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Q1 5th generation warfare is posing a perpetual threat to Pakistan's peace and prosperity. How can Pakistan counter 5th generation warfare impacts, suggest remedial measures?

Introduction to 5th generation warfare

In 2003, Robert steel coined the phrase fifth-generation warfare. It is a battle of information and perception. Fifth-generation warfare is carried out through non-kinetic military actions such as artificial intelligence, social engineering technologies and fully autonomous system. The use of fast internet technologies and social media has transformed the world.

Lind William S. a military theorist stated "Fifth generation warfare is warfare that is not fought on the battle field but in the mind of the people. It relies on the psychological, informational and cultural

means to subvert and collapse the enemy from within.

Fifth generation warfare involves propaganda, misinformation, psychological operations, cyber warfare and exploitation of internal divisions like ethnicity and sectarianism.

Tools of fifth generation warfare:

1 Social media:

The "enemy" of state utilizes social media as a warfare tool to share fake news and misleading reports to damage national unity of Pakistan.

As per the reports, there are approximately 71.7 million social media users in Pakistan. Among other media sources Facebook is used by 46% of public, youtube is on the second place with 42%, whatsapp 23.5%, TikTok 17.3% and only 2.3% use twitter. Adversaries of Pakistan use these media tool for spreading false news.

Youtube channels like "WION" and "Study IQ" are common examples.

Degrading Pakistan's position internationally with propaganda and misinformation. Common evidence

is the fake news of Balakot incident where they claimed to target terrorists, in reality there were just trees which got burnt. Recently in pahalgam incident, without proper investigation, they put whole blame on Pakistan to deteriorate its position globally.

ii) Fake websites:

Indian agencies have made more than 500 fake websites, that continuously degrade Pakistan's position. According to Disinfo Lab report in 2019, Indian intelligence agency (RAW) is sponsoring fake media groups and fake NGO's to damage the image of Pakistan in the world. This report uncovered network of more than 550 registered websites and more than 750 fake media in 116 countries working against Pakistan.

iii) Fake NGO's:

Adversaries are using fake NGO's to target Pakistan. One such example is "Commission to study of peace" which was founded in 1930 and stopped

was Prof. Louis B Sohn who served for 39 years. It was shocking to see that prof. had attended the UNHRC in 2007, while he died on 2006.

These NGO's portray to the world that they are working for betterment of people of Pakistan which are oppressed and are facing harsh behaviour from the government or military. They bring forward people like Dr. Mahrukh Baloch, who is their funded agent, to ~~show~~ ^{portray} aggressive and reckless behaviour of state.

fifth generation's impacts on peace and prosperity of Pakistan.

i) National Unity:

The first and foremost impact of this warfare is on national unity of Pakistan. They promote sectarianism and try to turn ethnic identities into source of conflict by spreading hate, mistrust and separatist ideas. Major examples include Baloch separatist groups like BLA, that demand independence from Pakistan. They use propaganda

to show baloch as victims of state's oppression. Tension between muhajireen or sindhi, intensified by spreading fake news like one group is getting jobs and land. Fake accounts promoting anti-punjabi or anti-pushtoon narratives to create hostility among youth.

ii) Terrorism and extremism:

The main purpose of fifth generation warfare is to make enemy weak from within. So they support extremism and promote the spread of hatred through foreign funding along with their own main-media. They also sponsor terrorism within Pak. Like In April 2025, ISPR claimed to have retrieved materials including an Indian origin drone and cash, linked to Pakistani individual sponsored by Indian army officer. Another example is of the TTP Commander, who confessed that militant groups like TTP and BLA was facilitated by India to sabotage chinese project like CPEC.

iii) Trying to Economically weaken Pakistan:

Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan is facing issues like fake news, false flag operations, funding to separatist organizations and efforts by India to deteriorate Pakistan's image globally.

India is portraying Pakistan as a default country, showing international institutions, that Pakistan harbour and support terrorism, to loose their trust on Pakistan. Likewise Indian lobbies kept Pakistan on FATF grey list (2018-2022) which restricted international loans and investments.

Since 2012, India has refused to send its Cricket team to Pakistan when latter host's the tournament.

This is a soft tactic of India to show the world that Pakistan is politically unstable and insecure country. This move of India is seen as a deliberate effort to damage Pakistan's Cricket economy. Apart from just Cricket it also bring foreign investments in country. By such moves, Pakistan's global image hurts.

iv Misleading youth in Pakistan

The main target of Indian propaganda is ^{the} young generation of Pakistan. Youth which is in majority, about 64% of Pakistan's population is below 30. That's a huge number, they are the easy target, because they mostly rely on social media for news and report, which is a main tool of adversaries, for manipulation.

They are creating difference and trust deficit between youth and governance and other state institutions. As being an under developed country, there exist issues like unemployment, inflation and poor education system. Enemy use these fault lines to uprise youth of any country ~~be~~ against its government. Recently Nepal saw "Gen Z" uprise, forcing Nepali PM to leave his office and flee abroad. Aggressive mob burnt parliament, houses of ministers along with some elites.

Being aware of ^{the} potential that youth carry, adversaries of Pakistan also try to manipulate them against their government and military.

Another effect on youth is brain drain, just in 2023-2024 40-50% of youth left the country.

In hope of getting better job opportunities abroad. They also show distrust on Pakistan's system, they prefer to serve foreign country over their own. And the reason is appreciation of their work.

Counter measures by Pakistan to mitigate its impacts.

1) Cyber Security

To combat technological threats, one needs to retaliate in technological way. In this scenario where the main tool of warfare is social media and internet, Pakistan needs to make its cyber security strong. By investing in cyber security, Pakistan can make its official websites secure from being hacked and leaked. And Pakistan has worked well on it by establishing "Cyber Security Institutions" namely "National Centre for Cyber Security" established in 2018. It works on research, training and indigenous cyber security solutions. Other one is "Cyber Crime wing - FIA". It investigates cyber crime and attacks especially foreign-sponsored intrusions.

Positive media role to Counter fifth generation warfare

Pakistan can use its media as a powerful defensive and offensive tool to Counter SGW, especially against hostile Campaigns from India or other actors.

Media can be use to run Campaigns that highlights national achievements, patriotism and shared identity to strengthen public morale. It can also use drama, documentaries and talk shows to build a positive image of Pakistan at home and abroad.

Secondly government should establish dedicated fact-checking cells within media houses and government. These cells should quickly identify, verify and publicaly refute fake news or propaganda content Circulated from hostile sources.

Media can be turned into a shield and sword if used smartly. It helps shaping public perception and exposing hostile designs.

Educate young generation

The dire need of this modern time

is to educate our young generations which is in large number. Youth is soft target of enemies, Pakistan needs to educate them on social media use. For this purpose state should introduce media literacy courses in schools, colleges and universities. They should teach students to verify source, cross check news and spot fake or doctored videos.

To strengthen National Identity and unity they should include patriotic, civil and ethical education in Curriculum to build resilience against anti-state propaganda. Teachers should highlight Pakistan's achievements, cultural diversity and shared history along with their sacrifices for ~~the~~ Country, to reduce ethnic or sectarian conflicts. For this purpose inter provincial youth exchange programs can be build for understanding and harmony.

Spread awareness among masses

Last but not the least, Government of Pakistan should creat awareness among locals about

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SGW and its tactics. So they cannot fall trap of it. Recently government has founded "Paigham-e-Aman Committee", its purpose is to spread peace and it includes ministers, ulama and clergy as well. This would use fatwas and ~~clergy~~ clergy would assist non-muslims in regard to foreign threats.

They would guide and give fatwas against terrorism and suicide bombing. It is a great step toward secure Pakistan.

State should listen to their public and try to take decisions which help its people to keep their trust on state. Among such steps one is their liberty to speak for their cause, provision of justice and quality life.

For awareness purpose state should partner with respected social media influencers, celebrities and religious scholars to spread awareness messages. Other than that Friday sermons, community gathering and local events can be used to educate people about the harm of spreading unverified content.

Conclusion

SGW has emerged as a powerful threat to Pakistan, through disinformation, psychological manipulation, propaganda and cyber attack. It targets the youth's mind, economy and national unity to create confusion, distrust and internal instability.

While SGW has fueled sectarianism, ethnic tension, brain drain, extremism and public distrust. Pakistan has taken important counter measures by establishing "NCCS" "Cyber Crime wing - FIA" and Paghnam-e-Aman Committee.

~~However~~ ^{However} only defensive measures are not enough, state has to aware its people and educate its young generation about impacts and tools of SGW.