

Q. The Ascending Potency of Hybrid Warfare being fostered on the state of Pakistan is adding to the security woes of the country. Elaborate with Examples. (20)

## Introduction

Pakistan is geographically located in a globally strategic corridor. South Asia accounts for  $\frac{1}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> or 25% of the global population. In addition, it is the region with the highest human diversity in terms of ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences. This has resulted in a vast array of territorial and non-territorial disputes. The dominant presence of China - a key global player and super power coupled with the geographic centrality of India - with its hegemonistic and aggressive foreign policy has added to the prevalent security dimensions for Pakistan. South Asia, carrying a burden of history due to the colonial past and a major corridor for the global power dynamic, continues to retain its position on a strategic level. Quite naturally, under this premise, Pakistan's position on regional and global developments becomes immensely significant. As the only Muslim majority nation that is nuclear armed, Pakistan's internal and external security apparatus has been tested and influenced consistently over the course of its brief history since independence. The measures that have been adopted over time have also evolved as new war mechanisms coupled with advances in technological sophistication attempted to influence and damage the nation's institutions. The term, Hybrid Warfare, has been coined just recently. However, its roots can be

traced back in history. The use of propaganda, misinformation, and an attack on the minds of the people can be observed in the years or decades before the first world war. An excessive intimacy with militanization through education <sup>systems</sup> and battle centric films and cartoons made a psychological infiltration possible among everyday people. This infiltration, now exploited using the familiar and unfamiliar battlefields prove effective in weakening a nation internally.

## The Ascending Potency of Hybrid Warfare and Pakistan's Fault Lines

A combination of internal and as a consequence external challenges have moulded Pakistan's strategic environment. Since inception, Pakistan has witnessed and suffered from weak civilian institutions. With high degrees of constitutional vacuum and inevitable extra-constitutional interventions, Pakistan has also suffered from the retrogressive ethnic, religious and tribal forces who have either exploited these fault lines themselves or were enabled by certain non-state entities. These hindrances have had an adverse impact on the nation-building process. Our economic concerns have remained a constant hurdle in the path towards prosperity and peace. With a deeply divided and polarized political spectrum, governance and administrative models have been other serious fault lines within our internal challenges. Pakistan, like any self respecting nation has been consistently striving to create conducive ~~environments~~ <sup>environments</sup> to allow its citizens to live with honour, dignity and peace as envisioned by our founding fathers. These ideas

have been challenged since inception. With an external dimension moulded by the strategic location of Pakistan at the cross roads of geopolitical landscape, the prevalent security atmosphere has rarely been favourable enough to focus on <sup>strengthening</sup> internal stability. The presence of a super power <sup>^</sup> and other great powers in the South Asian region, a destabilized western frontier, the unresolved status of Jammu and Kashmir, the presence of CPEC triggering major strategic realignments and shifting or at least influencing the geo-political centre of gravity to the Asia-pacific region, the hegemonic ambitions of India and the tripolar dimension between the United States, China and Russia evoking concerns of a new cold war hence, directly influencing the correlation of forces in Asia. This strategic external landscape poses immediate and momentous consequences for Pakistan.

It can be established that Pakistan's security apparatus is largely shaped by the combination of <sup>prevalent</sup> external and internal strategic ~~environment~~ <sup>factors</sup>. To further the vested interests of regional and global players, a variety of overt and covert measures have been deployed to destabilize or at least attempt to destabilize the institutions within the country. Frank Hoffman had defined the term Hybrid Warfare as, 'the combination of regular, irregular, guerilla, terrorism conventional and unconventional, cyber warfare, economic sabotage and coercion and the exploitation of religious, ethnic and political fault lines by state and non-state actors. This means that methods of indirect warfare are utilized by an adversary to make an opponent

Weak and influence its decision making to the extent of coming to agreement with the desires and terms of the former. The perpetrators of hybrid warfare use multi-dimensional infiltration with an aim to demoralize, destabilize and disintegrate the adversary. The advancing potency of such warfare is attributed to the high cost of personnel, material and resources in conventional warfare and the rationale is to weaken a nation internally - through proxies, information warfare and psychologically influence the masses to turn against their own. In the twenty-first century, widespread access to social media has further made hybrid warfare effective.

### Examples of Hybrid Warfare in Pakistan

#### 1- Economy

Economy is the new battlefield. The prime target of the adversary is to incapacitate a nation's ~~economy~~ <sup>ability</sup> to strengthen its national security through weakening its economy, institutions and governance capacity. A country's economic strength has a direct influence upon a country's military strength. A strong economy can ensure strong defense, which enhances national security. In the words of a British Historian, Paul Kennedy, 'A nation's military strength rests on its economic strength'. The erosion of economic strength of any country is the hardest to reverse. Pakistan is facing considerable economic woes. The case for imposition of hybrid warfare is strong based on the recent statistics as a result of the repeated financial assistance programs opted for through the International Financial Institutions.

#### a. International Monetary Fund

Pakistan has been under the IMF program for over three-

decades. The program created a dependency on the IFI's (International Financial Institutions). Pakistan is the only nuclear armed nation that has regularly sought the help of IMF. It is important to understand the economic philosophy and foundation of the IMF "prescription". A tight monetary policy in the form of high interest rates and a currency devaluation together with a tight fiscal policy which contributes to increasing poverty. Between July 2018 and December 22, due to devaluation, public debt increased to 44,366 (Rs in Billion) from 24,953 (Rs in Billion) - Source:

Pakistan Economic Survey 21-22 Chap 9. Furthermore, due to the exchange rate fluctuations, \$75 Billion remains as the debt servicing cost. Based on these findings, it will not be an understatement to quote that 60% of the defense budget and <sup>other</sup> vital state operations are conducted through foreign aid <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> <sup>^</sup> borrowed resources.

## b. FATF

The global financial action task force is the money laundering and terror financing watchdog.

Since 2008, Pakistan has landed on its blacklist twice more. In 2012 and 2018, interestingly when the nation was due for a national election or had recently completed a transition of power. Jai Shankar, the Foreign Minister of BJP-led India expressed his views as, "The BJP government ensured that Pakistan remained in the grey list of the FATF.

We have been successful in pressuring Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan's behaviour has changed is because of our pressure". This startling remark must be viewed in the light of Frank Hoffman's

definition of hybrid warfare as stated earlier.

### c. DeIndustrialization

As a result of the rising debt, inflation and poverty, businesses have moved out of the commercial hub in Karachi without any substitutes. Karachi's contribution to the national exchequer has also shrunked. The higher interest rates have also discouraged borrowing in the economy leading to a decline in investor confidence.

## 2 - India's Enmity and Hegemonic Ambitions

There is irrefutable evidence of Indian influence in the internal affairs of Pakistan. The Indian government unleashed a covert campaign to subvert Pakistan by spreading terrorism and insurgency. This was highlighted by a serving Indian Naval officer K. Yadav caught in Balochistan. The BJP government has threatened the Indus Water treaty, disrupted the SAARC conferences and has turned down Pakistan's offer for dialogue on some pretext or the other. Their Prime Minister blatantly admitted India's intervention in East Pakistan and made references to Balochistan and the Gilgit Baltistan province. While India's relentless arms pursuit continues, it has generated a domestic hysteria of confrontation which has escalated tensions in the region.

India continuously challenges the credibility of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and spreads misinformation through use of cyber platforms to weaken or influence the minds of Pakistan's population. The presence of an anti-muslim government in India further adds to the woes of Pakistan's security concerns.

Furthermore, India offers to play a leading role in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea to support containing China — key ally of Pakistan. ~~Indian~~ annexation of Kashmir and genocide of its minorities further proves that <sup>the</sup> external threat to Pakistan's security is predominantly from India and its <sup>periodic</sup> involvement in Pakistan's internal landscape exemplifies its involvement in the hybrid war foisted on Pakistan. We cannot ignore the sight of Indo-Afghan strategic agreement, the latter's military presence in Afghanistan and its exploitation of Afghan friendship to extend intelligence operations into Pakistan's Western Province. These tactics are coercive, attempting to exploit internal fault lines and subvert the socio-cultural environment.

### 3 - Domestic Matrix

Pakistan's domestic challenges have often been exploited by adversaries. The particular framing of the term 'Islamophobia' has given rise to negative narratives and has also ~~disintegrated~~ <sup>disintegrated</sup> national consensus. A decaying political system based on feudal and hereditary political institutions has led to regionalism and provincialism. Sub-Nationalism has been projected as a strengthened force which has been sponsored and further aggravated by non-state actors.

The Pakistan Military has been projected in the International Media as divisive institution rather than a unifying force. It has been increasingly undermined — for the best interests of adversaries, to create a distrust between the military and the civilian population. This hybrid war tactic

has also had an impact on political stability - which is fundamental to the prospect of good governance. Furthermore, the post 9-11 scenario and Pakistan's role in Afghanistan had caused a proliferation of Madrassas which was internationally promoted as 'Jihadi culture'. Even though Pakistan made heavy sacrifices, she was blamed to be the epicentre of global terrorism.

## Conclusion

It is quite clear that Pakistan faces multiple vulnerabilities in the form of economic challenges, internal divisions, political instability and governance challenges. These internal fault lines have been popular targets for regional adversaries, particularly India with its hegemonic agendas. In the globalized and interconnected world, we cannot isolate ourselves in the face of advancing non-kinetic warfare strategies. Rather, to counter the increasing potency, we must look inward and focus on nation building and generate clarity on <sup>matters pertaining to</sup> national interest. The threat of hybrid warfare is <sup>^</sup>undeniably <sup>^</sup>sensous, however, our national capacity is greater. Pakistan has consistently been exposed to conflicts and the resolve and resilience has helped the nation survive. As the world stands at the cusp of a strategic transformation, the nation must realize that together, as a unified state, conscious of our destiny, we stand stronger in the face of adversity. In the words of Andrew Korybko - A Moscow Based strategic commentator, "Pakistan is in a prime position to influentially shape the contours of the coming century."