Weaponization of all Elements of National Power by India: Hybrid Warfare against Pakistan

Ghulam Muhammad Malik*

Abstract

The research is meant to conduct conceptual and contextual evaluation of Hybrid Warfare (HW) by examining how weaponization of all EoNP by India makes Pakistan vulnerable to Hybrid war. The study is significant to understand the evolution of war with focus on the phenomenon of HW. The analysis of the impact of HW in diplomatic, economic, informational, social, military and law-fare domains, makes the research highly beneficial to policy makers and practitioners alike, especially in India and Pakistan. This study is conducted using qualitative research methodology, and literature has been extensively consulted, using secondary sources. The research concludes that categorization of HW as a new phenomenon or just rebranding of terminologies would remain a contested question. Therefore, a clear understanding needs to be built with regards to the understudied phenomenon of 'Hybridity' and its applicability to Pakistan-India context. Nevertheless, based on discernable criteria, this paper ascertains that HW is distinguishable because in this case adversaries achieve the same ends with modified ways and means, employing EoNP in a highly synchronized manner. Finally, a national response mechanism is proposed to prevent exploitation of own vulnerabilities, and the need for adaptation and awareness to counter the evolving threat. The paper also recommends strengthening of the trinity among masses, military and government.

Keywords: hybrid warfare, elements of national power, offensive realism, defensive realism, gerasimov doctrine, end-ways-means paradigm, Clause witzian trinity, coercive diplomacy.

Introduction

The international security environment witnessed major changes in post-Cold Warfare era. With new forms of asymmetric threats transgressing the traditional state boundaries, policy makers and practitioners are struggling to understand the new phenomenon that the world is currently engaged in, or is likely to experience in future. The concept of "Hybrid Warfare (HW)" is one such concept, first coined by William J. Nemethin 2002 and later evolved by Frank Hoffman in his various papers during 2005–2016. With a number of evolving concepts and difference of opinions about the applicability of these terms, a clear understanding needs to be built with regards to the understudied phenomenon of 'Hybridity' that we are confronted with.

^{*} National Defence University Islamabad Email: gmmalik87@gmail.com

World today is averse to armed conflicts and the economic and geopolitical interests enormously impact the security environment. With rising cost and decreasing feasibility of large-scale aggression vis-à-vis its potential benefits, the character of Warfare is transforming to non-kinetic means and ways. While we do not assume that the era of traditional Clausewitzian 'Force-On-Force' engagements is over but outright aggression will only serve state's interests under exceptionally narrow conditions.

The post-nuclearization South Asian security landscape has also changed dramatically. Traditional aggression would be costlier than ever before and the Escalation Control would be extremely difficult because of the nuclear factor. The Stability-Instability Paradox, has created more space for instability at lower levels. Principal threat to Pakistan emanates from India where it has modified its ways and means due to constraints put on its ability to achieve desired ends; therefore, posing a hybrid threat to the security of Pakistan rather than mere conventional threat. In addition, the ultranationalist outlook of Indian Government is now being seen permeating in its National Security Apparatus; which may exacerbate in future. This is where the South Asian security landscape assumes prominence, and the application of newer forms of Warfare gains currency with focus on weaponization of all Elements of National Power (EoNP) instead of solely relying on military.

While institutional and societal strengths of Pakistan mitigate a number of hybrid threats yet there are vulnerabilities like any society, which India focuses to wage HW. Pakistan presents peculiar ideological, geo-political, and societal makeup, which are exploitable. Geographical mapping of hybrid threat indicates that our vulnerabilities lie in ex-FATA, Southern Punjab, Baluchistan and parts of Sindh including Karachi. As a consequence, hostile elements have already penetrated these vulnerable segments of Pakistani society. Individually and in combination, these act as enablers, which can be synchronized by inimical forces for higher order effects under HW umbrella.

Based on these observations, my research points out that weaponization of all EoNP in the HW framework serves as an effective tool for achieving political aims thus reducing the risks inherent to the sole application of military instrument. The study would examine how adversaries, through state as well as non-state actors, achieve the same ends with modified ways and means. The adversaries in the context of this research would imply India and other like-minded players that I describe as 'Red Syndicate'. This altered Ends-Ways-Means Paradigm would help us identify the new challenges to Pakistan's overall national security construct and proffer suitable policy recommendations.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant to understand the evolution in the character of war with focus on the phenomenon of Hybrid War. The 5point criterion formulated for qualifying hybridity in conflicts and for contrasting this phenomenon from other warfare related concepts, would crystallize the conceptual foundation. The analysis of the impact of Hybrid War in diplomatic, economic, informational, social, military and law-fare domains, would make the research highly beneficial to policy makers and practitioners alike, especially in India and Pakistan. Also, this research would be useful for audiences such as students of Peace and Conflict Studies and Military History, and think tanks to develop a deep understanding of the evolving security landscape.

Research Questions

This paper endeavors to explain HW in Pakistan-India context by addressing the questions mentioned below:

- Is HW something new or just rebranding of terminologies, and how to qualify a war or conflict as hybrid?
- What is the perceived place of HW within the context of nature and character of war?
- How does the weaponization of all EoNP through interplay of exogenous and endogenous factors make Pakistan as a classic target for HW by India?
- How HW affects the threat spectrum in Pakistan-India context, is Pakistan configured to tackle it??
- What should be the possible contours of a National Hybrid Response Regime for Pakistan?

Theoretical Framework

This research is primarily built around structural/ neorealist paradigm. Realism is a school of thought that explains international relations in terms of power. Power is central to the realists' description of international relations, and they believe that power determines which country prevails. Structural realism or neorealism seeks to explain international relations on the basis of the structural pressures exerted by anarchy. How much power states acquire under what conditions, divides neorealism into two sub branches: defensive and offensive realism.

Defensive realism contends that states should acquire an appropriate amount of power necessary for them to survive, and not

maximize their relative power in a quest to become hegemons. Kenneth Waltz, the leading proponent of defensive realism, only makes two explicit assumptions regarding states: they are unitary actors and that they, at minimum, pursue policies to ensure their own survival. On the other hand, Mearsheimer's theory of 'Offensive Realism' explains that the most efficient way to guarantee survival of states in an anarchic world is to maximize their relative power with the ultimate aim of becoming a hegemonas opposed to seeking an 'appropriate' amount of power as in Waltz's defensive realism. They pursue expansionist policies when and where the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.

Mearsheimer's theory of 'Offensive Realism' has been applied to analyze how India, aided by other state and non-state actors, attempts to maximize its power vis-à-vis Pakistan and weaken the latter's ability to resist. This theoretical construct helps explain Indian aggressive and hegemonic designs against Pakistan, and how these can be manifested in HW framework.

Research Methodology

This study is conducted using qualitative research methodology. For data collection, literature has been extensively consulted, using secondary sources including books, newspapers, magazines, journals, historical accounts and online resources. The qualitative data analysis is aimed at identifying themes and trends that underscore the phenomenon of HW and its applicability to India-Pakistan context.

HW: Conceptual Underpinnings and Perspectives

HW is the latest addition to the warfare lexicon and is being debated in the media, and among the academic circles as well as in the policy-making corridors. While it remains a contested concept like any new idea, the 'hybridity' is being widely recognized at international level. Recognition of Russia's aggression in Crimea and Daesh actions in Iraq and Syria as hybrid war threats by Council of the European Union is a case in point. The academic opinion remains divided on the validity of HW as a new concept, however, the policy makers and practitioners need to understand its nuances. Therefore, the succeeding paragraphs aim to fill the conceptual void and haziness surrounding the notion of hybridity by studying various perspectives.

In the Quadrennial Defense Review 2010, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates coined the term "hybrid", in which he hypothesized that "future adversaries may use surrogates including terrorist and criminal networks, manipulate the information environment, and exploit perceived economic and diplomatic leverage in order to complicate our calculus. "This description neither fully encapsulates the complexity that HW could bring in, nor does it effectively distinguish HW from other forms of unconventional warfare. US National Military Strategy (NMS) 2015 finds hybridity into the blend of conventional and irregular forces to create ambiguity, seize initiative and paralyze the adversary. It describes HW as "overlapping state and non-state violence in which actors blend techniques, capabilities, and resources to achieve their objectives, and serve to increase ambiguity, complicate decision-making, and slow the coordination of responses."

Rear Admiral Parry (retired) of the Royal Navy distinguishes HW from conventional war by stating that the former is conducted by irregular forces that have access to the more sophisticated weapons and systems normally fielded by regular forces. The underlying assumption in this perspective about irregular groups' access to sophisticated weapons and technologies is rather a narrow view of 'hybridity'.

Andrew Korybko asserts that the concept of HW is completely different from anything being discussed in the West. He defines HW as "externally provoked identity conflicts, which exploit historical, ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and geographic differences within geostrategic transit states". Two aspects merit attention here: identity conflicts and external provocation. A similar argument is made in the "Gerasimov Doctrine" named after General Gerasimov, Russian Chief of General Staff. He defines HW as "broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military means, supplemented by civil disorder among the local population and concealed armed forces". Making population as the main target for achieving desired objectives is the distinguishing feature of Russian perspective, and this makes it a more useful description.

The Chinese book Unrestricted Warfare does not use the term HW per se, however, in essence it comes close to what is intended to be achieved through HW. Unrestricted Warfare encompasses "employment of all lethal and non-lethal assets, including armed and unarmed, military and non-military force, to compel the enemy to accept one's interests." This concept implies a war 'without any rules or limitations', may it be physical or moral restrictions. This is where HW has tremendously wide canvas and dangerous consequences.

A careful study of contemporary perspectives guides me towards establishing five determinants that serve as basic criteria for a war or conflict to qualify as hybrid:

- Complexity of Ways. Sophisticated campaigns based on simultaneous and adaptive use of conventional weapons, irregular tactics, terrorism and criminal beahviour.
- Combination of Means. Synergized employment of all Elements of National Power (EoNP) within the conflict space, with technology acting as a key enabler.
- Multiplicity of Actors. Employment of state or non-state actors, synchronized in time and space at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of warfare.
- Diversity of Effects. HW serves to increase ambiguity, complicate decision-making and slow the coordination of effective responses.
- Swath of Conduct. Employment of non-military tools, such as electronic or cyber operations, information campaigns and strategic coercion and sub conventional war, but may eventually involve conventional conflicts.

The Perceived Place of Hw Within the Context of Nature and Character of War

The debate about nature and character of war is as old as warfare itself. However, as a starting point, it is imperative to understand what 'warfare' entails. While there are numerous definitions of warfare, the one given by Carl von Clausewitz remains the mainstay for the students of Military Theory: "War is a mere continuation of politics by other means". While studying Clausewitzian description of warfare, the linkage of violence with political ends must be understood. Violence denotes that, "War is an act of force to compel the enemy to our will". Violence describes the nature of war, which has remained largely unchanged. However, the character has evolved overtime, which pertains to ways and means to achieve political ends. Colin Gray analogizes war with human nature, stating, "the nature of war does not change, any more than that of the human beings who lie behind it." He asserts, "many people confuse the nature of war with its character. The former is universal and eternal and does not alter, whereas the latter is always in flux."

As the character of war evolved, writes Alex Danchev, relevance of 'The Indirect Approach' as enunciated by the British strategic thinker Liddell Hart increased. A careful study of 'The Indirect Approach' reveals that it resides more in cognitive domain that in physical domain, though the latter is an essential part of execution. Throughout the history of warfare, indirectness of approach has met more successes since it focuses on enemy's ill-preparedness and weaknesses. Sun Tzu, in The Art of War,

emphasizes the Indirect Approach stating, "Indirect tactics, efficiently applied, are inexhaustible as Heaven and Earth, unending as the flow of rivers and streams; like the sun and moon, they end but to begin anew; like the four seasons, they pass away to return once more." His ideas continue to influence all domains including culture, politics, business, as well as warfare.

States essentially focus and project their resources to achieve desired political ends. While many nations might act directly, others adopt indirect strategies to disguise their real motives. The warfare lexicon is full of various terminologies that denote a similar approach: Non-Kinetic Warfare, Asymmetric Warfare, Irregular Warfare, 4th/5th Generation Warfare, etcetera. Therefore, beyond the changing character of war, we need to distinguish between the wars of the past and those facing us today and likely to confront us in future. The future conflicts will cut across all domains, both horizontally and vertically, as well as geographic regions. This change in the character of war is termed as hybridization, which helps states maintain plausible deniability (Hoffman 2009). The subsequent paragraphs deliberate on the conceptual aspects of this hybridity.

The Applicability of HW to Pakistan

The applicability of HW to Pakistan is of keen interest for academics, policy makers and practitioners. Andrew Korybko warns, "Pakistan urgently needs to understand the essence of HW, because this model indicates that there is no other place in the world right now, which is more likely to be victimized by this stratagem." This victimization can be actualized by a mix of exogenous and endogenous factors.

• Exogenous Factors

Mearsheimer's theory of Offensive Realism, that expands the work of classic realists like Morgenthau, is an appropriate framework for explaining the role of exogenous factors in India-Pakistan context. Offensive Realism, a theory of 'opportunistic state power maximization', aptly describes Indian behavior reflected in its regional and global power ambitions. According to Mearsheimer, cites Peter Toft, the states soon realize that the most efficient way to guarantee survival in anarchy is to maximize their relative power with the ultimate aim of becoming the strongest power - that is, a hegemon.

Valeriano explains that a state must meet three conditions to become a hegemon: it must become a regional hegemon, acquire wealth

and land power, and develop nuclear weapons. India is on the trajectory of acquiring wealth and land power and is a nuclear weapon state. What it lacks is the regional hegemon status, and Pakistan is perceived to be the stumbling block. How to remove this obstacle altogether or reduce its strength to an extent that it is unable to resist, remains a question mark. While the former is not possible given the military power Pakistan possesses, the latter becomes an obvious political objective (End).



With the *End* of weakening Pakistan's ability to resist to Indian ambitions, the traditional *ways* and *means* paradigm had to be changed. Applying Art Lykke's model of Ends-Ways-Means, let us explore how India, in concert with Red Syndicate, has alerted its Ends-Ways-Means Paradigm.

McCuen states that HW is fought on two planes: "physical and conceptual". It is in this context that state and/or nonstate actors employ military as well as non-military EoNP simultaneously or sequentially and

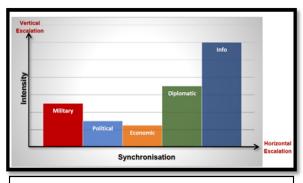


Figure-1: Synergized Employment of EoNP

with varying intensity (Figure-1). Use of diplomatic instrument for coercion, what George terms as *Coercive Diplomacy*, is a case in point. "Coercive Diplomacy seeks to persuade the opponent to do something or to stop doing something" However, George confines his definition to persuasion which is essentially a defensive mechanism. Schelling pioneered the concept of *Compellence*, which is offensive in character and carries a threat intended to compel an adversary do something. Freedman's concept of *Strategic Coercion* encompasses the notions of *Coercive Diplomacy* as well that of *Compellence*, and is therefore more relevant to our context. In South Asia, notes Ali, the threatened or actual use of force has often been a critical feature of regional diplomacy. This phenomenon,

he adds, is further complicated by the tendency of extra-regional great powers to use states and sub-state actors as instruments of their own coercive strategies. Indo-US coercive nexus against Pakistan bears testimony to this assertion.

World Economic Forum (2016) identifies a list of economic measures, from economic blockade to aid suspension, that states can institute against the target state in pursuance of their political aims. Suspension of Coalition Support Fund by the US and coercive use of the Financial Action Task Force are a few examples. Similarly, social and informational means are being used throughout the spectrum to launch the process called 'social engineering'. South African Council for Industrial and Scientific Research concludes that people remain susceptible to manipulation and the human element is thus a weak link.

Soofi argues that "states have moved away from a 'warfare' approach and have instead adopted 'lawfare' as an alternative means of achieving their political objectives." Prof Kennedy of the Harvard Law School, cites Soofi, asserts that lawfare "can often accomplish what might once have been done with bombs and missiles...." Indian lawfare offensive against Pakistan post-Mumbai and post-Pulwama attacks are apt examples. The interesting point in this discourse is that most of the instruments mentioned above fall in the category *Soft Power* as Nye termed it. However, one can note that though Nye mentioned soft power in a positive sense, the same instruments can be "weaponized to act as means of coercion and employed in lieu of, or in concert with, the application of violence." Military coercion would remain an obvious choice as a physical component of HW, though India would attempt to avoid this rather a costlier and less useful option.

Endogenous Factors

Pakistan's institutional and societal makeup act as enablers for waging HW. While every nation has exploitable fault lines, Pakistan internal front, marked by its unique 'Clausewitzian Trinity', makes it a classic HW target (Figure-2). It is important to note that most intra-state conflicts are results of two factors: First, "horizontal inequalities in society" and second, the "breach of the social contract" between the state and the citizens. In case of Pakistan, relative sense of deprivation among the smaller provinces and resultant grievances provide breeding ground for HW.

While contextualizing the above stated trinity in Pakistan's perspective, I evaluate out three aspects: the weakest social contract between government and masses, fragile interface between government and military, and strong ideological confluence between military and masses. One can discern from this discourse that masses are the prime

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target in the overall HW construct. Targeting masses is likely to break their already weak social contract with government, and also undermine their ideological confluence with military. I argue that the interplay of these endogenous factors with exogenous ones in an increasingly complex HW framework is creating an existential threat for Pakistan. Pakistan's institutional voids and lack of coherent response make it even more susceptible to be exploited.

Sehgal asserts that "Public awareness remains the quintessential factor that can eradicate the scathing effects of HW. Surprisingly, this remains the weakest link. While recognition of the danger exists at political and military leadership levels, though to a varying degree, a clear state of naivety can be observed in common people who are the real target. In was in this in this backdrop that General Bajwa, the COAS, explicitly cautioned that "We now have a greater responsibility to ensure that our people, especially youth, stay aware and steadfast against propaganda onslaught being launched through a soft offensive."

Conclusions

Is HW a new phenomenon or just rebranding of terminologies, remains a contested question. However, as the warfare-related lexicon evolves, difference of opinions on the applicability of these terms would widen. Therefore, a clear understanding needs to be built with regards to the understudied phenomenon of 'Hybridity' in general and its applicability to Pakistan-India context in particular. Based on this discernable criterion, this paper concludes that HW, while not entirely a new phenomenon, is distinguishable because in this case adversaries achieve the same ends with modified ways and means.

Throughout the history of warfare, indirectness of approach has achieved more successes since it focuses on enemy's ill-preparedness and vulnerabilities. With technology acting as a key enabler, states weaponize and employ EoNP other than military in a highly synchronized manner. This synchronization can be vertically or horizontally escalated or deescalated to achieve political ends.

While HW can be applied against any state, this threat is actualized by inimical forces against Pakistan through orchestrated strategic coercion strategies. Indian opportunistic power maximization beahviour, reflected in its regional and global power ambitions, is deteriorating as extraregional great powers use it as instrument of their long-term objectives. To make the matters worse, Pakistan's internal landscape provides an opportunity target to the external inimical forces. Pakistan's institutional voids and lack of coherent response make it even more susceptible to

exploitation. My assertion is that in Pakistan's state trinity, masses will remain the prime target of any hybrid attack; exploiting weak state-masses social contract and attacking masses-military ideological confluence being the center stage of a hybrid campaign.

Fundamental to any problem remains public awareness about the issue at hand. Surprisingly, this remains the weakest link when it comes to hybrid threats. Nothing can make a prey more vulnerable to a predator than its naivety about the clear and present danger. Any response framework will have to encompass a deliberate public awareness campaign as a starting point.

Policy Recommendations for Pakistan

HW poses significant threat to national security of Pakistan. It is evident from the research that HW targets all EoNP in linear or non-linear manner, complemented by the conflict extension to the ideological, social, political and legal fields. Therefore, no individual or institutional response to HW can suffice: it is rather a national undertaking. Key response contours are suggested in succeeding paragraphs.

As a nation, we must aim at deterring exploitation of our vulnerabilities into potential threats. Our adversaries, especially India, must be deterred to undertake damaging attempts with regards to: -

- Undermining CPEC security.
- Return of ethno-linguistic violence.
- Opening of new fronts, especially sub nationalist movements, due to governance and grievances issues.
- Exploitation of youth by extremist organizations.
- Afghan refugee's abetting or acting as Violent Non-State Actors.

To remain viable, we must alter our strategic thought and modify the way we work to adapt to the changing diversified threat. Awareness is the key in this regard. A cohesive approach to ensure awareness of impending hybrid threats to Pakistan at the grass root level of governmental, military and educational institutes as well as across various factions of the society is the foremost requirement. This can be done through workshops, seminars, mainstream and social media, and inclusion of related subjects in syllabi.

The Clausewitzian Trinity among masses, military and government must be strengthened. Social contract between masses—government should be renewed through good governance and addressing

causes of deprivation. Similarly, masses to military trust must be preserved at all costs by making military to masses interface more efficient and effective, while prudently countering the hostile narratives.

Population profiling based on HW vulnerability and preparation of HW Vulnerability Index can assist in managing state resources to respond and address the root causes of hybrid threats. These population segments should be given preference in resource allocation in development programs aimed at reducing their potential to be exploited.

Introduce, enhance and secure use of technology in state institutions to mitigate technology driven hybrid threats. Besides, initiatives like Multi University Research Initiative for synergizing technological output of academia and industry in four key areas of Artificial Intelligence, robotics and automation, cyber security and big data/ cloud computing must be extended to remaining key technologies like nanotechnology and space technologies by Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform.

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