strategic interest in fend-off Chinese growing influence through its BRI initiative and its Flagship CPEC Project by abetting attacks on Chinese nationals and locals associated with this project, such as in Gwadar and the Chinese Consulate in Karachi in recent times (Dawn, RAW running \$500 million cell to sabotage CPEC,' says Gen Zubair Hayat, 2017). India also seeks ingress and egress through the Iranian port of Chah Bahar to advance its economic interests in Afghanistan and the Central Asian States. It spares no efforts to carry out sabotage activities through its operatives/moles such as Kulbhashan Yadav and the likes" (Saleem, 2023). In 2021, R&AW allegedly orchestrated another bomb blast outside the residence of Hafiz Saeed of JuD, in which 3 people were killed and many got injured. According to Pakistan's National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf, Pakistan possess irrefutable evidence of the Indian involvement in this attack. He said,

The whole drama about some mysterious drones flying in Jammu and Kashmir" was a "deflection tactic" in the face of Pakistan gathering proof of the alleged Indian hand in the bombing.....We have concrete evidence and intelligence, including financial and telephone records, of this particular incident in Lahore, which point towards direct Indian

sponsorship of these terrorists," Yousaf said at a joint presser with information minister Fawad Chaudhry and Punjab police chief Inam Ghani.....Soon after the briefing, PM Imran Khan appreciated law-enforcement agencies for "unearthing evidence" of the bombing and urged the world community to take note of India's "rogue behavior (India T. T., 2021).

In the post 2018 situation, Indian government wanted to seek revenge and impose heavy damages on Pakistan, whereas Pakistan has always categorically denied of any involvement in terrorist activities in India. When BJP led government came in power after 2014, the Indian government's approach got further momentum. The Indian policy makers pursued aggressive policies towards Pakistan and appointed hawkish Ajit Doval as their national security advisor. After his appointment India's ingress increased not only in Pakistan's surroundings like Afghanistan and Iran but also in Tribal areas and Balochistan. But the Indian perspective differs from Pakistani perspective. India's renowned scholar responded to a question that what are India's strategic interests in Afghanistan and Iran and why India supports BLA and TTP. He replied that

Long, historic relations with Afghanistan provide the context for India's continued interest in Afghanistan as the interface with the Central Asian Republics, with whom India has intimate political and military relations. Iran is important to India in the main because it is an energy source and because, via the Chabahar port, it provides India land access to Afghanistan and Central Asia, and will help India maintain a naval presence in the North Arabian Sea and the oil-rich Gulf (Karnad, 2021).

Professor Bharat Karnard had positive overview of India's ties with Afghanistan and Iran. But he ignored the other side of the coin. India through Afghanistan has been supporting and financing militancy in Pakistan. There is now undeniable evidence available which proves India's support to terrorist groups in ex-FATA region and Balochistan (Mukherjee A. , 2013). India through Iran tried to destabilize Pakistan. In 2016, Pakistan nabbed high profile Indian operative from

Balochistan who accepted in his confession that he has been involved in notorious activities inside Pakistan. He confessed of supporting BLA militants with funding and nurturing, planned terrorist attacks on Pakistan's maritime installations, destabilized Pakistan's financial capital Karachi with target killing and criminal activities (Transcript of RAW agent Kulbhusan's confessional statement, 2016). So far during Ajit Doval's tenure Pakistan have suffered huge losses. The National Security advisor of India, Ajit Doval came up with the idea of Defensive- Offense. The next portion of study would elucidate on this topic.

2.2.2. Aggressive Defensive-Offense Doctrine: Covert Ops in the Enemy Territory

Ajit Doval has been twice appointed as national security advisor of India by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Ajit Doval is well known for his aggressive approach towards Pakistan. Ajit Doval in one of his interviews said that there are three ways to meet the enemy. One is offensive- offensive, in which you go out rightly and carry out open war against the enemy. Which means a total war which is not possible vis-à-vis Pakistan now because of nuclear weapons. Second option is defensive-defense approach in which you improve your defenses at home and meet the enemy at your door steps. This is defensive approach and mostly entails no benefit. However, third approach is defensive-offense in which you go the area from where the threat is being originated and mitigate that threat (Doval, 2015). India's National Security Advisor, Mr. Ajit Doval asserted that India must pursue defensive-offense strategy to capitalize on Pakistan's political, social, economic and ethnic vulnerabilities. The next section of the study would focus on India's covert operations under this doctrine.

2.2.3. Indian Covert Ops/Proxy War: BLA/TTP/ISKP

India is actively pursuing its nefarious goals in Pakistan through BLA, TTP and or ISKP terrorist groups. India's involvement in Balochistan is not new. India has been interfering in Balochistan,

supporting and funding BLA militants and giving them shelter in New Delhi. There had been many reports about Baloch insurgents getting treatment of asylum in India. According to the confession of Kulbushan Yadav, he funded BLA militants and subversion in Pakistan. According to former CJCSC Zubair Hayat, India has established a \$500 million worth secret cell to disrupt CPEC. It was Indian funding, training and support which enabled BLA to carry out high profile attacks against Pakistani installations in Balochistan. Through BLA India wants to achieve a few objectives.

- Undermine Pakistan's internal security
- Curtail Political and Economic Efforts by Pakistan in Balochistan
- Attack Pakistan Army/FC/Police and installations
- Fund, Nurture, and provide intelligence support to BLA militants
- Attack Chinese Workers, Engineers and Nationals to reduce and ultimately remove their footprint from Balochistan
- Ultimate goal is to disrupt/delay/curtail CPEC Project
- India want to see Pakistan as economically Fragile/Dependent state
- India don't want China in Gwadar so it can dominate Arabian sea and beyond India want maritime dominance in the region.

India's support to Tehrik-I-Taliban was also exposed when TTP senior commander Latif Mehsud was arrested in Afghanistan by NATO while having a meeting with R&AW and Afghan Intelligence Khad. Later on after a few months he was handed over to Pakistan. During his confession he accepted that India and Afghanistan are funding militant groups in Pakistan and destabilizing tribal areas (Pirzada, 2016). According to Former Ambassador and Executive Director of an Islamabad based think tank CISS, Ali Sarwar Naqvi, "Every country wants to have

border security and stands against terrorism. At the same time, a state also wants to have good investment opportunities in another country, not least a neighbor. India has similar interests in Afghanistan and Iran. But since India and Pakistan are pitted against each other, it adversely affected each other's strategic, security, and economic interests. As an enemy, India does not shy from supporting destabilizing elements in Pakistan. As for itself, India has also tried to invest in Afghanistan's infrastructure and provided it with humanitarian assistance, military training and so on. These efforts are meant to gain popularity among the populace. Iran is a sanction-hit country. India has tried to build Tehran's seaport in Chabahar to conduct trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia through Tehran. But due to sanctions on Iran, that has not materialized. India would naturally want to use its consulates in Iran's bordering region with Pakistan to support militancy in Pakistan by sponsoring Baloch rebels" (Naqvi, 2022).

Same narrative was accepted by Former Spokesperson of TTP, Ehsan Ullah Ehsan. He surrendered to Pakistani security forces after operation Zarb-I-Azb in tribal areas. In his statement to media he said that India does support militant groups in Pakistan from Afghanistan (ISPR, 2017). After 9/11 India came to Afghanistan started its effective renewed hybrid warfare against Pakistan. According Professor Ladwig of Kings College London,

The role of the Haqqanis in the new Afghan government (controlling key ministries like interior and intelligence) raises concerns for India given their past relations with groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. India doesn't want to see Afghanistan become safe haven for anti-Indian terrorist groups (Ladwig, 2022).

From Afghan soil India managed to fund, train and nurture militants in tribal areas and elsewhere. Because of the Indian funding and support militant groups were able to establish Safe Heavens, Network, Command & Control Center. In last two decades TTP militants with Indian support and transnational affiliates like Al-Qaeda, IMU, ETIM and others seriously impede Pakistan's security.

In the war against militancy Pakistan faced huge economic and human losses. Thousands of soldiers of Pakistan Army, FC, Police perished. Overall economic losses were more than \$150 billion which seriously crippled Pakistan's economic growth (Ahmed K. , 2021). Indian cronies TTP carried out attacks on Pakistan's key military bases, intelligence headquarters, even GHQ Rawalpindi was not spared. Another important step India took was diplomatic boycott at regional and global level.

2.2.4. Offensive Diplomacy under Modi Regime: Diplomatic Isolation

The Indian government declared many times over to diplomatically isolate Pakistan at regional and global milieu. Modi government tried utmost to malign Pakistan and build consensus that Pakistan is country that harbor militants. In continuation to this aggressive approach former foreign minister of India once categorically said that we will isolate Pakistan. In practical terms India boycotted SAARC summit in Pakistan. Due to Indian political influence Afghanistan, Bangladesh and some other countries from South Asia also boycotted SAARC meeting in Pakistan. In addition, Indian government used its political, economic and strategic influence over US, EU and Russia to build an anti-Pakistan narrative. After the attacks on Indian Army, PM Modi threatened Pakistan of diplomatic isolation.

We will isolate you. I will work for that.....Terrorist attacks in Bangladesh and Afghanistan were also being instigated from Pakistan. This is the only country that is exporting terrorism in all corners. Wherever there is news of terror, there is news that either the terrorist first went to this country or later, after the incident, like Osama Bin Laden.....India would continue to push to make Pakistan a pariah state in the eyes of the international community.....We will intensify our efforts and force you to be alone all over the world (Dawn, 2016).

In 2016, Sushma Swaraj former Foreign Minister of India accused Pakistan of terrorist attacks in Pathan Kot and Uri and asked the world powers to take action and isolate Pakistan (George, 2016).

India's baseless allegations and vicious campaign seriously hampered Pakistan's ties with regional and global powers. In reality India was involved in terrorist activities in Balochistan and Tribal areas. Their senior Naval Officer Commander Kulbushan Yadav is still under the custody because of his involvement in terrorist activities in Pakistan (BBC, 2019). Diplomatic isolation by India would have far reaching implications for South Asia as a whole. Regional connectivity from Mumbai to Central Asia would suffer. Pakistan is the geo-graphical pivot of the world. Interregional connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia would be difficult to achieve if Pakistan is isolated at regional level. It is imperative for India to understand that Kashmir and other related issues are paramount for long lasting peace and stability in South Asia. In line with its hybrid warfare strategy, India has also launched media warfare against Pakistan. Next part of the article would discuss this aspect of the study as well.

2.2.5. Media Warfare/Propaganda/Fake News: Psychological Warfare

Media is fourth pillar of the state. India is effectively utilizing this platform and carrying out fake media campaign against Pakistan. The Indian Sponsored Srivastava Group launched an operation to discredit Pakistan and China not only at regional level but also at global level. The Indian objectives were in India, to reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings in India. Internationally, to consolidate the power and improve the perception of India, to damage the reputation of other countries and ultimately benefit from more support from international institutions such as the EU and the UN. To do so, the operation consists of: The support to minority and human rights NGOs and think-tanks. The use of Members of the European Parliament to create a mirage of institutional support from the European institutions to these minority groups, in favour of Indian interests and against Pakistan (and China). An active presence in Geneva and the United Nations' Human Rights Council by: organizing side-events and demonstrations in support of

minority rights; to impersonating extinguished UN accredited NGOs or using the speaking slots of various NGOs whose original missions seem totally unrelated. The creation of fake media in Brussels, Geneva and across the world and/or the repackaging and dissemination via ANI and obscure local media networks – at least in 97 countries - to multiply the repetition of online negative content about countries in conflict with India, in particular Pakistan (Gary Machado, 2020).

This is just an ice berg of India's media warfare efforts. The Indian media more often behave irrationally for example after Balakot Strike by Indian Air Force the Indian media falsely claimed that IAF killed more than 200 people in an alleged Madrassah run by Jaish-E-Muhammad (Pratik Sinha, Pooja Chaudhuri, Priyanka Jha, Mohammed Zubair, 2019). However, reality was different from the said claim. No major damage was reported after the Indian Air strike. Only a few trees in Jungle were hit. On the next day when Pakistan carried out successful surgical strike across the LOC and on return destroyed two Indian aircraft and captured one pilot. But the Indian press continued to falsely report that Abhinandan the captured pilot shot down Pakistani F-16 (Gaurav, 2021). But reality was different from the Indian claims. Many international scholars and organizations refuted the Indian claim of shooting down Pakistani F-16 aircraft (Seligman, 2019). According to Foreign Policy Magazine report, "Two senior U.S. defense officials with direct knowledge of the situation told Foreign Policy that U.S. personnel recently counted Islamabad's F-16s and found none missing" (Seligman, 2019). Even the top Indian media's anchors never shy away from stating lies on TV Channels. One such example is Arnab Goswami, who is senior anchorperson of Indian Leading News Channel. He claimed in his one program that Pakistani Army officers on fifth floor of Serena Hotel in Kabul are busy in hatching conspiracies against India and Afghanistan. His lies were exposed when it was revealed that Serena Hotel in Kabul

only had two floors (Times T. F., 2021). Such misinformation by the leading Indian media could help the government to secure their vote bank but sowing hatred and anti-Pakistan sentiments may lead to unwarranted consequences.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi used same rhetoric against Pakistan after Pathan Kot and Uri incidents and put all blame on Pakistan without any independent investigations. Later on their own investigation proved that Pakistan had no involvement in Pathan Kot terrorist incident (Arunima, 2016). Media warfare, propaganda, fake news and psychological warfare are key components of the Indian hybrid warfare strategy. With this strategy India is using the print, electronic and social media for fake news onslaught against Pakistan to undermine Pakistan's soft image at regional and global level.

Such an onslaught would continue in the near future as well because this strategy is working for Indian government. Based on false claims after Balakot Strike, the Modi Government secured second tenure and won decisive political victory by raising political slogan of "Chokidar"- (Watchman)" (Times H. , Hindustan Times, 2019). India's fake news reporting is part of its propaganda warfare against Pakistan. As per 2021 record India got 392 news channels (Krishnan, 2021). Most of these channels are influenced by the state and considered as mouthpiece of the government. Fake news and propaganda is part of India's media and psychological warfare. It is a powerful tool to shape public opinion. Such approach by Modi regime is dangerous and would have far reaching implications for regional security.

2.2.6. Cyber Warfare

Cyber warfare is a modern warfare in which countries target other countries through computer networks and disrupt their Electricity Grids, target nuclear installations, civil military networks and facilities. In modern times the cyber warfare has become a serious threat to countries because

of the airlines, trains, electricity grids, nuclear reactors, military facilities, governmental institutions even banking system is linked with computers. Any disruption in the above facilities would be a disastrous thing for a country. In recent times many developed nations suffered cyber-attacks by alleged rival states. It has been alleged that Chinese hackers hacked the America Stealth Aircraft F-35 and F-22 Raptor's Design. Moreover, also hacked about 614 GB data related to of American submarine's weapon, sensors and communication systems (Sonne, 2018). It was huge breach into the elite defense programs of the United States. In another example more than 20,000 computers of the German parliament were hacked by the hackers and they asked for huge ransom to give access to data (Jowitt, 2020). Russia recently hacked Ukrainian grid stations which resulted in total blackout for few days (Majkut, 2022).

Many times over Iranian nuclear sites faced cyber-attacks which resulted in disruption and losses (BBC, 2021). In Indo-Pak context cyber domain is slowly and gradually trying to create space. According to a Chinese cyber security experts, Indian government has officially authorized some state level cyber firms to carry out continuous cyber-attacks against China and Pakistan's civil and military installations. India's Cyber War against neighboring states would have far reaching implications for regional security. Any major cyber breach against Pakistan or China may create unwarranted situation for India (Tribune, 2021). In an another incident the Indian hackers targeted mobile phones and other digital devices of Pakistani government officials and military personnel. According to ISPR, the cyber-attack by Indian intelligence agencies involved a range of cybercrimes including deceitful fabrication by hacking personal mobiles and technical gadgets. Various targets of hostile intelligence agencies are being investigated. Pakistan Army has further enhanced necessary measures to thwart such activities including action against violators of standing operating procedures (SOPs) on cybersecurity.....an advisory is being sent to all

government departments so they may identify security lapses and enhance cybersecurity measures. Senior officials advised to stop using WhatsApp (News T. , 2020).

India is using Israeli Software “Pegasus” and “Chat Line” to hack into the mobile phones both IOS and Android and sneak into the WhatsApp to get access to crucial information. As per reports,

The alleged targeting was discovered during an analysis of 1,400 people whose phones were the focus of hacking attempts in a two-week period earlier this year, according to the sources. All the suspected intrusions exploited a vulnerability in WhatsApp software that potentially allowed the users of the malware to access messages and data on the targets' phones (Kirchgaessner, 2019).

India's cyber-attacks may increase in near future and undermine Pakistan's security. It is necessary for Pakistan to take effective measures to counter such attacks. Pakistan is a credible nuclear weapon states, if US and China can face cyber threats to its strategic installations, same could happen to Pakistan. India and Israel are closely collaborating with each other in Network Centric and Electronic warfare capabilities. It would be dangerous for Pakistan to ignore this emerging threat to its civil-military sensitive installations.

2.2.7. Surgical Strikes: Punitive Response

Hybrid Warfare entails direct and indirect attacks against the enemy. Indian hybrid warfare has many shapes and surgical strike are also part of this strategy. Surgical strike is an air force concept in which you go to a certain area, conduct a raid or operation and come back unhurt. In 2016, the Indian army claimed to have carry out surgical strike against Pakistan, (Hindustan Times, 2021) which was rejected by Pakistan (AlJazeera, 2016). There was no evidence to prove that India carried out any operation across the LoC. In 2018, the Indian Army introduced a New Land Warfare Doctrine- (LWD) in which it was reasserted that India would carry out “punitive

responses” in other words India will carry out surgical strikes across the LoC or deep inside Pakistan in case of any alleged terrorist attack in the Indian Held Kashmir or elsewhere in India (SSRI, 2018). According to Commodore (retd) Asif Saleem of Pakistan Navy, “The overt nuclearization of Pakistan precipitated by Indian nuclear detonations in 1998 has closed the window of an All-Out War with Pakistan. This has put the Indians in a bind to seek some avenues to apply military muscle. They were emboldened by the Kargil Operation and coined the Limited War concept to try various manifestations such as the Cold Start/ Proactive Strategy, and lately Surgical Strikes. It is my considered opinion that while Indian Forces will not venture into a broad-front military confrontation, they will continue to show military ascendancy through so-called, Surgical Strikes to gain political mileage” (Saleem, 2023).

After Pulwama incident, India blamed Pakistan for complicity and support to JeM. However, there was no proof to establish this propaganda. Pakistan categorically rejected Indian allegations and offered full support in investigation. However, after a few weeks, Indian Air Force crossed the border and conducted failed surgical strikes inside Pakistan. No loss of life was reported on Pakistani side (Yusuf, 2019). On the next day Pakistani air force conducted successful surgical strike and locked down targets across the LOC but intentionally dropped the payload in nearby deserted place (Dawn, 2019). The idea was to establish conventional deterrence against India. During the raid two Indian aircraft were shot down and one pilot was captured and later on released by Pakistani authorities. Now the idea of surgical strike is still there in the minds of Indian strategic thinkers. Because total war is not possible because of the nuclear factor. Limited war (Cold Start Doctrine- Pro-active Military Ops) was also checkmated by Pakistan because of the tactical nukes. Now there is only one option left with the Indians to conduct surgical strikes to woo their public and gain political mileage in India. Indian military is acquiring required capabilities to conduct

successful surgical strikes against Pakistan. For a successful surgical strike Indian military must have impeccable air defense which they are in process to acquire from (S-400)- Russia (Walia, 2021) and (Barak-8)- Israel (Tan, 2020). These capabilities would improve India's air defense and give Indian policy makers a sense of invincibility. Such a thinking would allow India to carry out misadventure against Pakistan which may invite quid pro quo response. No doubt these systems would shore up Indian military's air defense but at the same time it cannot guarantee that these systems would cover each and every part of Indian territory. In addition, Indian is also acquiring more Rafael aircraft from France (Sharma, 2022) and may finalize a deal with the US to supply F-16s for IAF and F-18 for the Indian Navy (Ashley J. Tellis, 2017).

These aircraft along with Russian SU-30 MKI would improve the Indian Air Force and fill the operational gaps. The IAF will be confident to engage PAF in future. Such a scenario would push the region into an unending arms race. Obviously Pakistan would do the needful. Pakistan may acquire long range air defense, add more MIRVs, increase the quality and quantity of warheads, add more ALCM and SLCMs and procure fifth generation aircraft with the help of China to offset any Indian air superiority in the region. Another dangerous development is the acquisition of Israeli armed drones by India (Negi, 2022). India has already acquired Harpy and Harop UAVs which could be used to take out targets inside Pakistan (Arkin, 2021). However, in recent times India is in negotiation with Israel to acquire Advance Heron TP UAVs which could be used for future surgical strikes against Pakistan (Philip, 2021). It must be noted that any surgical strike by India would meet quid pro quo response because Pakistan has the ability to find the gap and penetrate the Indian defenses.

The combination of longstanding tensions, mistrust, a border dispute, ongoing conventional military modernization in both countries, and other policies that each considers destabilizing

(Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons, India's new doctrine and its relentless acquisition of heavy conventional arms), along with nuclear weapons, mean that the risks of a limited war are very much there. They nearly went to war in 2019, and, had Pakistan not reacted with restraint, they could have gone to war in 2022 after an errant Indian missile ended up in Pakistan. All it would take is a single provocation or miscalculation to start a limited—or worse—war: A terrorist attack, a move on Kashmir, some type of preemptive strike, or even a case of misinformation or disinformation that wrongly reports a provocation. Any Surgical strikes by India in future may invoke a limited war between the two belligerents. Any conflict, limited or total, would have far-reaching implications for regional security. Nuclear South Asia cannot afford any such misadventure. Michael Kugelman believe that India and Pakistan must improve their bilateral ties for long lasting peace and stability. He was of the view that,

It all starts with building more trust, through realistic confidence building measures. I don't see talks on Kashmir as realistic, given India's intransigence. More realistically, we have to look at possibilities for bringing back more people-to-people engagements (through cultural exchanges and business ties). Increasing border trade could be a big help, as well as more frequent discussions around less controversial issues, like river flow data and air pollution figures. If the two sides can develop a mechanism for regular talks around water insecurity and climate change, for example, then that could build more trust for more difficult conversations around security issues focused on finding ways to achieve more strategic stability in the region (Kugelman, 2022).

It is imperative for India to avoid any misadventure and resolve all issues with Pakistan in an amicable way through meaningful dialogue. Bharat Karnard in regard gave some remarks to resolve issues between India and Pakistan. He was of the view that, "The basic problem is

Pakistan's close alignment with China, which is India's primary security concern. For Pakistan, on the other hand, China is its military anchor, which it cannot give up. This makes for strategic instability. If there's to be enduring peace, something has to give. In my books (Why India is Not a Great Power (Yet) & Staggering Forward: Narendra Modi and India's Global Ambition) and other writings I have suggested that because Pakistan cannot ever be a credible military threat, India should take two unilateral military measures to inspire confidence and build trust in Islamabad, namely (1) removing all forward deployed nuclear missiles on its western front, and (2) rationalizing and reconstituting its three strike corps into a single composite corps for Pakistan contingencies, and otherwise shifting resources to three offensive mountain corps against China. To complement these steps India should offer generous economic and trade incentives. Such as tariff-free access to the Indian market of all commodities and goods wholly grown and produced in Pakistan.

The study examines that India and Pakistan must overcome their trust deficit and work for long lasting peace because there is no way to peace but peace is the only way in south Asia. A nuclear south Asia cannot afford any misadventure in the name of CSD/Proactive military operation, Surgical Strikes or New Land Warfare doctrine. It is necessary for both states to sit together and carry out consistent meaningful dialogue to establish peace in South Asia for a bright future of coming generations. The next part of the study would analyze the implications of Indian Hybrid warfare strategy against Pakistan.

2.3. Implications for Pakistan's Security

2.3.1. Instability and turmoil in Tribal Areas and Balochistan

India's renewed Hybrid warfare strategy after 2008 seriously hampered Pakistan's internal security. Indian strategic thinkers were cognizant of the fact that direct war is not going to serve

the purpose because of nuclear factor in South Asia. This is the reason India planned hybrid warfare in tribal areas and Balochistan to undermine Pakistan's internal security, ignite ethno-political issues, capitalize on the political and economic vulnerabilities. Ex- FATA faced serious challenges and it will continue to do so because this area is bordered with Afghanistan, it is tough terrain and underdeveloped area. It is easier for the militant groups to sneak inside Pakistan despite border fencing and deployment of Pakistan troops. According to Brigadier (ret'd) Tahir Mahmood, Former Director Hilal Magazine ISPR, "As far as India's hybrid warfare strategy is concerned, I think they are quite successful, although Pakistan successfully get back to its position but still Pakistan was defensive for few years" (Mehmood, 2022). It is difficult to man almost 1600 km Tribal areas. Militants, drug traffickers, smugglers make their inroads some way or the other and create problems for Pakistan. for a country like India it is not at all difficult to establish sleeper cells of TTP or ISKP in tribal areas. Despite Pakistan's huge counter terror efforts after 9/11 situation in some corners in tribal areas is volatile. After the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan in 2021, Pakistan suffered many attacks on its security forces in tribal areas in which dozens of Pakistan Army's personnel were martyred. Which shows that secret sleeper cells of terrorist organizations are still working and they cannot work with patronage of any external element.

On the other hand, situation in Balochistan is also volatile but under control. Balochistan has been on target by India since inception. There is huge evidence available of Indian funding, nurturing and training of BLA insurgents. In recent times a common trend was noted in tribal areas and Balochistan. In both these areas there was surge in attacks on Pakistani security forces. Which clearly indicates that after a brief pause India has activated its proxies in Balochistan as well. There were coordinated IED attacks, guerrilla ambushes, and first suicide on Chinese citizens by female

suicide which shows a new phenomenon in Balochistan insurgency. The intensity of attacks in Pakistani security forces in tribal areas and Balochistan would increase if not properly checked. These groups are getting external help with funds and intel which makes it easy for them to conduct such high profile attacks against Pakistani security forces in tribal areas and Balochistan. It is a matter of grave concern for Pakistan that Taliban in Afghanistan are not taking effective steps against TTP and other terrorist groups. These terrorist groups are enjoying safe heavens in Afghanistan, from where they are managing and controlling their sleeper cells in Pakistan.

2.3.2. Economic Challenges: Threat to CPEC

India's hybrid warfare is also threatening Pakistan's economy. The main thrust of India is now on Balochistan to disrupt CPEC. Gwadar port is considered as jewel of CPEC mega project. Instability and turmoil in the area, attacks on Chinese citizens and workers may delay the project but it cannot stop this venture between Pakistan and China. But the most dangerous development is India's renewed efforts to sabotage this project. Deployment of high ranking intelligence officer with expertise in maritime warfare raised a few questions in Pakistan's strategic community.

- Is India aiming to plan attacks on Pakistan's maritime traffic e.g. Cargo Ships, Oil Tankers/ships/vessels?
- Is the Indian intelligence planning to carry out renewed attacks on Pakistan's maritime assets e.g. Ports, facilities or bases?
- Is India going to equip BLA with modern weapon and equipment e.g. IEDs, VBIEDs, anti-aircraft Guns, SAMs to target Pakistan's security forces, Chinese engineers and workers or low flying helicopters in the area?
- Who will invest in Balochistan if the situation is volatile?

All these above questions are valid and creates sense of anxiety in Pakistan. It is necessary that India and Pakistan must work together and resolve their issues amicably. According to Rajesh Basrur, “They need to work toward a political understanding that (1) avoids supporting cross-border violence in all forms; and (2) builds up relatively neglected areas of mutual gain, especially with respect to trade and investment” (Basrur, 2021). But it doesn't look like this issue would be resolved in near future. It is imperative for Pakistan to improve its security apparatus in the area, enhance human intelligence in Iran and Afghanistan to as well to locate safe heavens and hideouts of the mainstream terrorist organizations and hunt them down with the help of local authorities. India has multiple interests in both these countries. Its presence in the two countries helps it surround Pakistan, enables it to easily support anti Pak elements, keep these countries from establishing good ties with Pakistan. Additionally, they also offer passage to CARs which helps Indian economic interests. Indian influence in Afghanistan can deny Pakistan an easy access to CARs. This can also be used to provide alternate route for trade and scuttle CPEC (Arain, 2023). Local policing and intelligence network must also be improved to eradicate sleeper cells of TTP, ISKP, BLA and their affiliates.

2.3.3. Strategic Vulnerabilities: Two Front War Dilemma

Pakistan's main threat perception always revolved around India on the eastern front. But after 9/11 India came to Afghanistan and established its network to destabilize Pakistan. After years of struggle Pakistan established peace in its tribal belt. But the cost was great. Pakistan had to deploy more than 200,000 troops on Western front which created two front war dilemma for Pakistan. Western border is equally dangerous for Pakistan and even today this border is not stable as it should have been. Allegedly, India backed militant groups and criminals are active and try to sabotage Pakistan's security. In recent times Pakistan army faced many terrorist attacks and

suffered huge casualties since 2021. Indian hybrid warfare is creating serious challenges for Pakistan to manage its security and allocate more funds, men and resources to safeguard huge eastern and western borders.

2.3.4. Engineered Social Movements: Igniting Ethnic Fault lines

Another important facet of the Indian Hybrid warfare is to capitalize on Pakistan's political and ethnic vulnerabilities. This trend will not stop and it will continue. Previously, India, Russia and Afghanistan backed greater Pakhtunistan movements in the post 1947 situation. Later, these states supported ethnic groups in Balochistan and ignited insurgencies in the 1970s. In recent times again we have observed that some engineered social movements are trying to undermine Pakistan army and launched a vicious campaign to create ethnic divide in Pakistan.

The Indian hybrid warfare strategy is serious and pertinent threat to Pakistan's national security. Although, hybrid war by India is not new phenomenon but it gained after the nuclearization of South Asia and specially in the post 2008 Mumbai attacks. The Indian hybrid warfare is hurting Pakistan on many fronts. India is capitalizing on Pakistan's geopolitical vulnerabilities, ethno-nationalist susceptibilities, diplomatic weaknesses, economic woes, internal & external security fault-lines. The Indian government realized its operational readiness and lack of offensive capabilities in their military machine after 2008 which prevented the Indian Army from any limited war strategy- (proactive military operations or Cold Start Doctrine) against Pakistan. Lack of overwhelming conventional superiority vis-a-vis Pakistan and threat of nuclear escalation imposed limitations to India to execute these strategies against Pakistan. this is the reason that India relied more on hybrid warfare options to make it difficult for Pakistan to manage its overall security. The Indian Hybrid Warfare mainly relied on Covert Ops and proxy wars. The Indian strategic planners applied defensive-offense strategy against Pakistan to subvert peace and security in Pakistan. This

strategy of India actually worked and it imposed serious damages on Pakistan. India's covert support to terrorist and insurgents in tribal areas and Balochistan seriously hampered Pakistan's security and it took almost two decades for Pakistan to somehow manage its security after 9/11. India also used its political and economic clout to coerce regional and international powers to impose diplomatic isolation and create troubles for Pakistan. Apart from covert ops the Indian policy makers are also challenging cyber security of Pakistan. The indo-Israel strategic partnership is growing and creating new challenges for Pakistan. In recent times India is using an Israeli software to hack into electronic gadgets of key civil military officials in Pakistan which may undermine Pakistan's national security (Deep, 2023).

Pakistan must take concrete steps to counter cyber-attacks on its civil-military installations, nuclear sites and personnel etc. The Indian Hybrid warfare has opened up multiple threats for Pakistan which also include quick and swift operations or surgical strikes. India resort to surgical strikes options because it was unwise to fight a limited or total war with a nuclear weapon state. The IAF has tried a surgical strike in 2019 but it failed because of operational weaknesses whereas Pakistan carried out successful surgical strikes with greater precision and accuracy which established conventional deterrence vis-à-vis India. But Pakistani policy makers must be cognizant of the fact that India failed in 2019 because of three weaknesses, (i)- Deficiencies/discrepancies in military preparedness & effective strategy, (ii)- Absence of long range defense system and (iii)- Lack of clear cut air superiority vis-à-vis Pakistan Air Force.

Now Indian government is seriously working on all these aspects and trying to fill the gaps in all these domains. They are buying modern aircraft along with long range air defenses with the help of Russia and Israel. After the induction of these capabilities, it would be a tough choice for Pakistani military commanders to cross the LOC and carry out counter surgical strikes on the

pattern of Operation Swift Retort-2019. Keeping in view all these developments Pakistani decision makers must plan according to the Indian military's capabilities and fill the operational gaps in its own military machine and strategy. The Indian Hybrid warfare is serious and pertinent threat for Pakistan, it is necessary for policy makers in the country to assess these emerging threats and strategies an effective response to mitigate these threats and challenges.

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