



RESEARCH PAPER

India's Hybrid Warfare Strategy towards Pakistan in the Backdrop of Social Media (2018-2022)

¹ Muhammad Sohail Fazal ²Dr. Adeel Irfan* ³Aneel Waqas Khan

1. Research Scholar, Political Science Department. Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, School of Peace and Counterterrorism Studies, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, Government College University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author** adeel.rao@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

Hybrid warfare with its new tool of social media has the power to change the thinking of people. This article intends to evaluate the different aspects of the Indian hybrid warfare strategy toward Pakistan through social media. Previously, Indian hybrid warfare has been discussed but social media as its tool was not discussed comprehensively. The theory of securitization provided a conceptual framework for the study and the theory served as an analytical tool in data analysis. An exploratory research approach including a qualitative method is undertaken for the study. Data were collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. The study finds out that India systematically waged hybrid warfare against Pakistan after the mid of 2018. This study makes an original contribution by pointing out India's hybrid warfare strategy through social media's disinformation campaigns.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare, India, Pakistan, Securitization Social Media

Introduction

"Supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy resistance without fighting"

(Sun Tzu, The Art of War)

Two thousand years ago, a Chinese war strategist Sun Tzu used and suggested an indirect approach to war. Chankya Kautilya, the military advisor of Chandragupta Mourya, also propagated the idea of silent warfare. He was a strong believer in dividing the enemy internally, without a regular fight. Thus, irregular or unconventional warfare is a very old strategy of war. In hybrid warfare, a country may face multiple things like propaganda, fake news, cyber-attacks, spying, direct military fight, psychological attacks, proxies, international propaganda, economic hitman, sectarian conflicts, separatist movements, and terrorist attacks at the same time. William J. Nemeth used the term 'hybrid warfare' first time in his thesis in 2002 (NATO, 2016). Patrick Cullen (Senior researcher at NUPI Norway) defines hybrid warfare as *the capability of synchronizing various tools of powers against targeted vulnerabilities to create linear and non-linear effects* (Cullen, 2017, p.8).

Mark Galeotti introduced the term '*Gerasimov Doctrine*' after the annexation of Crimea by Russia (Fridman, 2019). The '*Gerasimov Doctrine*' says don't strike direct but the mode of masses. There are many tools of hybrid warfare but one tool is very effective, and has the power to change minds and that is social media. Social media has become a very effective weapon of hybrid warfare because it shapes the perception and attitude of people (NATO, 2016a).

Historical Background

Olmstead (2014) talked about Pakistan and India's relationship. Since 1947, Pakistan and India have waged four wars. India did not maintain good relations with its neighboring states because of its hegemonic design. Johnson (2005) described those nuclear tests established an equilibrium of power between Pakistan and India in South Asia. But India's desire of pursuing hegemony in the region still exists. Now India through hybrid warfare is trying to undermine Pakistan. On October 2020, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute's report (IPRI) '*The Timeline of Indian Propaganda*' revealed that after the general elections of 2018 in Pakistan, India systematically started a propaganda campaign against Pakistan through digital and social media.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Securitization helps to understand the process of hybrid warfare. Securitization through its 'speech act' also demonstrates the importance of social media in hybrid threats. Kaunert and Wertman (2020) explained that Ole Waever and Barry Buzan (a professor of international relations at the London School of Economics and an honorary professor at the University of Copenhagen) originally developed the idea of a securitization framework.

Buzan (1998) defined the theory of securitization as; '*processes of constructing a shared understanding of what is to be considered and collectively responded to as a threat*'. It is neither a threat of military nature nor materialistic. Kaunert (a professor of International Relations at Dublin City University) and Wertman (a researcher, INSS, Tel Aviv University, Israel) described the Iranian hybrid warfare towards Israel after the Iranian Islamic Revolution 1979. Kaunert and Wertman discussed that the theory of securitization perceives threats as social construction on the basis of a 'speech act' and focuses on the process of how issues inter-subjectively transform into security threats.

The concept of securitization has strong linguistic dimensions and security issues are socially constructed through the '*speech act*'. In the securitization process, when a securitizing actor through social entities and 'speech act' highlights any referent object as a security threat and if the audience or majority accept the securitizing actor's claim then it becomes a security threat (Kaunert & Wertman, 2020). Hybrid warfare aims to destabilize a state and polarize its society. Social Media is one of the tools of hybrid warfare which acts as a 'speech act'. Hybrid warfare against Pakistan has proceeded through securitization. Pakistan's referent objects are Balochistan, CPEC, and most important, the peace of Pakistan. EU Disinfo Lab's report (Indian Chronicles) revealed that India had waged hybrid warfare against Pakistan since 2005 and acted as a securitizing actor by engaging social entities to target some referent objects. In Pakistan, social entities like PTM and JSMM are working for India as EU Disinfo Lab's report disclosed the nexus of all these social entities with India. Internally, these social entities use social media for disinformation as DMW's report revealed in August 2021.

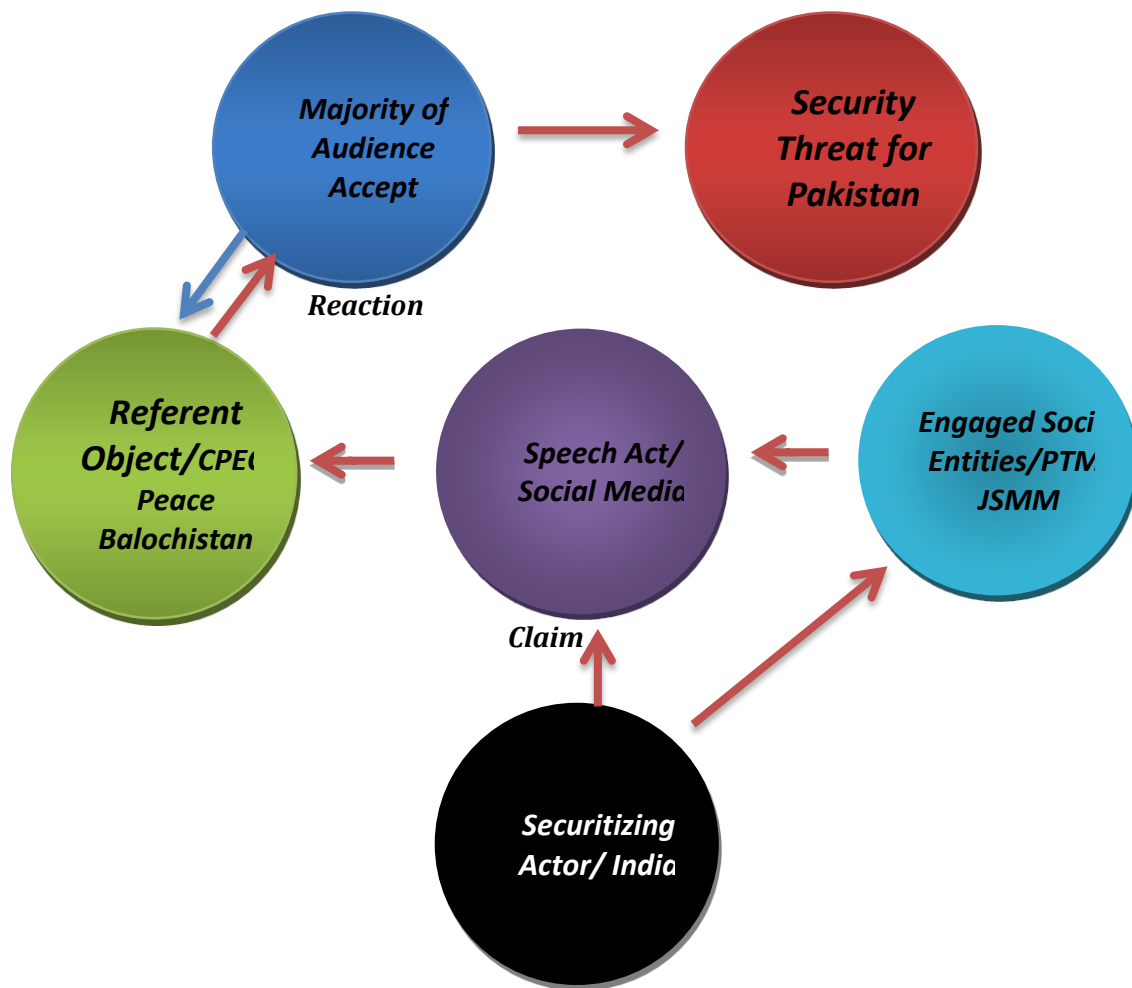


Figure: 1 Indian Hybrid Warfare and Securitization

The aforementioned figure (1) draws a clear sketch of Indian hybrid warfare against Pakistan through securitization. Social entities through social media involve the audience of Pakistan as Kaunert says, the issue becomes a security threat when a securitizing actor claims something about a referent object and then the majority of the audience accepts the claim. According to Kaunert, securitization helps to analyze the process of hybrid warfare. If Pakistan's masses accept the propaganda against Pakistan's military or vulnerabilities, then it is a serious threat as securitization explains. Sometimes people unknowingly become part of propaganda campaigns against their own country as Buzan believed that speech acts are very powerful in the securitization process.

Literature Review

A famous indicator of hybrid warfare is the creation of disinformation among the masses of adversaries. It is a new tool, which changes a positive objective into doubtful and fearful things. It injects fear into the minds of people and the victim nation starts speaking against the positive objectives which could be beneficial for their country. Therefore, people naturally go against their national interests. This tool of disinformation is more effective with social media in the present time as securitization elaborates the 'speech act' and its importance. Therefore, social media has become a threat and a powerful tool of hybrid warfare.

In the current era, social media has become a tool for spreading disinformation by many groups (Hayat, 2021). Just because Pakistan is a developing country and according to

the data from 2021, almost 62.56% population lives in villages but nevertheless almost everyone has easy access to the internet and social media. There are 71.70 million social media users in Pakistan till January 2022 (Datareportal, 2022). And because of illiteracy, most social media users are not well aware of its negativity. According to the data, the literacy rate in Pakistan is 68% but in reality, it is less than 60%. Thus, it is easy to inject something into empty and illiterate minds.

Disinformation Campaigns

Indian Chronicles: A Disinformation Castle

EU Disinfo Lab is a Brussels-based NGO and in 2019, its four investigators named Alexander Alaphilippe, Roman Adamczyk, Antoine Gregoire, and Gary Machado investigated and prepared a report named *"Indian Chronicles"*. The investigators found that the influence operation against Pakistan was started in August 2005 by India (EU Disinfo Lab, 2020, p.14). EU Disinfo Lab uncovered an Indian network with 265 fake media groups in 65 countries, working against Pakistan. The network was created by malicious actors in Brussels in 2005.

The network was also attached to United Nations, European Parliament. The network consisted of fake media houses like Big News Network, World News Network, Asian News International, the economic times, DNA, Republic News, WESTT lobbies and think tanks in the USA as well as in Europe and 10 NGOs. Indian networks also used social media to undermine Pakistan.

Investigators also found that an Indian group named 'Srivastave Group' was controlling all these NGOs to influence the international community. International Club for Peace Research (ICPR) an NGO, which perfectly worked for peace in Africa in 2004 but in 2012, ICPR suddenly started to speak about the human rights situation in Pakistan at UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Investigators found the nexus of ICPR and the Srivastave group through one credit card under the email address icpr.eu@gmail.com with the name Ankit Srivastave (EU Disinfo Lab, 2020, p.18).

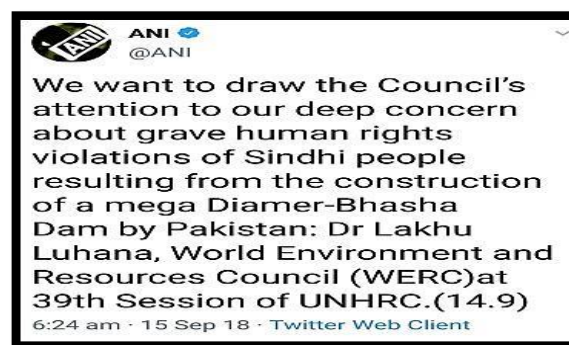


Figure 2 Source: Twitter

In 2018, WERC at UNHRC opposed the construction of a dam in Pakistan. ANI news also started propaganda on Twitter against dam construction in Pakistan that 3 out of 4 provinces are against the dam construction in Pakistan. India with NGO requested UNHRC to stop the construction of the dam because it is a violation of human rights in Pakistan while it is a fact that Pakistan is still facing the serious issue of an energy crisis. India constructed a lot of dams and doesn't want Pakistan to construct even a single dam, knowing the fact that the energy crisis leads to the weak economy. Indian hybrid warfare against Pakistan is continued from 2005. Ajit Doval in 2015 said; *"Statecraft and Influence" are the weapons against the enemy*" and EU Disinfo Lab's report shows the Indian strategy of hybrid warfare in which lobbying and propaganda through fake NGOs and media networks.

Karachi Civil War- An Indian Propaganda

On October 2020, news was circulated on local Pakistani media that troops have kidnapped the provincial chief of Sindh police to force him to arrest top opposition leader Captain Safdar, (son-in-law of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif) (BBC News, 2020). On 20 October 2020, Sindh's Inspector General of Police Mushtaq Mahar requested leave because of alleged military intimidation and ordered his officers to do the same. Indian media reported about the deaths of many police officers in Sindh and tanks of Pakistan's military had been seen on the streets of Karachi (BBC News, 2020a). According to BBC News sources, the Indian Twitter account @drapr007 started to spread false news;



Figure 3 Source: BBC News

In a tweet, the Twitter user talked about the area of '*Gulshan e Bagh*' which even doesn't exist in Karachi. Twitter users also claimed that there was an exchange of heavy fire between Pakistan's army and Sindh police and the hashtag #*Karachi_Referendum2020* was trending on Twitter. Indian media channels and social media claimed that in the fire exchange, 25 police officers and 5 army men died. The same day, a blast at Maskan Chowrangi Karachi caused by gas leakage also became the headlines of Indian media. Indian media and social media also claimed that the reason behind the blast was because of the clash between the army and police of Pakistan.

Farooq Khurram @*FarooqKhurram1* tweeted and claimed that there are tanks on the streets of Karachi and 25 Pakistan's army Jawan and 5 officers have died in the firing. He also shared some images, but according to the 'Soch Fact Check's (website) report, all the images were fake. He shared one image which was taken in 2009 after the blast, near MA Jinnah Road Karachi. He also shared one image from 2013 which was taken after the car bomb attack in Peshawar and a tank image was taken from online forums, discussing the Syrian conflict (Soch Fact Check, 2020).



Figure 4 Source: Soch Fact Check

Many tweets from International Herald also had no credible sources and International Herald’s tweets were shared by Indian Twitter users. Thus, on social media, the fake death count rose and many were sharing news that 22 police and 13 rangers died in the crossfire (Soch Fact Check, 2020a).

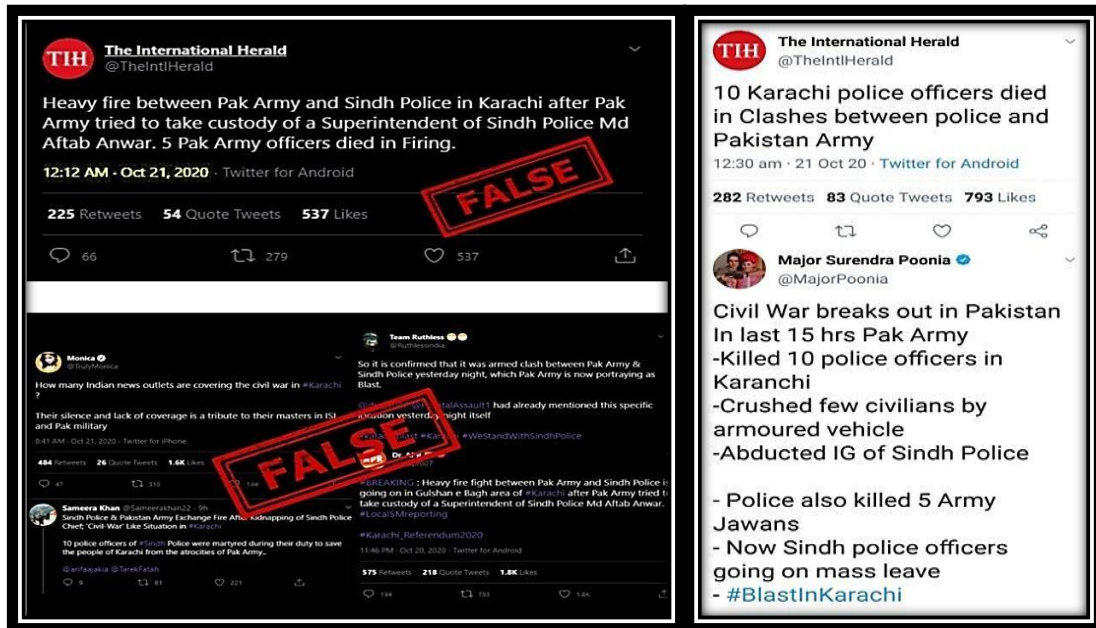


Figure 5 Source: Twitter

The PRO to the Inspector General Pakistan, Sindh said; “no clashes occurred at all. Reports about a civil war in Karachi on social media being shared and re-shared by prominent Indian social media personalities are false. There was not any deadly gunfire exchanged between Pakistan Army and Sindh Police” (Soch Fact Check, 2020b). According to Nighat Dad, the founder of Digital Rights Foundation Pakistan (DRFP), many verified Twitter accounts were spreading false news about the civil war in Karachi such as India Today, Zee News English, CNN News 18, and India.com and well-known journalists.

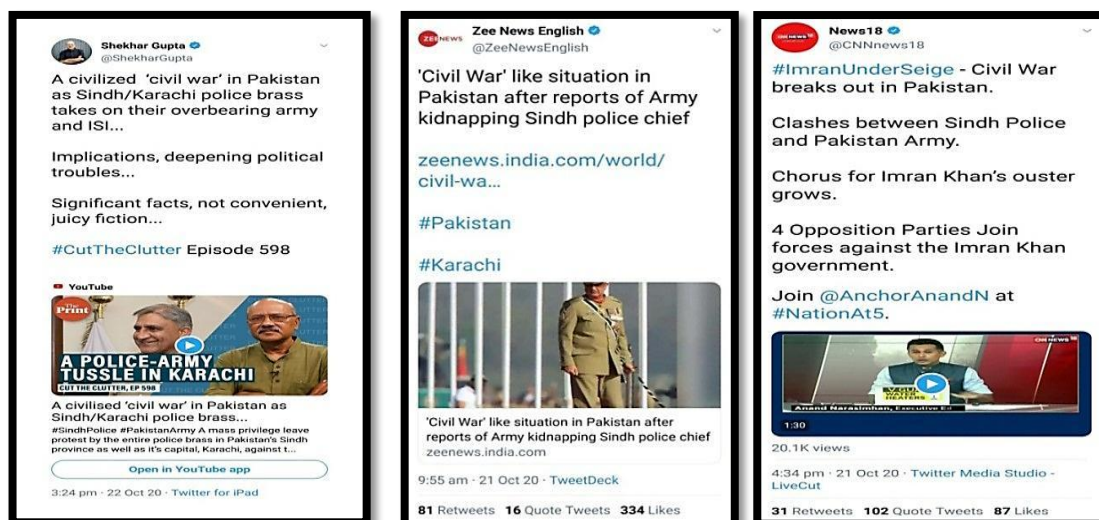


Figure 6 Source: Twitter

A journalist and the founder of ‘ThePrint.’ with 2.4 million followers on Twitter also tweeted that there is a civil war in Pakistan. He also shared the same news through his YouTube channel named ‘a civilized ‘civil war’ in Pakistan as Sindh/Karachi police brass.’ All

these Twitter accounts had thousands of followers. According to the Nighat Dad, the purpose of this disinformation campaign against Pakistan was linked with FATF's virtual plenary session because FATF was reviewing Pakistan's status. India used social media as a speech act to create unrest through securitization.

India's Misleading Narrative during TLP's Protest

In October 2020, a French teacher Samuel Paty displayed a blasphemous caricature in Paris and he was killed for his blasphemous act. President of France Emmanuel Macron pointed out that the specific act by Samuel Paty was the act of freedom of expression. Islamic world protested against France. Tehreek e Labaik Pakistan (TLP), a political and religious party, also started protests in Pakistan to boycott French products. TLP also demanded the expulsion of the French ambassador from Pakistan. The government of Pakistan did an agreement with TLP on 16 Nov 2020, to put the matter in the Parliament of Pakistan. TLP again started a protest against the government of Pakistan on 11 April 2021. The purpose of the protest was the expulsion of the French ambassador but the next day, on 12 April 2021, police arrested TLP's leader, Saad Hussain Rizvi. Fake news was circulated on social media that in the next 48 hours, the military is going to impose martial law.

According to 'meddy tweets', on 16 April 2021 at 2:06 PM, an Indian Twitter account @Gif_baaz created the hashtag #CivilWarinPakistan on Twitter, and after a few hours the hashtag became some of the few top regional trends. A total of 10318 tweets were posted in which there were 1396 tweets and 8922 retweets from India to promote the hashtag #CivilWarinPakistan.

On 18 April 2021, police started an operation against TLP at Yateem Khana Chowk (office of TLP/Masjid in Lahore). Mainstream media of Pakistan was not allowed to give coverage to the TLP protest by the government. TLP blocked all the main roads of Pakistan. More than 27 people died including 2 policemen and more than 100 people were injured in the protest. Protest of TLP continued from 11-20 April. After the matter was settled down, it was analyzed by institutions and agencies of Pakistan that 61% of total tweets and hashtags originated from India. Statistics are given below;

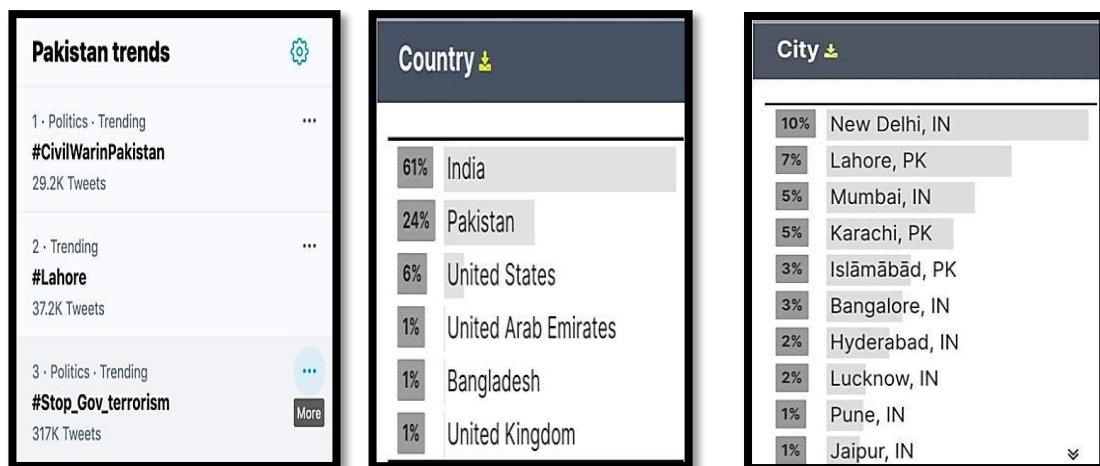


Figure 7 Source: Digital Rights Monitor

The highest number of tweets contributing to the trend was from New Delhi. New Delhi was generating 10% of the total volume of tweets (Digital Rights Monitor, 2021). Many fake Indian-based Twitter accounts were engaged in Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) and produced 84,000 tweets using this particular hashtag. 6688 tweets were generated per hour at the peak of the trend (Digital Rights Monitor, 2021a). In seven Indian

cities, this hashtag was trending i.e., New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Pune, and Jaipur (Saleem, 2021).

Then Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry said; *“so much so that during TLP protests, more than 300,000 tweets originated from the Indian city of Ahmedabad, which is known as an information technology city, within three and half minutes,”* (Wasim, 2021). According to Imran Khan (a journalist in Pakistan), some elements on social media were creating a disturbance by saying; *“government is nowhere”,* and *“there is no writ of government”*. Those elements wanted to increase the tension between protesters of TLP and the government. The purpose behind the propaganda was to create unrest in Pakistan and according to the Interior Minister of Pakistan, Sheikh Rasheed; *“More than 200,000 social media users from India were operating, for propaganda during the TLP protest.”* There were more than 320 fake WhatsApp accounts were also operating from India. 70% of social media accounts were fake according to the government of Pakistan.

During TLP protests, India used social media as a weapon of hybrid warfare against Pakistan to create unrest. Again, through securitization, the speech act's (social media) malicious campaign tried to sabotage peace in Pakistan and the protest became a security threat. India, through fake accounts on social media, tried to increase the tension between the Government and protesters and it worked like a fuel on fire.

Anti-Army Campaign by PTM

No army in the world can stay strong without the support of its masses and likewise, Pakistan's army gets its support from the masses. On 14 April 2022, Pakistan's army spokesperson DG ISPR, Babar Iftikhar in his press conference said; *“public's support is the source of the power of armed forces.”*

Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) is a political party, founded by Manzoor Pashteen in 2018. On 11 August 2021, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry with 8th National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf in a press conference presented a report titled; *‘Anti-State Trends: Deep Analytics Report’*. The report was prepared by the Digital Media Wing (DMW) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Information Minister said that social media is used against Pakistan and somehow our people intentionally or unintentionally become part of it. He further described that DMW comprehensively analyzed the data from June 2019 to August 2021 and found Indian involvement in anti-Pakistan trends. He expressed; *“we say with sorrow that all major social media trends against Pakistan were led by India and the major player in Pakistan who supported India is PTM and its workers. PTM led 150 main trends against Pakistan in 2 years”* (24 News, 2021).

According to the report, there were 3.7 million tweets, which were sent to support anti-Pakistan trends and these tweets lasted over 1000 hours. Information Minister further explained that a trend *#SanctionPakistan* was started and 800,000 tweets contributed to the trend. Twenty thousand tweets were from PTM and its activists. Information Minister further told; *“Interestingly, PTM actively supported even Baloch separatism and a trend #Balochistansolidarityday which was started on 14 August 2020. There were 100,000 tweets from India and in one day total of 150,000 tweets supported this trend”* (24 News, 2021a). 30 to 40% of bots were used for these tweets and hashtags said Moeed (Dawn, 2021). He further said; *“now we are talking to you on the base of analysis and data, Pakistan is facing hybrid warfare. Indian and Afghan accounts (social media accounts) are being used against Pakistan”* (24 News, 2021b). It is clear that through securitization, India targeted Balochistan through social entity PTM by using social media.



Figure 8 Source: Twitter

#Split_Pakistan and *#FinalStrike* became the top trends on Twitter in Pakistan and most of the tweets were from India. In Oct 2019 a trend *#pakistanarmykillspashton* was started against Pakistan Army on Twitter. PTM started the trend and India supported it on Twitter. Many trends against Pakistan's army were initiated by PTM, which was supported from India and Afghanistan. There are some examples as follows; *#PTMExposedstateTerrorism* on 26 May 2019 with 23k Tweets, *#DasangaAzadida* on 13 August 2019 with 32k Tweets, *#Pashtoongenocide* on 24 March 2021 with 21k, *#TyrantPakArmy* on 25 August 2019 with 34k tweets, *#PakArmykillPashtoon* on 11 October 2019 with 34k tweets and *#Armybehindtargetkilling* on 14 September 2019 with 32k tweets. In securitization, the speech act injects misinformation about targeted vulnerability and it becomes a security threat when the majority of the audience accepts it and anti-army trends on social media are doing the same thing because the narrative against Pakistan's military is being popular in Balochistan and KPK.

PTM: a 'pawn' in the hands of adversaries

In 2018, when a Pashtun named Naqibullah Mahsud was murdered by police in Karachi. Manzoor Pashteen started a movement named *Mahsud Tahaffuz Movement*. Initially, the purpose of that movement was to protect the rights of Mahsud Tribes in FATA (Warrich, Haider & Azad, 2021). PTM first showed that the campaign was for human rights protection but later on, the campaign on social media targeted Pak Army to undermine the military of Pakistan. DG ISPR, Asif Gafoor in his press conference on 29 April 2019 asked some important questions to PTM;

"Security institutions have some questions for PTM leadership, PTM has shared information about the collection of funds from Pakistan and other countries like Dubai and Saudi Arabia, where Pashtun lives, PTM says that they collect funds, and we (Pak Military) have all the details, first tell us about your funds. On 22 March 2018, how much and where NDS (an intelligence agency of Afghanistan) gave money to PTM to continue the protest against Pakistan's army? How much they got money from RAW (an intelligence agency of India) during their first protest in Islamabad and where did they use the money? On 8 April 2018 which relative of Manzoor Pashteen with one friend, was in the Indian consulate in Kandahar, and how did the money come to Pakistan? On 8 May 2018, how much money was given by the Indian consulate in Jalalabad to PTM for the Torkham protest rally, and where is that money? What do you have a relationship with Haji Mir Afghan Safi in Kabul and Naseeb Zadran in Dubai? PTM is threatening people that anybody who will support Pak-Army, PTM will bulldoze their houses. PTM is playing in others' hands."

Pakistan's security institutions claimed that they have a lot of information that how India is using PTM against Pakistan and the EU Disinfo Lab's report '*Indian Chronicles*' also exposed PTM's nexus with India. SAATH (South Asians Against Terrorism and for Human Rights) forum supports PTM. SAATH Forum's second event was held with the collaboration of EFSAS (European Foundation for South Asian Studies). According to EU Disinfo Lab's report, EFSAS was working for India.



Figure 9 Source: EU Disinfo Lab

In hybrid warfare, protests look natural but some hidden hands operate behind. It can't be said that all the activists of PTM are enemies of Pakistan but many of them support the Indian narrative unintentionally just because of propaganda by India. Tweets from Pakistani people do not mean that they are working for India but it indicates that the Indian narrative is being injected into the minds of Pakistani people through social media and this is what securitization does.

Changing a Positive Objective into a Doubtful Thing

Indian Campaign to Sabotage CPEC

CPEC is a gateway to prosperity and a game changer for Pakistan. CPEC will not only be beneficial for Pakistan's economy but it will also strengthen the Geo-political and Geo-strategic position of Pakistan in the region. Two of the many reasons are; firstly, India considers itself a fake hegemon therefore India wants to counter China because China's move towards Gwadar will increase the expansion of China on the Strait of Hormuz. Secondly, India had plans to isolate Pakistan from the international community but because of Gwadar connectivity, India itself would be isolated. Resultantly, Pakistan and China would have strong control on the Strait of Hormuz because of CPEC.

Attack on Chinese and Pak Army soldiers was the message not for Pakistan but for the world community. A video, in May 2020, was circulated on social media in which some people burnt the flag of China and Pakistan in Balochistan. Indian social media users and Indian mainstream media shared the video and started propaganda as Baloch people don't want CPEC. In 2017, India opposed CPEC and claimed that CPEC is going through disputed areas so it should be stopped and the USA also supported this Indian stance. Furthermore, US Secretary of Defence, James Mattis told Congress that CPEC passes through disputed territory therefore, it should be stopped. China's foreign minister Wang Yi responded that *"We have repeatedly reiterated that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is an economic cooperation initiative that is not directed against third parties and has nothing to do with territorial sovereignty disputes and does not affect China's principled stance on the Kashmir issue."*

Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi skipped the BELT and Road summit in China just because of the CPEC project. In July 2018 S. Jaishankar, the Indian foreign secretary, told

Chinese officials in Beijing that CPEC allegedly violated Indian sovereignty because it runs through Azad Kashmir, while China rejected this stance. India is going all the way to oppose CPEC (Khan, 2020). China's spokesman of the foreign ministry Lijian Zhao tweeted and rejected Indian claims. New propaganda against CPEC is that it would be a burden on Pakistan's economy as one Indian journalist wrote in *'the pioneer'* on 27 February 2018; *'CPEC: A debt-trap for Pakistan'*. Many Pakistani journalists also support the Indian narrative like an article in *'The News'* on 19 July 2018 with the title; *'Beijing's \$63bn CPEC investment to enhance debt trap: Nikkei Asian Review'*. An article by Logan Pauley and Hamza Shad on 5 October 2018 published in *'The Diplomat'* with the title; *'Gwadar: Emerging port city or Chinese Colony?'* also portrayed CPEC as a burden for Pakistan's economy.

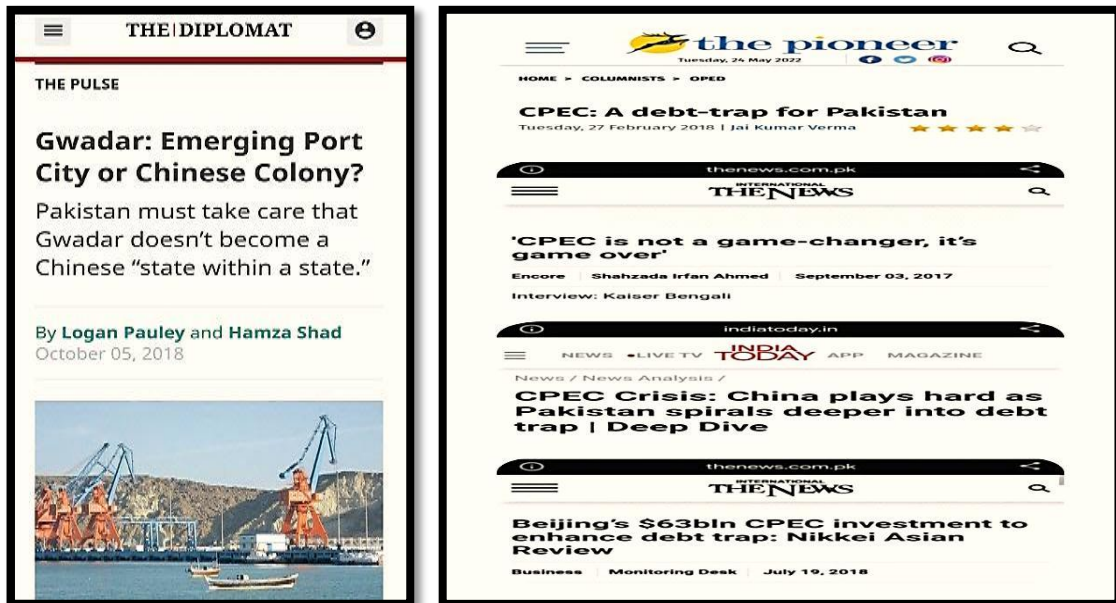


Figure 10 Source: The Diplomat, the pioneer, The News, India Today

In 2017, there was an article by Qaisar Bengali published in *'The News'* which was *"CPEC is not a game changer, its game over"*. India also through social media tries to inject this narrative against CPEC that Pakistan would become a colony of China through the CPEC project. A trend *#ChinaPakExploitationCorridor* was also started by someone on Twitter against CPEC and Pak Army.



Figure 11 Source: Twitter

CPEC is one of the prime targets of India. In 2020, from August to October, a planned and systematic propaganda campaign on social media started by India against Pak-Army and CPEC. The purpose of that campaign was to malign Pakistan's army and make CPEC and its projects controversial (DND, 2020). Securitization's tool speech act also targeted Pakistan's referent object CPEC to sabotage it. In August 2021, Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) fighter's message was; *"CPEC will fail miserably on Baloch land. Balochistan will be a graveyard for expansionist motives. Majeed Brigade is ready to sacrifice lives to protect our land. Majeed Brigade has been formed particularly to attack Chinese officials and installations in Balochistan."*

On 23 Nov. 2018, an attack by terrorists was launched on the Chinese consulate in Karachi. The objective was to kill Chinese nationals but the timely response of Pakistan's law enforcement agencies ensured the safety of the Chinese. Sindh police registered FIR on the behalf of State, and after investigation, it was found undeniable proof of Indian intelligence agency RAW's involvement through BLA nexus. A suspect named Abdul Razzaq son of Din Muhammad and his two brothers were arrested and after investigation, their allegiance with BLA was proved. Moreover, it was also shared by Additional Inspector General Dr. Amir Sheikh that attackers planned the attack in Afghanistan with the help of the Indian spying agency RAW to sabotage CPEC.

On 14 July 2021, a bus was blasted carrying workers of Dasu Hydropower project. In Dasu attack, 13 people were killed including 9 Chinese workers. More than 100 kg of explosive material was used in the attack. Deputy Inspector General of Counter Terrorism Javed Iqbal (Pakistan) briefed the media that cell phone data, footage, and investigation of the facilitator proved that TTP planned this attack in Afghanistan, and after investigation and forensic examination of car and data analysis, it was concluded that senior officers of RAW were behind this attack from Afghanistan (Shehzad, 2021). Foreign Minister of Pakistan stated; *"As per our investigation the Afghan soil was used for this incident... about its planning and its execution, we're seeing a clear nexus between NDS and RAW."* China also had the same intelligence report about the involvement of Indian agencies RAW and NDS in Dasu attack. Therefore, China appreciated Pakistan to bring the truth in front of the whole world.

A planned campaign on social media was also launched against Chairman CPEC Authority General (Retd.) Asim Saleem Bajwa and different hashtags like #AsimBajwaHisaabDo, #AsimBajwaMoneyTrialDo, and #PapaJohnsPizza, tried to target him.

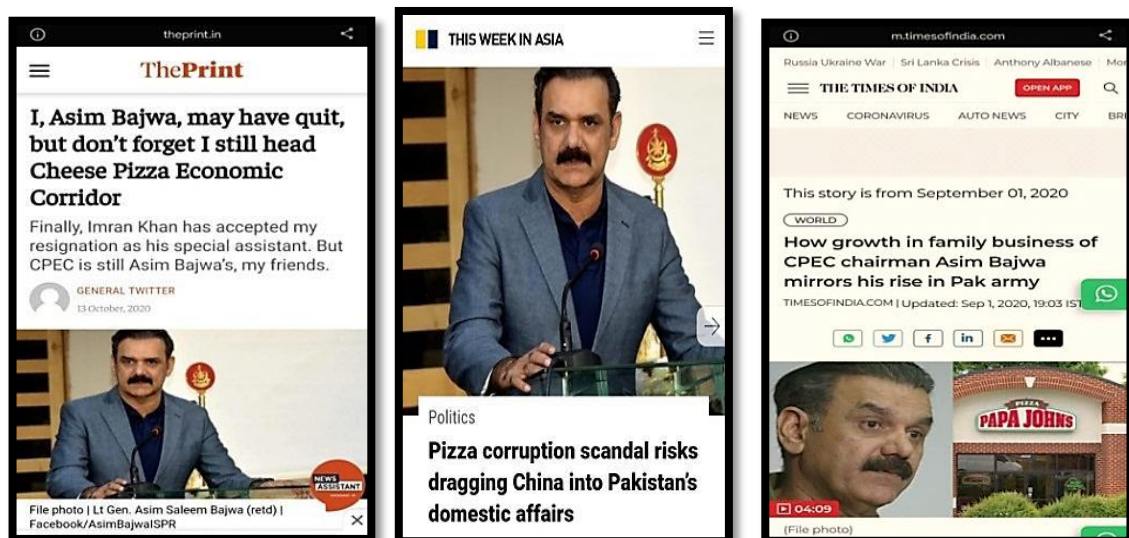


Figure 12 Source: the print, times of India, south China morning post

India's Malicious Campaign in FATF

Financial Action Task Force was founded in 1989 on the initiative of G7. FATF is a watchdog to keep an eye on terror financing and money laundering. Financial Action Task Force put Pakistan in the grey list in June 2018. That was the result of pressure by the international community, and India's lobbying. After the Pulwama attack in 2020, the Indian media channel NDTV started propaganda on 28 Aug 2020 and claimed that money for the attack was transferred from Pakistan by Muhammad Umar Farooq s/o Muhammad Ibrahim Azhar. NDTV also claimed that 1 million and 43 thousand rupees were shifted from two Pakistani bank accounts of Muhammad Umar. Indian media also showed a fake ID card on TV with CNIC no 31202-4271643-1. Pakistani intelligence agency investigated and brought reality in front of everyone (Public News, 2020a).

Indian media claimed that two banks named Meezan Bank and Allied Bank were involved in the transaction. As per Pakistan's investigation, the first bank account of Muhammad Umar was opened in Peshawar on 18- Jan 2017. Muhammad Umar had a spare parts business. The second account was opened on 31 March 2018 in District Khyber and both bank accounts were biometric verified. The actual ID card number of Muhammad Umar was 21201-1492548-7 (Public News, 2020b). India claimed that money was transferred for terror financing. The Indian plan was to put Pakistan on the blacklist of FATF through this kind of propaganda.

On 23 June 2021, there was a blast in Lahore Pakistan. Four people were killed and 24 were injured. The timing of that blast was very important because, on 25th June 2021, there was a FATF meeting in which it had to be decided whether to keep Pakistan on the Grey list or not. On the 4th of July, after an investigation, the National Security Advisor to PM, Moeed Yousaf stated that the attack was planned by RAW. *"Mastermind of the attack belongs to India and money for the attack was financed from India. The Cyber-attacks were also carried toward the investigation equipment so that time could be gained for the network to disappear."*

He further told to media that the main executor of the attack was named Eid Gul (Afghan national), a refugee in Pakistan. On 4 July 2021, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted; *This coordination led to identifying the terrorists & their international linkages. Again, the planning & financing of this heinous terror attack has links to Indian sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan. The global community must mobilize international institutions against this rogue behavior.* Indian lobby in Europe worked to put Pakistan on the black list as it was admitted by Indian External affairs minister Jaishankar. Hindustan Times @ht Tweets tweeted on 18 July 2021;



Figure 13 Source: Twitter

Thus, India did its best to keep Pakistan in the 'grey list' of FATF, and Indian External affairs minister Jaishankar admitted the Indian hybrid warfare against Pakistan. Here,

securitization clears India's strategy of hybrid warfare towards Pakistan through social media (speech act) to create linear and non-linear effects in Pakistan's society.

Conclusion

Hybrid warfare through social media is a serious threat to Pakistan and all the stakeholders have to be on one page to counter it. The study finds out that India has used social media as a tool of hybrid warfare against Pakistan since the mid of 2018. Disinformation campaigns against Pakistan aimed to create unrest in Pakistan. The theory of securitization helped to understand the process of Indian hybrid warfare against Pakistan. In addition, this study further contributed to the previous work whereby other writers described other tools of hybrid warfare in the context of Pakistan and India, instead of social media. EU Disinfo Lab's report *Indian Chronicles*, TLP's protest in April 2021, *Karachi civil war* propaganda by India, Indian involvement in FATF to keep Pakistan in the *grey list*, propaganda campaigns against CPEC, Pak-Army, and DMW's report 2021 shed light on Indian hybrid warfare towards Pakistan through social media. Education and awareness are the tools to counter this Indian hybrid warfare.

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