

India's Hybrid Warfare Against Pakistan: PPP and PMLN Governments Response (2008-2018)

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Abstract

After the division of the Indian subcontinent, the conflict is still ongoing between Pakistan and India over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Many wars have been fought between the two countries. With the development of the subject of International Relations the concept of irregular warfare also termed as Hybrid Warfare has been introduced. This research paper explores the complex landscape of India's Hybrid warfare against Pakistan, focusing on a comparative analysis of the strategies employed during the tenures of the Pakistan People Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) governments to counter India's Hybrid warfare. This study aims to interpret the distinct approaches each government adopted to address this complex irregular warfare. By scrutinizing diplomatic engagements, intelligence operations, and responses to regional challenges, the research seeks to unravel the efficacy of the PPP and PML-N administrations in managing and responding to the multifaceted nature of Indo-Pak relations from a hybrid warfare perspective.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare, Indian Subcontinent, India, Pakistan People Party, Pakistan Muslim League, Counter strategies

Introduction

Partition of India is the term used to describe the brutal and unfair division of the subcontinent by British resulted in the creation of two independent states, Pakistan and India, 75 years ago. The collapse of the British Raj on the Indian subcontinent and the establishment of two sovereign dominions in South Asia, Pakistan and India, were accompanied by a shift in political boundaries and the division of other resources known as the Partition of India in 1947 (Fisher, 2018). After the partition, the newly independent states (Pakistan and India) got involved in the war of 1948 over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This led to a series of wars between Pakistan and India (Khan, 20017). With the development in the subject of International Relations the concept of Hybrid Warfare was introduced.

A strategy called hybrid warfare integrates conventional and unconventional methods to attain strategic objectives. This approach combines a diverse array of tools and tactics: traditional military force, irregular warfare, information warfare, economic

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coercion—along with cyber operations; spying is involved too—as well as propaganda, fake news other non-traditional means. The primary objective behind employing hybrid warfare is not only exploiting an adversary's weaknesses but also instigating ambiguity; and confusion—indeed even uncertainty—within their camp (Hoffman, 2007).

If one look into history through the lens of Hybrid Warfare it can be found that India has been involved in this irregular warfare against Pakistan since independence. In the War of 1947-1948 over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and India provided an early example of hybrid warfare. This conflict was characterized as a blend of conventional military operations, irregular warfare, and political maneuvering. Conventional forces clashed on the ground, yet both nations also employed asymmetric tactics—utilizing tribal militias and irregular fighters among them. Concurrently, diplomatic actors pursued international support and legitimacy. The conflict emphasized the interdependence of military, political, and diplomatic strategies – a manifestation of warfare's hybrid nature. The use of propaganda techniques was evident as far as Nehru's note to Mountbatten; Gandhi's visit to Srinagar, in July 1947, and after that appointment of a chief minister who in front of all supported accession to India; Violation of Instrument of accession in the form of disregarding people's will in Kashmir (Sattar, 2010, p. 25).

India employed a multifaceted approach in the Indo-Pak conflicts of 1965, 1971, and 1999 - instances that exemplify hybrid warfare. In the specific case of 1965, India combined conventional military operations, covert support for insurgencies in Kashmir, and diplomatic maneuvers to achieve its objectives. The creation of Bangladesh resulted from the war Pakistan fought in 1971, this conflict featured a blend—conventional warfare on one hand—and Mukti Bahini rebels' support coupled with international diplomatic isolation efforts against Pakistan, on the other (Lahiri, 2021). In the 1999 Kargil conflict, India showcased a hybrid warfare strategy. It utilized traditional military tactics and special forces operations in response to the incursion within its borders. Simultaneously diplomatic initiatives rallied international support while isolating Pakistan. This engagement underscored not only but emphasized—India's adoption of an integrated, comprehensive approach. She seamlessly incorporated elements from three distinct arenas—military strategies, politics—both domestic and foreign—and diplomacy—all aligned towards achieving her strategic goals within this context defined by mixed conventional/irregular methodologies, Hybrid Warfare (Sachdev, 2000). Not only this the Hybrid incidents by India also continued during the Musharraf era.

This research paper is an attempt to highlight the significance of a comparative study of PPP and PMLN governments that explains the counter strategies of these governments against India's Hybrid warfare. In this research, a comparison of incidents and their response by the respective government was done to analyze which government was more successful in countering Hybrid Warfare tactics by India.

Pakistan People Party (PPP) Government: 2008-2013

Following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007 (Asghar, 2008), the nation conducted general elections on February 18. The Muslim League-N, ANP and People's Party opted to form a coalition government, this decision marked the end of Pervez Musharraf's prolonged martial law. Freshly elected lawmakers took the oath of office on March 17, 2008 (NA oath-taking overshadowed by power struggle in PPP, 2008). The new National Assembly, wielding a majority of more than two-thirds, selected Yusuf Raza Gilani as their prime minister on March 24, this action ushered an anti-Musharraf alliance into leadership and commanded immediate release for the deposed justices. The army initiated operations against both Pakistani Taliban groups Swat's and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) within South Waziristan tribal region in May 2009. The United States passed the Kerry Luger Act in 2009, allowing Pakistan's government to annually release \$1.5 billion in non-military aid from 2010-2014. Senior military commanders expressed "serious reservations" about certain provisions of this act. The government made an attempt to reconcile with the Baloch people in November 2009 by promising a probe into political killings, leasing new neighborhoods and strengthening local control over resources, known as Al-Haqq Balochistan. The Supreme Court invalidated the controversial NGO under this government's administration. Similarly, Pakistan's National Assembly ratified the 18th Amendment to its Constitution, this amendment strips away from the President his power for unilaterally dissolving Parliament. As a result of this alteration, the Senate approved the change in name for the North-West Frontier Province to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on April 15, 2010. President Asif Ali Zardari signed it into law one day later thus establishing its status as a law of the land. (Dawn.com, 2013).

India's Hybrid warfare Tactics against Pakistan during PPP government

The following are the India's Hybrid warfare Tactics against Pakistan during the PPP government.

A. Technical Service Division (TSD)-2008

Former Indian Army Chief General (ret'd) V.K. Singh founded The Technical Services Division (TSD), a covert division of the Indian Army, he established it with two primary objectives: to assuage the CIO leadership in Kashmir and counteract Lashkar-e-Taiba's leadership, alongside its terrorist activities--in Pakistan ("Ex-Indian Army chief admits sponsoring terrorism in Baluchistan", 2013). We actively engaged with existing terrorism through our efforts to penetrate and combat its evolving tendencies, operating within the LoC environment. The unit of Circle, a radical-exclusion entity, received approval from high-ranking officials including the Director General of Military Intelligence in India, the Deputy Chief and Army Chief. The Indian Army has executed three covert operations since 2008. India initiated Operation Seven Sisters in India, Operation Deep Strike in Pakistan, and Operations Rahbar I, II, and III (Baweja, 2013).

B. Operation Deep Strike

The operation, known as 'Deep Strike', implemented by the military, involves a meticulously planned and executed strategy. It aims to neutralize high-value targets, particularly, those within hostile territories. The Prime Minister of India initiates a covert operation, upon uncovering a top-secret military program in Pakistan, he formulates an aggressive strategy to neutralize it. The plan, simple and direct, involves three key actions; first, infiltration into Pakistan is necessary. Second: breaching the fortress-like security protecting the secret facility becomes imperative. Finally--and most importantly--sabotaging those weapons stands as our primary objective. Armaan, the seasoned agent, and his covert operations team receive a call to action; India has not only violated Pakistan's security once through clandestine acts--but continues this breach with persistent espionage (Badami, 2017).

C. Case study of Attack on Sri Lankan Cricket team

On March 3, 2009, twelve gunmen commenced an attack on the Sri Lankan national cricket team. Their target, a bus carrying the cricketers, it was part of a large convoy traveling near Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. The second Test's third day held a scheduled competition between them and Pakistan's cricketing squad. Six Sri Lankan cricketers sustained injuries, and the violence claimed six Pakistani police officers' lives along with two civilians. Imran Khan - a Pakistani politician who also served as captain for his nation's cricket team in years past - vociferously asserted that adequate protection did not extend to tourists visiting Sri Lanka. He further underscored this point by referencing it within one of Pakistan's most significant security failures. The Government of Pakistan had made commitments towards endorsing Sri Lankan cricket events while concurrently offering reassurances on security measures (Gunmen shoot Sri Lanka cricketers, 2009).

❖ RAW's involvement in the attacks

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Punjab issued a special threat alert on January 22, 2009 - precisely 40 days before the terrorist attack in Lahore against Sri Lankan forces. The alert specifically identified RAW as plotting defamatory actions towards the touring team; it cited that these attacks typically occurred during their transit from hotel accommodations to stadium venues or vice versa throughout their stay periods. "SECRET/IMMEDIATE", a report dated January 22nd, 2019 states:

- ❖ Reliable sources confirm: RAW (Indian Intelligence Service) has issued direct orders to its agents, instructing them to stage an attack on the visiting Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore, particularly, at their accommodations and sports arenas. The directive extends even further; it includes potential ambushes during their transit between these respective venues.
- ❖ RAW's clear intention is to depict Pakistan as an unsafe destination for sporting event visitors, particularly after European and Indian teams postponed their

scheduled visits due to ticket sales. Venturing into Pakistan solely for the purpose of exploring its forts poses significant danger.

- ❖ In 2021, Abbasi reported that RA actively collected images for the purpose of targeting Jamaat-ud-Dawa (Lawlessness) leaders and their organizations (Abbasi, 2021).

Counter strategies of PPP government against Hybrid Warfare by India

From 2008 to 2013, a democratic renaissance emerged in Pakistan; concurrently, terrorism within the nation reached its apex. The war on terror and India's alleged involvement through espionage, fabrication of news narratives and propaganda stood as principal factors driving this wave of terrorism. Moreover, under the PPP government's tenure, Pakistan witnessed a resurgence of democracy, yet it did not proffer any significant anti-hybrid warfare strategies. The administration prioritized addressing the war on terrorism repercussions as its primary objective.

- In 2009, the government received a reward for its initiative: it established the National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA), an agency that commenced operations during PMLN in 2013. This Pakistani internal security body bears a responsibility to formulate policies and strategies, aimed at countering terrorism. Moreover, it elucidates action plans against extremism while overseeing their execution with rigorous vigilance. The entity formulates a counter-strategy, focusing on short, medium, and long-term goals. It develops plans for the application thereof. It assumes responsibility for preparing risk assessments with periodic reviews. Furthermore, it advises the federal government regarding not only appropriateness but also timeliness of measures to combat terrorism and extremism (National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA): A wise step by the people's government, 2014).
- The PPP government undertook another initiative, the establishment of the National Cyber Crime Response Center (NCR3), a direct response to the Electronic Crimes Ordinance in 2007 and 2008. This strategic move aimed at tackling cyber threats head-on, thus demonstrating their commitment to cybersecurity. The NR3C offers manifold benefits these include, among others, Computer Forensics, Mobile Forensics, Video Forensics, Audio/Image Forensics; Network Forensics also falls under its purview. All integral components for comprehensive investigative work into digital crimes. Additionally providing technical training enhances our capabilities in this evolving field, an investment that yields substantial returns not just academically but operationally too. (National Response Center for Cyber Crime, 2022).

Pakistan Muslim League Noon (PMLN) government: 2013-2018

In 2013, Nawaz Sharif secured his third term as Prime Minister through a landslide victory that restored power to the PML-N. The election delivered an overwhelming majority in the National Assembly for their supporters thus marking their return to governmental control. Post-elections, Sharif encountered formidable opposition from

the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), positioned as the second largest party, during general elections of that year. Claiming that the parliamentary elections were rigged, PTI requested Nawaz Sharif to open four constituencies, consequently, this led to their long march in 2014. Yet--after the APS incident unfolded--the fate of this prolonged demonstration came to an end. The Panama Papers, leaked on April 4, 2016, revealed the involvement of the Sharif family in foreign businesses notably, two were utilizing their operations to purchase lavish houses in London. In response to these findings - and as a demand for an impartial investigation into this matter - Imran Khan issued a threat, if his requests were not met by October 28th that year, he vowed Islamabad's capital city would be placed under 'lockdown'. Meanwhile, Sharif maintains his stance insisting there was no wrongdoing on his part. The Supreme Court, on November 2, 2016, decided to establish a Judiciary Commission, this was in response to the Panama Papers disclosures and their allegations implicating Sharif in corruption. Khan halted a lockdown. On July 28 of the following year--2017--the Supreme Court dismissed Sharif from office for his failure to disclose income from UAE business dealings that had been omitted from initial Panama Papers' revelations. The court, in light of numerous other Panama Papers disclosures, issued an order to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) - directing them towards initiating criminal proceedings about London apartment ownership. Consequently, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, a minister for PMLN took office as Pakistan's Prime Minister in August 2017. On April 13th, 2018, The Supreme Court decreed permanent disqualification from public office for Sharif. A NAB court declared Sharif guilty of corruption on July 6, 2018; subsequently, they issued him an absentee sentence of ten years (Timeline: The three-time rise and fall of Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif, 2018).

India's Hybrid warfare Tactics against Pakistan in PMLN Government

The following are India's Hybrid warfare techniques used against Pakistan.

A. Fake news and propaganda as India's Hybrid warfare in Pakistan (2013-2018)

Observers have found evidence of India employing fraudulent news and propaganda methods against Pakistan via electronic and social media. For instance, they disperse disinformation and anti-state content through Twitter, Facebook, web links, as well as YouTube accounts. A Brussels-based European group revealed in December 2020 an alleged Indian disinformation network actively working to destabilize its adversaries such as Pakistan. The report reveals a total of 265 fake local media networks, suspicious NGOs, and think tanks operating in 65 countries (Alaphilippe & Adamczyk, 2020). These entities aimed to undermine Pakistan's and China's image by producing their deceptive content for distribution in India and globally. Although authorities uncovered this network in 2019; they persisted with their nefarious activities through the rebranding of website domains. For instance, in May 2020, Jahangir relaunched "EP today" as the EU Chronicle, since then Twitter suspended its account--the EU Chronicle Twitter account has been actively publishing a multitude of posts alleging abuses against minorities and terrorism within Pakistan (Jahangir,

2020). As of this writing, despite suspension on Twitter, the operation of their website remains uninterrupted at the EU Chronicle. The Digital Rights Foundation examined the trend of misinformation, including fake images, videos, and chaotic content used to construct an anti-state narrative. Pro-India Twitter accounts emerged during an anti-Pakistan campaign from October 21st to October 23rd, coinciding with deliberations over Pakistan's Financial Action Task Force (FATF) status as per the report. The report identifies these deceptive strategies: attempting also to propagate chaos and turmoil in Punjab - the largest province-, along with Karachi – a hub for financial activities.

B. Use of Afghanistan Soil Against Pakistan

In 2017, the TTP representative acquiesced; he revealed that they were utilizing Afghanistan as a base to launch attacks against Pakistan. Kulbushan Yadav substantiated his claim - India fosters aggression towards Pakistan from its Afghan facilities (Yousaf, 2017).. Advancing hostility and diplomatically pressuring for Pakistan's isolation from the world represents another core value of Indian arrangement, this is not passive action, India actively boycotted the 2017 SAARC meeting. Meanwhile, countries such as Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Bhutan actively participated in what seemed to be a strategic detachment towards Pakistan (Sansanwal, 2016).

C. India's involvement in identity-based conflict within Pakistan

Political and military leaders often underscore India's active role in manipulating identity disputes within Pakistan, for instance, its escalating support of militant networks both in the tribal belt and Balochistan. Moreover, particularly post 2013, the intensity with which India pursues disruption of the CPEC project significantly amplifies, through this strategy, it effectively inflicts damage upon its key competitors: Pakistan and China. The assertion stands that India, foreseeing a potential reduction in its economic and strategic influence within the Asian belt with the establishment of a functioning CPEC corridor, lends purported support to certain separatist Baloch militant factions. These groups allegedly conduct terrorist activities in Gwadar, Turbat and Ormara, an instance being when The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) assaulted a hotel situated in Gwadar during 2019. National Security Advisor to the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mooed Yusuf, later asserted, "In addition to this attack, India is implicated in four other high-profile terrorist attacks" (India behind at least 4 high-profile terrorist attacks in Pakistan; 'We have evidence to the T', 2020).

D. Espionage by India against Pakistan Case Study of Kulbushan Yadav

Viewed often through the lens of geopolitical complexities and accusations of hybrid warfare, the Kulbushan Jadhav case heightens tensions between Pakistan and India. Pakistani authorities arrested Jadhav, a former Indian naval officer, in 2016 on charges of espionage and involvement in subversive activities in Balochistan. However, India consistently denies these allegations. They assert that Iran was not involved instead suggesting that he had been abducted from there by unknown parties. Multiple fronts

unfold the case. It involves legal battles in international forums, diplomatic maneuvering, and media campaigns come into play. The Jadhav case, according to some perspectives, epitomizes India's Hybrid warfare – a blend of legal, diplomatic and intelligence efforts aimed at narratively influencing and asserting India's stance. Yet others maintain that primarily this is just a dispute within the realms of law and diplomacy. The case, irrespective of its interpretation, illuminates the intricate landscape of Indo-Pak relations, a domain marked by multifaceted strategies—complex maneuvers employed by both nations to chase their respective national interests (Haider & Qarar, 2016).

Counter strategies of PMLN's government against India's Hybrid warfare

- The federal cabinet launched **Operation Karachi** in September 2013, authorizing the Rangers and police to target alleged criminal elements within Pakistan's commercial hub. Federal military and civilian officials had previously identified these individuals for their supposed involvement in various illicit activities such as target killing, kidnapping for ransom, and extortion. They also suspected them of engaging in acts of terrorism specifically within Karachi.
- After the horrific attack on Peshawar Public Army School on 16, 2021, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and Ministry of Interior proposed a **National Action Plan** to counter terrorism and extremism; this strategy demonstrates positive results: it features a comprehensive 20-point agenda (Pakistan counter terrorism strategy showing positive results, 2021).
- **PECA 2016's** most crucial accomplishment lies in its provision of protection against unauthorized access, interception and transmission of critical data and information systems. The act further addresses cyber terrorism, condonation of online crime, hate speech, electronic fraud, identity theft including both traditional and digital forms- cyberbullying, spamming activities that threaten the integrity or privacy of individuals, especially minors, as well as attacks on their dignity and decency(Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, August 19, 2017).
- The Government of Pakistan launched the **National Center for Cyber Security (NCCS)** in June 2018 as an initiative of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Planning Commission. The center incorporates research and development (R&D) laboratories from prominent Pakistani universities, a selection made by HEC for proposals introduced in 2018. After two rounds of meticulous evaluation, 11 universities in Pakistan shortlisted the technical proposals. The Central Secretariat mandated these universities to establish NCCS-affiliated laboratories specializing in various cyber security fields; Air University proudly holds the Secretary status for NCCS. NCCS primarily functions as a key player in fortifying Pakistan's cyberspace; its pivotal role aims to catapult the nation into global prominence as an advanced cyber-security powerhouse (National Centre for Cyber Security, 2018).

PPP and PMLN Governments Counter Strategies of India's Hybrid warfare: A Comparative Study

The analysis of Cases of Hybrid Warfare in PPP's government

1. Attack on Sri Lankan Cricket Team

Espionage by India, in Pakistan, was increased in PPP government. One of the incidents of RAW's involvement was explained above as the attack on Sri Lankan Cricket Team.

2. Balochistan Insurgency

The other incidents include the insurgency in Pakistan's province of Balochistan. That results in increased incidents of terrorism in Balochistan which was confirmed by Indian agent Kulbhushan Yadav in 2013 that is explained in the 4th chapter ("RAW agent reveals, more spies present to destabilise Pakistan". , 2016). The following are the facts and figures of terrorism in Balochistan, which according to Yadav were sponsored by India as India Hybrid warfare.

Terrorist incidents in Balochistan



Source: (Chronology of major terror incidents in Balochistan, 2016)

Most of these Incidents were carried out by BLA (Balochistan Liberation Army). The Indian spy, Yadav, confessed in his video record to Pakistan army that India was involved in these incidents (Shah, Arrested 'RAW agent' trained separatists to target Pakistani ports: security official, 2016). Based on above information, we can say that incidents of Hybrid warfare by India, in the form of insurgency in Balochistan, were increased during the government of PPP.

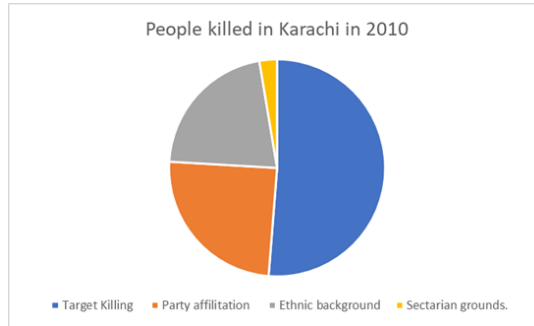
3. Karachi Unrest

Not only this Yadav confessed that he was also involved in unrest in Karachi. As we know that Karachi is home to different ethnic identities and different groups have affiliations with different parties the enemy had taken the advantage of this division of groups. According to a report of the Sindh government of Pakistan total of 1,981 people were killed in 2010. They have affiliation to different political parties. The enemy took advantage of the situation to make different groups in Karachi against each other.

Targeted Killings of People Of Karachi

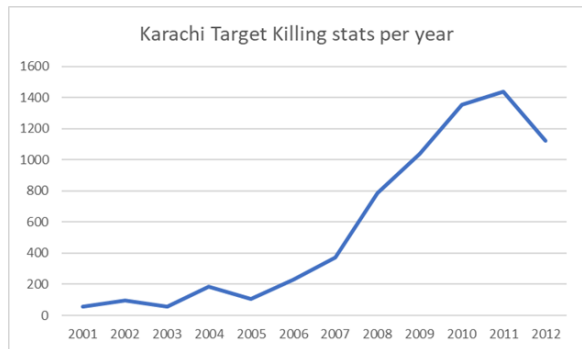
This targeted killings of people of Karachi was based on political, ethnic and sectarian grounds.

Figure No 5. 1:Incidents of Target killing in Karachi



Source: (Karachi targeted killings claimed 748 lives , 2011)

Figure No 5. 2: Karachi target killing stats per year



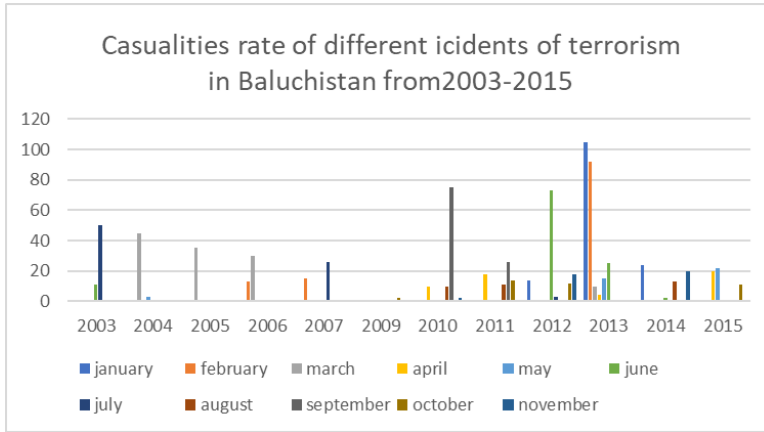
Source: CPLC and Sindh police

If we compare Yadav’s confessions and the above statistics, we come to know that how our enemy was taken the advantage of situations by involving Pakistan into issues of target killing, sectarian and ethnic conflicts, and terrorism in Balochistan to separate it from Pakistan. All this shows India’s involvement in the irregular warfare in Pakistan. If we looked t the overall statistics of different terrorists’ incidents in Pakistan, we deduct that Indian Hybrid tactics increased during PPP government.

5.2 Analysis of Hybrid warfare cases by India in Pakistan in PMLN Government

As far as the analysis of cases of Hybrid Warfare in PMLN government is concerned although incidents Indian espionage in the form of Terrorism reduced due to arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav yet cyber-attacks and fake news and propaganda continued by India.

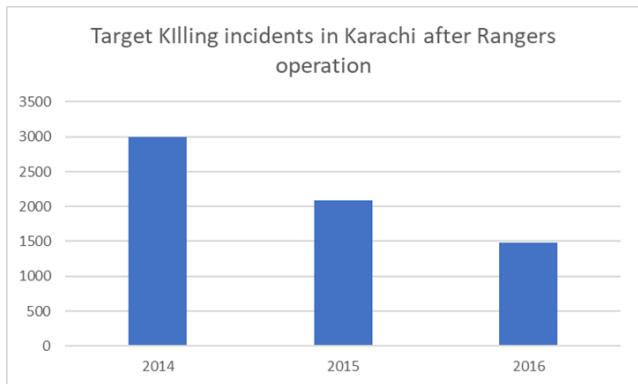
Figure No 5. 3: Incidents of terrorism in Balochistan



Source: (Chronology of major terror incidents in Balochistan, 2016)

The stats shows that the incidents of terrorism in Balochistan continue to decline after PMLN government.

Figure No 5. 4: Target killing in Karachi after Rangers Operation



Source: (Targeted killings dropped by 72pc in Karachi last year: report, 2015)

During the government of PMLN target killing was reduced due to Karachi Operations.

Conclusion

India being an enemy of Pakistan has been involved in irregular warfare against Pakistan since independence. India tried to destabilize Pakistan, in the form of sectarianism, ethnic conflict, and target killing, many times. This research paper is an attempt to carefully examine the incidents of India’s Hybrid warfare against Pakistan during PPP and PMLN governments. Moreover, after the careful analysis of events during these two governments and the counter strategies introduced by these two governments we came to know that the incidents of Hybrid warfare increased during PPP government while during PMLN government there was a decrease in such incidents due to the introduction of more effective counter strategies than PPP Government.

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