Essay: Is Pakistan faces the challenge of Hybrid warfare efficiently?

<u>Outline:</u>

1. Introduction

Thesis statement: In contemporary era, war type has changed from traditional war to hybrid war. Nonetheless, Pakistan lags in its efficacy to confront the challenge. However, it can be countered via modern tactics.

2. Hybrid warfare and its implications for Pakistan.

3. Pakistan does not face the challenge of hybrid war efficiently. (Thesis)

    a- Ideological divide and separatist movements weakening Pakistan.

    b- Disbelief in government institutions and political instability.

    c- Failure of cyber security systems in stopping hackers' attacks.

    d- Information leakage and irresponsible media escalates mistrust in people.

    e- Exploitation of Islam to undermine state religion.

4. Pakistan ~~(does)~~ faces the challenge of hybrid warfare efficiently. (Anti-Thesis)

    a- Pakistan's response to separatist movements is self-evident.

    b- Pakistan struggles to bridge the gap between people and government.

    c- Pakistan Cyber-security Policy 2021 helps to curb cyber attacks.

    d- Pakistan highlighting the enemy's propaganda globally.

e- Pakistan countering sectarian violence through effective policies.

5. Pakistan is altogether ineffectual to face the challenge of hybrid warfare. (Synthesis)
   a- Pakistan's action towards separatist movements is slow and weak.
   b- Institution accusation syndrome is still prevailing.
   c- Incidents of cyber attack (still) is rife.
   d- Spread of disinformation targetting Pakistan globally.
   e- Pakistan's sectarian violence policies are ineffective and outdated.

6. Conclusion

Essay:

When Russian special forces seized Crimea at the end of February 2014, without their insignia, but with the latest military kit, it seemed as the start of new era of warfare. Certainly, the conflict in Ukraine has demonstrated that Moscow, in a bid to square its regional ~~demonstrations~~ ambitions with its sharply limited resources, has assidously developed a new style of 'guerilla geopolitics' which leverages its capacity for misdirection, bluff, intelligence operations and targeted violence to maximize its opportuniti-es. Similarly, in the context of Pakistan, hybrid warfare has been a persistent issue due to country's strategic location and the presence of numerous security threats. In addition to, Pakistan has faced a range of unconventional challenges, including terrorism, sectarian violence, and insurgency, which has impacted its stability and

security. In contemporary era, war type has changed from traditional war to hybrid war. Nonetheless, Pakistan lags in its efficacy to confront the challenge. However, it can be countered via modern tactics. Pakistan is unable to face the challenge of war owing to divergent ideological and extremist beliefs and campaigns. Moreover, lack of trust upon governmental policies, sectarian violence, incapability to curb cyber attacks and non-confidential nature of data aggravate the challenge. Although Pakistan's preparedness ~~towards~~ to counter the challenge of hybrid warfare is inefficient, efforts are being in progress to confront the hybrid warfare. In this perspective, Pakistan's activeness towards separatist movements, efforts of liason between government and people and assistance of ^cyber-security policy to stop cyber attacks are self-evident. Moreover, effective policies regarding sectarian violence and lime lighting enemies' propaganda gave yeoman service to the nation. Notewithstanding, Pakistan's progress to face hybrid warfare is slow owing to institution accusation syndrome. Cyber hacking and global defamation of Pakistan are prevalent. Over and above, sectarian violence policies proved to be inefficient.

Hybrid warfare refers to the unconventional methods rather than relying on traditional means of war, i.e, the application of traditional weapons in the battlefield, hybrid warfare emphasizes cyber warfare, economic warfare, fake news, diplomacy and lawfare. The Russian campaign leading to the annexation of Crimea can be cited as an example. Pakistan

has strategic and competition and challenges with India posing the biggest threat. In this perspective, hybrid agenda of India against Pakistan came clean in 2014. The Doval Doctrine (Defense Offensive Doctrine) was introduced by India. This doctrine aims to destabilization and demoralization of Pakistan both internally and externally. In view of this, the arrest of an Indian spy Kalbushan Jhadav back in 2016 by Pakistan's security forces is quite significant. Besides, these country has faced a range of unconventional challenges, including terrorism, sectarian violence and insurgency.

Pakistan is impotent to face the threat of hybrid warfare due to various reasons. One among them is rampant separatist movements and division based on ideology. There are various separatist groups in Pakistan who run campaigns based on ethnic and regional nationalism. Influence and success of separatist groups has varied from total, in the case of Bangladesh. Bangladesh separated from Pakistan in 1971 due to Mohajir Qaumi Movement. This movement was accused by Pakistani intelligence for wanting an independent state. Similarly, in the current era, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is a separatist group responsible for political chaos. From 2010 to 2015, organized political violence events linked to the insurgency increased, peaking in 2015 with 96 events and 383 total reported fatalities for the year (Relief Web). Hence, ideological divide and separatist movements are major contributor to ~~kinder~~ ignite hybrid warfare.

Secondly, lack of trust in governmental institutions and political turmoil in Pakistan hampers the way to counter hybrid warfare. This is due to the fact that being amongst the poorest nations, Pakistan is prioritizing other projects of trivial importance. Rather than giving priority to primary, social institution to make them strong, stable and productive, government is taking more loans for secondary purposes. Institutions like Judiciary, Armed forces, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Election Commission and so on. Hence, mistrust among people and government acts as a barrier to face the challenge.

Over and above, Pakistan is not immune to cyber-attacks. India keeps on defacing government websites, especially on Pakistan's independence day. Likewise, the attack on Pakistan Stock Exchange building in Karachi in June 2020 is also believed to be backed by India. Similarly, a recent report by the International Institute for Strategic studies (IISS) suggests that India's offensive cyber capabilities are Pakistan-focused and Delhi is increasing its offensive capabilities through modern technologies. Thus, Pakistan faces multiple challenges to its cyber security, an yet lacks efficient security systems. 86

Moreover, Pakistan is also confronted with the challenge of data privacy and irresponsible media. Owning to advanced technology, the privacy of information has become difficult. In view of this, India organized a spying operation against Pakistani officials using Pegasus spyware. This spyware is being used by Indian intelligence to gather

sensitive information. In 2020, Indian agencies tried to steal sensitive critical data by targeting the networks of the Pakistan military. These attacks and stealing is not only limited to governmental and military institutes but also accessed general people. After the **Pulwama attack**, Indian Hackers took down over **200 Pakistani websites**. It raises mistrust in people. Therefore, information manipulation is a prevalent factor in hybrid warfare.

Sectarianism has also been a major contributor to hybrid warfare in Pakistan, as the country has a long history of sectarian tensions between sunni and Shia populations. These tensions have often been exploited by external actors to advance their own interests. Resultantly, instability and conflict rises in the country. One example of this is the rise of Sunni extremist groups such as **Taliban Lashkar-e-Jhangvi**, which have targeted Shia population in Pakistan. Moreover, these groups are responsible for a number of high-profile terrorist attacks in the country. In addition to, the ongoing sectarian conflict in Pakistan has also created a conducive environment for extremist groups to operate, and has weakened the state's ability to effectively respond to security challenges. Hence, sectarianism has a major impact on stability and security of Pakistan.

Nevertheless, Pakistan's attempt to confront the menace of hybrid warfare is not out and out failure. Efforts under progress are manifold, such as Pakistan's response to separatist movements is self-evident. Separatist movements are the

ultimate effect of extremism. Various security institutes are at work to mitigate it and restrain these separatist movements from violence. Four individuals were charged with blasphemy during previous years, received death sentences in 2022 (Civil Society Report, 2023). So, Pakistan has demonstrated significant progress ~~contribution~~ towards separatist movements.

Furthermore, despite political instability, Pakistan in a bid to foster the communication between government and people. Owing to this, mistrust and disbelief in government institutions would dwindle to the great extent. In order to serve this purpose, different sources are favourable. Pakistan creates soft image of government via **soft media** and **probing commissions** etc. Indeed, this is a positive step towards political and government stability as well as for people's contentment from country.

Over and above, cyber attacks, being the major challenge of hybrid warfare has been countered by many cyber-security policies. These policies curb the enemies' cyber attacks and make the sensitive data of institutions more secure. Otherwise, Pakistan's sensitive and confidential governmental records are at the risk of being stolen by cyber attacks. **National Cyber-Security Policy** 2021 fillips to restrain hackers' attack. This policy recognizes different responsibilities of individuals, businesses, academia and government. Thus, Cyber-security policies are a good initiative to counter cyber attacks and enemies' attempt to data-theft.

Moreover, Pakistan has manifested the enemy's propaganda to the world. India backed Srivastra and other extremist groups keep on defacing Pakistan, in every possible event. Pakistan has highlighted India's propaganda in every UNGA and UNSC session, which are proved fruitful. The generation of manipulated content for fake media outlets, think tanks and NGOs by the Indian backed Srivastra group in order to defame Pakistan at infarma international forum is revealed in EU report (EU Disinformation Lab Report, 2020). Therefore, Pakistan is able to reveal the real intentions of India in front of the world.

Besides, Pakistan has made significant progress in eradicating sectarian violence. This is done by implementing effective policies. In this domain, internal or local as well as national plans are prepared. Moreover, it is the major step towards country's progress and development. National Action Plan countered sectarian violence through various programs such as Paigham-e-Pakistan. Likewise, NAP announced stern action against sectarian violence early this year. The 20-point NAP very clearly defines the government's counter-radicalism and counter-terrorism strategy. Various steps including raising a counter-terrorism force, conviction of the terrorists through military courts and reformation of criminal system were suggested in NAP. Thus, it would help the government to deal with the threat of sectarian violence and extremism.

Notewithstanding, the progress to face the challenge of hybrid warfare is slow and weak. One of major reasons for the failure or slow progress of government policies is lack of political will to implement them fully. Moreover, weak judicial system in Pakistan and socio-economic crises are the hurdles in the ways of implementing these policies. As a result, separatist groups perpetuate in number. Attack on Chinese Teachers in Karachi University by BLA terrorist, attacks on military check posts escalated during the months Jun-July and rise of Sindh separatist Movement are worth-noting in this perspective. So, Pakistan's policies towards separatist groups are inefficient.

Besides, despite country's efforts to bridge the gap between government and people, institution accusation syndrome still prevails in people. They blame government for everything, to escape from their duties and responsibilities. This ensues weakening of the country. When people become irresponsible and indifferents from their duties, country starts degenerating. Islamabad Police Controversy is a good manifestation in this regard. Moreover, social media campaigns and no-confidence movements of are also responsible for this syndrome. Supreme Court took a notice on extention of Chief of Army Staff. Hence, institutional accusation syndrome is still rife.

Furthermore, incidents of cyber-attacks have also increased despite counter policies. With the advance-ment of digitalization, warfare has took adopted new modes and succeeded in number. For example, in

Sep 2021, cyber-attacks had succeeded 17 percent as compared to 2020. Servers of different institutes slow down as well. ~~On~~ In Oct 2021, NBP servers went down due to a cyber-attack. These attacks have been increased since past two years instead of halting. Therefore, it is a setback to counter cyber-attack policies.

Pakistan has strategic competition and challenges with India. Since independence, India has always been in a struggle to defame Pakistan globally. For this, it uses different tactics. A recent report by International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) indicates that India's offensive cyber capabilities are more Pakistan-focused. Futhermore, since long India has been accusing Pakistan for the involvement ~~of~~ in Terrorism and entremist violence. Indian government backed Servastra group generated the manipulated content for fake media outlets, think tanks and NGOs in order to defame Pakistan (EU Disinformation Lab Report, 2020). So, spread of disinformation against Pakistan has not been resolved.

In addition to, pakistan's sectarian violence policies are ineffective and out-of-date. Conventional tactics cannot resolve ~~the~~ modern problems. Sectarian violence may not be eradicated by abdicating the liberty to speak. For example, in Pakistan, the primary solution of every issue is to ban the thing causing nuisance. It fosters the entsemism rather than mitigating it. Moreover, Prevention of Electronic Crimes Ordinance, 2022 (Amendment) proved ineffecte~~ive~~ due to certain loopholes. Hence, ineffective policies cannot counter modern problems.

In a nutshell, it can be said that Pakistan is altogether not prepared to face the challenge of hybrid warfare efficiently. Pakistan is faced with both conventional as well as unconventional challenges, which has impacted its stability and security. Many factors contribute in this such as sectarian violence, ideological divide, rampant cyber attacks and inability of government to restrain them. However, Pakistan has made policies to counter hybrid warfare effectively but it would take time to become completely efficient. Nevertheless, despite efforts to face the challenge, it further exacerbates with time. This has not only impacted the security and stability of country but also hindered its progress and development. The only solution to face the challenge of hybrid warfare is to tackle it with modern tactics. As Sun Tzu has said;

"Be extremely subtle, even to the point of formlessness. Be extremely mysterious, even to the point of soundlessness. Thereby, you can be the director of the opponent's fate"
— Sun Tzu.