Indian Hybrid Warfare in the Post-Truth Era and its Impacts on Pakistan's Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

The maintenance of peaceful diplomatic relations with the outside world has become a potential challenge for government of Pakistan due to the rise of multiple advanced information communication channels worldwide. In other words, the arrival of the post-information age in international relations has affected the conventional foreign policy mechanism of states, where Pakistan is not an exception. Under the intense South Asian regional security environment, the conventional mechanism of Pakistan's foreign policy has been undermined by the advancement of information communication technology and the rise of multiple non-traditional media channels around the world. The unstoppable forces of this digital revolution have changed the traditional patterns of New Delhi-Islamabad hostility. Under the shadows of hybrid warfare, the growing reliance of both nuclear rivals of South Asia on the advanced means of information communication technology has resulted in the transformation of India-Pakistan strategic competition in the new world of digital realities. In the hybrid domain of modern warfare, the challenges of the post-information age have also hampered the role of Pakistan's diplomatic forces in the world. Beyond weakening the role of Pakistan's diplomatic community across the world, the existing framework of Islamabad's mainstream foreign relations has started facing the challenges of Indian-supported worldwide disinformation campaigns. Therefore, the central theme of this paper seeks to maintain an analytical account of India-Pakistan hostility in the post-information age, in which the foreign policy of Pakistan has become a prime target of New Delhi's worldwide anti-Pakistan narratives. Furthermore, this paper is an academic endeavour to critically examine the inabilities of Pakistan's current foreign policy in addressing the Indian anti-Pakistani propaganda in the digital world.

Key Words: **Foreign Policy, Post-Truth Era, Technological Advancement, Indo-Pak Conflict.**

Introduction

The international community has consistently recognized the decades-long rivalry between India and Pakistan as the gravitational point of South Asian regional politics. The multileveled points of disagreement between both nuclear rivals have jeopardized the whole regional security environment of the subcontinent and undermined the scope of peace and stability in the region. Indian quest for securing a regionally dominating status and Pakistan's determination to preserve its

counterbalancing potential are the primary factors behind the persistently degrading regional security environment of South Asia. The combination of India-Pakistan hostile behaviours against each other has created a regionally complex security environment in which the two-sided leading state officials remained reluctant to change their traditional antagonistic standings against each other (Sabharwal, 2022). The politically incompatible and diplomatically inflexible standings of both nations have led their governments toward a longstanding armed conflict, resulting in an enduring rivalry at the regional and extra-regional levels. An analytical overview of their decades-long hostile history has shown that the Indian government always introduced new means of warfare against Pakistan while adopting various modern information technologies. Apart from inaugurating a regional nuclear arms race, the Indian government is determined to empower its regular armed forces with modern warfare technologies. So, the New Delhi-based defence planning circles have started to rely on the emerging modern warfare trends while believing that these new fighting methods could facilitate the Indian armed forces secure a strategically advantageous position against Pakistan in the region (Ganguly, 2016). Additionally, Indian political and diplomatic communities have launched international anti-Pakistani propaganda, which activated the Indian diaspora around the world as well. In contrast, the Islamabad-based strategic community always preferred to remain defensive against New Delhi's Pakistan-specific offensive attributes under the nuclear shadows. The architectures of Indian national security strategy have accepted the essential role of various unconventional strategic means in the changing nature of warfare technologies and their applications in various non-traditional domains.

Presently, Indian government have started focusing on applying the hybrid domain of warfare with the belief that the role of conventional armed forces in the national security of the state cannot ultimately serve the country's strategic aspirations in regional and extra-regional affairs. The increasing focus on the evolving nature of modern warfare has led New Delhi to form new strategies based on information warfare. The worldwide spread of digital culture is the fundamental reason behind New Delhi's aims to develop and promote its anti-Pakistani false flag operations globally (Saeed, 2023). An international network of various Pakistan-specific disinformation campaigns of New Delhi has directly attacked Pakistan's relations with the outside world. It has heavily degraded the role of Pakistan's diplomacy around the world, parallel to undermining the position of Pakistan in the Muslim world. The launching of international anti-Pakistani campaigns of New Delhi has been validated and verified by several international academic institutions and independent research organizations. Moreover, the recent history of the India-Pakistan conflict has also witnessed various incidents of New Delhi's determination to stigmatize the national image of Pakistan in regional and extra-regional affairs. The Indian-sponsored fake news and manipulated facts have penetrated the internal social structure of Pakistan as well, where state-society bonds and civil-military relations are already sensitive areas.

In conceptual explanations, establishing a strong connection between modern warfare strategies of the states and developments in information technology has altered the conventional patterns of interstate hostilities between different states where the India-Pakistan rivalry is an appropriate case. Therefore, the central theme of this research revolves around the changing nature of India-Pakistan enduring rivalry in the contemporary age of digital realities in which several unconventional means of warfare have become a prevalent trend. It is an academic endeavour to study the increasing reliance of the Indian strategic community on the various sources of information warfare under the broader concept of hybrid warfare to undermine Pakistan's position in the world (Shafiq, 2021). In addition to diminishing the role of Pakistan's diplomatic forces in the world and degrading Islamabad's mainstream relations with other states, the Indian disinformation campaigns and its anti-Pakistan propaganda operations have started targeting the internal state infrastructure of Pakistan on a parallel basis. Thus, this research seeks to analyze the inevitable impacts of this scenario on the traditional framework of Pakistan's foreign policy, which is facing severe challenges in managing Indian hostility in the contemporary post-truth era. The Indian strategies in the post-truth era are the result of New Delhi's growing strategic tendencies in the domain of hybrid warfare, which has become an inseparable feature of the contemporary international system.

Hybrid Warfare in the Post-Truth Era

The concept of hybrid warfare is directly linked to the changing attributes of the international security apparatus and its varying impacts on the states located in different regions. Due to the rise of modern information technologies and the persistently growing interstate hostility between states, the concept of hybrid warfare has secured a widespread appreciation in the world and convinced the security establishments of the states on the adaptation of new means of warfare. The notion of hybrid warfare allows states to employ a mixture of conventional and unconventional means in their military strategies against potential rivals. In other words, this new domain of warfare has provided a wide range of targeted areas to a state by employing multiple conventional and unconventional warfare tools (Marovic, 2019). These tools consist of regular and irregular armed forces, propaganda with fake news and disinformation campaigns of fabricated facts, along with manipulating the vulnerabilities in the political, economic, diplomatic, and cyber domains. Combining all these elements enables a state to target its rivals in multiple areas and makes its competitors vulnerable on the internal and external fronts. The main objective of executing a hybrid warfare strategy is to facilitate a state to place its potential rival at a disadvantageous position in regional and extra-regional affairs parallel to weakening its internal infrastructure through different unconventional propaganda operations. The pursuit of destabilizing and disintegrating the potential rivals at the domestic level engages the national

government of the rival nations in their internal affairs, which compromises the attention of its policymakers from global power politics (Solmaz, 2022). Thus, the domain of hybrid warfare and its execution in the strategic thoughts of a state enables its security planners to exploit the internal fault lines and fragile areas of rival nations in which its leaders are facing major challenges.

The conceptual attributes of hybrid warfare have introduced a new dimension of strategic competition between states and placed the entire international system under the shadows of unconventional warfighting strategies. The worldwide promotion of modern warfare techniques and the digitalization of the international system are the prime factors behind transforming strategic competition between states into cyberspace. In the domain of cyberspace, the strategic communities of different nations have started relying more on the waging of war against their potential rivals through adopting unconventional means, which has challenged the traditional wisdom attached to the traditional nature of world politics (Stoddart, 2022). The emergence of a new domain of warfare has undermined the traditional wisdom defined in the Westphalian state system, where sovereignty and its permanent attachment to the territorial jurisdictions of states always remain an essential feature of the international system. The Westphalian concept of sovereignty was established under the broader concept of Westphalian peace and endorsed by the states at national, bilateral, and multilateral levels (Brenner, 2009). The regional and extra-regional territorial alliances of the states also accepted and appreciated the notion of sovereignty and its description in terms of territorial state borders. The prevalence of non-traditional features of the international system, especially in terms of cyberspace, has shaken the foundations of the modern state system established by the Westphalian concept of sovereignty in 1648. The rise of non-traditional features of the international system has introduced a new era of transnational security threats in which cyberspace has become a gravitational point of strategic planning for the states (Demchak, 2011).

In this way, the increasing focus of leading strategic communities of the world on the digital infrastructure of the international system has placed strategic competition of states under the umbrella of hybrid warfare, which dictates the mainstream decision makers of the country to explore the unconventional options of their warfighting capabilities. Such capabilities have convinced the formal defence authorities of states on the significance of deep-fake news, fabricated information, and manipulated facts in their strategic planning. These features of states' defence planning have facilitated mainstream security establishments from around the globe to design multilayered clandestine operations against their rival nations (McNair, 2017). In the hybrid domain of warfare, integrating unconventional warfighting means with conventional means makes it difficult for a state to intercept every offensive move of its rival. An appropriate application of this scenario can be seen in the India-Pakistan conflict in which the leaders of both states have adopted various points of disagreement in regional and international politics and defined their inflexible positions against each other in cyberspace as well. The continuation of their strategic inflexibilities has resulted in an intense

regional security environment of the nuclearized subcontinent, where New Delhi is determined to undermine Islamabad's counterbalancing potential against its regional hegemonic ambitions (Gul, 2021). To destabilize Pakistan's position in politics at the regional and international levels, the Indian strategic community has started developing its warfighting capabilities by adopting various unconventional means and jumped into the post-truth era with the support of its worldwide disinformation operations. In other words, the greater reliance of New Delhi on unconventional warfighting means has dragged the mainstream defence planner of India towards the use of widespread anti-Pakistani propaganda based on different disinformation operations in cyberspace.

Indian Version of Hybrid Warfare

Hybrid warfare offers a variety of strategic tools to a state against its potential rivals based on an expectational arrangement of conventional and unconventional means. However, Indian security establishment mainly focus on different disinformation campaigns to weaken the position of Pakistan's government in internal and external affairs. The primary objective of New Delhi's policy of spreading manipulated and fake news through different digital channels is to negatively alter the public opinion about the government of Pakistan at home and abroad. The selection of digital channels is due to the rapid emergence of cyberspace through globalization and the worldwide spread of smartphone technology (Phartiyal, 2019). The dramatic advancement of smartphone technology has developed a new international system in which the emergence of Android software applications worldwide has become an undeniable reality. The rise of this digital age has made smartphone technology an essential societal feature of every nation. The societal transformation in the smartphone culture has surprisingly increased the use of social media across the world and forced state governments to legitimate the presence of social media channels in their societies with the help of various domestic policies. Thus, the use of social media has facilitated state leaders in developing a strong and fast connection between the government and the people on the one hand. On the other hand, it has let the rival nation easily exploit the vulnerable points of their opponents with the help of different popular social media networks (Sarfraz, 2021). The case of India-Pakistan hostility cannot be ignored in this regard due to the addition of information warfare in the decades-long rival interaction. This development has started intensifying the regional security environment of nuclearized South Asian politics.

The Indian pursuit of maintaining its hegemonic status in the territorial and maritime affairs of South Asia through developing contrasting strategic positions against the neighbouring states is an ignorable feature of the politics of the nuclearized subcontinent. It has introduced an improved version of Indian strategic thinking, which has empowered New Delhi's digital capabilities to achieve its

strategic objectives. In addition to the traditional features of its strategic thinking, the integration of various propaganda networks into the mainstream defence planning of New Delhi has augmented the existing patterns of Indian anti-Pakistani operations. The transformation of New Delhi's anti-Pakistani agenda in information warfare clearly reflects ancient Indian strategic thinking, which instructs Indian leaders to adopt an anti-neighbourhood policy against the territorially adjoining nations, parallel to enhancing Indian influence in the home region. The continuation of classical patterns of Indian strategic thinking in the unconventional domain of the post-truth era is due to the effective role of nuclear deterrence in South Asia (Khattak, 2022). The deterring role of nuclear weapons has outdated the probability of a direct clash between India and Pakistan in the traditional battlefield domain where the contestants could easily identify the positions of losers and victors in their strategic competition. The history of international world politics also explains the vanishing presence of direct confrontation between nuclear weapons states through various conventional means. Under this description, the absence of a direct confrontation between New Delhi and Islamabad has forced the governments of both states to start exploring various unconventional means against each other. In this way, Indian strategic communities have decided to rely more on the unconventional means of the digital world, where Pakistan's digital industry cannot be matched with the Indian IT industry (Kiran, 2023). New Delhi's decision for opting unconventional means and their multileveled employment against Islamabad under the nuclear shadows have legitimated the deterring role of nuclear weapons between both South Asian contestants. The selection of sub-conventional or hybrid domains of warfare is mainly an updated version of Indian strategic thinking in which Pakistan has always remained a prime target of New Delhi's belligerent regional approach.

The addition of unconventional warfighting means in the security calculations of India defined New Delhi's hostility with Islamabad on Sun Tzu's maxims. Sun Tzu, a Chinese military strategist, emphasized that the most preferred way of defeating the enemy is to launch an attack without fighting. In other words, victory without fighting is the supreme art of war in which state governments are advised to employ several unconventional means to subdue a potential rival (Weiss, 2021). Under Sun Tzu's teachings, the contemporary orientations of Indian strategic thinking can easily be understood because the Indian strategic community have started exploring non-traditional means of targeting Pakistan. Parallel to attacking the internal social and political structures of the country, the primary focus of New Delhi is on Pakistan's standing in world politics. The efforts to diminish the position of Islamabad in world politics have led New Delhi to stigmatize Pakistan's national image in the international community. The spread of different fake news and various formats of manipulated information have been considered the most preferred tool among Indian strategists for making Pakistan a diplomatically isolated and politically unreliable state (Shamsi, 2023). The employment of such campaigns to serve Indian strategic objectives is fundamentally designed to cultivate a pro-Indian stance in the international community on various global

issues. These campaigns aim to obtain the support of various states in regional politics against Pakistan.

Pakistan's Foreign Relations and Indian Hostility

The advancement of a worldwide network of clandestine disinformation campaigns of New Delhi has targeted the foreign relations of Pakistan at the regional and international levels. Starting from the subcontinent's independence, the historical analysis of Indian foreign policy proved that the Indian leaders under different political administrations continued the anti-Pakistani patterns in New Delhi's mainstream foreign relations. The prevalence of Pakistan's counterbalancing potential against New Delhi's strategic hostile thinking proved that the Indian leaders had accepted the potential of Pakistan in preventing the strategic objectives of New Delhi's power maximization in its home region. An overwhelming role of these security considerations of New Delhi has started targeting the fundamental values of Pakistan's foreign policy (Naureen, 2019). The guiding principles of Pakistan's foreign policy officially recognized the significance of neighbouring states and the world beyond territorially adjoining states, parallel to exclusively emphasizing the Kashmir issue. The six main objectives of Pakistan's foreign policy formally defined the promotion of cooperation with the Muslim world, formulation of friendly ties with the great powers and neighbours, protection of geostrategic interests mainly related to the Kashmir issue, creation of cooperative economic relations with the international community, safeguarding and empowering its diaspora across the world, and the advancement of national resources for the cooperation at international and regional levels (Sattar, 2010). The formal document of *the National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026* has highlighted the Indian opposition as a serious challenge to Pakistan's foreign policy while paying exclusive attention to New Delhi's inflexible position on the Kashmir issue (National Security Policy of Pakistan, 2022). The declassified document of National Security Policy mainly discussed the Indian hostility concerning the Kashmir issue and categorically pointed out the suffering of the Muslim people living under Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The same document released by the government of Pakistan emphasized the emergence of various threats of a hybrid nature, mainly consisting of state and non-state actors (Haque, 2022).

Apart from damaging Islamabad's stance on the Kashmir issue, the determination of Pakistani policymakers to enhance their cooperative ties with the Muslim world has also been affected by New Delhi. The increasing collaborative ties of India with Islamic countries have gained momentum in the changing patterns of contemporary international power politics, and its impacts on the politics of the Muslim world have become an inescapable reality. In the Muslim world, Pakistan is the only nuclear weapon state with India-centric counterbalancing potential parallel to having exceptional standing in the leading

Islamic societies of the world (Joseph, 2019). The Muslim world has recognized the nuclear weapon status of Pakistan through its formal multilateral cooperative framework, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Despite having solid ideological connections with the Muslim world, the government of Pakistan has started witnessing an increasing role of Indian leaders in the politics of Islamic countries. The growing bilateral engagement of New Delhi with the Muslim states in economic and strategic domains has undermined Islamabad's quest for cultivating broader support of the Islamic world in South Asian regional politics. This development negatively impacts Islamabad's position on the massive human rights violations of Muslim communities in the Indian-occupied areas of Kashmir. The governments of different Islamic countries have signed various commercial and trading agreements with New Delhi, parallel to developing multilayered areas of bilateral strategic engagements with India (Pande, 2011). The leading state officials from Islamabad have proved ineffective in convincing the Muslim community on the reports of various international organizations on the massive human rights abuses of the Muslim population living under Indian occupation in Kashmir.

Analogous to the damaging position of Pakistan in the Muslim world, India's Pakistan-specific foreign policy has created serious diplomatic challenges for Pakistan in the international community. New Delhi's objective of weakening the support of the international community to Pakistan generally and affecting the standing of Pakistan in the Muslim world exclusively has been augmented in the contemporary rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in which Prime Minister Modi has altered Indian strategic thinking. The contemporary trends of Indian foreign policy under Modi's leadership have designed various anti-Pakistani campaigns to encircle Pakistan in regional politics and to isolate Pakistan from the Muslim world. Apart from gaining inevitable significance in the Muslim world, the Indian leadership has digitalized the conventional patterns of its antipathy towards the ideological foundations of Pakistan (Prasad, 2017). A clandestine network of deep-fake information operations on social media and its worldwide promotion has mainly stigmatized the national image of Pakistan by targeting the ideological foundations of Pakistan. Indian leaders heavily attacked the Islamic state structure of Pakistan under the broader theme of the US-led global war on terror, where Pakistan was the frontline state and internationally recognized as the leading player in the global counterterror efforts. The promotion of the international anti-Pakistani agenda of New Delhi primarily influences the global political perception about Pakistan's active role in the war on terror while shaping international public opinion against Islamabad (Musharraf, 2006). The continuation of such state-sponsored campaigns has become an undeniable reality and an inevitable challenge for Islamabad because the worldwide spread of these deep-fake operations of New Delhi has disturbed Islamabad's mainstream foreign relations with the outside world.

Post-Truth Era in South Asia and India-Pakistan

The increasing confidence of the Indian strategic community in promoting fake news and manipulated information against rival nations is less likely to decrease in the future because the growing significance of Indian economic relations with the world is the main point in this regard. The solid diplomatic forces of New Delhi and the active role of Indian overseas communities are the additional points for promoting a state-sponsored anti-Pakistani agenda around the world. At the international level, both supporting points of the Indian anti-Pakistani campaign have attacked the foreign relations of Pakistan with different states (Khalil, 2020). The Indian attacks on Pakistan's foreign relations aim to undermine the mainstream framework of Islamabad's foreign policy in the world. The widespread use of anti-Pakistan and anti-Islamic propaganda of New Delhi has been identified by various independent research organizations such as the EU Disinfo Lab, which is mainly working on sophisticated disinformation campaigns targeting EU member states and its multilateral organizational setup. A report by Disinfo Lab *Indian Chronicles* published in 2020 validated that a New Delhi-sponsored global network of various websites and news channels is heavily involved in serving Indian interests while criticizing Pakistan (Indian Chronicles, 2020). The report has provided a brief account of various New Delhi-supported digitally operating propaganda campaigns to persuade anti-Pakistani bias through manipulated facts and fabricated information. The subsequent months after the launching of EU Disinfo Lab's report witnessed a major attack on Islamabad's diplomatic strength. The attack was planned and executed by the Modi government when the sports diplomacy of Pakistan was severely affected due to New Zealand's decision to abandon the Pakistan tour of its cricket team. The government of New Zealand decided to withdraw its cricket team in September 2021 on a serious security alert, and it overlooked all the foolproof security arrangements made by the Pakistan Cricket Board (Ali, 2021). Following the New Zealand government's decision, England also withdrew its men's and women's teams from Pakistan, causing a national-level disappointment in Pakistan.

The cancellation of New Zealand's tour to Pakistan was based on fake news generated by Indian digital outlets consisting of certain social media accounts and emails. The fabricated social media accounts attempted to sabotage Islamabad's vision of promoting its national image in the international system. The Indian efforts for attaching a stigma to Pakistan's global standing damaged the scope of cricket diplomacy in Pakistan. The mainstream political leadership of Pakistan clarified to the international community that the worldwide spread of Indian anti-Pakistan propaganda is purely designed to weaken the position of Pakistan in the world, which could be studied as fifth-generation warfare (Khan, 2021). The proliferation of fake news targeting the soft image of Pakistan was a part of New Delhi's broader false-flag operations to serve Indian strategic interests in its home region. In the regional politics of South Asia, New Delhi's Islamabad-specific

propaganda focuses on the growing trading collaboration of Pakistan with neighbouring China generally and the increasing economic ties between Islamabad and Beijing specifically. The Brussels-based EU Disinfo Lab report was an analytical survey of Indian anti-Pakistani or anti-Chinese sentiments. Indian Ministry of External Affairs actively pursues a multileveled operation for downgrading the economic potential of Pakistan. It has raised various questions about signing a mega economic corridor project between China and Pakistan, generating several misperceptions and misconceptions about the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Based on the abovementioned scenario, it can easily be maintained that the continuation of Indian antipathy toward Pakistan has become an essential feature of New Delhi's foreign policy. The multifaceted disinformation campaign of New Delhi tries to encircle the diplomatic forces of Pakistan across the world, parallel to disturbing the basic principles of Pakistan's foreign policy. In other words, Islamabad's quest for increasing its role in regional and international politics is linked with Pakistan's position in its decades-long hostility with India. The contemporary government of Prime Minister Modi has augmented the existing patterns of New Delhi's global propaganda, which has multiplied its effects in specific dimensions and started promoting anti-Pakistani, anti-Islamic, and anti-CPEC narratives in the world. In this way, the use of anti-Pakistan rhetoric has become the most effective and efficient political tool of the Modi government due to its ultra-nationalist ideology and its worldwide promotion. The prevalence of anti-Pakistan propaganda on Modi's corollary of Hindutva ideology is pushing Islamabad under the critical circles of the international community, where it is becoming difficult for Pakistan to explore the world beyond its fixed bilateral interactions with other nations.

Way Forward

The mainstream foreign policy decision-making circles of Pakistan are required to pay substantial attention to the contemporary age of digital realities, where the conventional mechanisms of managing foreign relations have become less relevant in the newly emerged post-truth era in the world. There is a need to revise the traditional ways of managing security challenges in cyberspace because of the arrival of different social media channels and the growing worldwide appreciation of the newly emerged digital sources of information. Both developments have dramatically changed the nature of the international system. Therefore, the government of Pakistan needs to take specific policy measures to address the worse impacts of this emerging digital infrastructure of the world on the traditional foreign policy mechanism of Pakistan.

The government of Pakistan is required to accept the arrival of new sources of information introduced by various social media channels in its formal policymaking mechanisms. The leaders involved in the foreign policy decision-

making process of Pakistan should focus on the arrival of the post-truth era in the international system, which has become an undeniable reality for every state. Analogous to various other states located in the intense regional security environments and their unprecedentedly worse impacts on their traditional national security frameworks, it is essential for Pakistan to alter its traditional way of dealing with the challenges of regional security threats. In other words, the prevalence of non-traditional security threats in cyberspace and their rapid evolution in the post-truth era have multiplied the leading challenges to Pakistan's existing foreign policy mechanism (Lodhi, 2022). The transformation of New Delhi-Islamabad's enduring rivalry in the era of social media and the Indian quest for undermining Pakistan's foreign relations with different states across the globe have led New Delhi to push Pakistan at a disadvantageous position in regional and extra-regional affairs. Indian increasing reliance on the hybrid means of warfare in cyberspace has allowed New Delhi's defence planner to create an international network of various propaganda operations against Pakistan. The spread of Pakistan-specific New Delhi propaganda campaigns is mainly supported by the rapidly growing Indian IT industry and its increasing worldwide connections. So, the government of Pakistan is required to understand the nature of supporting elements in the Indian global anti-Pakistani disinformation operations, which constantly diminish the role of Islamabad's diplomatic communities in different countries.

With the support of newly emerged sources of information in the digital world, New Delhi has started stigmatizing the national image of Pakistan across the world. The unprecedented growth of the Indian IT industry and the promotion of a countrywide digital culture in Indian society have empowered New Delhi's pursuit of undermining Islamabad's position in the regional and extra-regional affairs of South Asia (Raj, 2022). Apart from emphasizing the nature of Indian digital anti-Pakistani campaigns, Pakistan's government must improve its domestic IT industry by multiplying the existing state-sponsored digital initiatives with various new initiatives. These initiatives will provide sufficient space to improve the local IT industry while promoting a countrywide digital culture on constructive lines. The allocation of sufficient resources for exploring new avenues of the digital world will energize the local community in the emerging wave of different anti-Pakistani propaganda campaigns. The availability of different unexplored

digital avenues will educate the local community about the nature of the newly prevailed conception of information warfare in the post-truth era.

Apart from improving digital and IT skills at the domestic level, Islamabad-based policy circles are needed to comprehend the modern version of Indian strategic thinking and the latest upgrade of the classical security mindset of India. The transformation of Kautilyan principles in cyberspace and the strategies of silent wars have become New Delhi's modern strategic posture, which has increased India's reliance on indirect means of warfare. The arrival of Narendra Modi in Indian politics has augmented the anti-Islamic thoughts of New Delhi at the social, political, economic, diplomatic, and strategic levels. The ethnoreligious and ethnopolitical agenda of the Modi regime has adopted the classic tools of silent wars defined by ancient Indian strategist thoughts developed by Kautilya (Jahangir, 2019). Thus, the government of Pakistan ought to develop a comprehensive understanding of Modi's way of managing Indian politics at the domestic, regional, and international levels. Islamabad needs to monitor the emerging anti-Pakistani and ethnic-nationalist agenda of the Modi government and its worldwide promotion with the help of digital technology. The ultra-religious thoughts of the Modi regime have framed a policy of anti-Pakistani and anti-Muslim traits, which needs an updated and non-traditional response from Islamabad.

Conclusion

Indian inability to operationalize its armed forces according to its conventional military doctrine has forced the New Delhi-based strategic community to upgrade its warfighting planning and align them with the new realities of the digital world. The shift in Indian defence planning is directly linked with its strategic aspiration in the nuclearized subcontinent and New Delhi's perceived threats from the territorially adjoining nations. An analytical survey of the South Asian regional security environment under the nuclear shadows revealed that Indian disappointment with the Cold Start Doctrine is the primary factor diverting New Delhi's attention toward the digital world where it can easily achieve its strategic objectives. The Indian strategic communities decided to launch an offensive operation in cyberspace that could easily let New Delhi place Islamabad at a disadvantageous position at the regional and international levels. Moreover,

Pakistan's economic ties with China and efforts to restore peace in Afghanistan have raised various Indian apprehensions and pushed the New Delhi-based strategic community into cyberspace, where the use of propaganda and disinformation campaigns have been recognized as the preferred strategies (Bagri, 2019). The actively functioning clandestine network of different Indian media outlets and various state-sponsored research institutions has created an international network of fake news and manipulated data regarding Pakistan. This network has attacked the foreign relations of Pakistan in the world, parallel to weakening Islamabad's role in various multilateral initiatives of the international community. The increasing influence of Indian propaganda in the world has enhanced the Indian vision of launching non-kinetic attacks on Pakistan and considered them the appropriate strategies for influencing the association of various international actors and institutions with Islamabad.

In light of the abovementioned scenario, the most appropriate strategy for Pakistan is to understand the nature of modern warfare, which has broader catastrophic implications for Pakistan's mainstream state structure. The Indian objective of launching, projecting, and supporting anti-Pakistan digital outlets around the world has become an undeniable reality and an irrefutable truth. The decision to orchestrate a network of worldwide false-flag operations against Pakistan has been augmented by the current BJP government, which is less reluctant in advocating the scope of peace and stability in the nuclearized subcontinent (Saleem, 2021). Therefore, the government of Pakistan is required to comprehend the nature of contemporary warfare between New Delhi and Islamabad and its impacts on Islamabad's mainstream foreign relations with the outside world. The transformation of the decades-long conflict between India and Pakistan in the digital world required the leading state officials of Pakistan to adopt a pragmatic approach for overcoming the challenges of post-truth era. The growing reliance on cyberspace has facilitated the Pakistani nation in multiple ways. However, it has disturbed the conventional patterns of Islamabad's foreign relations with other nations due to the multiplying tendencies of unregulated social media platforms worldwide. In the end, it is appropriate for the government of Pakistan to focus on the role of its diaspora in the world, which is mainly reluctant or inactive in countering the Indian-origin propaganda targeting Pakistan and

Muslim communities in the world. The active role of overseas communities could be an essential factor in containing and condemning the spread of Indian-sponsored fake news about the national values of Pakistan and the foreign relations of Islamabad with different countries. The support to the Pakistan diaspora located in different regions around the globe could be treated as the main source of supporting Pakistan's foreign policy and the role of Islamabad's diplomatic forces across the world.

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