

Media and Fifth-generation Warfare: A Case Study of Indian Disinformation Campaign Against Balochistan

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In the post-truth era, media has emerged as a vital propaganda tool of fifth-generation warfare. Balochistan being one of the most important geostrategic locations in the region has been the victim of Indian Hybrid warfare. Due to its unique geo-strategic location, regional and international players have tried to meddle in the affairs of the province. In the current post-truth era, the adversaries of Pakistan have utilized tactics of fifth-generation warfare i.e., insurgency, terrorism, propaganda, and fake reports to destabilize Balochistan and ultimately Pakistan. India, the archrival of Pakistan, is utilizing the fifth-generation warfare tactics most prominently media to fuel the Baloch insurgency and create a sense of deprivation among the people of Balochistan. The paper has utilized secondary data sources and Indian media news outlets to support the objectives of the study. In the theoretical framework section, the paper has applied the Johan Galtung's theory of War and Peace Journalism to understand the Indian Media's perception about the issues of Balochistan.

Keywords: Firth Generation warfare, post-truth era, Balochistan, India, Fake news, Hybrid warfare

Introduction

In the contemporary post-truth era, media has emerged as a vital tool of fifth-generation warfare to spread disinformation and propaganda against adversaries. The development of modern technologies like artificial intelligence, information technology, and advanced communication sources have transformed the relations between countries (Azad, 2020). Likewise, in the 21st century, non-state actors have compromised the state's right to diplomacy and warfare. In the modern era information is used to destabilize governments and run a malign propaganda campaign against adversaries (Maaz, 2018). The main objective of media warfare is to create distrust and confusion among opponents (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012).

Over the years the nature of warfare has evolved with the induction of new and advanced technologies. With the advancement of weapons, technology, and weapons of mass destruction, warfare has changed from generation to generation. Starting from the first-generation warfare, the battles were fought using swords and axes. The second generation of warfare began with the invention of gun powder. In the third generation of warfare, the role of non-state actors in international affairs became prominent. Fourth-generation warfare is based on using soft power in international affairs, mainly economic. Fifth-generation warfare, the current nature of the war between states, is based on using communication and information tools as means of war (Tahir & Afridi, 2019).

Fifth-generation warfare (5GW), the battle of perception and information has emerged as a prominent form of modern warfare (Abbott, 2010). 5GW is mainly considered as a war of information and propaganda to distort the perception of people and manipulate their views. Using the tools of this warfare, countries wage informational war to exploit the fault line of their enemies and support political subversion (Maaz, 2018). Fault lines can exist in several forms including religious division, ethnic divide, political differences, and marginalized minorities (Akhtar, 2009). In the 5GW, states manipulate news, create fake stories, and support insurgencies to create doubts among the people of the country (Kaltenthaler et al., 2012).

The emergence of social media has introduced new trends in the domain of warfare. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp have become tools of modern warfare. These platforms

are used to spread fake news, misleading reports, and propaganda against enemies (Azad, 2020). Media warfare is the use of information and communication technologies to achieve a strategic advantage over an opponent (Thornton, 2015).

Likewise, India has waged fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan by spreading disinformation and propaganda (Nadeem et al., 2021). The transition from traditional to nontraditional warfare tactics was caused by the induction of nuclear weapons in South Asia. The weapons of mass destruction compelled both states to adopt new ways of war without engaging in direct conflict with each other.

The Indian hybrid threats against Pakistan have several dimensions including political, social, and economic (Naz, 2021). India has adopted policies to isolate Pakistan from the international community. Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi showed the desire to isolate Pakistan by using coercive diplomacy (Dawn, 2016). Narendra Modi, during his visit to Bangladesh, praised Indian support for Mukti Bahini in creating destabilization leading to the establishment of Bangladesh (The News, 2015).

Using media as a tool of 5GW, India is fueling sectarianism, religious extremism, and ethnic conflicts in Pakistan. Indian spy agency RAW (Research and Analysis Wing), has provided diplomatic and media support to Baloch separatist groups (Khetran, 2017). The Indian-sponsored terrorism in Balochistan was exposed, when the security agencies captured Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian spy, from Balochistan (Dawn, 2017). The Pakistan government officials also unveiled RAW's support for sectarian groups in Karachi (GVS, 2020). In 2019, the Indian Chronicles, a report exposed an extensive network of Indian-sponsored fake NGOs and media outlets responsible for spreading propaganda against Pakistan at the global level (Machado et al., 2020). India has also lobbied to put Pakistan on the black list of FATF (Financial Action Task Force) (Chaudhary, 2019).

The Indian media warfare against Pakistan is mainly waged in the four major areas.

1. The Indian news media runs a malign campaign against Pakistan armed forces (M. A. Khan, 2020).
2. The Indian digital and social media platforms aim to create social unrest in Pakistan. In October 2020, fake news about the civil war in Karachi went viral when the Indian media claimed

that tanks have been deployed in the streets of Karachi (Hussain, 2020).

3. Pakistan's alleged support for terrorist organizations in Kashmir has remained a prominent propaganda tool against Kashmir (Siddiqui, 2021).
4. The Indian media is the cognitive technique to derail the development of CPEC by changing the perception of people (Cheema, 2020).

Pakistan and China, the two friendly neighbors, enjoy strategic cooperation. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has increased the economic and political cooperation between the two countries. However, the growing Sino-Pak strategic cooperation has been under constant threat from India (Naz, 2021). India has established a "special cell" within RAW to destabilize the economic corridor (Tribune, 2016) such as spreading fake news (Aamir, 2020). In 2016, Eight members of the Indian foreign mission in Islamabad were expelled from Pakistan because of their involvement in undercover activities (Khetran, 2017).

Literature Review

The emergence of advanced communication and information technologies has transformed the conduct of warfare (Fahmy & Hussain, 2021). In the modern world, such technologies have led to the emergence of information and media warfare (Grondin, 2011). In the contemporary era, the internet and social media have introduced the state to new forms of warfare, which is the battle of information and perception (Nadeem et al., 2021)

India has launched fake media campaigns to fuel sectarianism and lawlessness in Pakistan. Particularly, India has targeted Balochistan by sponsoring terrorism and spreading misleading reports. The sole aim of the fake media campaigns is to create a gap between the people of Balochistan and the state (Nadeem et al., 2021). India, along with Israel and US has launched a media campaign against Pakistan to distort its image in the international community. India is trying to present Pakistan as an unsafe and terrorism-sponsoring country (Nadeem et al., 2021). India has established radio channels in the Balochi language to incite the Baloch community against the state of Pakistan (Malik, 2018).

In 2019, a report (Indian Chronicles) published by the EU Disinfo lab exposed a massive network of alleged RAW-sponsored fake NGOs and

media outlets to malign Pakistan in the international community (Machado et al., 2020). The purpose of the Indian chronicles was to isolate Pakistan. In a public gathering, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed that he will work to isolate Pakistan from the international community (Dawn, 2016). India has also lobbied to put Pakistan on the black list of FATF (Financial Action Task Force) (Chaudhary, 2019). FATF, a watchdog that oversees terror financing has currently put Pakistan on the gray list. Following the Pulwama and Uri attacks, India blamed Pakistan for terror financing and tried to isolate Pakistan by dragging it towards the black list category.

Pakistan and China, the two friendly neighbors, enjoy strategic cooperation. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has increased the economic and political relations between the two countries. However, the growing Sino-Pak strategic cooperation has been under constant threat from India (Naz, 2021). India believes that the corridor passes through the disputed Kashmir region. The Indian authorities fear that the CPEC project is likely to internationalize the Kashmir issue and increase the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean (Shah, 2017) The Indian schemes against CPEC and Balochistan were exposed by Kulbhushan Jadhav (Dawn, 2017). According to the reports, India has also established a "special cell" within RAW to destabilize the economic corridor (Tribune, 2016) such as spreading fake news (Aamir, 2020).

Methodology

The research paper is based on qualitative research. Data for this paper has been collected through secondary resources i.e. scholarly articles, research journals, newspapers, and social media content. Due to the lack of time and resources, the researcher was unable to collect primary data. For this study, the content analysis method has been applied to analyze published news on Indian print and social media about Pakistan, especially Balochistan. The researcher has used Johan Galtung's war and peace journalism model to understand the Indian Media warfare against Pakistan. The peace and war journalism model help us to understand the Indian media approach towards Balochistan. The study has also applied the concept of propaganda in understanding the Indian disinformation campaign against Pakistan.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is based on Johan Galtung's model of war and peace journalism (Galtung, 2006). In this model, Galtung has identified two types of journalism, 1) peace journalism and 2) war journalism. Peace journalism presents an alternative to the tyranny of war while war journalism is based on dehumanizing and maligning reporting against the opponent (Linda, 2012). Galtung believes that mainstream media is mainly dominated by war journalism (Galtung, 2006).

Likewise in the case of Indian media warfare against Pakistan, the Indian media has adopted the model of war journalism. As reported by the Indian Chronicles, more than 650 media networks aimed to malign Pakistan in the international community (Machado et al., 2020). Moreover, table (1) also presents the Indian media coverage trying to instigate ethnic conflict in Balochistan. In October 2020, the Indian digital and social media presented fake news about the civil war in Karachi (Hussain, 2020), trying to create social unrest in Pakistan.

The researcher has also utilized the concept of media framing theory. Ervin Goffman believes that media focuses on issues of its importance and presents them with a certain meaning (Goffman, 1986). Using media framing theory, the study has tried to explore how Indian media has distorted the fault lines of Pakistan for its own purposes.

Propaganda has remained a vital tool of statecraft to achieve national interests. The word "propaganda" has its roots in Latin which means to spread. Propaganda can be defined as a "Deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012). From Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in 1622 (Guilday, 1921) to World War 1 (Steiner, 2018) propaganda was used by governments for mass persuasion. The purpose of propaganda is to alter the attitude and behavior of people (Collison, 2003) and to control information flow (Messina, 2007).

This study analyses the Indian media contents with the view of propaganda. The Indian media warfare is designed to change perceptions and manipulate people by propagating fake news. Just like in world war 1, India is using negative propaganda (Steiner, 2018) to dehumanize and spread hatred against Pakistan.

India Pakistan Relations- An Overview

Since their independence from British colonialism, both India and Pakistan have shared a history of enmity toward each other. The history of conflict between the two countries began in 1948 over the annexation of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (Qadir, 2008). Since then the two neighbors have remained close enmity with each other. Pakistan, a Muslim majority, while India, a Hindu majority state were separated based on the two-nation theory. The cultural-religious divide never allowed the two neighbors to normalize their relationship.

Pakistan and India have fought four major wars. The first war between the two countries was fought in 1948 on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, which led to the division of Kashmir into two parts (Oh et al., 2011). The second Indo-Pak war erupted in 1965, which was later resolved with the mediation of Russia (Oh et al., 2011). In 1971, The third war between the two countries led to the disunification of Pakistan, creating Bangladesh as a separate independent state (Iqbal & Hussain, 2018). In 1999, the fourth war between the two countries erupted in the Kargil region. The Kargil war was a limited war that was resolved following strong international pressure (Rabasa et al., 2009).

Besides these major wars, several escalations occurred between the two countries which nearly put them on the brink of war i.e. Indian parliament attack in 2001, the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the Uri attack in 2016(Mathur, 2017), and, the Pulwama attack in 2019(BBC, 2019b). The Indian authorities blamed Pakistan for the terrorist attack in Pulwama that led to the killing of dozens of Indian soldiers(Habib et al., 2019) and retaliated with airstrikes in the Balakot region of Pakistan (BBC, 2019a).
Indian Chronicles- A Disinformation Campaign

Indian Chronicles, a report by the EU Disinfo lab has exposed a massive network of a systematic Indian disinformation campaign against Pakistan. The report has exposed a massive network of fake news media outlets, the resurrection of dead individuals, and NGOs aimed to malign and isolate Pakistan. Indian Chronicles is based on a network of more than 600 fake news media outlets. These news outlets were involved in the circulation of propaganda news with more or less identical content (Machado et al., 2020). However, India has rejected the reports of EU Disinfo Lab alleging that the reports are sponsored by Pakistan (Mohan, 2020).

The organized disinformation campaign is reportedly headed by Ankit Srivastava who is the Vice Chairman of the Srivastava group. The report unveiled 265 pro-Indian sites across 65 countries working under the Srivastava group (Hussain & Menon, 2020). The group has been allegedly responsible for creating fake media outlets and NGOs, resurrecting dead people, and registering new domains. These organizations under the Srivastava group were responsible for promoting the Indian agenda on international platforms. Mostly these organizations stressed the issue of Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan, and minority rights in Pakistan (Machado et al., 2020).

Balochistan- An Overview

Balochistan, an arid region, is located in the southwestern part of Pakistan, shares a border with Iran and Afghanistan. The province is filled with abundant natural resources including marble, chromite, gold, iron, gas, and copper among many others (A. Z. Shah, 2017). Balochistan joined the federation of Pakistan after its inception by the British. However, the province has seen ethnic insurgencies, militancy, and poor economic infrastructure preventing it from growth and development (Nadeem et al., 2021).

Historically, Balochistan has remained the center of attraction for international actors due to its unique strategic significance in the region. Balochistan is considered a gateway that connects three regions, South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East (Baloch, 1987). The great empires including Alexander the Great, Scythians, Arabs, Seljuqs, and Mughals all stretched their empires up to Balochistan to access land and water routes (Islam et al., 1999). Balochistan was of equal importance to the British for military and economic purposes. British used the province as a buffer zone between Russian Empire and British India (Baloch, 1987).

The focus on Balochistan has increased manifold since the initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The weak economy, growing insecurity, and ethnic conflicts make Balochistan a suitable place for states to infiltrate and attain their objectives (Ali, 2021). Anti-Pakistan forces including, India, Iran, and Israel have intensified their conspiracies against Balochistan to sabotage peace by sponsoring terrorism and insurgencies (K. Khan et al., 2012). The volatile security

situation in the province has provided a vacuum for foreign involvement in Balochistan (Siddiqi, 2012)

Indian Fifth Generations Warfare Against Balochistan

Balochistan due to its poor economic conditions, political instability, and security situations has been frequently exploited by foreign powers, especially India. The anti-Pakistan forces are trying to destabilize the province by exploiting its fault lines. While utilizing fifth-generation warfare tactics, India is trying to create unrest in Balochistan by supporting religious and ethnic militants (Elsa, 2019). According to reports, through its sleeping cells in Afghanistan, India is conducting a covert operation in Balochistan (Nadeem et al., 2021), which was confirmed by Kulbhushan Jadhav (Javaid, 2016).

The government of Balochistan unveiled the Indian interference in the province and exposed its information warfare (Seth, 2016). Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian naval officer was caught in Balochistan on the allegation of espionage. During the investigation, Jadhav accepted that he was involved in sabotaging peace in the province by supporting separatists. However, the Indian authorities have rejected the claims (Dawn, 2017). After the trial, the military court announced the death sentence for Kulbhushan Jadhav on the charges of spying (BBC, 2017).

The Indian media warfare against Balochistan was mainly shaped by the so-called "Doval doctrine" (Akhtar et al., 2021) presented by Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor. The doctrine aims to wage hybrid warfare against Pakistan by supporting insurgencies, jeopardizing CPEC, and spreading propaganda using media (Akhtar et al., 2021). Ajit Doval claims that India has the potential to disturb the status quo in Pakistan through Balochistan (Rej, 2016).

Likewise, India has initiated information warfare using print, digital and social media to spread disinformation against Balochistan. For this reason, India has launched different websites and radio services in the Balochi language to incite Baloch people against Pakistan (Malik, 2018).

Source	Contents
Hindustan Times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mazdak Dilshad Baloch, an exiled Baloch separatist, praised Indian support for the Baloch cause. 2. Free Balochistan protests outside UN headquarters. 3. Naela Qadri Baloch, who supports “Free Balochistan”, met with political and government officials to garnish support for the Balochistan <u>cause</u>.
India Today	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provided media coverage to anti-Pakistan protests in Germany by Baloch and Indian protestors.
India Tv	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hyrbyair Marri, exiled Baloch separatist in London, stated that India should provide diplomatic support to the Balochistan cause. 2. News reporting of the “independence Balochistan” rally held in Quetta.
India Times	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On Pakistan independence day, provided media coverage to Baloch separatists in the US. 2. News reporting of a protest by a small group of Baloch separatists in front of the White House. 3. Media coverage of Baloch separatists in Geneva.
Zee News	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free Balochistan Movement rally before British Parliament.

Table 1. (Prepared by Author)

One of the main tools of Indian media warfare against Pakistan is the Baloch insurgency. As shown in Table (1), the author has analyzed Indian media coverage of Balochistan. While analyzing the media coverage of Hindustan Times, India Today, India Tv, India Times, and

Zee News regarding Balochistan, the study find out the use of war journalism as identified by Johan Galtung in the peace and war journalism model (Galtung, 2006). These news outlets provide media coverage to small gatherings of Baloch separatists to present Pakistan as a genocidal state. The purpose of such news coverage is to manipulate the minds of Baloch people and create distance between Baloch and the state of Pakistan.

Countering the Indian media warfare

The Indian disinformation and propaganda schemes are affecting Pakistan in various sectors including economic, social, political, and security. To counter the Indian media warfare, Pakistan needs to adopt a nationwide comprehensive attitude in exposing Indian propaganda schemes. First of all, Pakistan needs to put its house in order. Domestic issues, including political, economic, and ethnic division provide an opportunity for foreign involvement in the country. Pakistan needs to address the economic, political, and ethnic fault lines to prevent foreign enemies from jeopardizing peace in the country. In fifth-generation warfare, national disunity becomes an easy target to damage the opponent. Pakistan needs to endorse and promote national unity to achieve an edge over India in modern warfare.

Secondly, Pakistan needs to build strong relations with regional and international countries to sabotage the Indian scheme of isolating Pakistan in the international community. India has for long tried to present Pakistan as a terrorist-sponsoring country, on the contrary Pakistan should collaborate with regional and international players to combat terrorism. Thirdly, Pakistan needs to expose India let propaganda campaigns on all regional and international platforms. Pakistan should highlight the Indian Chronicle sat the UN as India's breach of international norms and values.

Conclusion

In the 21st century, the advent of diverse sources of communication has transformed warfare from traditional to non-traditional means. The age of diverse mass communication platforms has led to the emergence of fifth-generation warfare, the battle of perception and information. 5GW is a battle of distorting information and spreading propaganda to create a

mental disturbance among the enemy lines. The study has discussed media as a tool of Indian fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan, especially Balochistan.

The geopolitical location of Pakistan, especially Balochistan makes it one of the most important regions in the world. The global powers have always in one way, or another tried to meddle in the affairs of the country. Pakistan has seen conflicts, terrorism, wars, insurgencies, and ethnic problem. Now that the means of warfare has evolved, the adversaries of Pakistan have adopted fifth-generation warfare tactics by giving support to ethnic and religious conflicts, sponsoring fake media campaigns, and presenting misleading reports to malign Pakistan in the international community.

A falsified propaganda campaign against Pakistan is mainly waged by its archrival, India. Through its fake media campaigns, India is trying to present Pakistan as a haven for terrorists, unsafe for minorities, and religiously intolerant. India is using media including print, digital, and social as means to carry out its propaganda campaign. The EU Disinfo lab exposed a massive network of fake news outlets that were maligning Pakistan in the international community. The Indian Chronicles unveiled fake media outlets and NGOs that were working to present misleading reports against Pakistan in the European Union and United Nations.

Balochistan is one of the main victims of Indian fifth-generation warfare. India is fueling insurgencies and violating ethnic fault lines in the province. Indian news outlets have provided constant coverage of Baloch separatists (Table 1) to exploit the ethnic problems in the province. India is also active covertly by deploying agents in Balochistan for espionage. The capture of Kulbhushan Jadhav exposed Indian support to terrorist groups in Balochistan. India is also trying to jeopardize the CPEC project by propagating misleading reports.

Pakistan needs to counter Indian fifth-generation warfare by resolving its domestic issues and creating a credible posture in the international community. Pakistan should also expose the Indian media warfare campaign on regional and international platforms. By countering Indian propaganda, Pakistan will be able to promote national integration.

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