Hybrid Warfare: India's New Policy Instrument

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Abstract

Hybrid warfare has gained significant attention since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Despite numerous definitions, a clear understanding of this phenomenon remains elusive. This study aims to define hybrid warfare by synthesizing expert opinions and organizational viewpoints. It also examines how hybrid warfare has been executed using an analytical framework developed by European nations. Recent claims by Pakistan, China, and others about India's use of hybrid warfare prompt analysis of India's strategic application of this approach for national security objectives. The study concludes with practical recommendations for policymakers to counter Hybrid Warfare challenges effectively. Overall, this study contributes to comprehending, analyzing, and addressing the complexities of Hybrid Warfare in contemporary security contexts.

Keywords
Hybrid warfare, India, Pakistan, Policy, Strategy, Security

Introduction

According to the famous American poet and journalist Ambrose Bierce, "Peace is a period of cheating between one war and the next" (p.143). War has existed throughout human history in various forms. It has been used by individuals, groups, organizations and states as a tool to achieve their 'political' goals. The famous Prussian general Carl von Clausewitz termed war as a "continuation of politics by other means" (Clausewitz, 1918, p. 280), and since politics has been a constant element in human life, war has co-existed with it for all this time.

From the initial form of war to its present-day manifestations, the concept of war has gone through a tremendous transformation, and the factors that have contributed the most towards this transformation include the revolution in military and communication technologies. Besides expanding the ambit and cost, these advancements and developments have made war more lethal, dynamic and complex.

Nonetheless, despite the continual evolution of technology and tactical strategies, warfare's fundamental purpose and objective have endured across history.

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Nevertheless, these advancements have spurred military thinkers and strategists to forge novel and sophisticated tools within the realm of hybrid warfare. These tools aim to exploit and magnify the vulnerabilities of adversaries, thereby facilitating the goals of weakening, destabilizing, and asserting dominance.

With the advent of modern and conventional aerial, naval and atomic weapons systems like guided missiles, radars, drones and nuclear bombs, wars in the 21st century are not conventionally waged but rather provoked and instigated by surreptitious agents using a combination of military and non-military, information operations, cyber instruments, media tools (Wither, 2016), non-government organizations (NGOs), non-state actors, intelligence organizations, economic instruments, propaganda (Hickman et al., 2018), terrorism (extremism and radicalization) (Qureshi, 2020), confusion (Monaghan et al., 2019), in-house insurgencies and separatist movements.

Combining the components mentioned above to achieve a political objective against an adversary is termed hybrid warfare. Although the terminology seems relatively new in the contemporary International Relations jargon, the concept behind it is also consistent with the older forms of conflict. Various examples of this kind of warfare can be found in history, e.g., the effective use of Continental forces combined with sturdy guerrilla forces by Gorge Washington during the American Revolution, and also, the British combination of its regular forces with irregular forces, under its operational control, during conventional operations in the Palestine region (Hoffman, 2007).

However, due to its nature (political), historical roots and profound ramifications for states and individuals, it is highly pertinent to study modern-day hybrid warfare and understand it adequately, and as this study demands, explore how it is being used by countries like India against other countries (particularly Pakistan), what threats such kind of warfare entails, how to identify those threats and most importantly, how to counter or defend against those threats posed by this warfare. Therefore, as stated earlier, the main intention behind conducting this research is to understand the contemporary concept of hybrid warfare, how different actors, particularly India, use it as a policy tool and finally, provide various state policymakers with concrete recommendations to counter hybrid warfare.

This research study comprises five distinct segments. The initial segment is dedicated to comprehending the concept of hybrid warfare, encompassing diverse definitions and elucidating the analytical framework (as a model) for dissecting this form of warfare. The subsequent segment delves into India's multifaceted utilization of hybrid warfare strategies against various adversaries. The third segment presents two illustrative case studies spotlighting India's concrete instances of hybrid warfare implementation. Shifting focus, the fourth segment outlines recommendations tailored for Pakistani policymakers intended to counteract hybrid warfare tactics effectively. Finally, the study culminates with a conclusion underscoring the imperative of formulating a comprehensive strategy to counter hybrid warfare.

Understanding the Concept of Hybrid Warfare

As mentioned in the earlier section of this study, the terminology of hybrid warfare is comparatively new to the International Relations jargon; hence, researchers, academics, policymakers, strategists and practitioners alike are striving to reach some form of agreement on the basic definition of this concept and what it entails.

Multiple definitions of 'globalization' exist today, so numerous definitions of hybrid warfare are used to define this very dynamic concept. The prevailing definitions of hybrid warfare revolve around various key facets, encompassing diverse actors,

adopted tactics, intricacies, multifaceted dynamics, adeptness in perception management, strategic information dissemination, concurrent actions, inherent dynamism, and deliberate ambiguity (Uziębło, 2017). Moreover, these definitions underscore the deliberate endeavors to sidestep clear attribution and mitigate potential retribution (Qureshi, 2020). However, it is essential to note that Hoffman has coined the idea of hybrid warfare (Hoffman, 2007).

Defining Hybrid Warfare

- "[…] spectrum wars with both physical and conceptual dimensions: the former, a struggle against an armed enemy and the latter, a wider struggle for control and support of the combat zone's indigenous population, the support of the home fronts of the intervening nations, and the support of the international community" (McCuen, 2008, as cited in Baker,2015, para. 2).

- "Hybrid warfare is the synchronized use of multiple instruments of power tailored to specific vulnerabilities across the full spectrum of societal functions to achieve synergetic effects" (Monaghan et al., 2019).

- "[…] a combination of military action, covert operations and an aggressive program of disinformation" (Landler & Gordon, 2014).

- "[…] the employment of a full spectrum of tools, tactics, and coercions. Both states and a variety of non-state actors can conduct hybrid wars. These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of the conflict" (Hoffman, 2007, p. 8). The cited definition encapsulates hybrid warfare as a strategic orchestration involving the coordinated deployment of both military and non-military instruments. This integrated campaign is meticulously crafted to secure surprise, initiative, and psychological elements alongside tangible physical advantages. This intricate approach encompasses a spectrum of tactics, including diplomatic channels, sophisticated and rapid information dissemination, electronic and cyber operations of a complex nature, discrete military and intelligence actions, and judicious application of economic pressures ("Complex Crises Call for Adaptable and Durable Capabilities," 2015).

- "[…] the use of military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign, designed to achieve surprise, seize the initiative and gain psychological as well as physical advantages utilizing diplomatic means; sophisticated and rapid information, electronic and cyber operations; covert and occasionally overt military and intelligence action; and economic pressure" ("Complex Crises Call for Adaptable and Durable Capabilities," 2015, p. 5).

Upon meticulous examination of the aforementioned diverse definitions, a salient observation emerges: the core aim of hybrid warfare resides in the strategic evasion of confrontation, seeking instead to disrupt and impede the policymaking processes of the target state through a repertoire of clandestine maneuvers. This objective is achieved through diverse covert tactics meticulously orchestrated to sow chaos and ambiguity, cultivating an environment of uncertainty and perplexity. Central to these tactics is the deliberate avoidance of any clear attribution or avenues for retribution against the instigators.

Spanning the entire spectrum of conflict, these concerted endeavors are harmoniously coordinated, with the overarching intent of either orchestrating regime change within the subject state or exerting influence over its policies, all in alignment with the interests of the aggressing state(s). This calculated manipulation encompasses multifarious tools and strategies designed not only to subvert and undermine the target

state's stability but also to shape the trajectory of its governance and decision-making in a manner that advances the strategic objectives of the aggressor(s).

Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "Every age has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period, therefore, would have held to its own theory of war" (Clausewitz, 1918, as cited in Regier, 2009, para. 26). This means that based on existing literature and empirical data, in today's day and age, the definition and execution of war have evolved from the conventional nature of warfare to a more unconventional mode where the fine line between war and peace is blurred, the enemy not clearly defined, and there is no clarity on victory and defeat.

Over an extended period, developments in the domain of warfare resulted in the creation of hybrid warfare. It is the kind of warfare where the strategic dependence on conventional practices and tools has been dramatically reduced. Alternatively, incorporating irregular means of social and psychological combat is ensured. Each segment of a society or a state is encompassed by the 'battlefield' compared to the restriction to military combat and engagement as customary to conventional warfare.

Similarly, the main objective is not associated with a direct and immediate triumph over the nemesis. Instead, the main focus is on softening, isolating, and demoralizing the opponent by capitalizing on their social, political and economic vulnerabilities (Aqdas, 2021).

Moreover, despite a worldwide consensus on hybrid warfare, there is a lack of proper understanding of this concept. It is a problem, nonetheless. And to resolve an issue, conceptual understanding is the first step taken in the right direction. For this purpose, an analytical framework was developed by the Multinational Capability Development Campaign (MCDC) in its first report out of a series of reports titled 'Understanding Hybrid Warfare' (Monaghan et al., 2019) project. The report enables us to understand, detect, and respond to hybrid warfare. The MCDC's Understanding Hybrid Warfare report defines hybrid warfare as "the synchronized use of multiple instruments of power tailored to specific vulnerabilities across the full spectrum of societal functions to achieve synergetic effects" (Kjennerud & Cullen, 2017, p. 3).

The report further gives the 'Baseline Assessment' (Kjennerud & Cullen, 2017) for the nature of hybrid warfare (asymmetric) and how it uses multiple sources of power at its disposal along different axes (X and Y axis on a graph) to varying degrees (depending on the instigator's creativity and requirements). These elements set hybrid warfare apart from the conventional approach of warfare, which is attrition-based.

Figure 1 explains how an instigator of hybrid warfare can employ different elements of its power, namely 'Military, Political, Economic, Civilian, Informational' (MPECI), to escalate the situation vertically and horizontally (as per its requirements) by targeting vulnerabilities in the target state—Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information and Infrastructure (PMESII)—, to generate desired results. Escalation in this form can be made by intensity adjustment of one specific instrument or by increasing the number of instruments on the horizontal spectrum.
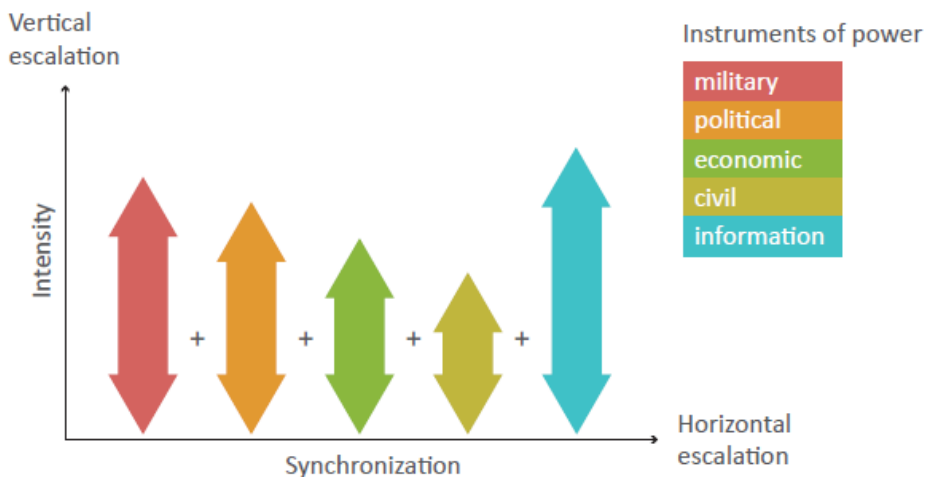
Figure 1. MPECI instruments of power and PMESII target vulnerabilities
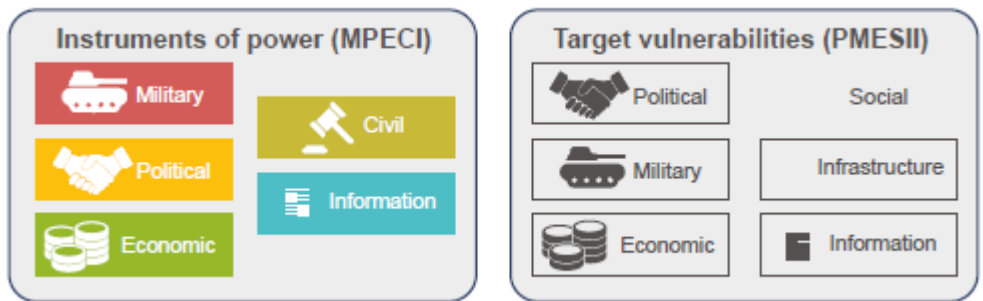
Source: Monaghan et al. (2019)

The following Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the synchronization of diverse instruments of power. Nuanced adjustments to escalation levels along both axes aptly accompany this synchronization.

Figure 2. Hybrid War Escalation (MPECI)

Source: Kjennerud and Cullen (2017)

Moreover, in the context of hybrid warfare escalation, a diverse array of instruments of power is strategically employed across various dimensions and levels synchronized. This strategic approach facilitates the orchestrator to execute meticulously customized 'attack packages' to exploit the susceptibilities inherent within the targeted state or system. The efficacy of this endeavor hinges upon the capabilities inherent to the initiating state, the perceived vulnerabilities of the target state, and the underlying political objectives driving the instigation of hybrid warfare. This strategic modus operandi, accompanied by a well-defined methodology, is instrumental in realizing the envisioned objectives. It is worth noting that the significance of context cannot be underestimated in this milieu, echoing the importance it holds in all forms of warfare.

Taking from the findings of MCDC's report (Kjennerud & Cullen, 2017), the threat analysis for hybrid warfare is different from that of the enemy-centric traditional threat analysis adopted during conventional warfare for various reasons:

1. Hybrid warfare employs a broader range of MPECI tools to target the adversary.
2. Hybrid warfare targets societal vulnerabilities in ways that are traditionally overlooked in warfare.
3. There is a novelty in synchronizing its means and tools, defeating predictability.
4. Hybrid warfare thrives on creativity, surprise, confusion, and an existing understanding of warfare.
5. Hybrid warfare campaigns can remain undetected after their damaging effects have already manifested themselves, rendering the target state(s) capability to defend itself useless.

The above-discussed framework will be succinctly elucidated in the forthcoming section and subsequently employed in the empirical examination of India's hybrid warfare tactics vis-à-vis Pakistan, aligning with the principal aim of this research endeavor.

Analytical Framework

As per the MCDC's report on Understanding Hybrid Warfare, the analytical framework consists of three interconnected categories elucidated by Kjennerud & Cullen (2017). These categories, though distinct analytically, are inherently interdependent due to the extensive nature of hybrid warfare: (i) critical functions and vulnerabilities, (ii) synchronization of means (horizontal escalation), and (iii) effects and non-linearity.

A comprehensive grasp of UHW necessitates an integrated understanding of these categories, as they collectively capture the multifaceted nature of hybrid warfare. The distributed activities and operations spread across the MPECI+infrastructural (MPECII) spectrum are called critical functions that, if disturbed, can create serious problems for the target state's working system. Due to their innate vulnerabilities, all vital functions provide the instigator of hybrid warfare with opportunities for exploitation against the target state.

Synchronization, within the context of hybrid warfare, refers to the adept capability of the instigator to effectively harmonize instruments of power, precisely timed and strategically positioned, to attain predetermined objectives. This orchestrated finesse ensures a focused alignment of resources within an opportune temporal and spatial framework. Effective synchronization of power instruments gives the instigator more options and the ability to escalate and de-escalate horizontally.

Effects and non-linearity mean the tangible or intangible change in the state of any given entity in the targeted state after the synchronized implementation of power instruments by the instigator of hybrid warfare. Effective synchronization also makes it impossible for the target state to predict the pattern of attacks. With this understanding, the next section will demonstrate, with the help of the analytical framework, how India uses hybrid warfare as a tool against its western neighbour Pakistan.

India's Hybrid Warfare

According to the famous Chinese strategist Sun Tzu, "Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting" (Tzu, 500, as cited in Mott IV & Kim, 2006, p. 15). The approach offers a range of advantageous outcomes, encompassing the conservation of fiscal and material resources that would otherwise have been expended in direct adversarial engagement. Additionally, it shields the instigator from potential attribution or retaliatory actions. Simultaneously, it engenders a state of destabilization within the adversary's domain, compelling a shift towards a defensive posture and concurrently heightening susceptibility to subsequent incursions (Korybko, 2015). This paradigm closely mirrors India's strategic methodology in its interactions with Pakistan.

Since 1998, when Pakistan and India conducted nuclear weapon tests and declared to possess nuclear capabilities, engaging in a total conventional war was no longer an option for the two significantly large countries of South Asia. Besides, the entire financial cost and material expenditure involved in pursuing the course of conventional war are incredibly high for both countries, especially India. For example, India spent approximately US$ 14 billion on arms imports between 2014 and 2020 (Asthana, 2020); it secured the 36 Rafale fighter jets deal for € 7.85 billion (US$ 9.4 billion) (Rafale Deal: How much does it cost and other questions govt should answer, 2019); and it plans to spend US$ 130 billion in the next decade on military modernization (Asthana, 2021).

Furthermore, India stands among the world's foremost arms importers (Wezeman et al., 2021), having secured the top spot in recent years. Despite this, India has encountered challenges in realizing its military (conventional) objectives concerning both internal and external adversaries. These include, among others, Pakistan, China, resistance in the disputed Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) region, and Naxalite separatists in the Red Corridor[2]. As a strategic response, India has initiated an expansive hybrid warfare initiative to destabilize its adversaries.

This approach is driven by the intention to conserve substantial resources that might otherwise be expended through conventional means. In the past, conventional wars between Pakistan and India were fought using conventional military equipment and means such as missiles, submarines, fighter jets, tanks and infantry. However, as indicative of hybrid warfare power instruments (as explained in the previous section), India has used several instruments such as colour revolutions, insurgents, spies, rebels (anti-state), propaganda through all types of media (print, electronic and social); surgical strikes; proxy wars; economic coercion; and diplomatic and political onslaught against Pakistan as part of its hybrid onslaught.

The primary objective of India's hybrid warfare campaign against Pakistan is to isolate Pakistan internationally by depicting it as a pariah state. Additionally, the campaign aims to undermine Pakistan's social, political, and economic systems, leading to destabilization. This approach further seeks to establish a dominant position over Pakistan, exerting coercive influence over its decision-making processes in alignment with India's interests.

Such hybrid warfare tactics have enabled India (the aggressor and/or instigator) to not only use non-military forces against Pakistan without the risk of being held responsible in conformity with the rules of international law, but it has also allowed India to cause considerable instability in Pakistan without spending plenty of

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[2] The red corridor, also called the red zone is the region in the eastern, central and the southern parts of India where the Naxalite–Maoist insurgency has the strongest presence.

resources or attracting the wrath of the international community despite its relentless transgressions over the years. To better explain India's hybrid warfare efforts against Pakistan via the analytical framework model, this section will apply an empirical case study of the EU DisInfo Lab's *Indian Chronicles* (2015-2019) (Alexandre et al., 2020). More short case studies that are a part of the Indian hybrid warfare campaign against Pakistan will follow in this section.

The illustrative example of the *Indian Chronicles* focuses on India's use of the information, political and economic spectrums of the MPECI instruments. In this particular case study, the use of misrepresentation, exaggeration and dissemination of wrong and malicious causes and information against Pakistan via an extensive and elaborate disinformation campaign enabled India to create special synchronized attack packages (as explained in earlier sections) to convince the international community to isolate Pakistan and put diplomatic pressure on the Pakistani government over this entire time and even synchronize these SAPs with other power instruments available to India such as political, economic and ultimately military.

Critical Functions and Vulnerabilities

Nine types of vulnerabilities are identified in this case study, which constitute the enabling factors for promoting the implementation and execution of a special synchronized information (or disinformation) attack package as part of the Indian hybrid warfare campaign against Pakistan.

Vulnerabilities Inherent to Pakistan
- Dwindling economy
- Weak international diplomatic outreach
- Weak structures of governance and other state institutions (internal balancing)
- Societal divisions along ethnic, religious, sectarian, socio-economic and political lines
- Ineffective and inefficient lobbies internationally
- The absence of robust internationally linked media networks
- Non-existent capabilities in the Cyber domain
- Lack of a national narrative and counter-narratives
- Irresolute and feeble political leadership

Vulnerabilities intentionally created by India
- Indian-sponsored terrorism and militancy in Pakistan
- Proxy wars by using Pakistan's neighbouring countries against it
- Spread of chaos, fear and anti-state sentiments via a network of spies
- Constantly elevated tensions on the border (especially in the J&K region)
- Misuse of Indian goodwill and influence with Western powers (US, UK, Russia) and other regional and international organizations such as the European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN) against Pakistan
- Attempts to establish the 'new normal' via tactics like surgical strikes.

Synchronization of Power Instruments and Patterns of Escalation
The following table shows the Synchronized Attack Packages (SAPs) that have been identified during the case study analysis:

Table 1: Synchronized Attack Packages (SAPs)

• *SAP-1* represents the hostile actions taken by India and its proxies (mainly through terrorist and extremist organizations like the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA), and operatives like Kulbhushan Jadhav, to spread terrorism, militancy, chaos and uncertainty in Pakistan.
• *SAP-2* represents the hostile actions taken by India against Pakistan via its malicious media campaign worldwide by creating fake media and bogus website domain names in more than 115 countries around the world, including Brussels and Geneva. It spread fake news and negative content about Pakistan to generate an anti-Pakistan sentiment internationally and get it diplomatically isolated by proving it to be a rouge state.
• *SAP-3* represents the hostile activities undertaken by India against Pakistan via alleged 'surgical strikes' in 2016 and 2019 (namely, one after the Uri incident and the other after Balakot).

During the time leading up to the unveiling of the nefarious Indian designs against Pakistan in the form of the *Indian Chronicles* report in 2019, India used a combination of pressures on Pakistan via cross-border violations: state-sponsored terrorism and militancy, sabotage activities through spies, malicious media campaign (locally and internationally); and political forces in the form of its strife to diplomatically isolate Pakistan and India's refusal to enter into negotiations with Pakistan on longstanding issues such as the J&K dispute. All this was implemented through the effective use of SAPs by India to drive Pakistan's decision-making as per its vested interests.

With the change in the strategic environment over time and the evolution of conflict between the two countries, India began to use different MPECI power instruments. It modified the SAPs as per its needs to synchronize its efforts by executing various patterns of horizontal-vertical escalation and de-escalation (See Figure 1) to achieve desired objectives.

By using Indian proxies inside Pakistan, India created chaos and confusion inside Pakistan. It not only helped in deteriorating the law-and-order situation in the country but opened new vulnerabilities in the system for the instigator (in this case, India) to target. Furthermore, using Pakistan's neighbours against it (such as Afghanistan and Iran), India was also able to destabilize Pakistan's western border and create regional hostility for the country.

Military escalation along the western borders, especially the Line of Control (LOC), enabled India to maintain vertical escalation with Pakistan, which in turn helped India to justify its military presence in the disputed J&K region, gain popular support at home (especially during election times) and ultimately destroying any chances of entering into any negotiations with Pakistan over pending issues and disputes.

Moreover, India's disinformation campaign, which consisted of spreading malicious and damaging content about Pakistan with the help of fake media outlets, journalists, bogus NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and internet domains, helped India to paint Pakistan as a notorious, rouge state in front of the international community which ultimately provided India with the opportunity to escalate horizontally and vertically to its great advantage against Pakistan.

India adeptly leveraged the prevailing element of ambiguity within the context of its hybrid warfare endeavors directed towards Pakistan. While the Pakistani leadership remained cognizant of the looming threats emanating from India, their

ability to mount effective responses was constrained. Consequently, a decline in public confidence towards the governing structures ensued, prompting the administration to resort to ad-hoc and occasionally ill-considered measures. This, in turn, culminated in a cycle of strategic entrapment, amplifying the challenges faced by Pakistan (Kjennerud & Cullen, 2017). The intricate situation allowed India to harness its inherent and acquired advantages, employing them with a confrontational and malicious agenda whenever deemed opportune. The calculated use of these advantages further propelled India's ability to exert influence and achieve its strategic objectives, thereby exacerbating Pakistan's vulnerabilities.

Effects

India's effective and efficient use of the hybrid warfare toolkit (synchronized attack packages) against Pakistan's broad spectrum of vulnerabilities had profound adverse effects. The outcome of diplomatic and political pressures that came about due to India's competent use of PMECI's 'informational' power instrument against Pakistan resulted in the latter's negative image in front of the international community.

The international community, especially the major global powers, changed their policy orientation and attitude towards Pakistan. In hindsight, it is safe to say that this strategy initiated a variety of non-linear consequences in all PMESII domains, of which the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) strict conditions and the addition of Pakistan into grey list along with reluctance of the international investors and other countries in joining the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects or investing in different sectors of Pakistan (such as development, infrastructure, agriculture, medicine and textile to name a few) are part of.

The fascinating aspect of the various non-linear consequences that resulted from Indian actions was that New Delhi displayed tremendous capacity in capitalizing on the incalculable developments that followed the social turmoil, deteriorated law and order situation, dwindling economy and political instability in Pakistan.

India did exploit the tumultuous situation in Pakistan to carry out the 'alleged' surgical strikes against Pakistan and revoke the special status of J&K (Al Jazeera, 2019), changing the regional dynamics between the two countries by trying to establish a 'new normal' along with recalibrating its SAPs to more coercive instruments.

Through careful examination of the period of this case study, it has been deduced that SAPs remained an integral part of the Indian hybrid warfare campaign efforts against Pakistan. India used SAPs to great outturn in an escalating conflict with Pakistan, ultimately affecting its policy orientation and decision-making processes. For example, by applying the SAPs against Pakistan to exert political and economic pressures on the country from the international community, India pushed Pakistan into adopting a more defensive posture and increased its political and economic dependency on other countries.

This posturing ultimately weakened Pakistan's position on several matters, such as the J&K dispute, nuclear arms control proliferation, and political and economic reforms, to name a few. India adopted the strategy of employing proxies like the TTP, BLA and spy agents to create unrest in Pakistan. This allowed India to destabilize Pakistan from within without exhausting many resources and efforts while achieving plausible deniability due to the absence of direct or open involvement.

Likewise, by engaging in military adventurism with Pakistan and creating tensions along the LOC, India could maintain military pressure on Pakistan for an extended period and justify its presence and actions in the J&K region.

            In summary, India adeptly maneuvered between escalation and de-escalation strategies across diverse instruments of power within the context of the studied Strategic Action Plans (SAPs 1-3). This proficiency was demonstrated both at tactical and operational levels. Remarkably, India effectively sustained a consistent and elevated level of strategic escalation throughout this case study, optimizing its application according to strategic imperatives. While this section provides a concise overview of an intricate conflict scenario, it serves as an illustrative example of how the analytical framework can be employed across various instances. This framework enhances our comprehension of hybrid warfare campaigns and offers insights into their constituents and strategic deployment methodologies. The case studies mentioned in this section can be summarized as follows:

Table 2: Case Study 1—India in Balochistan (2013-2021)

Overview:	India takes advantage of the turmoil in Balochistan, establishes linkages with local separatist militant groups (BLA/BRA), and creates its network of spy agents in the province. The case study highlights some of India's actions from 2013 to 2021 to demonstrate hybrid approaches to attain its political objectives via non-state actors.
Vulnerabilities:	• Absence of the rule of law in the province • Sectarian and ethnic divisions • Anti-state sentiments owing to socio-political and economic deprivation
Means:	• Material, financial, and political support to militant and separatist groups operating in Balochistan • Establishment of training camps for militants (inside the province and abroad, e.g., Afghanistan) • Infiltration of spy agents like Kulbhushan Jadhav
Effects:	• Unrest in Balochistan • Attacks against foreigners and state projects, e.g., attacks against Chinese workers and CPEC-related projects • Deteriorated Law and Order situation in the province • Increase in the number of militants and intensity of militancy. • Diplomatic and disinformation campaigns by India and its proxies against Pakistan on different forums via different formats (media, lobbying etc.)

Table 3: Case Study 2—Indian Fake News and DisInfo Campaign against Pakistan 2020-2021

Overview:	India takes advantage of political instability in Pakistan and attempts to launch a fake news and disinformation campaign against Pakistan to create confusion and fear amongst the local population and smear its image in the international community. The case study highlights some of India's actions over the time period 2020-2021 to demonstrate a *hybrid* approach to attain its political objectives via non-state actors.
Vulnerabilities:	• Increasing political instability and absence of political harmony and consensus • Mistrust among state institutions and the political elite • The rise of far-right religious groups in the country and public dissatisfaction

Means:	• Fake news campaigns through print, electronic and social media by India • Spreading disinformation and exaggerated adverse content dissemination about the situation in Pakistan via fake and bogus NGOs, media outlets and cyber domains
Effects:	• Tried to instigate large-scale unrest in Pakistan by declaring incidents in Karachi (October 2020 - the alleged arrest of the Police Chief by Pakistan Army) and Lahore (Tehrik-i-Labbaik Pakistan protests in the wake of its Chief's arrest by Law Enforcement Agencies in April 2021) as 'Civil War in Pakistan.' • Fear and confusion among the local population after exposure to media that was rampant with Indian fake news. • Fear in the international community about the deteriorating situation in a nuclear-armed state • Panic among foreigners stationed in Pakistan (embassies instructing their nationals to leave the country) • A diplomatic and media nightmare for Pakistan's Foreign Office and political leadership

Pakistan: Strategies for Mitigation of Hybrid Warfare Challenges

Understanding hybrid warfare holds undeniable significance; however, an equally imperative endeavor entails comprehending the mechanisms for its preparation and subsequent containment. States, the fundamental entities under scrutiny within this research, bear a profound responsibility to grasp and internalize the strategies for countering Hybrid Warfare. This comprehension extends beyond mere awareness and acquiring the requisite capacity and determination essential for the adept execution and successful implementation of counter-hybrid warfare strategies.

Hybrid warfare is a reality and a serious challenge to the global system with profound, disruptive and enduring tendencies. It takes place on a continuum of competition and conflict between international actors. Consequently, countering it requires a strategic approach (Monaghan et al., 2019). And since Pakistan is part of the international community and an actor in the global arena, it has also been a direct victim of hybrid warfare; hence a strategic approach needs to be adopted by it to counter its onslaughts successfully.

In pursuit of these objectives, the 'countering hybrid warfare framework' (Monaghan et al., 2019) will serve as the cornerstone, systematically generating tangible and pragmatic recommendations. Given Pakistan's role as a recipient of hybrid warfare campaigns, prevailing circumstances naturally underscore the imperative for Pakistan to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of hybrid warfare dynamics. This understanding offers a pivotal vantage point for Pakistan to deconstruct past instances of attack, thereby elucidating the underlying motives behind prevailing destabilization. Moreover, this analytical insight equips Pakistan with the tools necessary to proactively mitigate potential future onslaughts of hybrid warfare.

Central to this endeavor is Pakistan's pragmatic acknowledgment of its vulnerabilities and susceptibilities, which potential instigator states of hybrid warfare might exploit. This candid self-assessment is a pivotal cornerstone, enabling Pakistan to discern and reinforce its weak points, fostering resilience against hybrid warfare tactics. Pakistan's response to counter-hybrid warfare demands a methodical and systematic approach.

As a target state of hybrid warfare, Pakistan should lay the groundwork by establishing strategic guidelines. These strategic objectives play a pivotal role in

shaping the array of available policy choices to effectively counter the onslaught of hybrid warfare. The continuous evolution of the strategic landscape necessitates a regular review of these objectives, thus ensuring their relevance and adaptability within a dynamic environment. Pakistan's counter-hybrid warfare measures should aim to achieve these strategic goals. Pakistan should formulate the following five all-inclusive strategic guidelines.

Table 4: Strategic Guidelines

1.	Maintain capacity for independent action (Monaghan et al., 2019). The government of Pakistan should develop the ability and maintain the capability for independent activity. The government and the public should be on the same page regarding the threat of hybrid warfare, have vulnerability awareness and develop a coordinated approach to thwart SAPs of the enemy.
2.	Deter an adversary from hybrid aggression (Monaghan et al., 2019). Pakistan should formulate a comprehensive deterrence strategy that can threaten and impose dire costs on the enemy. Such deterrence capability should be established from the beginning and re-constructed if unsuccessful. While deterrence formulation, considering own interests and the adversary's intent and capability should be kept in mind.
3.	The urgency of preempting potential hybrid aggression, as articulated by Monaghan et al. (2019), underscores its significance in the context of Pakistan's vulnerability to such tactics. Beyond conventional deterrence, Pakistan must adopt a multifaceted approach that dissuades further aggression and incapacitates adversaries from future hostile actions. This imperative acknowledges the possibility of renewed aggression without immediate reprisal, necessitating a robust strategy to nullify the adversary's willingness for hybrid warfare.
4.	Pakistan should craft a comprehensive framework, integrating diplomatic, informational, economic, and military strategies. Diplomatically, international discourse must highlight the futility of hybrid aggression and garner global consensus against it. Informational efforts should systematically expose the fallacies of hybrid tactics, delegitimizing them globally.
5.	Economically, fortifying resilience and diversifying trade dependencies would create disincentives for aggressors. Concurrently, bolstering cyber and counter-hybrid capabilities will limit adversary maneuverability. Orchestrating these measures cohesively will reshape the adversary's calculus, deterring prospective aggression and safeguarding Pakistan's interests in the face of hybrid warfare complexities.

However, before the aforementioned Strategic Guidelines can be formulated, Pakistan needs to consider certain principles. Pakistan should set goals at the government level and the multinational level. All decisions and actions taken concerning countering hybrid warfare should strengthen the rule-based international order and not undermine any rules that preserve the strategic environment. Pakistan should be wary of keeping the thresholds for action too low to avoid creating a hostile strategic environment in which the probability for escalation and miscalculation is likely to be high. While countering hybrid warfare campaigns, Pakistan should be ready

for all situations and adapt to changing circumstances. And to this end, strategic guidelines should be revisited and modified (Monaghan et al., 2019).

Upon establishing SGs, Pakistan must promptly define operational thresholds. These benchmarks will delineate acceptable levels of hostility and prescribe requisite responses. Customizing these thresholds in alignment with the PMESII spheres is imperative. Variability across vulnerabilities mandates a holistic evaluation of the threat landscape, moving beyond isolated sectors. Articulating and disseminating these thresholds assumes pivotal importance. This strategic delineation and communication fortify Pakistan's hybrid warfare preparedness, reflecting a nuanced grasp of multidimensional vulnerabilities. The approach enhances resilience against potential adversarial acts within the hybrid aggression spectrum. Ultimately comes the 'Countering Hybrid Warfare Framework', which consists of 3 main steps (as illustrated in Figure 3) (Monaghan et al., 2019):

1. ***Detect:*** Pakistan's ability to detect hybrid warfare threats and attacks is a paramount priority. While acknowledging the inherent challenges, Pakistan can employ a repertoire of techniques. Establishing robust warning intelligence mechanisms and cultivating early warning systems tailored explicitly for Hybrid Warfare scenarios are pivotal. This proactive approach aims to accumulate crucial intelligence, thus forming the bedrock upon which the nation's comprehensive counterstrategy against instigator-driven hybrid warfare campaigns can be effectively erected.

2. ***Deter:*** Among the components, deterrence emerges as profoundly consequential. Pakistan's imperatives mandate the development of a robust deterrence strategy grounded in fundamental principles. Credibility, signifying the unequivocal resolve to enact actions; capability, reflecting the tangible capacity for execution; and communication, fostering mutual comprehension of potential gains and costs, constitute the bedrock of this strategy. The nuanced realm of deterrence encompasses two discrete categories warranting Pakistan's strategic consideration.

    a. The deterrence-in-denial approach impairs the adversary's initial pursuit of objectives. Pakistan should adeptly tailor strategies to erode the enemy's capacity to achieve its goals at the outset. Concurrently, deterrence by punishment entails convincing adversaries of the staggering costs associated with their aspirations. This entails deploying a combination of coercive threats and calculated retaliation, thereby dissuading the adversary through an articulated readiness to undertake aggressive actions.

    b. Pakistan's deterrence strategies should be meticulously calibrated following its unique exigencies, employing these categories as guiding pillars. This component is perhaps the most important. Pakistan should develop its deterrence strategy, which rests on principles like credibility (will to act), capability (capacity to carry out actions), and communication (understanding and perception that intimate gains and costs to both sides).

    c. As deterrence strategies come in two distinct categories, Pakistan should also formulate its strategy according to its needs. The two categories are deterrence in denial (undermining the enemy's ability to achieve its goals initially) and deterrence by punishment (convincing the enemy that the cost of their goal achievement will be immense via threats of aggressive action and retaliation).

3. ***Respond:*** This elucidates how a targeted entity should effectively address Hybrid attacks. Factoring in its vulnerabilities, capacities, and the prevailing Hybrid Warfare threat cycle, Pakistan can judiciously adopt specific actions and measures. These measures encompass both responsive strategies against hybrid attacks and proactive fortifications to safeguard potential vulnerabilities from impending assaults. The responsive approach entails a dynamic amalgamation of the PMESII domains meticulously tailored to align with the instigator's intent and the targeted state's (responder's) resolute capacity and determination. This synergistic fusion aims to craft a comprehensive and multifaceted response, calibrated to effectively thwart Hybrid attacks whilst positioning the targeted state to deter and counter future threats proactively.

Figure 3. Visual illustration of 'Countering Hybrid Warfare Framework
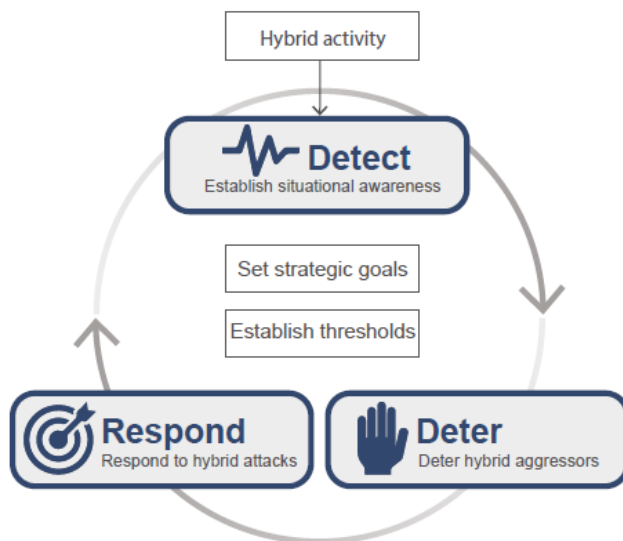
Finally, besides the above-mentioned systematic approach to counter hybrid warfare campaign attacks, Pakistan should simultaneously develop the institutional machinery required to execute and implement the comprehensive counter-hybrid warfare strategy, involving processes, mechanisms, trained individuals and appropriate skills (Monaghan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Pakistan has emerged as a principal target, if not the central one, within the ambit of the Indian hybrid warfare campaign. Faced with unmet objectives of coercion, intimidation, and military dominance vis-à-vis Pakistan, India, in alliance with like-minded nations, has resorted to employing hybrid warfare tactics. Employing a comprehensive array of hybrid warfare tools, notably special strategic action plans (SAPs), India has adeptly sought to exploit prevailing vulnerabilities within Pakistan's socio-political fabric, significantly undermining the nation's overarching security paradigm.

While Pakistan has successfully cultivated robust deterrence capacities within the conventional and nuclear spheres, it is undeniable that further strides remain

imperative within the purview of hybrid warfare. The prevailing leadership ethos, prevailing sentiments, and governmental orientation in India, compounded by the evolving dynamics of global power, interdependence amongst states, and accelerated technological progressions, collectively foreshadow a distinct possibility of heightened employment of hybrid warfare by India against other sovereign entities, particularly Pakistan.

Consequently, the imperative of constructing an all-encompassing counter hybrid warfare framework, reinforced by institutional machinery and resolute determination, assumes the utmost significance for Pakistan. The exigency stems from the recognition that the looming specter of hybrid warfare constitutes a palpable and credible existential threat, casting a shadow over the nation's security and sovereignty. In this context, developing a robust and comprehensive counter-hybrid warfare strategy becomes a sine qua non for Pakistan, a pivotal safeguard against this formidable stratagem's encroaching complexities and challenges.

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