



Fifth Generation Warfare and its Challenges to Pakistan

Muhammad Ashraf Nadeem
MPhil Scholar
Department of International Relations
GC University Faisalabad
ashrafnadeembaloch@gmail.com

Dr. Ghulam Mustafa
Assistant Professor
Department of Political science & IR
GC University Faisalabad
ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk

Dr. Allauddin Kakar
Assistant Professor
Command & Staff College,
Quetta.
allauddin_kakar@yahoo.com

Abstract

This research paper aims to analyze fifth generation warfare and its challenges to Pakistan. In modern era, wars are not declared or waged conventionally: instead it is instigated by clandestine agents using military, non-military, media, cyber tools, information operations, NGOs, non-state actors, intelligence agencies, propaganda, economic tools, insurgency and terrorism. The adversaries have been waging FGW against Pakistan for long. Pakistan became nuclear power in 1998 and declaring conventional battle remains very hard for adversaries. Hence, they are using tools of fifth generation warfare against Pakistan to destabilize it internally and gain their nefarious designs. The enemies are behind conspiracies to destabilize Pakistan internally and undermine its image in global community, sponsoring, financing and training terrorists to conduct covert operations within Pakistan's territory. In present era of hybrid warfare, Pakistan is facing threats to its national unity due to negative role of some foreign countries. At present, media campaigns



against Pakistan are at full swing. The enemies have been spreading propaganda, misleading reports, and false news to damage national unity of Pakistan. They are trying to influence international institutions, particularly FATF to portray Pakistan as terrorist sponsoring state. Pakistan is being subjected to fifth generation warfare massively. This research paper highlights challenges of FGW Pakistan is presently facing.

Key Words: Fifth Generation Warfare, Hybrid War, Pakistan, Media, Propaganda, Balochistan, FATF, Army.

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed the beginning of a new social, political, economic and technological advancement. The nature of warfare has also changed in the modern world. In present era, internet and information technology have changed the nature of warfare. The role of internet is growing in the realm of warfare. Internet is the main tool used in latest generation warfare. The latest generation of warfare is the battle of perception and information. It is waged when it becomes impossible for a state to destroy its rival state through direct military attack. Hence, propaganda, disinformation, use of non-state actors, and media campaigns are launched to generate anarchy, chaos and resentments. Media campaigns are out of proportion and beyond the control of a state. The rise of social media has led to new trends in domain of warfare. Social media tools particularly Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter etc. have become instruments of fifth generation warfare. Fake news, misleading reports and falsified propaganda are spread through these modern media tools (Azad, 2020).

Pakistan has a significant geo-political location. It has always played positive role at regional and global level. It has great importance among world power due to its geo-strategic location, nuclear capability, relation with rising super power-China and the initiation of CPEC. Hence, it is facing threats of latest generation warfare, waged by hostile intelligence agencies. The adversaries are waging this type of warfare against Pakistan to create chaos and uncertainty in the country and trying to disrupt internal security of the country with tools of hybrid warfare.

Since Pakistan has become nuclear power in year 1998, the enemies have been unable to launch any form of conventional battle against it. Hence, waging hybrid war against Pakistan has become a preferred strategy by adversaries. Addressing a ceremony marking Defense Day at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, General Bajwa stated Pakistan is facing many challenges aimed at discrediting the country and its defense forces



“We are facing the challenge that has been imposed on us in the form of the fifth generation or hybrid war. Its purpose is to discredit the country and its defense forces and spread chaos”, he said. “We are well aware of this danger. We will surely succeed in winning this war with the cooperation of the nation” (Yasin, 2020). The enemies are trying hard to disrupt internal security of the country by using electronic, print and social media, NGOs disgruntled elements and other means as a tools of fifth generation warfare. Anti-Pakistan elements are engaged in inciting sectarianism in Pakistani society.

Fifth generation warfare undertaken by adversaries against Pakistan has multiple negative impacts which include social unrest, ethnic and sectarian divisions, defamation of Pakistan globally, economic unrest, and many more. Pakistan is making efforts to counter nefarious agenda of the enemy by preparing itself for fifth generation warfare. This research paper highlights challenges of fifth generation warfare to Pakistan which include, propaganda war, media campaigns, externally-abetted terrorism etc.

The study explores “Fifth Generation Warfare and its Challenges for Pakistan”. In this study, the researcher focuses on media, economy, cultural war and sectarianism which are being used as tools of fifth generation warfare against Pakistan. For this research, data has been collected through both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Different data collection tools has been used to conduct this research. Using primary sources, the researcher conducted interviews with media persons and security official to get relevant and necessary data for this research. Using secondary sources, the researcher used books, scholarly articles, research journals, official reports and newspapers to gather relevant data for this research.

Propaganda campaigns against Pakistan: Building misperceptions

The last two decades witnessed rising trends of propaganda campaigns against Pakistan. Pakistan is being subjected to hybrid warfare through Non-Kinetic resources. India has formed nexus with Israel and US and influencing international media. Mearsheimer and Stephen explains that “pro-Israel organizations work hard to influence the media, think tanks, and academia, because these institutions are critical in shaping popular opinion” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006). The media campaigns launched against Pakistan aim to distort its image at global level and destabilize it. India is enjoying its leverage over international media to build misperceptions against to Pakistan. Indeed India is pursuing its nefarious goals to damage Pakistan’s image at global level. India is trying to build perception that Pakistan is an unsafe place and sponsoring militancy in the region. An extensive Indian network of fake NGOs and think tanks was exposed in 2019 that was



found responsible for operating more than 200 fake news outlets to influence the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) to distort Pakistan's image at global level (Machado, Alaphilippe, & Adamczyk, 2020).

Furthermore, the Indian and the international media associations are engaged in spreading negative propaganda, false news, misinformation, and unjustified criticism to build misperception about Pakistan to weaken its position in international community. The west and India are using all means including non-traditional and non-Kinetic resources to push Pakistan towards a difficult political and economic position. Realizing the fact of hybrid warfare challenges being faced by Pakistan, Army Chief Gen. Qamar Bajwa in 2018 stated that "We are now confronting hybrid conflict where focus is shifting to subversion on religious, sectarian, ethnic and social issues" (Maqbool, 2018).

Role of Social Media

The twenty first century has seen emerging role of media technology and internet. The rise of social media along with fast internet technologies have changed the world. Social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Whats App have become favorite sources of information (Ospina, 2019). There is no denying the fact that social media has brought positive changes in the world, but on the other way it has become an effective tool to spread fake news, misleading reports and propaganda.

Social media is being used as an instrument of warfare (Bukhari, 2020). Anti-Pakistan forces are using social media tools to spread fake news and misinformation against Pakistan. According to an estimation in 2008, there were about 326 million people who use social media in India. This large number of social media consumers mainly receive fake news and misinformation from Indian government which they spread with no justification. After Pulwama attack in February 2019, the Indian government promoted false news and misinformation with their public (Azad, 2020). The Indian government even said that Indian Air force has shoot down Pakistani F-16 which was never proven. In addition, India also failed to prove its claim of killing militants inside Pakistan's territory (Dawn, 2019). The Indian national media, sponsored by Indian government, has always been involved in such kind by false reporting.

Propaganda campaigns against Pakistan Nuclear weapons

Pakistan is a responsible nuclear power. After India became nuclear power, it became inevitable for Pakistan to become nuclear state and deter the hostile intentions of India and maintain balance of power in the region. When Pakistan successfully tested nuclear



weapons in 1998 and got the status of a nuclear states, unjustifiable criticism followed by propaganda campaign stared against it. The United States and the western world perceived Pakistan's nuclear capability an alarming trend. They launched propaganda campaigns and tried to pressurize Pakistan. They labelled Pakistan an unsafe and unstable country. The reports highlighted by US and western world were based on the probabilistic estimations with no reasonable ground.

After the event of September 11, 2001, propaganda against Pakistan nuclear asset got intensified. The international media is trying to build misperception about Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme. The international media along with think tanks, nuclear experts and main western politicians promoted biased, negative criticism and propaganda against Pakistan's nuclear status. In September 2001, Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) raised concerns that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists (ISIS, 2001). Furthermore, in April 2004, the European Union (EU) Parliament criticizing Pakistan for its proliferation activities, passed a resolution. At the same time, the international media also started to spread rumors that due to mounted international pressure Pakistan might halt and roll back its nuclear weapon programme (Mustafa, 2017).

Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state. Pakistan, Pakistan, without compromising over its national security concerns, playing responsible role and making every efforts to address all these challenges. In order to ensure a responsible nuclear behavior, Pakistan is making measures to strengthen its nuclear command and control structure. Pakistan has maintained a strengthened national export control laws and regulatory system and it has made concrete measures to safeguard its nuclear installations.

Propaganda campaigns against Pakistan Army

Pakistan has always faced security challenges from the both borders—Indian and Afghanistan. Pakistan Army has fought three wars with India, followed by Kargil conflict, insurgencies and military operations against terrorists. The Army institution of Pakistan has remained the most well-managed, disciplined and dedicated for the country. Apart from playing role for defense of Pakistan's territory, the Army institution also has a remarkable history of making sacrifices and contribution towards nation building. Pakistan Army, which is considered the backbone support of Pakistan, has been represented very negatively. The adversaries have been blaming Pakistan Army and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for belligerency in the region and supporters of non-state actors. Additionally, India has always blamed Pakistan Army and ISI for any incident that



happens in its region or Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Indeed, India has been trying to divert the world's attention from its atrocities in IOK and subversive activities in Balochistan province of Pakistan (Azad, 2020).

Foreign media has always been prejudiced to Pakistan. It has never applauded and highlighted sacrifices Pakistan has made in war against terrorism. The US is targeting Pakistan with collaboration with India and Israel. Pakistan army has been the strongest obstacle in their way to gain its foreign policy objectives. Hence, they are targeting Pakistan military from many angles. They are engaged in hybrid warfare in Khyber Pashtunkhwa and being dragged in Balochistan turmoil as well.

While such an attempts to malign prestigious institution of the state has become a common practice. Negative opinions through media is over blowing such information which is leading to misperceptions regarding Pakistan's armed forces and intelligence agencies. However, Pakistan army and its leading intelligence agency ISI have been effectively countering these conspiracies.

Waging conventional battle against Pakistan remains difficult for the adversaries. Hence, they have launched propaganda campaign against it. India is trying to build the narrative that she always tried to maintain cordial ties with Pakistan but its Army does not let the bilateral relationship to a normalize level. Moreover, it is trying to undermine Pakistan's military institution to hide its nefarious designs against Pakistan. It is trying to malign Pakistan in global level, blaming it for not allowing regional peace and integration. Obviously, India is pursuing the objectives to dwindle the social contract of our country by generating divisions and uncertainty within the country (Atta, 2018).

In fact, Pakistan Army has successfully tackled lawlessness and effectively fought and defeated insurgencies in Balochistan combat terrorism in Ex-FATA region. Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa said at the recent Munich Security Conference: "The presence of terrorists of various hues and colors cannot be ruled out. However, today, I can say with pride and conviction that there are no organized terrorist camps on our side of the border. Pakistan Army has waged a relentless and bloody fight against terrorism and violent extremism, at a monumental human and material cost. Over 35,000 Pakistanis have lost their lives, over 48,000 are critically wounded or disabled with a financial cost exceeding US\$250 billion – only a fraction of which is actually shared by our global partners" (Atta, 2018). Pakistan army fully understands the hidden motives and objectives of defamation campaigns launched by India.



It is important to mention that, after 9/11 incident, Pakistan suffered huge economic losses. In addition to this, it lost about 80,000 human beings, including 5498 military personnel. Moreover, Pakistan deployed 200,000 in Ex-FATA region to eliminate terrorism networks sponsored and nurtured by Indian from across the border (Center for Research & Security Studies, 2014).

Indian Hybrid Warfare Strategies against Pakistan

Hybrid warfare has been a preferred strategy for India to gain its projected goals. Since the formation of its intelligence agency—RAW, it has been constantly involve in subversive activities against Pakistan. Soon after its creation in year 1968, the Indian-spy agency started meddling in Pakistan (Stanley, Kokanee, & Hardgrave, 2008). RAW had created a terrorist organization (Mukti Bahini) which was used to exploit the political crisis of Pakistan in 1970s and eventually resulted in separation of East of Pakistan. It trained, funded and nurtured the organization which was involved in act of atrocities against Pakistan army, their families and people of East Pakistan. Since then, it has been actively carrying out covert operations against Pakistan. India has long been involved covert operations against Pakistan (Khattak, 2019).

To achieve its nefarious goals, India has embarked upon a bi-dimensional strategy towards Pakistan. First, it has launched campaigns to diplomatically isolate Pakistan through blame game of terrorism. Secondly, it is meddling in Pakistan's internal affairs, sponsoring and abetting terrorism. In order to achieve its foreign policy objectives, India has always used multifaceted approach to undermine Pakistan's position in the global community (Bhatti, Waris, & Mohammad, 2019). Indian is trying all means to make Pakistan a diplomatically isolated state in international community. The Indian-western nexus is behind conspiracies against Pakistan to weaken its position at global level.

In 2008, former Indian Army chief General (Retired) V.K Singh established a covert unit in Indian Army known as Technical Services Division (TSD) with aim to make Kashmiri leaders their loyal and conduct terrorist operations inside Pakistan (The News, 2013). Furthermore, the Unit is behind generating subversion in Balochistan. The capture of Indian Spy agent—Kulbushan Yadav is a clear evidence of Indian covert activities within Pakistani territory. According to General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, "Indian spy agency RAW had established a cell in 2015 dedicated to sabotage CPEC projects in Pakistan" (Dawn , 2017). India is involved in the subversive operations in Karachi and Balochistan which has resulted in the loss of many innocent Pakistanis The Indian spy—Kulbushan Yadav and other network that has been exposed are evidences that they are indeed waging



the hybrid warfare against Pakistan. It is due to the Indian subversive activities that Pakistan has seen terrorist attacks in Balochistan, Karachi and in some other areas of the country during the last two decades.

Pursuing its projected goals, India has continued to wage fifth generation warfare against Pakistan. Ajit Doval, the National Security Advisor (NSA), while describing his approach in dealing with threats to the Indian National Security said that “we deal with enemy at three levels. First is defensive mode, in which he said we improve our defenses at home and deal with it on our own soil’. Second mode is defensive-offense, in which you have to proactively go to the area from where threat is coming and neutralize it there. And third is offensive mode which implies that ‘you go for offensive out rightly” (Khattak, 2019). The doctrine indicates the Indian ambitions of latest generation warfare against Pakistan. The latest generation warfare has already been launched against Pakistan, especially in Balochistan.

Financial Action Task Force: A tool to undermine Pakistan

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organization which aims to promote policies and standards to eliminate financial crime. Recommendations provided by the organization focus money laundering, terrorist financing, and other threats to financial system of the world. It was formed in year 1989 at the behest of G 7 and headquarter in Paris. With emergence of global economy and global trade, financial crimes such as money laundering are growing (FATF, n.d.).

In the era of hybrid warfare, global organizations are exploited as diplomatic coercion to gain political objectives. Pakistan has made many sacrifices to combat terrorism and ensure peace and security in the region. It played role of frontline state in US-led war against terrorism. Nonetheless, making sacrifices and suffering huge losses in war against terrorism, the United States has put forward a motion to place its name on a global terrorist-financing watch list.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has placed Pakistan “jurisdictions with strategic deficiencies” known as grey list of FATF. It is not for the first time that Pakistan name is on FATF list, Pakistan was placed on the list in year 2008, 2012 to 2015 (Dawn, 2019) . Recently, FATF has placed the country’s name on grey list on ground that it’s structural deficiencies on the count of weak non-compliance on money laundering and terrorism related financing. It is far more political than financial in nature. It has been perceived as an attempt of coercion by the US with India a key player at the FATF Asia and the Pacific



to mount pressure on Pakistan to “do more” on terrorism related matters to achieve its political objectives. Enjoying its influence over FATF, the US can make it difficult for Pakistan to be out of the list. The US is major financier of FATF and it has more leverage than states. The US had also cut down its military assistance to Pakistan, before placing its name on FATF list.

India has launched falsified propaganda campaigns against Pakistan to build negative perceptions that Pakistan is sponsoring militancy in the region. It is persistently engaged in generating opportunities for false flag operations such as attack on Indian parliament, Bombai attack 2008, Pathankot attack in 2016 and Pulwama incident of 2019. The Indian media negative propaganda campaigns and diplomatic efforts have deeply damaged Pakistan's image at global level and as a result of this Pakistan has been placed on the FATF grey list (Jaffery, 2020). Brigadier (R) Abdul Basit Rana about FATF stated that: “India is lobbying with Financial Action task force to discredit Pakistan. If the Indian efforts are succeeded, it would have far reaching effect on Gwadar and CPEC—a game changer for Balochistan and Pakistan in future” (Rana, 2021).

Indian is making efforts to blacklist Pakistan in the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and get it labeled as a terror sponsoring state. In fact, it is another form of economic blackmailing to attain strategic objectives. Pakistan's military fully understands and the ulterior motives of global defamation campaigns. Pakistan Army and paramilitary forces have successfully tackled Karachi's lawlessness and successfully fought and defeated insurgencies in Balochistan and ex-FATA region (Dawn, 2021). According to Foreign Office (FO) "As for the hypocritical Indian assertions regarding the terror infrastructure and individual terrorists, irrefutable evidence has already been provided by Pakistan to the international community of the active aiding, abetting, planning, promoting, financing and execution of terrorist activities by India against Pakistan, with impunity" (Dawn, 2021).

Foreign Involvement in Balochistan

Balochistan is a significant geo-strategic location of Pakistan. It has seen insurgencies followed by suicide attacks, bomb blasts, and attacks on infrastructure and security forces through history. Foreign hostile forces are sponsoring insurgencies, abetting terrorism, sabotaging development projects and publishing misleading and fake media reports to influence the minds of local communities and incite them against its own state and its institutions. Anti-Pakistan forces have been meddling in the province for long. Russia, US, India, Israel, UK, Afghanistan and Iran have been part of conspiracies against the province



(Khan, Sana, & Kiran, 2012). They have been trying to incite the locals against its own state and its institutions, sponsoring insurgencies, and promoting propaganda.

The world powers always tried to promote their interest in Balochistan in order to exploit the region as tool to make Pakistan a destabilized country. Russia had supported “Greater Balochistan” movement. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, it was believed that it would also try to take possession of Balochistan’s deep-sea-water port and the Baloch insurgents and their militant activities would be helpful to its attempt. After gaining control of Afghan territory, Russia tried hard to convince the Baloch to revolt against Pakistan’s central government. The Soviet assured Baloch that they would be given autonomy over the province. The Soviet was pursuing the objective to maintain domination in Kabul as their base and to raise the issue ‘Greater Balochistan’ from land of Afghanistan, and make attempt to separate Balochistan from the state of Pakistan (Carson, 2018).

At present, Balochistan is being subjected to fifth generation warfare massively. Anti-Pakistan forces are pursuing their political goals to generate lawlessness and uncertainty in the province in order to destabilize Pakistan. Indian, through Iran and Afghanistan, is conducting covert operations in Balochistan. India is engaged in subversive activities in the province at massive level. India has established consulates in different cities of Afghanistan which are being used to conduct terrorism in Balochistan. The Iranian and Afghan territory have become a safe haven for the Indian-sponsored terrorists. The capture of Indian spy agent Kulbushan Jadav in 2016 confirmed the Indian involvement in Balochistan through Iran and Afghanistan (Dawn , 2016). The Indian intelligence agency RAW and Afghan NDS have joined hands and are engaged in subversive activities in Balochistan. The enemies are indeed pursuing their objectives to destabilize Pakistan and damage its national unity. Additionally, India has launched media campaigns by using all means including television, newspaper, social media, films, dramas and radio to promote its falsified propaganda against Pakistan focusing Balochistan province. India has launched a multimedia website and app of Balochi radio service which broadcast its transmission in Balochi language airing statements of the senior officials of Indian Intelligence agency-RAW to incite Balochi community to stand up against Pakistan. Besides, Indian has also launched a TV news Channel “Zee Salam” with same purpose (Maqbool, 2018).

Way Forward



The West-Indian nexus have deeply effected Pakistan and it has pushed the country toward a difficult position. However, Pakistan has the all strength and capability to counter the challenges of hybrid warfare. In order to make its counter strategy more effective, Pakistan needs a comprehensive counter strategy which should include all the stake-holders at federal and provincial level. At present we are at war. The adversaries are targeting our country with hybrid warfare. They are trying to divide Pakistani society on the basis of ethnicity and sectarianism. Pakistan should make measures to counter these conspiracies. Government should take steps to overcome the sectarian and ethnic issues and save the society from further division. Most of the domestic issues Pakistan is presently facing is due to the lack of 'Good Governance'. Ensuring good governance is an urgent need of time to address genuine reservations of the people (Haider, Azad, & Warrich , 2020). Pakistan should improve the governance and counter propaganda campaigns lunched against it by foreign forces. Education is considered a weapon of social change and national development. Pakistan should start technical education, create and groom skills. Steps should be taken to ensure uniform education system for all in terms of National curriculum. This will provide equal opportunities for upward social mobility. Pakistan needs a comprehensive counter strategy to counter challenges of hybrid warfare. Media plays crucial role in representing a state in international community. In Pakistan, there is presently no policy-based discussion between media and the government and Pakistan also lacks enough English news channels to portray the positive image of the country at global level. Pakistani society should collectively respond to hybrid warfare; media, the civil society and academia should play role for national unity of the country.

Conclusion

The study discussed challenges of fifth generation warfare to Pakistan. The geographical location of Pakistan makes it one of the important locations of the world. The global powers have always meddled in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Pakistan has witnessed wars, conflicts, insurgencies, terrorist attacks, bomb blasts and other acts of terrorism in its history. Since Pakistan has become nuclear power in 1998, direct military confrontation has become impossible for the adversaries. Hence, the adversaries are targeting Pakistan with soft power approaches, supporting insurgencies, giving rise to ethnic and sectarian conflicts, and launching media campaigns based on false news and misleading reports. In the realm of latest generation warfare, media along with internet is playing crucial role. Currently, Pakistan is facing fifth generation warfare waged by hostile intelligence agencies against it.



Pakistan is facing the threats hybrid warfare from many fronts. Adversaries are trying to exploit domestic fissures. The population of Pakistan is constituted by different communities with distinct cultures. The adversaries are trying to create differences among these communities to undermine national unity of Pakistan. For instance, India is trying to create trust gap between the local communities and state. India is using Iranian and Afghan soil against Pakistan. The RAW-NDS nexus is targeting Pakistan with hybrid warfare. In addition, India has joined hands with its western allies to conduct subversive activities in Pakistan, particularly targeting Balochistan, Karachi and Ex-FATA region in Khyber Pashtunkhuwa province. India is sponsoring terrorist organizations in Balochistan to create lawlessness and chaos in the province and destabilize the whole country. Besides, India has launched media campaigns highlighting fake news and misleading reports about Balochistan. The enemies are trying to create gap between the people and state and incite it against its own state and institution. This is indeed an attempt by enemies to fuel domestic fissures and damage Pakistan's national unity.

Falsified propaganda campaigns have damaged Pakistan's image in international community. The adversaries have given rise to narrative that Pakistan is an unsafe country, religiously intolerant, "safe haven" for terrorists, and nuclear weapons of Pakistan could fall into the hands of terrorists. At present, Pakistan is at FATF's grey list which is indeed the result of Indian negative propaganda campaigns and false flag operations. In fact, Pakistan played crucial role and made many sacrifices during war on terror, but it did not receive the due acknowledgement and its role never appreciated and still being told to "do more". Pakistan needs an effective counter strategy to counter challenges of fifth generation warfare.



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