



RESEARCH PAPER

(Re-)building Social Cohesion vis-à-vis Strategic Communication: A Pathway for Pakistan's National Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The advanced patterns of communications are not only meeting the centuries-awaited longings for liberty and freedom of expression but also bringing about new insecurities to national cohesion in the 21st century. Particularly, the fifth-generation warfare encompassed 'a strategic communication network' as its apex strategy wherein building and proliferation of narrative to attain specific goals is central to national strategy. Ironically, the Non-State Actors (NSAs) including insurgents are also effectively applying the tactics of strategic communication (SC) to propagate their narratives across the globe. BLA is an epitome of this in Pakistan. The research, therefore, investigates how SC framework could bring the marginalized and alienated groups into mainstream national politics without launching any coercive measure. In addition, the study systematically reviews the existing dominant models of SC around the world and presents a workable strategic communication framework for Pakistan by applying the qualitative method under an exploratory research paradigm.

KEYWORDS Fifth-Generation Warfare Narratives, National Cohesion, National Security, Strategic Communication

Introduction

The term 'strategic communication (SC)' has been significantly used in various fields ranging from business management to mass-communication and policy studies. However, the environment of 5th generation warfare enhanced its scope and recent research on security, counter-insurgency as well as conflict-resolution are now focusing on SC as an 'elite strategy' (Paul 2011; Farwell 2012). Particularly, the great game of narratives has popped-up un-conventional insecurities to national security policy and SC is getting momentum to fix such vulnerabilities in democratic societies.

It is pertinent to note that both state and not-state actors, including marginalized and insurgent sections of state are applying tactics of SC to have sustainable impact of their narratives. The terrorist groups like Boko Haram in Africa, IS in Iraq and Syria as well as BLA in Pakistan are the recent cases of applying SC to seek legitimation across the globe (Abubakar 2017; Rutledge 2009). This phenomenon is necessitating the policy makers and political elites to securitize the national security policy with advanced patterns of SC to formulate a impactful national strategy.

The research, therefore, is one of the initial endeavors to present a sustainable people-centric framework of "strategic communication" for Pakistan's national security strategy in order to promote national cohesion and strengthen territorial integrity in line with universally accepted definition of SC as "using communications to build social cohesion, community reliance and counter-terrorist narrative"(United Nations: Office of Counter Terrorism).

However, the process of public communication has been long debated among the scholars of social sciences, how does it (re-)shape ideologies, communities' behaviour as well as public knowledge and put influence on the societal issues? The field of political science, particularly, has institutionalized the communication process since the second half of the 20th century. David Easton, Gabriel Almond, and later Lucien Pie linked the political development and social change with well aggregated and articulated communication patterns. The modern western democratic system dominantly dependent upon effective communication channels that engulf the bridge between demand makers (people) and decision makers (government elites) for the public well-being.

The researchers are also observing a paradigm shift in the culture of political communication that in the 21st century the traditional modes of communication have been replaced with strategic modes of communication. For instance, the extensive use of social media is strengthening the relationship between the political elites and the masses (Shirky 2011). They are instilling their ideas, policies and development projects via social media networks and receiving immediate feedback on them. Such innovative and virtual patterns of engagement with the masses is relegating the role of conventional channels of communication i.e., political parties, interest groups, NGOs, print and electronic media etc.

It is pertinent to note that information can be instigated directly into the minds via Facebook and Twitter more effectively. Scholars have mentioned that social media has become the most influential source of political socialization, motivation and mass-mobilization wherein it is inculcating democratic norms and raising voices against corrupt practices of government officials (Stieglitz, Brockmann & Dang-Xuan 2012)

On the contrary, some recent studies uncover social media risks and their insecurities to democratic political systems. As per a survey report in the USA by Pew Research Center, "about two-thirds of Americans (64%) say social media have a mostly negative effect on the way things are going in the country today"(Auxier 2020). European Parliament enlists five major risks of social media i.e., "surveillance, personalization, disinformation, moderation, and microtargeting" (Dumbrava 2021; Nikhil, Phani & Balamurugan 2018). It reveals that excessive access to distorted news and false information gives birth to social and political fragmentation in society. It further mentions the fabricated content and capsule-knowledge on social media compromise the capacity of people to think independently and limit their political choices by putting them into informational bubble.

A profuse literature since 1990s has been defining and explaining multiple dimensions of strategic communication as a concept but diminutive studies are traced that elucidate the structuring and manifestation of it (Guerrero-Castro 2013). It is established that strategic communication is indispensable for the effective and successful working of national strategy but how to fuse it with the broader framework of national security; is a matter of main concern of this study.

In the case of Pakistan, there is a dire need to (re-)think triangular relations between strategic communication, national security and social cohesion. The rationale of this study is not only to reiterate the significance of strategic communication for the security framework of Pakistan rather it intends to fill the gap by modelling a people-centric sustainable framework of strategic communication to attain the objectives of national interest, internally as well as externally. In addition, the objective here is to provide the audience with the factual data and timely information that will increase their trust in the government and therefore not fall for the propaganda of non-state actors as it is common in modern-day world.

However, effective communication for any organization demands early and persistent efforts to decide how ideas would be shaped and through what channels will be propagated? In contemporary global politics, governments are not merely worried about

border wars rather civil-uprising, insurgencies and virtual propaganda are posing severe insecurities to territorial integrity and national sovereignty. For the conception and manifestation of strategic communication, the study applies the qualitative method under an exploratory research paradigm. Firstly, the study systematically reviews the available literature on strategic communication and then by applying the situational analysis technique it identifies the gap in Pakistan's national strategy. Finally, the research takes the constructivist perspective to present a sustainable framework of strategic communication.

Operational Definition: Our Approach to Construct SC Framework

This study theorizes Strategic Communication (SC) as an advanced preemptive strategy against insurgent groups in comparison to the coercive strategy. As Rohan and Lawrence have mentioned that state sponsored military operations, sometimes, may further radicalized the insurgents in more aggressive manner (Rohan and Rubin 2011). Therefore, the research initiates a debate that contemporary discourse on liberal democracy and human rights necessitates to (re-)think SC beyond the military operations and combatant studies and define it as *a strategic framework of hybrid communication, both at vertical and horizontal levels, to articulate national narrative, synched with local realities and timely propagated to all the circles of society to prevent the rise of any insurgent group.*

In addition, the study clarifies some of the fallacies related with strategic communication. For instance, in the race of information, the usage of social media is considered as applying strategic communication. It is not true. SC is not limited to the usage of social media including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube rather it is an all-comprehensive strategy ranging from problem identification to building sustainable narrative and its timely communication within targeted communities in addition to other people of the state.

The concepts of strategic communication and communication strategy are different. The former is indebted with an inclusive nation-centric ideological narrative to be built mutually by policy elites and to share with local people, whereas the latter encompasses multiple communication channels through which the narrative is propagated to every corner of society in the greater interest of the nation.

Epistemic Context: Strategic Communication

This part of the article/study entails an epistemic debate between what is SC and how it can be used? The study predominantly focuses on constructivist dimension of SC that how SC could be manifested in national strategy?

The etymology of strategic communication is multidisciplinary and complex in conception. Mainly the academia and think tanks in the US are considered the brainchild of advanced channels of strategic communication. In defense and security studies, Vince Vitto (2001), coined the term "strategic communication" to focus on all-comprehensive channels of communication to seek the national security objectives. Later Dennis M. Murphy (2008) elucidates the concept in detail as a "focused processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power."

Kjerstin (2013) argues that strategic communication is itself a developing subfield within communications and it is an umbrella term used to define the activities of multiple discipline particularly public relations, management communication and advertisement. K. Hallahan (et.al 2007) includes technical and political communication in realm of strategic communications and defines it as a "purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission." Dr. Paul (2001) opines that strategic communication is a tool to influence the certain set of peoples' attitudes, behaviors and perceptions.

Strategic Communication: Why We Need It?

This part analyses why strategic communication is inevitable for Pakistan's national security policy and discusses multiple factors to restructure it.

- Absence of integrative narrative
- Frail public diplomacy
- Lack of unity and cohesiveness among institutions
- Countering false propaganda
- Neutralizing psychological warfare
- Challenges of 5th Generation warfare
- Insurgents applying strategic communication: A Case Study of BLA

A recent study has extensively laid out the strategic communication concepts and its relevance for Pakistan in 21st century. It mentions that the intra and inter-state conflicts and approach of non-state actors to generate security threats for states has expanded from traditional to non-traditional methods of propaganda and warfare. In the backdrop of these situations, Pakistan needs an extensive and multifaceted approach towards strategic communication particularly harnessing the potential of its media. To achieve national strategic objectives, particularly in the era of complex hybrid warfare Pakistan need to assert all the efforts towards combining human factors such as human psychology, culture, sociology, history and behaviors to develop a national coherent consensus. The study further argues that Pakistan's approach to public diplomacy and consensus building is weak particularly in armed conflict that needs to be reassessed in order to assist national in post operation setup.(Afifa 2016)

The aim of SC in national defense is to be aligned with the objectives described in national security policy by contributing, maintaining, achieving policy goals. But here lies the problems of alignment of all the national objectives at a grand strategic level to ensure the cohesion of all the instruments of policy making. For instance, in case of atrocities of TTP, the national security is to be ensured only when the organization itself is declared as a threat to national security but the problem here is the popular support it enjoys in certain areas. masses.

Following 9/11, Pakistan undergone through the menace of terrorism, extremism and civil war situation at home besides the US ally in the war against terror in in Afghanistan. despite all its efforts, still Pakistan had been perceived as the enemy and a "strategic player" providing "safe heavens' to terrorists. Dr. Moeed Yusuf, former national security advisor stated that Pakistan still uses the conventional models of communication to build narratives and now is the time to update our methods with the advanced world ruled by other forms of social media for real engagement with the masses. In his views, Pakistani narrative building requires a boost of comprehensive strategic communication which the country lacks (News Desk 2021). For instance, BLA's false propaganda against Pakistan military institutions has been portraying Pakistan as a terrorist state.

Every nation not only has borders to protect but to neutralize psychological warfare in its people. As the nature of warfare has transformed, people are subjected to variety of these threats. It is not only the short-term propaganda of the adversary but the long-term efforts to influence the minds of people in order to turn them against their institutions by neutralizing national narratives via propagating counter narratives. For instance, when

CPEC was announced the narrative of it being another east India company emerges from Indian academia spreading an unrest in Pakistan particularly Balochistan. It is responsibility of the state to take necessary actions to nullify the argument but the fall out still exists in the minds of the Baloch people which often results in the hostility towards Chinese working on CPEC projects.

Since Pakistan became a nuclear power, it has been difficult for the adversary to declare conventional war. As a result, war is no longer carried in a conventional sense rather non-military, technical, intelligence and organizations along with the information warfare tactics are used often called as 5th generation warfare tactics against Pakistan to destabilize internal security of the country and achieve their malicious goals. Media efforts, misinformation, fake stories all add to undermine Pakistan's national unity. Pakistan's threat matrix is amorphous and is facilitated by the advance technology.

Insurgents Applying Strategic Communication: A Case of BLA

Balochistan, a hub of conflicts, sectarian violence, extremism and state repression for more than two decades. The nature of conflict yet is still termed as insurgency but there are several rebel groups that regard their activities as freedom for independent Balochistan. Particularly active militant groups in the area are of Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Baluch Liberation Front (BLF). These are hostile and active groups that have expanded their hostility particularly after the inauguration of CPEC project.

However, the Government of Pakistan had banned these organizations but still they are operating and targeting military and FC personnel in Balochistan. Among them BLA is one of the largest, hostile and active militant group. BLA formed in early 2000 as an ethno-nationalist military organization comprised of mainly Bugti and Marri tribes. They demand regional autonomy of the province to incorporate the area into greater Balochistan. Thus, demanding independence based on ethnic lines, BLA aims to root out Chinese and Pakistani influence over the province by carrying out militant attacks..

For instance, In November 2018, the *Fidayeen* of BLA launch an assault at Chinese Consulate in Karachi with the aim to dismantle Chinese political and military influence in Balochistan (McKiridy and Saifi 2018). Another attack on a five-star hotel in Gwadar in May 2019 targeted Chinese workers and investors was carried out by the BLA. In the assault, at least five people died. (Yousafzai 2019)

Furthermore, four attackers and two security guards were killed in a June 2020 attack on the Pakistan Stock Exchange building in Karachi, because of guerrilla activity by the BLA (BBC News. June 29, 2020). The BLA took responsibility for an attack on a hotel in Quetta where the Chinese ambassador was staying in April 2021. He wasn't there, though, when the attack happened (*Al Jazeera*. April 26, 2022).

Moreover, In the year 2022, BLA took the lead with at least 14 major attacks, mostly on security forces targets, resulting in 33 fatalities and 23 injuries. For the first time in a show of power beyond Balochistan, a female member of BLA carried out suicide attack at Karachi University in April that killed three Chinese teachers and a Pakistani driver. Baloch insurgents also spread their sphere of operations to Punjab where they attacked Anarkali Bazaar in Lahore on Jan 21, 2022.

Analysts claim that despite the group being formed in the early 21st century, its origins can be traced back to the insurgencies of 1973 to 1977. The group gained notoriety in 2004 when it began targeting non-Baloch residents and foreigners. This captured the media's attention which resulted into deployment of 70,000 troops in Balochistan out of which 6000 are from army, 17000 FC personnel, 20,000 cops, 17000 levies official and 10000 Balochistan constabulary personnel (Jaan 2013)

The tactics of group prior to this decade consisted of use of traditional military tactics of guerilla warfare, small scale bombs, mortar strikes but with the increased funding and information age, they expanded their operational strategies. At tactical level, the group started killing the nonBaloch residents along with the persons belonging to the army. The famous incident was the one where they removed passengers from buses and shot them dead after checking their identity cards (BBC News. August 6, 2013)

Since then, the organization has upgraded its network towards improving their communication strategies and expanding their cause internationally by enhanced strategic communication network. As by definition, strategic communication is a complete framework that uses several of strategies to fulfil its purposes. Analyzing carefully its activities, this research focuses on the groups strategies which are divided into three types.

- Information Operation IO/Digital Diplomacy
- Psychological Operations
- Public Diplomacy

Information operation/digital diplomacy: dimension of this type of operation is cognitive informational physical. Capabilities required to carry out IO based on information assurance, physical attack, counterintelligence and combat camera. BLA seems to have mastered all of these since they have resorted to organizational structure of information operation. The organization has been active on twitter for a long time and are posting content to expand their cause as well as influence the minds of young. The information operation uses social media accounts explaining Baloch history, cultural prowess and press releases by spokesperson to claim attacks or to spread warnings. Latest is the video shared by the group of IED explosion targeting Pakistan military vehicle. The tactics used in this warfare comprised of the fighters from the Majeed brigade of BLA and suicide bomber videos encouraging Baloch people to join struggle. Recently they have been starting to use Baloch women. In Baloch culture, its mostly the men that joins struggle but the video of suicide bomber at Confucius Institute of Karachi University went viral in which she has been encouraging Baloch women to join the cause. The tactics use by the group are propagation of their culture, military training videos with background cultural nationalistic songs and attack videos to increase morale of the group supporters and deter the enemies.

Psychological Operations: Major General P.K. Mallick has defined psychological operations as, "Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning and ultimately the behavior of foreign government organizations, groups and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives." (Mallick 2018).

Using effective non-lethal weapons, such as symbols of nationalism by a separate flag for greater Balochistan, BLA has been using psychological tactics and tricks to expand the cause of their activities. In a psychological warfare the target are minds of people, and they try to spread terror among local masses and to gain their support. The ways of carrying out psychological warfare differ but in the age of technology, social media is the biggest source of this type of warfare. For instance, a press release from spokesperson BLA, Azad Baloch, often claims the responsibility of attacks carried out by the group. Latest video released from Sangat Zain and Makurani Baloch (Tweeter Video, July 2022), shows a video of captured FC soldier forcefully recording of confession depicts the tactic of the group's part of psychological operation. In a strategic communication, psychological operation portrays the strength of the mission fulfillment. One of the tactics of psychological operation is to propagate one's culture and traditions at international level. That familiarity and appreciation of the particular culture ultimately wins popular support.

Public Diplomacy: Public diplomacy can be defined as the country's efforts to communicate and interact openly and directly with foreign audiences. Discussing public diplomacy there are 3 important aspects. For instance, Influence, Mutual understanding and impact of official relations (Mallick 2018). The BLA is utilizing all of three aspects. Reports have shown that in 2012, there were attempts to present a bill in US congress on Balochistan independence which later was opposed by Pakistan (*Deccan Herald* 04 May, 2018). In 2019, the organization was banned and labeled as global terrorist (U.S. Department of State 2019). Baloch diaspora has been spread in foreign countries supporting cause of independent Balochistan. Particularly of BLA members after the death of Nawab Kher Baksh Marri in 2014, his sons separated factions from BLA and some of them are currently living in self-exile (Zafar 2021). Hyrbyair Marri, is said to be pulling strings of BLA from London. Often reported missing persons are blamed on military institution which later emerges as dead or supporters of the extremist groups.

Modelling Strategic Communication Framework

The success of an idea to become an ideology depends upon the communication strategies. The process to formulate a sustainable framework encompasses 'precision and scope' (Goldberg and Gustafson 20121). The former raise issues of compatibility and accuracy of proposed idea as well as discusses its structural-functional aspects whereas the latter questions about its targeted strength, range and power to influence. Keeping this thing into account, the proposed framework aims to ensure precision and seeks its efficacy. The proposed framework, therefore, entails following distinctive hallmarks:

1. Pre-emptive policy
2. Synched with grounded realities and national needs
3. Honest and simple narrative
4. Bi-dimensional communication patterns: vertical and horizontal
5. Sustainability



Figure 01: Modelling Strategic Communication Framework

Table 01
Strategic Communication Framework

Stages	Strategic Themes	Communication Patterns
STEP 1	Problem Identification and Familiarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the dynamics of issue • Comprehending behavioural responses, attitudes, narratives and perspectives.
STEP 2	Securitizing Strategic Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top priority of National Strategy • Building an honest and robust narrative • Civil-Military all-comprehensive integrative approach • Vertical and Horizontal Confidence Building Matrix • Collective brain storming
STEP 3	Manifestation of Soft Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Gatherings and Cultural Programs • Train soldiers as ‘Cultural Ambassadors’ • Arrange Workshops
STEP 4	Pervasive and Effective Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with the Local Elites/Tribal Heads • Ideological Training • Rehabilitation Programmes • Communicate purposive, honest and timely information • Establishing an accessible hybrid communication network
STEP 5	Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of social services like health and education

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructural development • Economic opportunities
STEP 6	Sustainability/ Establish a follow Up Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing R&D Wing • Institutionalization • Learn lessons from other states • In search of strategic partners

Discussion and Policy Recommendation for SC Framework

Step 1: Problem Identification and Familiarization

The solution to any issue becomes relatively manageable if the core cause of the issue is identified. There is a dire need to familiarize the dynamics of raised challenges and becomes inevitable to comprehend the behavioral responses, attitudes, narratives and perspectives of the marginalized people. The best approach is to Identify psychology of the nation or ethnicity and treat them accordingly. Through this, detect people's grievances, their reservations, concerns and questions. Once these are addressed, people are satisfied then ultimately, they will be cooperative. Here the identification and familiarity of the problem is based on behavioral responses and attitude of the people.

Step 2: Securitized Strategic Communication

There is a need to develop a proper official communication strategy of Pakistan which should be on a grand strategic level. It should align all the national objectives and provide coherency at all levels. Second the term should be comprehensively defined, and all the aspects should be included so that not to cause any confusion.

The most effective communication matrix is based upon two dimensions i.e., vertical and horizontal. The vertical dimension revolves around a holistic interplay between state machinery because in contemporary complex global system the SC cannot be effective without close interaction between political elites, bureaucrats, military elites, media houses, law enforcement departments and intelligence agencies. Horizontally, it deals with how well-defined, simplistic narrative is timely communicated with the local masses.

Since today strategic communication is not limited to traditional media outlets but has spread across a wide range of social media platforms and technological developments. Therefore, there is a need to divide the framework into several of its components and thus should have a detailed policy for each section. For instance, information warfare, psychological warfare, public diplomacy, military deception and deterrence are some of the attributes or parts of affective strategic communication. The definition and comprehensive analysis of these when inclined with national objectives could create stability at peace time and legitimacy during crises.

Step 3: Manifestation of Soft Power

Joseph Nye Jr. quote "Soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies." (Nye 2005). In the light of this argument, the manifestation of soft power in SC could be used effectively. Initially government could arrange multiethnic social gatherings and cultural programs across the country particularly in the marginalized areas, universities and other working environments. This could be a step towards embracing the marginalized communities and cultures and develop a sense of nationalism. While at academic levels, workshops should be arranged particularly for the researcher youth of the disturbed areas, who as 'youth' are most vulnerable and prone to false propaganda and should be encouraged to come up with the solution. These activities not only provide a sense of confidence among state and the people but will provide an

effective strategy to deal with the problems at hand too as the young enthusiastic minds could provide a bigger picture moreover since these researchers belong to the area, they understand behavioral responses better.

Since the nature of warfare is hybrid and asymmetric in nature, it is a high time for Pakistan military to establish its narrative again. Besides ISPR and social media, this time they could train their soldiers and use them as a channel of strategic communication. It sounds weird but soldiers are inducted all over Pakistan including FATA, Gilgit and AJK. What actually happens in the field, they know the best. Most of them are high school graduates therefore mostly they don't have any idea about the concept of soft power or information warfare, or any aspect of war linked with narrative building. This time Military should do their narrative building through these soldiers as when they return to homes, they'll carry the national narrative with them.

Step 4: Pervasive and Effective Responsiveness

One of the features of SC is to influence public psychology in order to build a narrative or to gain popular support particularly it becomes way more crucial in a multicultural, multiethnic environment. There are some ethnic groups in Pakistan that have been involved in anti-state activities which is not only causing problems at home but are damaging the state's credibility in abroad as well. For a long time, Pakistan army has started operations against them, and the resistance is continued. The Baluchistan area and FATA are particularly disturbed. Pakistan should try to take a fresh start as there is a need to do ideological training of the masses. The grievances of these people should be listened, compensated, and bring them in national mainstream directly. Every ethnic group, every nation of the world have a particular psychology and they should be treated accordingly. The ideological indoctrination of the masses should be in several steps starting from school levels to grown-ups. This way trust of these people will increase and Indian influence would start to decline. Although the foreign agents caught in act of bringing unrest should severely punished. The internal security of Pakistan is way more crucial to counter external threats.

Moreover, there should be effective engagement with the local elites and tribal heads of the areas. Since the disturbed areas have often their separate traditional systems so there should be meetings of grand jirga's from time to time where all locals, government representatives and military representatives should present and openly address the problems and security situation. Areas which were damaged during operations should have rehabilitation centers. People who are turned against the state should given chance to make things right by declaring Amnesty. This will not only create an atmosphere of trust among them but also filter the roots of problem at each level.

Most crucial aspect of strategic communication is technology. Pakistan should increased its ties with technologically advanced countries. Students of IT, AI, and related disciplines should be sponsored by government. They should be bound by the contract with military to work for them after studies. This is because a lot of students do not return to home country as abroad are better opportunities for them. The century is of technology, and enhanced technology means a leverage on conventional weapons.

Step 5: Capacity Building

The relief packages and success of strategic communication are directly proportionate to each other. The more grievances would be ventilated in material way the more are the chances of national cohesion because the national strategy objectives inked with strategic communication cannot be achieved through messaging only rather some constructive tangible policy initiatives are also inevitable. The development of infrastructure, schooling, hospitals, level playing economic opportunities along with macro-

level capacity building programs for local people should be one of the stages of effective communication.

Step 6: Sustainability

Donald Reed present the four distinctive elements of future wars i.e., “new domain of conflict, changing nature of adversary, objectives and force”. Keeping in view the hybrid nature of war and conflict under Reed’s four points, the SC framework is an open ended field in national security apparatus where constant research is crucial to counter the non-traditional multifaceted threats. For this there should be established Research and development wing where civil-military collective brain storming produces an effective outcome.

Moreover, since the geopolitics of the world has been going through major shifts. New partners and alliances are starting to emerge. This results in the form of pact like AUKUS and alliance like QUAD. US China rivalry has started to increase and the new battlefield is the Indo- pacific region where US intends to make India a hegemon to counter China. The rivalry has risen to the point that China is building its separate undersea cables to take control as well as protect its information from external influence. In this backdrop, Pakistan needs to search for new strategic partners and there is an option to make strategic communication alliance with China since India has already become an ally of the US. Keeping in view future threats, it will not only provide communication security in maritime but is the best opportunity to make an alliance with one of the fastest rising technologically advanced countries of the world.

Conclusion

A multidisciplinary concept of strategic communication is getting momentum in the age of fifth generation warfare that has expanded beyond the conventional tactics of war and conflict. The study concludes that strategic communication could not only be applied as conflict-resolution mechanism but be better used as a preemptive strategy to neutralize the insecurities and marginalities of Non-State Actors (NSA) and insurgent groups in Pakistan.

Pakistan however has much to do research in this domain. Particularly since the NSA’s have started to operate on the patterns of a state, the need for strategic communication has been increased. So it is not limited to traditional media outlets but has spread across a wide range of social media platforms and technological developments. Therefore, the need of hour is to develop a comprehensive framework at grand strategic level and set national objectives as the only way to see social cohesion in attitudes and perceptions.

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