Asymmetric Warfare in Pakistan: Implications for National Stability and Security

Areena Shafqat	MS International Relations Graduate from the Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: areenashafqat3@gmail.com
Bilal Habib Qazi (Corresponding Author)	Doctoral Fellow (International Relations), School of International & Public Affairs (SIPA), Jilin University, Changchun, People's Republic of China. Email: bhqazi@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study assesses the implication of asymmetric strategies in the post-9/11 era on Pakistan's stability and security. It also draws attention to the threats presented by asymmetrical warfare, including cyber warfare, insurgency, terrorism, and propaganda, and how these affect Pakistan's judicial system, political systems, and regional ties. Pakistan had a history of internal strife and regional unrest. Hence, protecting its stability and security and developing effective countermeasures to these threats requires an in-depth understanding of the nature of asymmetric warfare. The significant finding demonstrates that Pakistan's governance structures are experiencing threats, and public confidence has been weakened by asymmetric warfare. It also involves stepping up intelligence and counterterrorism operations, creating all-encompassing counterinsurgency plans, improving cybersecurity, combating misinformation and propaganda, and encouraging regional collaboration to decrease the impact of asymmetric threats.*

Introduction

One of the most challenging tasks of the modern era is to define war. In modern times, conflicts are not waged on the battlefield; instead, they are combated through hybrid tactics, such as employing propaganda to weaken the enemy. This concept is not new; States have historically engaged in asymmetrical warfare (Krishnan, 2022). Asymmetric warfare is a hybrid term for conventional and unconventional warfare in which states employ disinformation, cyberattacks, and psychological tactics against another state. This tactic is intended to specifically target military and state operations to weaken public support for politics and destabilise the state both internally and externally. The primary goals of asymmetric warfare are to divide hostile groups or minorities, create cynicism among the public, and financially destabilise the targeted state (Yuriy Danyk, 2017).

Around 500 BC, the Chinese military officer and philosopher Sun Tzu said, "Avoid the enemy if their strength is greater than yours. Divide his forces if they are unified. Take him on when he's not expecting it. Make an appearance in unexpected locations." The fundamental idea of the 'Art of War' is to exploit your opponent's weaknesses while capitalising on your advantages. Military leaders have read and been trained about it for over 2,500 years. A military commander is always concerned that an enemy may win the battle by employing a successful asymmetric strategy (Miles, 1999). Ancient strategies the lesser Greek city-states used against the mighty Persian Empire during the

Greco-Persian Wars are examples of historical asymmetrical battles. Nonetheless, the idea became well-known in the contemporary era, especially in post-colonial conflicts during the Cold War. The US and the USSR employed asymmetric strategies in their proxy conflicts during the Cold War (Sexton, 2023). Similarly, Military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz of the 19th century defined war as "an act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfil our will." Classic examples of how wars are transforming and becoming more asymmetrical include the Arab Spring, revolutions, Hezbollah's war (2006), and Russia's annexation of Crimea (2014) and Ukraine in 2022.

In the Post 9/11 era, Pakistan finds itself at a crossroads in the dynamic international security arena with asymmetrical threats and geopolitical complexities. Pakistan has been facing several security issues that have threatened its stability and security for a long time (Shabbir, 2022). Asymmetric strategy has become a prominent concern in these challenges. Asymmetrical warfare encompasses several essential components, including economic, cyber, and information warfare, terrorist activities, propaganda, diplomatic pressure, and political coercion (Tahir Mahmood Azad, 2022). This type of warfare has been having a significant impact on Pakistan's socio-political structure, economic development, and regional security dynamics.

In light of the post-9/11 era, this study ascertains the complex effects of asymmetric tactics on Pakistan's security and stability in the twenty-first century. We aim to look at potential avenues for strategic resilience by analysing the different facets of asymmetric warfare and piecing together the complex web of issues facing this country. This research has taken three primary forms: first, a thorough review of the asymmetric tactics that have become predominant in the post-9/11 era; second, an analysis of how these tactics affect Pakistan's stability directly and indirectly; and third, a contemplation of possible ways to strengthen the country's security in this intricate geopolitical setting. It also addresses the two research questions: How did the asymmetric challenges evolve for Pakistan in the post-9/11 era? How have the asymmetric warfare strategies impacted Pakistan's security dynamics and contributed to the regional security order? This study comprehensively examines the effects of an asymmetric strategy on Pakistan's stability and security through a mixed-methods research approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques. The official assertions, government reports, and academic papers have all been used as primary and secondary sources of information. Comprehensive interviews with prominent policymakers, military officials, and security studies specialists were conducted to understand Pakistan's asymmetric approach and its consequences. The quantitative data has also been subjected to correlation analysis to evaluate the connection between Pakistan's stability, security, and asymmetric strategy.

Asymmetrical Warfare in Pakistan: Nature and Potential Threats

There is a discernible difference in the military power and capabilities of the opposing forces. To defeat the might of a conventional military force, non-state actors or other states employ irregular tactics, plans, and approaches (Michael Breen, 2011). The fundamental tenet of asymmetrical warfare is that one side uses strategies to exploit the vulnerabilities of another side. To undermine the state inside without going up against them, opposing nations use irregular techniques against competent states, such as cyberattacks, insurgency, violent extremism, guerrilla warfare, misleading information, and the uncommon employment of modern equipment or armament (Hassan Jalil Shah, 2023). Asymmetric warfare also represents a strategy that maximises limited resources, capitalises on the opposition's vulnerabilities, and blurs the line between the defence and civilian power domains. Moreover, diminishing the competitors' determination to dispute, degrading their expertise, and creating the conditions necessary for the weaker side to attain its stated goals are fundamental principles of asymmetrical warfare (Rodin, 2020). Asymmetrical warfare has become a prevalent characteristic of post-colonial wars because non-state entities contest the authority of established

governments. The emergence of terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS has demonstrated how successful asymmetrical strategies can be in destabilising strong regimes and producing major disruptions (Treiblmaier, 2021).

Asymmetrical tactics consist of various approaches and techniques to exploit the opposing side. These strategies are as follows: First, there is guerrilla warfare, which uses small, dispersed, mobile forces to launch ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run operations. To harass and degrade conventional forces, guerrilla fighters rely on their familiarity with the local terrain, the support of the community, and the element of surprise. Second, terrorism is the use of terrorist acts by non-state actors to destabilise society and undermine political systems. Examples of these acts include bombings, hostage-taking, and assassinations. Terrorist groups frequently employ asymmetrical strategies to further their political, religious, or ideological goals (Bruce W. Bennett, 1999). Thirdly, organised, long-lasting armed movements that oppose governmental authority are known as insurgencies. Usually disguising themselves as civilians, insurgents use guerilla warfare techniques to undermine government authority over certain areas or territories. Consequently, cyber-attacks are now a severe asymmetrical danger in the current era. Non-state actors or state-sponsored organisations use vulnerabilities in digital infrastructure to interfere with communication networks, steal confidential data, or carry out sabotage activities. Fifth, disinformation and public opinion manipulation are also components of asymmetrical strategies (Arnold Warchał, 2023). Misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda operations are employed to sway the opinions of the intended audience, challenge the authority of the more powerful party, and enlist new members. Unconventional weaponry and tactics, such as suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or unorthodox technological use, can be used in asymmetrical warfare. By avoiding the stronger party's conventional military advantages, these strategies can potentially cause significant harm (Raymond Mharapara,

2014).

Insurgent organisations like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and ethnic separatist movements like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) have presented Pakistan with persistent challenges. These organisations have attacked people, security personnel, and vital infrastructure, resulting in fatalities and impeding socio-economic growth. One well-known militant organisation that operates in Pakistan, mainly in the tribal regions that border Afghanistan, is called Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Hummel, 2023). Through their repeated acts of violence against civilians, security personnel, and critical infrastructure, the TTP emerged as a significant asymmetrical threat. The TTP has carried out multiple terrorist actions that have caused a substantial loss of life and property and have targeted civilians, government installations, and security forces. It began as a coalition of many extremist groups in 2007 to enforce its harsh interpretation of Islamic law and undermine governmental authority (Kronstadt, 2023). The TTP's attacks have hindered socioeconomic development and resulted in significant deaths in the regions they have targeted. Pakistan has responded to this threat with military operations, intelligence-driven counterterrorism measures, and programs aimed at addressing the root causes of militancy through socioeconomic development. However, the TTP continues to be a concern, particularly in the areas where Pakistan and Afghanistan share borders.

Besides, The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) are two of the many Baloch nationalist organisations leading an ongoing insurgency in Balochistan. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), an ethnic separatist group with up to 1,000 military rebels, is fighting an insurgency in the province of Balochistan. The BLA was specially designated global terrorists in 2019. These organisations contend that the federal government has been abusing the province's resources and calling for increased autonomy for Balochistan. Targeted attacks against government facilities, security personnel, and infrastructure projects have resulted from the

insurgency (Mukhtar, 2022). In response, Pakistan has combined military operations with diplomatic efforts and development projects to allay the concerns of the Baloch people and establish regional peace.

Pakistan has also been facing cross-border terrorism challenges, especially from India. In an attempt to destabilise the country, state-sponsored armed groups have attacked Pakistan with backing from outside sources (Soomro, 2024). These attacks have targeted residents, security officers, and financial assets, resulting in fatalities and interruptions to normalcy. Pakistan has consistently raised awareness of the issue in international forums and has worked to address cross-border terrorism diplomatically. The country has emphasised the need for international cooperation to halt state-sponsored terrorism and preserve regional stability. Militant groups have launched cross-border attacks within Pakistan by utilising the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border as a launchpad. Extremist organisations like the TTP and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) have used safe havens in Afghanistan to plan and execute terrorist operations in Pakistan (Gul, 2024). The government has stepped up border security, started military operations, and held bilateral discussions with Afghanistan to target these extremist groups. In sub-conventional warfare, nations may employ proxies to destabilise their adversary. The new tool of aggression used by different parties, like proxies and revolutionaries, is the employment of irregular forces or terrorism. Pakistan has been the victim of proxy warfare, mainly in the form of neighbouring countries' sponsorship of cross-border terrorism. Terrorist organisations with state sponsorship have supported separatist movements, encouraged sectarian violence, and fueled insurgencies to destabilise Pakistan. For example, Pakistan has continuously had to contend with the threat of India-sponsored proxy warfare. Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), an Indian intelligence agency, has come under fire for allegedly arming and funding several militant organisations that operate in Pakistan, including Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and the Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA)

(Bajoria, 2008). These organisations commit terrorist attacks to undermine Pakistan and sow discord within. Pakistan has appealed for international action against state-sponsored terrorism and brought attention to this problem in venues across the world.

Furthermore, Pakistan has also had to deal with hybrid warfare strategies, such as media operations meant to sway public opinion, sow discord inside the country, and challenge the authority of governmental institutions. Non-state actors and state-sponsored organisations use social media and other communication channels to propagate misinformation, sway public opinion, and spark unrest. These information operations could exacerbate already-existing rifts, damage the reputation of official institutions, and impede national cohesion. For example, since 1947, India has also been using asymmetrical methods against Pakistan. India is adhering to Chanakya Kautilya, a renowned military strategist and counsellor." In his work *Arthashastra*, he discussed ways to advance the country's interests. He also talks about the "Silent War," adding that it refers to warfare carried out by covert means and provocation by covert operatives (Ayaz Khokhar, 2019). By utilising these tactics, India is working to become the South Asian leader. India is also aware of the current ethnic and sectarian issues Pakistan is facing. Hence, India is making the most of this circumstance and accusing Pakistan. A prominent instance of asymmetrical warfare against Pakistan is the Indian RAW's engagement in Baluchistan and the capture of Kalbushan Jadhav.

India also trained, assisted, backed, and funded the Mukti Bahini, which resulted in the establishment of Bangladesh as part of its hybrid warfare strategy. In addition, India played a vital role in the Agartala conspiracy and the state-managed hijacking of the Ganga airliner, which denied Pakistani planes the ability to overfly before the 1971 War (Moawia, 2022). More recently, India has been discovered to have frequently participated in acts of terrorism in Baluchistan and Sindh, as well as funding, training, and support for Muttahida Qaumi

Movement (MQM), a group of Baloch separatists. In addition, India has engaged in continuous information warfare, propagandising, attempted political coercion through the use of military force, corrupted and influenced international organisations like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and engaged in hydro warfare through violations of the Indus Waters Treaty (Nageen Ashraf, 2023). Apart from causing domestic issues, these acts by India have also damaged Pakistan's reputation abroad. India has even been defaming and pressuring Pakistan through sports to further its political agenda. Its choice to forgo playing cricket with Pakistan was intended to demoralise a formidable adversary team. In a similar vein, Pakistan was barred from hosting international cricket matches due to the terrorist attack on Sri Lanka's cricket team (Chaudhry, 2017). Pakistan has taken measures to combat misinformation, encourage media literacy, and establish legislative frameworks that govern internet content while safeguarding the right to free speech.

Pakistan is also confronted with increasing cyber dangers, such as hacking, data breaches, and attacks on vital infrastructure, as the country's reliance on digital infrastructure grows. Governmental organisations, essential infrastructure, and financial systems are the targets of state-sponsored hackers, cybercriminal networks, and activist groups. The objectives of these cyber-attacks are to compromise national security, steal confidential data, and interfere with operations. Pakistan has strengthened its cyber defences after realising the importance of cyber security. This entails creating specialised cyber response teams, creating a thorough framework for cyber security, and raising public awareness of cyber threats. For Pakistan's security, radicalised people and extremist beliefs continue to pose a severe threat. The prime minister of Pakistan declared in November 2023 that since August 2021, there had been a 60% increase in terrorist assaults and a 500% increase in suicide bombs, resulting in the deaths of almost 2,200 Pakistanis (Hussain, 2023). Radical beliefs are spread by both domestic and international extremist groups, which encourages terrorist recruitment and acts. In addition to strengthening information collecting and enacting counter-radicalization programs, the government has also brought legal action against extremists.

In Pakistan, sectarian violence has been an ongoing uneven danger, especially between the Sunni and Shia groups. Extremist organisations have attacked and killed members of the opposing sect, including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The anti-Shia Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP, also known as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat) was founded in Punjab in the middle of the 1980s. Its 3,000–6,000 personnel primarily work in Punjab, Karachi, and the erstwhile FATA (Cassman, 2024). An SSP branch named Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LEJ) was granted FTO status in 2013. LEJ works mainly in prior FATA, Punjab, Balochistan, Karachi, and Afghanistan, with a membership in the low hundreds. It is said to have strong connections to the TTP and Al Qaeda. The government has formulated policies to strengthen ties between faiths, enhance intelligence capacities, and prosecute those who commit acts of sectarian violence. Pakistan's open borders, especially in the West, make it easier for people to smuggle goods and commit international crimes. This encompasses the smuggling of weapons, drugs, and people. These actions support the funding of terrorism in addition to increasing insecurity. To confront these dangers, Pakistan has boosted intelligence sharing, collaborated with neighbouring countries, and reinforced border management.

Fig: Pakistan's Terrorism-Related Death Toll and Rate of Change from 2001 to 2023
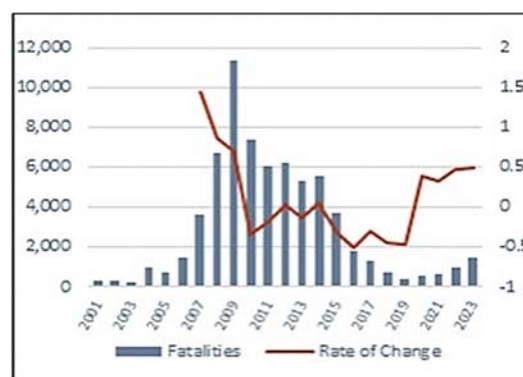
Source: Compiled by Researcher by South Asia

Terrorism Portal (SATP)[1]

Separatist activities are present in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces in addition to Balochistan. Demands for more autonomy and rights have been made by the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) in Sindh (Shah, 2019). Occasionally, these movements have led to violent altercations with security personnel and disturbances of the status quo. The government has sought legislative initiatives, development talks, and law enforcement actions to solve the issues raised by these movements and maintain calm in the areas.

Implications for Pakistan's Stability and Security

Pakistan's socioeconomic development is being significantly impacted by asymmetric or hybrid warfare. Trade has slumped, foreign investment has been dissatisfied, and the persistent fear of terrorism, insurgency, and other asymmetrical threats has impeded economic growth. It is difficult for companies and industries in the impacted areas to draw in investment and continue operating normally. Development efforts are further hampered by the destruction of infrastructure, which includes power plants, transportation networks, and communication networks (A. Ali, personal communication, November 13, 2021).

Uncertainty in politics and challenges to governance may arise from irregular warfare in Pakistan. In addition to undermining democratic procedures, the existence of extreme groups and the ongoing danger of violence also foster fear and worry in the community. Administration workers and politicians may be uncertain, which would restrict their ability to exercise democratic liberties and participate in politics (M. Khan, personal communication, October 12, 2021). Additionally, the state's incapacity to successfully counter asymmetrical threats could lead to a crisis of legitimacy, undermining public trust in the administration. It may exacerbate instability by needing more well-thought-out

policies, poor leadership, and power clashes.

Pakistan's regional and international security dynamics are impacted by asymmetrical warfare. The instability in the region can be caused by extremist groups that operate inside Pakistan's borders and pose threats to neighbouring countries. The friction between Pakistan and its neighbours may arise due to the existence of secure areas and the cross-border activities of militants (M. Khan, personal communication, October 12, 2021). The execution of asymmetrical threats by external actors to achieve their geopolitical objectives will complicate the nature of security in the region. International cooperation, diplomatic initiatives, and intelligence sharing are necessary to resist asymmetrical threats and enhance regional stability.

Asymmetric warfare led to immense infrastructure damage and many casualties in Pakistan. Non-state actors and militant groups are using cutting-edge tactics. Security personnel, politicians, and citizens have lost their lives as a result of terrorist attacks, insurrections, and attempted sabotage. The deliberate destruction of essential infrastructure, such as power plants, transportation networks, and communication networks, threatens the nation's stability and prevents the socioeconomic sector from developing (A. Ali, personal communication, November 13, 2021).

Asymmetrical conflict has the potential to shatter society and erode public trust in political authorities. The propagation of extreme ideologies causes polarisation and social segregation, the inciting of sectarian violence and the exploitation of existing fault lines by state-sponsored organisations and non-state actors, Scams and fabricated data spread, widening societal gaps and eroding public confidence in media outlets, the administration, and other establishments. This betrayal of confidence threatens social cohesion and erodes the nation's foundation (S. Malik, personal communication, October 21, 2021).

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[1] South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP):
https://www.satp.org/terrorist-activity/pakistan

Pakistan faces asymmetric challenges that highlight weaknesses in its border security management. Insecure borders, particularly those dividing Pakistan and Afghanistan, make it possible for terrorists, illegal goods, and weapons to travel across national boundaries. Terrorist organisations utilise secure locations in adjacent nations to organise and carry out operations within Pakistan. To mitigate these risks, border security protocols must be strengthened, intelligence cooperation with surrounding nations must be improved, and border management skills must be improved (S. Malik, personal communication, October 21, 2021).

Pakistan's tourism sector suffers from asymmetric warfare, which also negatively affects foreign opinions regarding the country. Because of security concerns, foreign governments issue travel advisories to discourage potential tourists from visiting the country. The assumption is that travel to Pakistan is unsafe; Pakistan should strive to promote its growing economy, rich cultural legacy, and points of interest for tourists. A decline in tourism-related revenue drives social and economic issues and negatively impacts the nation's international reputation. (M. Ahmer, personal communication, October 29, 2021).

Both people and entire communities suffer psychologically from asymmetrical conflict. People are traumatised, anxious, and panicked by frequent acts of terror and physical assault. People may experience long-term consequences from the psychological impact, such as a decline in general emotional health, efficiency, and general standard of existence. Addressing the psychological effects of asymmetrical warfare is necessary to restore the endurance and rehabilitation of affected populations. This means providing trauma-based psychological support and care (M. Ahmer, personal communication, October 29, 2021).

Non-state actors and state-sponsored organisations carry out cyber espionage, hacking, and disinformation campaigns to shake public opinion, affect political bodies, and interfere with vital structures (H, S, Afridi, personal communication, August 18, 2021).

Cyberattacks can disrupt vital services, cause havoc, and damage personal information. It is necessary to improve cybersecurity procedures, strengthen cyber defence, and promote digital literacy to safeguard Pakistan's digital infrastructure and stop information warfare.

Pakistan's democratisation and social and political harmony are under threat from irregular warfare. Extremist groups and extremist viewpoints have the power to weaken the foundations of democracy, restrict political liberties, and foster a scenario that is proponents of tyranny. People may be disappointed in participating in politics and legislative procedures due to a fear of intimidation and physical assault. To maintain stability and protect democratic ideals from asymmetrical threats, it is imperative to promote democratic institutions, respect the rule of law, and cultivate an inclusive political climate (M. K. Afridi, personal communication, May 2, 2021).

Countermeasures and Response Strategies

1. Military and Law Enforcement Approach:

Pakistan's military and law enforcement agencies have to deploy force to counter asymmetrical threats. Pakistan should launch military operations against rebel and militant organisations to destroy their support systems and make them secure havens. To prevent militants from annexing, the military and law enforcement should work closely together to enhance border security, intelligence sharing, and coordination. There is a need to spend money on advanced equipment's intelligence capabilities. Providing security forces with specialised training, equipment, and state-of-the-art technology will enhance their capacity to fend off asymmetrical attacks. (H. S. Afridi, personal communication, August 18, 2021). It is also required to strengthen political stability and governance frameworks, grant democratic rights, promote political engagement, enhancing reliability, transparency, and effective administration to counteract the adverse impacts of asymmetrical threats.

2. Socioeconomic Development and Counter-Radicalization Initiatives:

Initiatives for socioeconomic development and counter-radicalization are necessary to address the underlying causes of asymmetrical threats. To address issues that could fuel radicalism, Pakistan should prioritise job creation, eliminate socioeconomic disparity, and foster inclusive economic growth. Giving professional training and education a high priority is crucial to giving young people options and shielding them from extremism. To ameliorate terrorism and create resilience among communities, social unity, acceptance, and diverse connections need to be fostered (A. Ali, personal communication, November 13, 2021).

3. Diplomatic and International Cooperation:

Pakistan has asymmetrical leaps that must be handled through international collaboration and diplomatic connections. Pakistan ought to initiate proactive diplomatic discussions with adjacent countries to counteract terrorist activity across borders and stop militant organisations from using their nations as safe zones. To improve intelligence sharing, coordinated operations, and joint efforts against global terrorism, a regional partnership framework like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should be strengthened. Pakistan needs to keep bringing up the subject of state-sponsored terrorism in international forums to gain support for global measures taken to stop such attempts (A. Ali, personal communication, November 13, 2021).

4. Enhanced Intelligence and Surveillance Systems:

Security and information-gathering systems must be improved to detect and stop asymmetrical threats. To obtain the most up-to-date information on extremist operations, Pakistan should use cutting-edge intelligence techniques, including aerial surveillance, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and satellite images. There is a need to improve information exchange systems across national, regional, and international intelligence organisations to combat terrorism (M.K. Afridi, personal communication, May 2, 2021).

5. Cyber-security Measures:

With the growing significance of the digital realm, cybersecurity protocols are essential to fending off asymmetrical attacks in digital space. Pakistan could create specialised cyber response teams, strengthen its laws governing cyber security, and collaborate actively with its neighbours to share alerts about threats. Proactive steps should be taken to protect networks, systems, and data from cyberattacks, and significant vulnerabilities should be evaluated regularly. Programs should be developed to raise public knowledge about online risks, responsible internet use, and cyber-security significance (H. S. Afridi, personal communication, August 18, 2021).

Conclusion:

Asymmetric warfare had a wide range of complex repercussions on Pakistan's security and stability after 9/11. According to the study's analysis, Pakistan is confronted with asymmetrical threats such as cyberattacks, terrorism, and false economic and political propaganda that harms Pakistan's reputation abroad. Therefore, these dangers have a significant effect on Pakistan's stability and security by fostering political instability, which destroys the state. Moreover, this study has offered suggestions for countering these threats, including empowering intelligence, strengthening cybersecurity defences, controlling disinformation or ambiguous information, and expanding diplomacy for regional cooperation. Pakistan must create a policy and practical plan to enhance its deterrent posture against these multifaceted threats to its sovereignty. It also needs the collaboration of numerous stakeholders, including the government, security forces, counterintelligence agencies, and the private sector, to carry out these countermeasures. These parties were obliged to provide funding for training and capacity-building initiatives. Additionally, combating cross-border terrorism requires international cooperation and support, particularly from regional actors. Promoting

harmony and unity among the provinces, minorities, ethnic groups, and other polarised sections of society is also necessary. This cooperation will make it easier to combat hybrid threats.

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