

Critical Analysis of Foreign Funded Projects in the Domain of Security During Last 15 Years: Way Forward Inaam Ullah¹

Mr. Jehanzeb Khan Orakzai²

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Abstract:

Recently, foreign hostile activity has morphed from conventional to irregular warfare with huge security threats of hybrid nature particularly in cyber space affecting nearly all fields of modern life of a nation or state. An analysis of foreign sponsored activities in kinetic, non-kinetic and hybrid domain including cyber space of Pakistan during last 15 years substantiates Indian support to TTP & Baloch sub nationals through use of Afghan and Iranian soil, US espionage activities by Blackwater and Dr. Shakil Afridi against Non NATO ally in context of war on terror and increasing cyber threats by Indian hacktivists and patriotic hackers as Pakistani cyber space system has several vulnerabilities. Hence, Pakistan facing such threats of modern warfare needs to work on highlighting the issue at UNO level, benefit from changing geo political dynamics by taking Afghanistan, Iran and other stakeholders on board to harness CPEC potential for comprehensive growth and particularly prepare a national response for cyber security.

Key words:

Asymmetrical Warfare, Hybrid Warfare, Cyber Warfare, , Regional Hegemony, Non-Kinetic Domain

¹ Currently posted as-Deputy Director, PPHQ, IB, Lahore

² Faculty Advisor

Introduction

Nations and states have been meddling in each other's affairs since time immemorial. Such warfare has undergone a drastic change from conventional to modern era wars, becoming asymmetrical and irregular to undermine adversaries in almost all walks of life. The study of security or warfare can be broadly categorized into kinetic and non-kinetic domains. The kinetic domain encompasses the traditional hardcore components of national security, whereas the non-kinetic domain concerns implicit components of waging war against a nation or state. The latter also comprises fifth-generation or hybrid warfare, including cyber war. Here, any direct or physical onslaught is not necessary, and war theory takes on an interactive strategic dimension.

India is considered an arch-rival and has waged conventional wars against Pakistan. The analysis of recent patterns of warfare indicates that Indian hostile activity has now assumed the character of non-kinetic, hybrid, and cyber warfare against Pakistan. Indian engagement on the western border through Afghanistan and Iran is no secret. India has been sponsoring TTP and Baloch sub-nationals to undermine the security of Pakistan. Indian consulates in Afghanistan, the arrest of Kulbushan Jhadev from the Iran-Pakistan border, confessional statements of TTP leaders, and Indian cyber-attacks and propaganda against Pakistan substantiate the latter's case presented in a dossier to the UN. Indian hostile activities gathered momentum particularly in the wake of 9/11 when the US, despite being an ally, also resorted to espionage and INGO activities against Pakistan in the form of Blackwater and Dr. Shakeel Afridi to fulfill its vested interests brazenly.

Indian war theory is actuated by Chanakya's teachings for state expansion and controlling neighbors through espionage and by any means necessary. Indian hostility towards Pakistan is also meant to divert attention from the core issue of Kashmir. Indian pursuit of hegemonic designs in the region has also pitted it against Pakistan. US espionage activity against Pakistan has remained centered around its commitments in Afghanistan in the backdrop of the war on terror, although similar activities by the US worldwide have been launched in view of its national interests across the globe.

Problem Statement

Foreign-funded projects by states against each other over the last 15 years have posed grim threats to their security worldwide. However, such foreign hostile activity has morphed from conventional to hybrid warfare, including cyberspace, affecting almost every dimension of modern national life. This situation calls for an analysis of these foreign-funded projects, the nature of their operations, their modus operandi, the factors behind their proliferation, and their profound implications to suggest

remedial measures.

Scope

The study aims to analyze foreign-funded hostile activity in Pakistan in the kinetic and non-kinetic domains over the last 15 years. It will delve into Indian support for TTP and Baloch sub-nationals on the western border of Pakistan through Afghanistan and Iran. The study will also cover US espionage and INGO activity, such as Blackwater and Dr. Shakil Afridi. Additionally, it will explore the latest trends in cyber warfare by India against Pakistan. After delineating various dimensions of these foreign-funded projects in Pakistan during the last 15 years, the study will put forth recommendations for policymakers for course correction.

Literature Review

The emerging modes of war are less focused on the Clausewitzian centrality of physical violence and more centered on asymmetric or irregular conflict, narratives and perception management, adverse use of norms, and ambiguous or covert use of force (Krishnan, 2022). A state's support for terrorist groups is commonly held as a factor that helps insurgent, militant, and terrorist groups to survive (Carter, 2012). The principal-agent analogy can be used to analyze factors determining foreign support to insurgent groups, such as inter-linkages between rebel groups and actors in other foreign countries (Salehyan, Gleditsch, & Cunningham, 2011).

The onset of the 21st century has brought drastic changes in the nature of warfare. It is not conventional wars but the activities of clandestine agents, such as cyber tools, information operations, NGOs, economic tools, non-state actors, insurgency, and terrorism, that harm states the most today (Nadeem, Mustafa, & Kakar, 2021). Fifth-generation warfare takes precedence over traditional warfare as it keeps the conflict simmering, but a full-scale war is eschewed, thus avoiding potential political consequences (Carson, 2018).

The INGOs and the US intelligence community remained hands-in-glove as the US and its allies' frontline actors remained engaged in small wars and insurgencies in the former USSR and the Third World. The NGOs realized the need for an information strategy, whereas the intelligence officials confronted the need for an NGO strategy (DeMars, 2001).

India has been meddling in the affairs of its neighboring countries. India's actions are influenced by classical realist Kautilya's 'immediate neighbor-distant neighbor' stratagem, and India's interference in the security affairs

of its neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan, is a real cause of instability in these countries (Khetran, 2017).

Development NGOs have become a potential 'second-order' security issue related to the macro-securitization of the War on Terror (Howell, 2014). During the past two decades, many NGOs and INGOs have emerged that are actually cover faces of covert operational cells of hostile intelligence agencies. A well-orchestrated plan of hostile elements is behind the concerted campaign to discredit Pakistan's sacrifices in the War on Terror (Javed, 2023).

Research methodology

The study relates to foreign-funded projects in the security domain and is essentially based on qualitative research. Mainly secondary data is being used for this study. Research articles, journals, books, online searches, and web access are being utilized for data collection. Statistics will also be used where appropriate.

Organization of the Paper

The paper has been organized into three main sections, detailed as follows:

1. Highlights Indian-funded activity in Pakistan in the kinetic domain during the last 15 years: This section discusses Indian support of TTP and Baloch sub-nationals on the western border of Pakistan through Afghanistan and Iran.
2. Highlights foreign-funded activity in Pakistan in the non-kinetic domain during the last 15 years: This section discusses US espionage and INGO activity against Pakistan in the form of Blackwater and Dr. Shakil Afridi.
3. Highlights foreign-funded activity against Pakistan in hybrid/cyber warfare during the last 15 years: This section discusses Indian cyber onslaughts of various kinds, from technical to propaganda warfare, against Pakistan.

Critical Analysis of Foreign funded Projects In Kinetic Domain

Indian Support of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

In the wake of 9/11, Indian RAW fomented terrorism through Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) using Afghan soil, where its consulates functioned as "control rooms." The main objective of India has remained to force Islamabad

to abandon its support for the independence movement in Indian-held Kashmir (IHK).

Historically, India did not denounce the USSR invasion of Afghanistan or even publicly express its disapproval. Instead, it developed ties with the Soviet-installed successive governments in Kabul, which tried to keep the Pashtunistan issue alive.

After the Najib government, the last Soviet-installed regime in Kabul, was overthrown in 1992, Pakistan mediated among the competing Mujahidin groups to form an interim administration led by Rabbani and Masood. Nevertheless, these leaders developed differences with Pakistan and turned hostile. Following the emergence of the Taliban, they also formed the Northern Alliance.

Due to their differences with Pakistan, India started supporting them for its own political interests, particularly to undermine Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan. India also provided military assistance from its bases in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the war against the Taliban. After 9/11, when the Taliban government fell, the Northern Alliance succeeded in seizing power.

India resorted to its diplomatic, intelligence, and security network established under the guise of development work in war-ravaged Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era to launch terror through its surrogates in Pakistan. India also leveraged resentment among Taliban sympathizers who were averse to Pakistan's support for the US-led war on terror.

Indian RAW, in collaboration with the Afghan National Directorate of Security (NDS), used these linkages for surrogate warfare against Pakistan. Both RAW and NDS provided money, training, and weapons to TTP and other groups, including Baloch miscreants, to unleash terror in different parts of Pakistan.

Evidence of Indian Involvement in Fomenting Terrorism by TTP

The civilian officials of federal and provincial governments, in addition to military sources, verified India's support for TTP. For instance, the spokesman of Pakistan's military disclosed to the media in 2009 that a large consignment of weapons of Indian origin had been recovered from TTP militants during a military operation in Mingora, KP.

In 2015, a letter from the Sindh Home Ministry revealed that RAW had given Rs. 20 million to TTP and other terrorist groups for fomenting terrorism in Karachi. In 2016, Aftab Sultan, DGIB, told the Senate Standing Committee that "out of 865 terrorists arrested during the last three years, a significant number

had connections with Indian RAW and Afghan NDS.”

The evidence suggests that TTP activists are being nurtured by Indian RAW in close collaboration with Afghan NDS. For instance, the connections of these intelligence organizations with TTP terrorists were revealed by captured terrorists and would-be suicide bombers.

Such connections were also disclosed by ex-TTP commander Latif Mehsud, who was captured in Afghanistan by US forces and later handed over to Pakistan. He was in Afghanistan to collect funds and instructions from Indian RAW and Afghan authorities. In his confession, he confirmed the Indian role in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan.

Ehsanullah Ehsan, ex-spokesman of TTP, also testified to the Indian and Afghan roles in sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan. In a confessional statement during his custody under security forces, he said that TTP leadership had contacts with Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies, which were providing money and finance to them for carrying out terrorist activities in Pakistan.

He disclosed that RAW and NDS managed travel documents for them for their movement in Afghanistan. TTP and other militant organizations had established committees in Afghanistan through which they communicated and coordinated with RAW. Before moving anywhere in Afghanistan, TTP leaders contacted Afghan and Indian security officials, who granted them passage and guided their infiltration attempts into Pakistan.

Indian Support of Baloch Sub Nationals

India has been using Iranian territory to foment trouble in Pakistan. Both India and Iran began working together to support the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan in the mid-90s. Since then, they have cooperated in various fields, including working against Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan.

As in the case of Afghanistan, India, under the guise of business, development, and construction activities, established a spy network in Iran to use its territory for anti-Pakistan activities, particularly to support the Baloch insurgency.

Indian consulates in Afghanistan and Iran, especially those close to the Pakistani border, were also involved in fanning terrorism in the country. India used these consulates as meeting places for Baloch separatists and operation centers for their terror operations in Pakistan.

Evidence of Indian Involvement in Balochistan

The Indian consulate in Kandahar was essentially a control room for all the

terrorist activities organized by the separatist Balochistan Liberation Army. Pakistan's security forces apprehended Kulbhushan Yadav, an Indian intelligence officer, at the Pak-Iran border in Balochistan in 2016. He was a serving Indian naval officer, and in his confessional statement, he admitted that he was involved in sponsoring terrorism and subversive activities in Karachi and Balochistan, in which several Pakistanis had lost their lives.

A military court in Pakistan found him guilty of his crimes and sentenced him to death. Later, the ICJ granted India's request for consular access to Kulbhushan Yadav, following which his death sentence was suspended.

The Indian spying network was exposed in Pakistan when eight members of the Indian High Commission (IHC) in Islamabad were expelled from Pakistan in November 2016. They were working undercover for their intelligence bureau but were found involved in creating trouble and social unrest. According to Pakistan's Foreign Office, they had contacts with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a terrorist organization.

Indian Philosophy & Motives

The Indian history of spying is very ancient. Even in the times of Kautilya, the system of espionage was used to gather information about neighboring states and enemies. Today, in the modern era, India's history of espionage in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka is equally daunting.

The Arthashastra dealt with state affairs, state expansion, and how to control neighboring states through coercion or direct use of force. Spies were trained in special sciences to be proficient in the art of disguises and the secret language of espionage.

India has resorted to a well-chalked-out surrogacy technique of externalizing the burden of war to a deputy, who can both supplement and substitute the capabilities of the soldier as an infantryman. The relationship between the patron and surrogate is based on a classical Sanskrit principle or proverb written by Chanakya: "My enemy's enemy is my friend."

India has employed a multifaceted strategy, ranging from propaganda to open threats of military attack and the use of terrorist groups against Pakistan. India endeavored to divert the US-led war on terror to the freedom struggle in IJK, aiming to emphasize Pakistan's alleged involvement in cross-border infiltration.

Efforts to Highlight the Issue at Bilateral or International Level

The issue of Indian interference through the western border has been raised in almost every meeting between Indian and Pakistani leadership. They have

been reminded several times of their support for Baloch separatists and TTP to destabilize Pakistan through India's expanded presence in Afghanistan. It is believed that training camps, weapons, and money are all being routed through Afghanistan.

Pakistan has also been presenting dossiers at the UN level about Indian meddling in its internal matters and support for TTP as well as Baloch sub-nationals through well-planned espionage activities. Given the complexities involved in modern warfare and the limitations of the UN system, India has been able to circumvent any rigorous accountability.

Critical Analysis of Foreign Funded Projects In Non Kinetic Domain

US INGO Activity in Form of Blackwater

The media was abuzz about relations between the US and Pakistan once again touching on their sensitive norms when an American employee of the US Consulate in Lahore, Raymond Davis, killed two Pakistani motorcyclists in Lahore in 2011. Davis was driving his car in Lahore when a motorcycle with two men intercepted him at a traffic stop. Davis told the Pakistani police that the men had a gun pointed at him, so he drew his own gun and shot them. Assassination attempts by motorcyclists are not uncommon in some parts of the world. However, according to the police, Davis claimed that he was worried about being robbed when he shot the two men.

Although Davis claimed he was acting in self-defense, witnesses and the post-mortem examination indicated that the two men were shot in the back as well as the front. Davis shot the men through his windshield, got out of his car, shot them again, including in the back, and then photographed their bodies with a digital camera. During the initial interrogation, displaying official identity documents, he identified himself as a consultant. He also showed passes for visits to Islamabad and Lahore.

Diplomatic Efforts of US Administration & Confessional Statement

The significance that the U.S. attached to this brewing international incident was evidenced by the fact that John Kerry visited Pakistan on February 16, 2011. Amazingly, his statement was much more contradictory than what Davis had said about himself, claiming that Davis was a diplomat within the embassy and thus had diplomatic immunity. Still, U.S. President Barack Obama also claimed that the detained official Raymond Davis had diplomatic immunity under the Vienna Convention. However, the Foreign Office of Pakistan had a different view, as it had documents declaring Mr. Davis as 'administrative and technical staff.'

On February 21, 2011, the U.S. administration admitted that Davis was a

security contractor working for the CIA. In fact, Mr. Davis had worked for years as a mercenary for the CIA, including at times for Blackwater, the private security firm now known as Xe. Raymond was collecting intelligence and conducting surveillance on militant groups deep inside the country, as he was a member of a CIA team engaged in the surveillance of militant groups, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP). According to the forensic examination of the equipment found in his possession, it is said that he was in telephonic contact with 33 Pakistanis, of whom 27 were from TTP, LeJ, and LeT.

US INGO activity in form of Dr. Shakil Afridi

In 2011, a Pakistani doctor named Shakil Afridi went door-to-door, promising to deliver hepatitis B vaccines in Abbottabad, Pakistan. In reality, the CIA had recruited him to gather DNA samples for the operation against Osama bin Laden, the Al Qaeda leader. Ultimately, the US conducted the operation and had bin Laden assassinated on Pakistani territory.

Later, Dr. Shakil Afridi was apprehended by Pakistani security forces and sentenced to prison on charges of collusion with a foreign country. Pakistan also rejected the handover of Dr. Shakil Afridi to the US or any other country. Pakistan viewed Dr. Shakil Afridi as a very dangerous man with deep links to terrorist organizations within Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Implications for INGOs Working & Pak US Relations

The widespread controversy remained shrouded around the incident. Additionally, the deception fueled distrust of vaccine programs and damaged the global polio eradication effort.

Shortly after the assassination of Osama bin Laden, senior Taliban commanders banned polio eradication efforts in the most troubled areas of Pakistan, such as South and North Waziristan, until US drone strikes ceased. Generally, the public now feels that, under the guise of these vaccination campaigns, the US and its allies are running spying networks.

As of today, it seems too early to reevaluate the past. Dr. Shakil Afridi may be off the front page, but he is still significant to the psyche of Pakistan. In a way, he symbolizes everything that went wrong with the war on terror.

Dr. Afridi possessed everything in the worldly realm. He was an important and thriving physician, a successful businessman, and had a lovable family life. Locals considered him a humble Muslim, a devoted Pakistani nationalist, and a proud ethnic Pashtun. The real question then becomes: why did he help a foreign intelligence service find Osama bin Laden?

The government and establishment of Pakistan feel that traitors like Dr. Afridi cannot be allowed to remain the norm within the state. They wanted to show their resolve at the state level in handling the situation. The majority of Pakistanis also believe that Dr. Afridi is a traitor to the country.

Critical Analysis of Foreign Funded Projects In Hybrid Domain

Nature of Indian Cyber Attacks against Pakistan

Indian hacktivists and patriotic hackers have carried out website defacements on Pakistani government websites in the recent past. Some have also claimed responsibility for ransomware attacks on Pakistani airports and government websites. These perpetrators were most active on Pakistan's Independence Day and the anniversary of the Mumbai terrorist attacks.

Whether the Indian hacktivists and patriotic hackers were groups or individuals, and whether they acted in coordination with others, is still unclear. Some participants in defacement campaigns disappeared after their involvement, suggesting that these hackers were most likely script kiddies.

More patriotic or nationalist hackers tended to reappear from one defacement campaign to another. The Mallu Cyber Soldiers (MCS) is a hacktivist group that stands out due to the number of attacks it has perpetrated. The MCS is a group of Indian cybersecurity experts formed in October 2014, with the aim of protecting Indian websites from cyber attacks. The group informed website administrators of vulnerabilities and helped restore websites that were defaced. The MCS also retaliated for cyber attacks by defacing Pakistani websites in return.

Role of Indian State in Cyber Attacks by Indian experts

A Norwegian telecommunications firm discovered an Indian APT10 in 2013 when the APT targeted the firm with spear phishing emails. Two cybersecurity companies, Norman Shark and the Shadowserver Foundation, investigated the Indian APT and determined that the group had been active since at least 2010.

However, various cybersecurity experts believe that the Indian APT group is not composed of highly sophisticated hackers; it typically used freely available malware. The malware it developed was often an amalgamation, made by directly copying lines of code from hacker forums or online public coding projects.

Some experts also observed that the Indian APT sometimes reused its

command and control (C&C) infrastructure and decoy documents in spear phishing emails. Based on various cybersecurity reports on the Indian APT, it seems possible that this specific APT has support from Indian authorities or is part of the Indian state.

Case Study of Indian APT Group

The Indian APT carried out cyber espionage mostly against Pakistani private firms and government agencies, but also against international industries. These international cyber attacks were likely attempts to gain economic information. Reports from Norman Shark and the Shadowserver Foundation indicated that the Indian APT's operations did not always align with state interests.

Hence, it is possible that several poorly coordinated smaller operations within the Indian government compromised the APT's efficacy. Similarly, some operations might have been outsourced to a contractor who recycles the same infrastructure for various clients. In terms of tracking cyber attacks, all uses of shared infrastructure would appear as if they were perpetrated by the Indian APT.

Vulnerabilities of Pakistan in Cyber Space

The cyberspace vulnerabilities of Pakistan include NADRA, the National Power Control Center in Islamabad, the Sui Gas Network of Pakistan, the communication network with a landing site in Karachi, International Gateway Exchanges in Karachi and Islamabad, and the Microwave Radio System of Pakistan Railways. In a worst-case scenario, if a multi-front cyber attack were conducted simultaneously, affecting the Tarbela Dam, nuclear power plant, underwater internet connectivity, national power grid, air traffic control, and ultimately unleashing a flood of disinformation, the level of chaos would be considerable.

Issues and Challenges

Kinetic Domain

- The UN should be strongly urged to impose sanctions against India based on the dossiers submitted by Pakistan to deter India from interfering in the internal affairs of its neighboring states, especially Pakistan, in the future.
- The scope of CPEC should be extended to meaningfully involve more regional stakeholders such as Afghanistan, CARs, UAE, Russia, and Iran after due consultation with China, in line with the current geopolitical realignment.
- Afghanistan and Iran should be engaged to improve relations based on historical, religious, and cultural ties, as well as economic comparative

advantage and security cooperation, in view of the envisioned changes in the geopolitical landscape.

- The majority of the tribal and feudal lords in Balochistan have disregarded the interests of Pakistan. Places like Sibi and Naseerabad, being residences of prominent Baloch communities such as Marri and Bugti, lack institutions for primary and higher education. The establishment of Army and cadet schools or colleges, degree colleges, and universities offering free education is necessary.
- Employment in the area is entirely reliant on the public sector, despite the abundance of numerous mineral resources. Immediate and appropriate measures must be taken to create careers in these regions.
- The regional youth should be given priority in job opportunities within economic projects. It is also essential to fill the vacant positions of Balochistan's share in government services to address the sense of deprivation among the youth of this area.

Non-Kinetic Domain

- The espionage activities of the American security company M/s Blackwater against its non-NATO ally, in the backdrop of the war on terror, as revealed by the arrest of Raymond Davis and the subsequent forensic evidence from his equipment, as well as the ultimate confessional statements of US leadership, serve as a grim reminder of the dubious role of INGOs.
- The involvement of the otherwise well-reputed Dr. Shakil Afridi in data collection under the guise of a vaccination campaign, in collusion with the CIA, which was used for the operation against OBL on Pakistani soil, raises serious questions about the mindset of our educated professionals as well as the deceptive lengths to which the CIA could go against any country.
- Due to incidents like Raymond Davis and Dr. Shakil Afridi, Pak-US relations were no longer classified as a patron-client arrangement but as an estranged client relationship. Both civil and military establishments struggled with justifications, while the majority of people came to view the US and its facilitators as traitors.

Hybrid/Cyber Space

- An understanding of this vital subject and its widespread awareness at the mass level should be developed to generate greater cognizance. No single organization or institution can meet the demands of a secure system; a broad national response is essential in this domain.
- The government must identify and define the national infrastructure critical to the economic and national security of Pakistan. Pakistan must recognize that, due to cyber threats, it cannot remain oblivious to the advantages of the revolution in information technology.

- Sensitization campaigns could help users easily recognize spear phishing emails and watering hole attacks. Institutions could also implement standardized procedures in case an employee opens a malicious attachment or clicks on a malicious link. A predetermined response would help institutions deal with the intrusion more quickly.
- Implementing an email authentication system could provide a technological solution to the problems of phishing. For instance, SPF certifies the authenticity of the sender of an email, making it easier to identify spear phishing emails.
- In the case of website defacement, no specific measure can guarantee that a website will not be defaced. Website owners could conduct regular penetration tests to detect vulnerabilities and adopt tactics to reduce their risk.

Conclusion

India's ambition to gain hegemony in the region, old grievances against Pakistan, and the game-changing project of CPEC are factors that compel India to perpetuate insurgencies and militancy on Pakistan's western border to alleviate pressure in IJK. India particularly wants to use the Baloch card to negotiate with Pakistan over IJK, a concession Islamabad cannot afford. Moreover, the cases of Raymond Davis and Dr. Shakil Afridi illustrate that the relationship between US policymaking bodies and Pakistan, as well as the Pakistan Army, is no longer classified as a patron-client arrangement. The relationship remains in a crisis-patron-client phase, specifically as an 'estranged client.' Additionally, there is no doubt that threats related to the cyber domain are continuously evolving, with new challenges emerging daily. Like the civilian sector, the military is equally vulnerable to these threats. Synchronization and interoperability of systems at the government level, coupled with the integration of business, economic, and social institutions, are prerequisites for a comprehensive response.

Recommendations

Kinetic Domain

- The UN should be strongly urged to impose sanctions against India based on the dossiers submitted by Pakistan so that India could be deterred from interfering in the internal affairs of its neighboring states, especially Pakistan.
- The scope of CPEC should be extended to meaningfully involve more regional stakeholders such as Afghanistan, the CARs, the UAE, Russia, and Iran, following due consultation with China, in accordance with the current geopolitical realignment.

- Afghanistan and Iran should be engaged to improve relations based on historical, religious, and cultural ties, as well as economic comparative advantages and security cooperation, in light of the envisioned changes in the geopolitical landscape.
- The majority of tribal and feudal lords in Balochistan have compromised the interests of Pakistan. Places like Sibi and Naseerabad, which are home to prominent Baloch communities such as the Marri and Bugti, lack institutions for primary and higher education. Army and cadet schools or colleges, degree colleges, and universities should be established to provide free education.
- Employment in the area is entirely reliant on the public sector despite the abundance of mineral resources. Immediate and proper investment must be made to create career opportunities in these regions.
- Regional youth should be given priority for job opportunities in economic projects. It is also essential to fill the vacant positions in government services allocated to Balochistan to address the sense of deprivation among the youth in this area.

Non-kinetic domain

- An elaborate system for the registration, regulation, and monitoring of INGOs should be developed, and effective coordination should be ensured among various stakeholders, including INGOs, civil, and security organizations, to prevent anti-state activities.
- Any NGO/INGO or its staff functioning beyond its mandate, stated objectives, or area of operation, as well as those found to be recipients of unaccounted-for foreign funding, should be served an immediate explanation and debarred or blacklisted from current or future operations.
- Case studies of M/s Blackwater and Dr. Shakil Afridi should be prepared and included in the training curriculum of concerned institutions/security organizations to better understand the dynamics of adverse NGO/INGO activities and handle them accordingly.

Hybrid/Cyber Warfare

- An understanding of this vital subject and its growing awareness at the mass level should be developed to generate awareness. No single organization or institution can meet the demands of a secure system. A broad national response is essential in this domain.
- The government must identify and define the national infrastructure that remains critical to the economic and national security of Pakistan. Pakistan must remember that, due to cyber threats, it cannot remain oblivious to the advantages of the revolution in information technology.
- Sensitization campaigns could help users easily recognize spear phishing emails and watering hole attacks. Institutions could also implement

standardized procedures in case an employee opens a malicious attachment or clicks on a malicious link. A predetermined response would help institutions deal faster with the intrusion.

- Implementing an email authentication system could provide a technological solution to the problems of phishing. For instance, SPF certifies the authenticity of the sender of an email, making it easier to identify spear phishing emails.
- In the case of website defacement, no specific measure can guarantee that a website will not be defaced. Website owners could conduct regular penetration tests to detect vulnerabilities and adopt tactics to reduce their risk.

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