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Pakistan Affairs

Q: The Ascending potency of hybrid warfare being foisted on state of Pakistan is adding to the security woes of the country. Elaborate with examples.

Introduction:

Hybrid warfare is considered to be most significant strategic discourse in contemporary world. Its roots lie in history but its nature has been changed due to advancement in Information technology due to which involvement of the non-state actors in the strategic warfare has increased.

Hybrid warfare is all about conflict of changing behaviours. Advancement in technology makes it difficult for a country to analyze the situation and handle

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it.

Hybrid warfare impacts all state domains such as social, political, economic, informational, military, and diplomatic.

Hybrid war, in broader sense includes surgical operations, false flag operations along with cyber war, media war, social media war, and misinformation warfares.

Hybrid warfare against Pakistan:

Pakistan has faced serious threats from hybrid warfare due to its strategic location. Pakistan is a nuclear state and hence it is impossible to impose a conventional war on Pakistan. Therefore, the wave of indirect war has been imposed on Pakistan to destabilize its peace and stability of Pakistan.

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Pakistan has been facing threats by India, TTP, ISTS, BLA and such other terrorist organisations. Here are some examples of hybrid wars imposed on Pakistan.

India's disinformation campaign against Pakistan:

In investigation by EU disinfo lab in 2020 uncovered a massive operation by India largely against Pakistan which was working for 15 years since 2005. Its long term objective was to reinforce anti-Pakistan sentiments by portraying Pakistan a terrorist country. Another purpose was to influence UN and other international organisations on Kashmir issue. A lot of news channels including ANI were working on this and also there were fake NGOs registered in UN.

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India's support to terrorist organisations in Pakistan:

In 2016, an Indian naval officer was arrested in Pakistan spying for India and inciting terrorism in Pakistan. The agent was arrested in Baluchistan where he was fanning separatist insurgency. He admitted all his crimes including the Indian support to Baluch Liberation Army (BLA). He was later convicted by a military court of Pakistan. This is a clear evidence of Indian state sponsored terrorism in Pakistan.

Other incidents:

The attack of Pakistan Stock Exchange by BLA, supported by India, to detract the economy of Pakistan, The attack on Chinese embassy in Karachi, the recent killings of coal miners in Hazara, all leading towards

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Detaxationism in Pakistan and to isolate Pakistan internationally are examples of hybrid warfare.

Steps taken by Pakistan:

A study conducted in 2018 on the significance of non-conventional warfare threats and means concluded that Pakistan's military is only trained for conventional warfare. Since then Pakistan has adopted non-conventional warfare tactics such as cyber warfare, cultural warfare, economic warfare, information warfare, and the weaponization of military assets.

Hybrid warfare is the war of narrative and perception management. Pakistan has adopted the internal fault lines by establishing strong networks of media awareness campaigns about propaganda warfare and internal security

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to discourage the foreign actors to engage in violence against Pakistan.

Why hybrid warfare is becoming difficult to handle?

In hybrid warfare, the most important tool is the art of navigating the enemy's infrastructural lines of communication and fault lines in order to exploit or influence the operations. The wide scope of ethnic conflicts, socio-economic concerns, religious radicalization, and political instability in Pakistan has increased the complexity of hybrid warfare scenarios. These domains are directly linked to the national security of any state.

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Conclusion:

Due to advancement in IT and increasing dependency on internet has increased the risk of cyber attack. Pakistan, being a nuclear state, is very careful in dealing with the cyber threats to its nuclear and financial infrastructure. Consequently, Pakistan has developed laws to deal with such threats but still is unable to take some concrete steps.

To deter hybrid warfare, an effective national security strategy and policy formulation in collaboration with both civil and military leadership is required. A strong unity between state and nation is important to counter fake narratives.