



**ISLAMABAD INSTITUTE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION – IICR**



# **GLOBAL POLITICS IN THE AGE OF DISINFORMATION: WHERE PAKISTAN STANDS**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**15 APRIL 2022**

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## ABOUT IICR

Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution – IICR is Islamabad based independent and nonpartisan research institute (think-tank) ardent to being a source of impartial research for the government officials, scholars, journalists, young researchers, activists, and academicians. It deems to work on regional and global security issues in an unbiased manner and initiate discourses on conflict and conflict resolution. To strengthen the debate on peaceful coexistence, geo-political to geo-economic shift, and to avert the future crisis, IICR works with governments, think-tanks, universities, journalists, field experts, policy makers, and civil societies. IICR is on mission to link research and policy through analysis and youth training to comprehend the state policies and global affairs. IICR aims to conduct in-depth research to propose sound solutions and policy recommendations to deal with humanitarian and security challenges of Pakistan and the region.

### What We Do?

- Conduct in-depth research on issues concerning Pakistan and the region.
- Identify key areas of cooperation especially in the field of security.
- Document, disseminate and strengthen peace and conflict resolution efforts through analytical discourse.
- Identify, articulate and evaluate conflict issues through research and other academic pillars i.e. brainstorming exercises, round-tables, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- Critically analyze Pakistan's political, security, socio-economic and foreign policy challenges and to support efforts to integrate the country.
- Integrate youth in research work particularly to conflict resolution and peacemaking efforts.

### Publications

Research Papers, Monthly Briefs, Special Reports, and Weekly Rundown

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution – IICR aims to draw strategically comprehensive analysis on the contemporary conflicts. Moreover, we not only aim to draw analysis but also to present foreseeable way-forward.

I personally believe that it is time when Pakistan needs think-tanks to play proactive role they are destined to. It is time that nation works collectively to overcome national and international hurdles. Yet there is a marathon to run in this regard.

## CONCEPT NOTE

The modern world has entered in the age of information where every day comes with new invention in technology. Globally, the flow of information is so fluid that there barely has any checks and balances on it. Henceforth, leading to disinformation in the age of information. The spread of disinformation has altered the course of global politics and is often regarded as the core element of 5th gen warfare where countries global standing is shaped by the amount of data available about it online. And subdue a country with the among of data and disinformation.

Pakistan is a country who is an active victim of disinformation where its international standing has been dented by the variety of organized disinformation campaigns lunched by state sponsored actors. Recent revelations by EU's Disinfo lab remains evidence when it was revealed that India has sponsored multiple institutions to particularly target Pakistan's image by using multiple means including targeted social media campaigns and spread of literature based on disinformation. Pakistan not only bore the economic burden but also had to fight against it. One of the outcomes of these massive campaigns and lobbying is FATF which Pakistan is still facing despite complying with many of the annexures.

Being on grey list has serious effect on Pakistan's economy and it almost suffered. As per rough estimates being on the grey list, Pakistan's economy lost a total of \$13.43 billion from 2012 to 2015 and \$10.31 billion in 2018 and 2019. This is not the first time that Pakistan has been on grey list for almost 4 consecutive years. In 2009 Pakistan was first removed from the grey list and then eventually put back in 2012 to 2015. Till 2018 Pakistan was kept off the list and then again was put in grey list.

Pakistan seems underequipped in order to combat disinformation is the age of information. The national security paradigm of Pakistan needs to include combating disinformation as core issue. Pakistan also needs to explore the depths of lawfare in order to battle massive disinformation campaigns and stratagems launched against it.

In order to understand disinformation in information age and explore legal options and response for Pakistan, Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) is organizing a National Conference titled "Global Politics in the age of Disinformation: Where Pakistan Stands".

## SPEAKERS PROFILE



**Hassan Aslam Shad** is a graduate of Harvard Law School, U.S.A., with a Master of Laws (LL.M.) in 2007 with a focus on international law and corporate law. He is a twice Gold Medallist for his LL.B. studies from the University of the Punjab and one of the two nominees of the Presidential Award. He is the first person from the Muslim World chosen for a six (6) months paid internship with the President of the International Criminal Court, The Hague, where he assisted the President and the Presidency's staff on confidential international criminal law matters. Upon Hassan's request, the President of the International Criminal Court visited Pakistan in 2005 where he met with the Acting President of Pakistan (Chairman of the Senate), Judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and key government stakeholders.

Hassan is currently a Legal Director at CMS McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP, a Global Top Ten international law firm. Over the years, Hassan has advised Fortune 500 companies and leading multinationals and corporates on cross border multimillion dollar transactions. Hassan has been based in the MENA region for over fourteen (14) years, working throughout the various jurisdictions of the GCC, wider MENA region and the UK.

Hassan is the proponent of "Lawfare" in Pakistan. He has advised on confidential "Lawfare" related matters in both public and private international law. Over the years, Hassan has specialized on "FATF Lawfare Against Pakistan" which is one of the key global weapons being used to coerce Pakistan. In this connection, he has written extensively in publications to draw attention of the Government of Pakistan on how to counter this lawfare; what are the steps required to be completed by Pakistan for compliance; and to convince Pakistan to have in place a robust "international legal strategy" to counter the FATF lawfare through an aggressive "counter lawfare".

Hassan is the author of a Chapter of Use of Force in International Law for a text (under publication) by Oxford University Press and the author of more than a hundred op-eds, essays, articles and policy papers on international law, international relations and geo-politics for leading international publications such as the Diplomat, National Interest and TRT World. He has been a key note speaker at numerous conferences, webinars and seminars on topics of law, international law and international relations.

## SPEAKERS PROFILE



**Mr. Shahid Raza** is strategic communications specialist, currently working for the Government of Pakistan. He has significant prior experience in the I/O domain, has presented report on EU Disinformation labs report about Indian ops. He has a deep understanding of how Indian I/Os operate.



**Noaman Abdul Majid** is an Economist, Geopolitical Analyst and Social Welfare & Development expert. He is the CEO of WiXeman Global a strategy consulting and venture development firm based of out of GCC and Pakistan. He was earlier Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Investment and Special Economic Zones in Oman. He has been associated with Pak Oman Investment Company, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Emirates Global Islamic Bank in senior positions. He is a Board member at Saylani Welfare International Trust, Pakistan's largest NGO.

Noaman has advised sovereign wealth funds, high-net worth family office and corporates on a wide range of strategic financial and business-related matters. His areas of expertise include foreign direct investment, public sector restructuring, strategic financial management, economic planning and creating sustainable development models for low- to-middle income societies. Noaman has been a speaker at various conferences, seminars and TV shows in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Oman and Pakistan and writes for various news portals.

Noaman is a Fellow Chartered Management Accountant (UK), Fellow Chartered Accountant (Pak), Chartered Islamic Finance Professional (Malaysia) and Masters in Economics (Karachi University).

## SPEAKERS PROFILE



**Dr. Amna Mahmood** is Professor at Islamic International University, Islamabad. She served as Dean Social Sciences, Islamic International University, Islamabad. She did her Ph.D from University of North Carolina Wilmington, USA in “Transition from Military to Civilian Rule in Pakistan: 1985-1999”. M. Phil “Emerging Interdependence between China and the US-Trade & Technology Transfers” from University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, 2012.



**Dr. Salma Malik** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan. She specializes in the areas of Conflict and Security Studies, and South Asian Affairs. She is an alumnus of the Uppsala University, Sweden, the Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies APCSS, Hawaii and Visiting Research Fellow, Sandia National Labs, New Mexico, USA. Besides being a member of IISS London, she is part of various for a such as the Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks, Social Sciences Research Council, WISCOMP and WDN-USA.

Prior to joining QAU, she worked as a Research Officer at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan from June 1996 to August 1999. Her publications include an edited volume, “Pakistan’s Security Problems and Challenges in the Next Decade,” (October 2015). She has also been on the Visiting Faculty list of the Intelligence Bureau Directorate, National Institute for Management, Foreign Services Academy and has rendered lectures as a guest speaker at the National Defence University, Islamabad, PAF Air War College, Karachi, Naval War College, as well as Command & Staff College, Quetta, NUST and Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi. In terms of educational qualifications, she holds an PhD in Defence & Strategic Studies, from the QAU, besides fellowships and certifications from abroad.

## SPEAKERS PROFILE



**Mr. Nasir Qadri** is a human Rights lawyer from IOJK, and is pursuing PhD in Law of Armed Conflict. He also heads an Islamabad based international advocacy group Legal Forum for Oppressed voices of Kashmir (LFOVK). He has authored a number of situational reports on Kashmir. He also writes for International and Domestic print media.

He has presented papers in international and national conferences (both virtual and physical conferences). He authored the following books (i) Dynamics of Prisonology: A Study of Prison System in Indian Occupied Jammu Kashmir; and (ii) English-Urdu Dictionary of Legal Words. Mr Qadri has been Executive Member of High Court Bar Association and has appeared in number of high-profile cases before Supreme court of India.



**Ms. Sabah Aslam** is the founder and Executive Director of IICR. She is security analyst and Human Rights Activist. She served as research fellow in institute of strategic studies Islamabad. She was professional trainer in CDA Training Academy. She regularly writes for national & international print media.

She has served as visiting Lecturer at Quaid i Azam university and National University of Modern Languages. She has presented papers and have participated in many national and international level conferences and workshops & seminars in Pakistan and abroad. She is EUVP Alumni. She is working with Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Affairs, Government of Pakistan as Advisor on Research and Kashmir Youth Ambassadors programme.

## CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



On April 15, 2022, Friday. Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) conducted a one-day conference titled **“Politics in The Age of Dis-information: Where Pakistan Stands”**.

The worthy panelists included Mr. Hassan Shad, Mr. Shahid Raza, Mr. Noman Majid, Dr. Salma Malik, Dr. Amna Mehmood and Mr. Nasir Qadri. Executive Director IICR Ms. Sabah Aslam moderated the session after giving her welcome speech.

**Mr. Hassan Aslam Shad**

Thank you so much for the invite. I welcome all the participants and speakers on the conference. The topic on which I will be speaking is “countering disinformation through lawfare”. Before we go further, I would like to differentiate between disinformation and misinformation. These terms are used interchangeably but there is a difference between both the phenomenon. Disinformation is a subset of misinformation; *misinformation is any spread of false news without the intent to deceive the target*. Whereas *disinformation is the spread of false news with purpose to inflict harm to the target*. In the case of disinformation there is a clear intention to deceive the target. This is why disinformation becomes a very notorious tool to inflict harm to the target. Specially in the age of modern media. The easiest way of the spread if disinformation is social media where each individual becomes the vehicle for its spread. There is a chance that information first originated as misinformation but after passing through several handles it becomes disinformation.

Now disinformation can be of various kinds, it could be in the form of a conspiracy theory, could be a propaganda, deep fakes, or doctored photos. Today in the midst of the political chaos that we have in Pakistan we see a lot of disinformation campaign. Disinformation has three dimensions which makes It very dangerous for the society. Disinformation is very powerful; the message can resonate in entire political and social spectrum. It has a severe destructive capacity and it can be divisive which means that it can divide people. Furthermore, it is important to understand that disinformation can pollute the decision-making process. Pakistan is and active victim of disinformation. Pakistan ending up in FATF has major role of disinformation campaigns led by India. This remains an example of how disinformation can subdue countries.

Disinformation is also a national security threat because it threatens the very survival and existence of state. If disinformation seeps deeply into the society in can lead to chaos, confusion among the masses and internal division. This is where it can be said that disinformation can be more dangerous than missiles and jets.

Now coming to *lawfare*, firstly lawfare unfortunately is a term which is being misused in Pakistan. Firstly, we need to understand that the lawfare in its simplest form is the use of law as a weapon of war. The one thing which distinguishes the lawfare and hybrid warfare is that lawfare has the intrinsic nexus with the law or legal system. Another way of looking at the lawfare is the art of weaponizing the legal system to obtain some tactical, operational and strategic objectives. It is a vital tool of statecraft. It is important to understand that lawfare can be used as both defensive and offensive tool. In many cases lawfare is used to weakens the country internally, for instance Pakistan's founding ethos are Unity, Faith and Discipline, so if this founding ethos are challenged or disturbed it can very much weaken the country's internal structure. If believe on system and constitution is weakened then this in my view can harm more than any other thing.

Lawfare can be a weapon on its own or it can be a weapon coupled with military doctrine of the country. So, for instance, if the country is looking for military solutions it can use lawfare along with the kinetic options the country has. The idea is lawfare supplements the kinetic or military options. Similarly, lawfare can be used as an alternative to kinetic options to achieve same goals, for example the international sanctions on Iran by USA. So, without going to the war US has damaged Iran more than the use of any other means. To some extent FATF is also a lawfare against Pakistan.

There are seven types of lawfare. It has a direct link to economy and financial system. Similarly, it also shares the direct nexus with cyber, intelligence and military. Now, what a state needs to do when it faces lawfare challenges. State needs to have a holistic approach. It is also important to first understand the type of challenge which is being faced and also the opportunity on hand to counter that challenge. Also, the means and methods adopted by the adversary to inflict lawfare and the destructive capacity of the campaign. Furthermore, the cost benefit analysis also needs to be done against the challenge.

The central theme which is countering disinformation through lawfare. Apart from various types of lawfare the most dangerous one is disinformation lawfare. It does not

go off easily because once the disinformation enters the systems it circulates within the system while the people without knowing becomes the means through which this disinformation is being spread. The basic tools of this spread are social media and instant messaging services. People forward messages to their contacts without verifying the authenticity or sources. Disinformation often comes in different forms it can be in suggestive language which leaves it open to the people to interpret which makes it more lethal. Then there comes subliminal messaging, it is psychological messaging it hampers the decision-making capacity, it clouds one's decision-making capacity due to confusion.

Pakistan faces two front disinformation warfare. One is those people who indoctrinates disinformation, they are the originators and the handlers of disinformation. The second front is the proxies of those handlers and they are mostly situated in the targeted country i.e., Pakistan. The message gets amplified through proxies.

How we counter it? Understand that we live in an age of social media you cannot quell the freedom of speech but what can be done is to set an example in jurisprudence of Pakistan which sets the limitation of freedom of speech which are subject law and order. In any country there are those limitations in order to curb the spread of fake news and disinformation. There is a lawful punishment in case of any disinformation or fake news in Singapore. In Pakistan we don't have any proper legislation. But there is an issue in legislation also, its potential to be misused or misapplied there could be backlash.

Another option is to have robust international warfare strategy to counter disinformation. Because laws are only applicable within the country. But disinformation is beyond geographical boundaries. This strategy shall be based on desirability of people of outcomes which means those people or policy makers which identify the national objectives. They need to distinguish news and information and people rights of access.

Pakistan needs to have international voice that can come through global media house or create its own to tell its story more accurately and this is where Pakistan has failed.

**Mr. Shahid Raza:**

Good evening. I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to speak.

A famous Canadian philosopher puts it and outlines the war spectrum for WWII and comments that "*World War III is a guerilla information war with no division between military and civilian participation*". This perfectly applies on Pakistan.

From the early age, information has always been the central pillar of victory or loss. During World War I, the propaganda was broadcasted over radio and leaflets were thrown from the air. During World War II, it moved on to radio and certain other means more sophisticated and as the technology evolves to propaganda tactics also evolve. The current situation that we face, it started in the 1990s with the emergence of modern technologies, modern computing and Internet technologies, which connected millions and millions of people to access to Free, Uncensored information. So it is in this pretext that we are having this discussion today.

Let's talk about Pakistan today. Pakistan is the youngest country in the top five countries in the world. We have 233 million people and 64% of those people are young people. 55% of the population are known as *Gen Z*, the previous generation is what are known as millennials. The *Gen Z* was born after 1997. So, we are an incredibly young country, we have a huge youth bulge that will last us until 2045. This huge bulge of youth can either be converted in capital or it can be converted into a form that will basically send this country down to the pits. So, it is up to us to decide as a country what we are going to do with this historic opportunity of 100 and 70 million young people who are being misled and misinformed to the internet from different means.

Let's go and try to understand a brief history of information operations, we keep talking about the generations of warfare. I tend to refer to *Information Operations* as an extension of the hybrid domain. First of all, we need to understand that information operations, they are conducted to support an existing military doctrine. It could be a covert doctrine or it could be an overcoming to doctrine of warfare. But in any case, it is conducted under the overhang of an existing those who doctrine that lays out very

clearly the objectives of the country. It has very low cost, because of the tools, which are using to spread, create, and amplify the disinformation are readily available and in most cases are cloud based and free. This makes it accessible to more people coming back to what Marshall McLuhan said, everyone has a weapon in their pocket and they can use it to do damage on phones. It is a tool of intent when you go to sleep, this doesn't go to sleep. There is a time difference. So, if you're talking about disinformation campaign, there's a pendulum out there in the world where they're awake, and you're not facing up so it's a 24-hour job you cannot let this happen while you're asleep because the countries that are trying to feed this disinformation are actively doing it.

I've seen several instances where information operations have been used as an extension of terrorist attacks before and after. So, it cannot be discounted from kinetic theory in any shape or form because the amplified outcome of a kinetic operation is technologically advanced, which is based on algorithms and is based on artificial intelligence. It is based on machine learning. It is based on different organizational data mining, so it is technically possible for a response to be technically advanced, and in order to deploy at the international level.

It is an international phenomenon. So, I try to explain graphically what is at risk and what is going on inside a disinformation operation. So, first of all, in the center, you have a human figure that is being used to spread disinformation, through media. So, there's propaganda involved. There is foreign hostile actor involved.

So, what is automated propaganda? Propagandists, quantum is so diverse, it cannot be done by human accuracy and can't be done manually. The strategy is done manually. The planning is done manually, but most of it is done to an automated system. There are non state actors who will purely function in information domain I've observed this with ISIS with certain other militia groups. Sentiment manipulation is another element from cultural warfare aspects. So cultural warfare aspect is an extension of subversion. So, in its full forms hostile actors are trying to support cultural rewriting and revise the history of the country and trying to confuse them. That is very, that is a consistent theme in the US information about reporting about India.

Then there are bots, trolls, troublemakers we are quite familiar with that. Data domination is very important. We have 110 billion Internet users and the adoption of internet in Pakistan is rapidly increasing. We have 88% network of coverage in Pakistan right now. What is going on? Is none of Pakistan's data is stored in Pakistan, we don't have privacy laws, we are not storing our own data. So, if we are not storing our own data in Pakistan, who's storing our data? That is a question that everybody in this room needs to ask where's your data national data going? Where is it being stored? What are the laws under which those that data has been stored and it is accessible to hostile agencies it is accessible to hostile governments? There is an example of an application called True-caller which was banned some years ago. Why that was banned because it was stealing contact information from your phonebook, millions of users were affected and information was sent across the border in their data warehouse which was in Bangalore. We need to have a national data storage capacity where we can store our own data under our own laws and protect our own citizens. Role of social media companies obviously we know they deliberately amplify negative content because if you know the algorithms amplifies and you know itself that says it gets more retweets and more likes.

So, they have adjusted their algorithms in such a manner that the controversy is, is promoted. I will give a brief on the Indian situation last year. Last year, I presented my findings. So I had the opportunity to investigate the report itself. So, I went through the tedious process of tracing every single link in that report and trying to identify for my own skill set, how that that operation was put together. And I presented my findings at a seminar about last year. And this is a summary of what I found. So, the Indian state of propaganda was conducted in 90 countries. So, they were trying to dominate Pakistan's narrative, because Pakistan is not doing anything to own his own character as Mr. Shad said, we don't have an international television. If you are not telling your story, who is telling your story, then the question we need to ask somebody is who you are if you're not telling your story, 90 countries, 500 websites, social media companies were involved. Extensive lobbying and protests were conducted before Pakistani embassy in Geneva and other Western capitals, including our consulate in New York, London, and

other western capitals. BJP troll farms in India, and IT centers they have had a significant role to play as including the ANII News agency, which is owned by a BJP linked family. They have had a critical role to play in amplifying that operational base. But the funny thing is, I mean, not funny. This is actually quite depressing. The operation ran for 15 years and we didn't find that out.

We have to have a European agency find that operation and tell us that this is happening. So why not focus on our people to find that information? Why wasn't why we were not able to decipher what was going on against Pakistan. Why don't we have that capability? And EU disinfo lab which is a European agency used open-source tools, they did not use any premium technology to contact is the only use major skill set with available open-source intelligence tools and they created a report.

So, who is being attacked in an Information Operations? Who is trying to have an information operation? The general public has absolutely no role to play in a sophisticated information operation. What do you go? You go after people who make decisions, you go after the intelligence of a country, you go after the brain, you don't have to go for the body because body will paralyze anyway. So you go after the academia, you go after the national security networks, the retired officers serving officers deformations, you name it, you go after the government networks, industry networks, which is the backbone of our country, the economy, they go off to the economy, several operations have been carried out cyber operations have been carried on that specifically target Pakistan's economy, such as a recent hack at the Minister of Commerce.

Then we have international networks where Pakistan, for example, information operations have been carried out in countries that are traditionally friendly, such as Turkey. So, Turkey has been significantly targeted for its position on Kashmir. So, our friends are also being targeted. It's a very sophisticated system with very limited number of people. So, they go after social media influencers, people who have made something out of themselves at social media, they've become either celebrities or people follow

them. They are also attacked in your initial submission, because they are a key source of information cascade.

What are the implications? these are demoralization I'm pretty sure we've all agreed that the demoralization is a current and recurrent theme, especially in the current scenario, and focus on the demoralization is a real threat because it creates a division between the citizen and the state, the soldier and the state and the government. And this sows discord, disunity, sects, tribes and ethnicities. So again, this is another recurrent theme. I remember, every time there's an attack by ISIS, there's a certain hashtag that starts trending in Pakistan. Why has anybody never tried to connect the dots?

Mass confusion regarding national identity, trying to confuse the young Pakistani children about who they really are and why they exist in the first place. And why does the country exist in the first place. So, the reason the idea of Pakistan is attacked consistently have been a major recurring theme.

Change the reality context. So, once you create enough disinformation, it changes your perception. So, you'll see your friend as your enemy. And that is exactly what is desired. So, if we go through the scale that logic at a national level, you can understand what is the implication here economic loss and political instability, I think we all understand what that means.

What are the options for Pakistan? What is it that we can do, if anything, we have to focus on the development of our youth, to convert them into human capital, not human resources? We have political human liability. We need to convert our own huge interest, human wisdom into human capital. So, they can defend themselves. It is not the job of the army or the Air Force, Navy or armed forces in Pakistan to defend every single tweet. You have to inform, encourage, and equip your own young people with knowledge and skills required to do this. So, your numbers amplify. So, your response amplifies; it is all about the number of tweets, basically. Right. So, if India is sending 30

million tweets at you, and if you're able to send back 10 million, I believe that will make a significant headway, numbers matter.

Inform the demographics preemptively, we have to create a new national narrative in Pakistan. Shape a new national narrative in Pakistan under the preview of current threats in Pakistan. We have to inform demographics who are repeatedly attacked, we have to strengthen their sense of unity. We need to develop mechanisms for early warning. So, like I said, why don't we move on to the India Chronicles operation beforehand? Why weren't the Europeans? Why don't we have that capability, we need to have develop the capacity to be able to investigate certain threats and deal with that before they happen or disrupted while there are happening.

Develop counter force options Well, if Information Operations, if we are not fighting back then we are being defeated. If there is no response, if there is no preemption, you have been defeated, because the enemy has cultivated those narratives inside your country that have changed the reality context of the largest portion of your country, youth which is huge. So, we need to ensure that there are counter force options in Pakistan with these operations. And like Hassan said before we there are lawfare options to name a chain and take tape measures, legal measures.

So, what if I tried to encapsulate all of this information that I've just shared with you, we have tried to create order out of chaos. That is the context, the paradigm we're looking at, we're trying to create order or chaos trying to solve the puzzle. So, what can we do? We've understood what it is, we've understood the paradigm to working better, but what are the specific steps we can take as a state to combat this phenomenon? We have to improve the quality of our public policy. We have to improve the quality of the policy at a government level. The communication coming our government to the citizen is very, very weak and outdated.

We need to establish deterrence. That has to be a cost to targeting Pakistan, focus on the cyber attacks, information attacks, there has to be a doctrine. We have to develop links with the industry. We have to have linkages with the social media companies, we

can leverage the 23 million potential users and use our market cap to change laws and introduce their policies in our favor such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and everybody else storing Pakistan data in Pakistan, under Pakistan's privacy laws, establishment of information environment, we have to create an information environment where citizens are not threatened. If we create a climate of fear, for example, if a young man or young woman sends a tweet, and they are living in fear, you're actually playing in the paradigm of your enemy, because that is exactly the sort of disunity they want. So, we have to create, we have to strictly implement the constitutional right to freedom. So, there's a dynamic information environment that nurtures the very nature of the Pakistani state. And the citizen feels safe in the sense in the state, and they have a stronger response with the country for the government for the armed forces.

Precision over mass, so start with start with the university students, start with the educated lot and then cascade to the mass communication, we start in the opposite direction.

We have to feed and create intelligence, create intelligent solutions, protect our investors, our economy is not disrupted. Sometimes we have to learn the value of tactical silence, maybe go in silence over something, in certain circumstances is more valuable than putting out communications that can come back to haunt you.

We have to establish a global reach like Hassan said there has to be a global media that there has to be a television channel that tells Pakistan's story neutrally under international benchmarks, without any censorship by others.

So first of all, you have to identify what the threat is, you have to identify the communicators who is communicating that right, what is human elements? Who are the automated elements? What are platforms that are being used? And then we have number three, identify the constituency, that is the politicians who are being targeted decision makers who want to talk to the general public, is there a certain ethnic minority is at a certain sector? Is it in the armed forces? Are there certain personalities, we have to identify who was being attacked? What is the constituency of that particular attack?

That we have to develop a cohesive response, which I've already explained then you have to amplify the response. And then at an advanced level, you have to be able to track sentiments to understand where your communication is going and whether or not it is effective.

And obviously, as always, as, as always, a good strategist would have been an exit strategy. You have to have an exit strategy. In every crisis in every transaction in every situation, you've got to have an exit strategy. So, you have to decide what your exit strategy is from a certain from in a certain conflict or in a certain situation, hostile situation.

### **Dr. Salma Malik**

I'm extremely grateful for your invitation and that you called me here. The speakers before me have talked in greater detail talked about how disinformation misinformation, data mining, data collection, all of these have been part of the hybrid warfare mechanism. There is an economic potential of disinformation and how it has impacted global politics in the current circumstances. What I'm trying to get at will try and look at is how history is used or manipulated as a tool of information operation.

Just today I was talking to my students about how the partition has been portrayed in popular media, especially the power of media that India has in terms of Bollywood. So, we see that they have been movies on the partition from Pakistan, as well as from India, and the first-generation movies that were made were from the true to the code. It was made by people who had witnessed partition who have suffered partition. It had people who were deeply invested in that process.

Yet, the dominating theme they talk about the trauma, talk about the suffering, it also talked about the deep sense of loss, but there was nothing that would tantamount to hatred that was portrayed in those movies. There was a caricature at the end of each one, whether it was Kartar Singh in Pakistan, whether it was another movie of same genre in India, but the fact was that it was a pretty fascinating narration. But now when those movies are made, remade, or certain similar movies are made there is a very

poignant sense of the fact that the loss of the trauma is being now manipulated in use. There has very different connotation. Why I started with this anecdotal evidence is that very few of our today's generation knows what has happened, they tend to have knee jerk reaction to what is presented to them.

We also know that whenever the history is being talked about, why did I choose these students have asked you to speak. History is really fascinating. There is a history that happened. And there is a history that we make happen, how we make that happen, we make it happen through our writings, narrations and depictions and also there is a history that is presented with the architecture. And now what is happening to that history? Unfortunately, when we are looking at establishing history, and we are looking at how that history is being preserved, distorted, reused, abused and manipulated. So, we have some dominant themes there.

In Pakistan, as my colleagues have talked about there is very little investment in what we call as data or what we call knowledge economy. And I would also call it as public knowledge economy because today's data is really someone's historical record tomorrow. What we're seeing today is going to be history tomorrow. But now we're looking at how all of these things happen, then again Pakistan tried to trace back the history. We in Pakistan say Indus they say it was a Sindhu River. We don't have consensus on where history has started. But let's fast forward and drag it to the point where we look at the modern history, where we look at how much content continues to exist. When history gets recorded.

One very important aspect is which Mr. Shahid was also talking about targeting the brain and not the body, in which we are looking at academia and intelligencia, so the text books are the most basic source of influencing the future minds. let me not use the term manipulating, or let me not use propagated. But technically that means that whatever we write now in our history books is something that the child is going to read from grade 1 to the next 16 to 18 years of his life. And it is a distorted version of history, that is what he or she is going to take, a distorted version of this world.

So, you will have people who believe on concocted history. And that is when you see people picking up stones, sticks about that, and they believe in killing people whom they have coexisted just five years back, all you need to do is invoke them or provoke them, or get some steps off us versus them. So, a very selective narration of history psychological term, what is the selective narration of history? It is important so that the you know, what is the truth? What is the knowledge that we have about where we came from how it started? So, it has to be a very, very high five type of perception history, which gives us this joy of royal thinking about us. How much do we need to focus on the history because it connects the past with the present? It also provides us with the essence, as a Strategic Studies person, I've always said that one has to learn from history. But if we don't learn from the history that we keep on repeating those mistakes. It also provides us with several lessons, as I said, how do we record history? Earlier records of the history were in caves where people drew certain things in the cave, they didn't have any textbooks.

As I said, textbooks, historical books, biopics, paintings, architecture, most iconic buildings, such as could have been attached, attachment, activated, see how all of these all of this history has been deconstructed, or reconstructed, and manipulated to make it all up a Saffronized space. When they make this saffronized constituency of history. Through this the young minds are being shaped by inducing hatred. There are videos on social media where children are doing tableaux on who razes the mosque first. So, Mosque has become a symbol of hatred for the young Indian children, especially who come from Hindu background.

So, what needs to be done, because this hatred will lead to mirror imaging where Muslims will be targeted there and Hindus here. The foremost thing for us to do is to be honest about our history. Rather than social engineering, social narrations of events and history needs to be done. We need to own our history if we didn't then someone else will own it and take it away from us which is already happening.

**Dr. Amna Mahmood**

Thank you so much for the invitation.

Disinformation is basically disseminated to media and all guns are towards media that they are spreading disinformation. And they are taking this agenda but it is important to understand that media is just the face. when we see some of the actors, they are hired to lie foster some agenda, which is set up by on large scale in depth, after in depth analysis, and deliberation by the policy makers, think tanks and different input organizations which are essential for public policymaking which are good for making national agenda. So, disinformation is something which is very common. And if you talk about the previous times, that this information was there, because there was no information, and since people were not having any information, you can say anything. And that was there was no mechanism to test that that information. But now, the scenario has changed and disinformation is a planned move by the governments and non state actors to launch their propaganda, basically, that is the propaganda which is taken in negative connotation, but it is very much essential and it is the part of the government strategies to advance their interest.

Academia itself is a part of that, you know, number of universities are having different identities. They are religious universities, when we talk about as we know that what sort of *fatva* would be coming on a particular issue, same is the case with other universities of other countries. There are trained people with certain mindset in institutions in Pakistan and outside Pakistan. That's why nations make chairs, India have more than 120 chairs in different universities of the western countries, because the next policymaker, the generation of the people train there would be the policy makers, they would be the journalists, they would be the scientists and they would be on prominent positions qualified from universities, and ultimately, they would take their minds in them on what they do.

And that matters a lot. So, universities, academics role is very important. In that context, Pakistani universities are not so independent to make any agenda; they are not

independent to inculcate certain ideas in the mind. Rather, they don't allow people to think in their own way. We are bound to, to teach a particular curriculum, a particular dimension, we cannot speak. It is not very easy to speak your mind when we are talking about the politics, international relations and your own institutions. If we have to counter disinformation, we have to spread the real information, we have to allow all our youth as some of my panelists mentioned that we are more than 50% youth. So, if you want to enlighten us and youth is the most mobilized faction of the society that can bring change at any time without realizing that what would be the repetition and consequences of that? So spread information to the level that there would be no hidden thing.

If you see that most of the few days back, we are having the controversy that BBC was spreading the news of our one of the top most institutions that they monitor the ouster of Prime Minister through having the meeting of two high officials in Prime Minister house later that was denied, but if the information would have been very clear all the activity there would have been telecasted directly on the on the national news channel, that there can be no controversy, there will be no hypocrisy about that.

So, I think that countering disinformation should be with more information and for that purpose, you have to take academics to the place where they can speak their minds you made them intellectual to you ask them to do research, even by default for the promotion sake only better for promotion, there is also ironic about promotion, we are bound to write only 15 papers, but most of the professors are having more than 100 publications, they are doing that by design, because they are good habits and they want to function research activities.

So, they should be provided the opportunity to head and monitor think tanks. So, you can start culture of research. Similarly, there are tools to check that data that is present on the internet and that can actually be utilized in a practical manner. Cognitive biases will only be eliminated by the authentic information.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Noaman Majid:**

Greetings everyone, My thanks for the invitation.

Let's talk about disinformation effects business confidence and economic security. First of all, what we need to understand is that why disinformation effects economy? Pakistan has a long history of IMF programs, right now Pakistan is in the middle of its 22<sup>nd</sup> IMF program. The nation as a whole has no clue when Pakistan will get out of the shackles of IMF. Throughout the IMF programs the issues are more or less same which mean that there are some fundamental problems in our economic planning. Till now there has been no proper plan of getting out of IMF program in near future. The question here rises that are we taking enough measures to get out of IMF program. It is pertinent to understand and explore that do we have that policy mechanism in place? And why the successive governments have to IMF while their political rhetoric reflects different picture?

There are lot of steps and policy planning which needs to be done to get out of IMF program, one or few steps won't be enough to remove the chains of IMF program. One of the key issues is that we have short term goals and think that on the basis of those we can evade IMF program which is outrightly wrong. We need a 3-5 year long and proper plan to put ourselves on the track of economic sustainability. Why Pakistan has been unable to devise and implement such plans? The main reason behind this is inconsistent policy framework due to political instability. Even after 75 years of independence there has been no single prime minister who has completed its term. It clearly shows the depth of our institutional framework of 75 years. So whenever new government sworn it the business community gets a sense of uncertainty about what would now be the economic framework of the country. We have been hearing about charter of economy but unfortunately that charter has never been made just because of political rifts among political parties.

The second thing which we need to understand is that how disinformation effects economy? The foremost thing which gets effected is rupee-dollar parity. This parity

comes specially under the political turmoil and governments fail to manipulate this parity in favor of Pakistan. The second thing which gets effected by the disinformation is foreign direct investment or FDI. Pakistan has considerably low FDI which also effects the economic sustainability of Pakistan. India's FDI is roughly around \$50billions, Vietnams FDI is around \$16billions, Turkey's goes near \$8-10billions even Cambodia's FDI is around \$4 billions. Whereas Pakistan's FDI for recent years is around \$2 billion. FDI levels in Pakistan is pathetically low, there are other reasons as well but disinformation remains one. If there is a disinformation campaign is going on and it is working effectively then the foreign investors feel reluctant to invest in the country. Similarly, local business and investors also feel reluctant to invest. Whenever there is political uncertainty coupled with disinformation the inflation in the country also gets sky rocket. Despite we often claim that Pakistan is food secure country but still Pakistan has food imports of around \$8-10 billion. Furthermore, hoarding also effects the inflation rate in the country.

Now coming to the solutions, we need to look for the ways though which such issues can be curtailed. We need a paradigm shift in our economic planning and policy making. Pakistan is very vulnerable economically. However, the shift shall be based on the concept of national economic security. Our neighboring countries despite the turmoil they are doing good. No governments have given special focus on economic policy.

In order to do that we need a proper economic security framework. For that the foremost thing to be done is to create an office dedicated to the national economic security. There are ministries and offices dedicated to economics of Pakistan but their mandate is totally different. What we need office of national economic security is for to economic project management so that those sectors and projects could be identified which are of key and vital strategic significance. For example, Pakistan has IT economy and it gets good share in shape of foreign remittances but what needs to be done is to enhance that potential through holistic framework approach which can be done through office of national economic security. This office shall be comprised of high powered multi stakeholders board of governors from all organs of state including judiciary and military. The purpose of this office is to have project coordination and project continuity

in place. Furthermore, this office shall be given enough authority that even if there is a change in government this office ensures that certain projects remain intact and continues its progress. The establishment of such office shall be taken as a matter of economic emergency.

**Mr. Nasir Qadri:**

I would like to thank the organizers. I would be discussing “*Countering Disinformation: Challenges and prospects for Pakistan*”. The spread of harmful rumors, misinformation, disinformation, hate speech and propagandas online is an increasing challenge in Pakistan. These phenomena are not new in Pakistan, the use of technologies in the dissemination has considerably impact on scale and speed at which such information reaches multiple target audience online and the effect it has on them. Some scholars refer this online phenomenon as the “weaponization of information”. Though the term is problematic because legally speaking harmfully information does qualify as means of warfare, so theses terms doesn’t qualify the weapons to which specific rules of law of war applies. The concept of “misinformation, disinformation and hate speech” (Henceforth, referred to collectively as MDH) are used to refer to the most prominent types of “weaponized” information.

*What do we mean by “MDH”?*

- MDH is umbrella term that can include, but is not limited to: misinformation, disinformation, hate speech as well as information operations, mal-information and propaganda.
- They can occur both through digital (online) and non-digital (offline) means. While these phenomena have always existed, their online manifestation have ushered in a new set of challenges and potential harm.
- *Misinformation*: False information that is unintentionally spread by individuals who believe the information is true or who have not taken the time to verify it. Misinformation can be spread via rumours (see definition below), a series of social media posts, etc.

- *Disinformation*: Intentionally false information that is fabricated and/or disseminated with malicious intent. This can include terms such as propaganda and “information operations”.
  - a) *Example*: An armed group wants exclusive access to a specific water point. It goes online and finds old pictures of people who have suffered from water poisoning. It edits and then shares these pictures on social media and through messaging apps, stating that these are present-day pictures, proving that the water point has been poisoned and should be abandoned.

*Humanitarian consequences*: Local community members abandon the water point, but are now forced to ration – and, sometimes, fight over – water from other sources. Some decide to travel further out in order to get water, exposing themselves to attacks and harassment en route. All of this exacerbates tensions within the community, and leads to hygiene and health problems, particularly among the most vulnerable.
  
- *Mal-information*: Information that is true but is spread with the intent to cause harm (for example, to taint someone’s reputation or play on existing social tensions).
  - a) *Example*: After ten years of conflict, a ceasefire is negotiated between two parties to an armed conflict and a peace process initiated. National elections are organized. Just before the run-off vote, one party releases graphic images on social media of combatants and civilians who were wounded and killed in the course of the war. The images are considered as genuine, but the timing of their release was designed to cause maximum harm to the opposing party by tapping into people’s emotions. The images exacerbate social tensions between supporters of either side.
  
- *Rumours*: Information that is rapidly passed on from one person to another, often without being verified. Rumours may have started off as instances of misinformation or disinformation. What sets them apart is how widespread they

become, making it impossible to trace and verify a source in order to assess credibility.

- a) Example: People in a detention facility believe that the water that they are given to drink contains tranquilizers. All newcomers are immediately informed of this, but no one knows where the information came from in the first place.

*Humanitarian consequences:* Detainees attempt to minimize the amount of water they drink, leading some to develop health issues. As a growing number of detainees is hospitalized, others start a riot. Prison staff retaliate with great violence, leading to a number of injuries, some of them severe and even life-threatening.

- *Propaganda:* Information, often inaccurate or misleading, that is used to promote a particular point of view or influence a target audience. Propaganda may contain some elements of truth, but presents them in a biased manner, with the intent to damage the credibility or reputation of an “enemy” or opposing side. When propaganda is facilitated by the use of digital advertising, social media algorithms or other exploitative strategies, it is known as computational propaganda. Propaganda can also be used to target, recruit, radicalize and coordinate operations among potential supporters of extremist causes. This can be referred to as online radicalization and recruitment.

- a) Example: An extremist group makes use of social media algorithms to identify groups on social media that support similar – but less extreme – causes to theirs. They monitor the activity of different members in this group. They may start to engage with them, especially those members who seem particularly open to persuasion or inclined to take a more extreme stance on this cause. This engagement may include sharing pro-extremist material (including disinformation or hate speech); inviting the targeted members to other, more extreme platforms, forums or echo chambers; and advertising false advantages to joining the group.

*Humanitarian consequences:* People who are susceptible to the extremist group's recruitment campaign may start to perpetrate violence in their own communities, harassing or attacking people who challenge their beliefs. Some people might join the group, grow disillusioned and return, only to face stigmatization and discrimination from their peers and relatives, causing mental distress. The group might also play on some people's vulnerabilities, such as financial or psychological fragility, which could be exacerbated during the radicalization or recruitment phase.

- *Hate speech:* All forms of expression (text, images, audio, video) that spread, incite, promote or justify hatred and violence based on intolerance, usually against identity traits (gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.). Hate speech can contain a mix of misinformation, disinformation and rumours that are exploited by the perpetrators. Hate speech uses analogue and digital communication systems to drive in-group/ out-group tensions,<sup>9</sup> and trigger violence against members of another identity-based group.
  - a) Example: Members of a religious minority have been accused of organized crime. Various speeches and printed caricatures have depicted them as born criminals to be eliminated or driven from the country, including through violent means (hate speech). Manipulated images and videos that depict violence against members of this minority have been shared online, alongside a list of the neighbourhoods in which they tend to live (digital hate speech).

*Humanitarian consequences:* Members of this religious minority start to be harassed, then physically attacked, in their own neighbourhoods. A growing number of businesses decides to bar them from entering their stores or offices. Some members are even arbitrarily detained on fraudulent charges in order to quell popular out- rage. As a result, some members decide to flee the country. All fear for their safety and that of their families.

### *Framework For Analysing MDH*

MDH do not happen “on their own”. Several factors influence how MDH unfold in a given context and lead to violence and/or humanitarian consequences. The following framework<sup>15</sup> looks at the environmental factors that influence the spread and uptake of MDH.

*Foundations for MDH:* These are the environmental conditions that make a particular context more (or less) susceptible to the spread of MDH that may contribute to humanitarian concerns – for example, pre-existing social tensions, low levels of digital literacy, lack of trust or transparency in mainstream media. Foundations can help answer the question: why would MDH be able to take hold in this context?

*Pathways for MDH:* These are the ways in which the spread of MDH unfolds in a particular context. The spread of MDH can occur along these pathways intentionally, unintentionally or a combination of both, and usually relies on the specific nature of the information ecosystems in each context. For example, a disinformation campaign will make sure to spread content on the most popular platforms and target the most susceptible audiences. Pathways can help answer the question: how would MDH be able to take hold in this context?

*Signals of MDH:* These are the indicators, symptoms or early warning signs that MDH pathways may be active in a particular context. For example, the use of fake or automated accounts to boost the spread of hateful content, the timing of certain campaigns around significant events and, ultimately, a rise in humanitarian consequences. Signals can help answer the question: how do you know MDH are taking place?

### *Challenges In Detecting Online MDH*

A challenge is that State of Pakistan do not, in general, have an in-depth understanding of the role and functioning of digital technologies, specifically in relation to MDH. While some individuals are more tech-savvy than others – either because of their function in

the organization (e.g., information and communication technology engineers) or because of personal interest – in general, knowledge is uneven or insufficient. As a result, most Government institutions or security agencies may find it challenging to recognize MDH in a given context.

### *Challenges in Assessing MDH*

Assessing how different kinds of dynamics may lead to harm is central to conventional protection activities. This includes developing a sound understanding of the violations and abuses committed, the rationale and perpetrators behind them, and the direct and indirect humanitarian consequences they may create. In the case of MDH, this means relevant authorities of State need to be able to detect relevant occurrences and analyse them, to inform protection objectives and procedures.

- An initial challenge is the lack of data and analysis to help explain the relationship between online MDH and the actual humanitarian consequences on the ground.
- A second challenge lies in determining who the perpetrators or unwitting facilitators in different MDH instances are. An approach that focuses too narrowly on traditional actors may overlook the role that new and/or unconventional actors (such as tech companies, the private sector, social media platforms, influencers and users) may play in relation to instances of MDH and the risk and harm to which they may contribute.
- A third challenge is the way in which information is collected and analysed for different purposes (e.g., protection, assistance, communication). Most collection efforts will yield important and useful data to inform and support humanitarian responses. However, without a clear strategy, guidance, training and tools to promote and support a common and joined-up approach, assessment of the potential humanitarian consequences of MDH will remain incomplete. This can create blind spots around changing environmental conditions and patterns of violence, and thus affect the depth and the accuracy of the assessment and response.

## Recommendations

### 1. How to start Addressing MDH

Having a clearer understanding of the main barriers to and challenges in incorporating consideration of MDH some operational and policy-based work needs to be done.

As in any other domain, it is important to prioritize key challenges and to sequence elements of responses in a gradual and iterative manner. This includes having a clear set of criteria for carrying out this work (covering, for example, costs, time, human resources, capacity to adapt to change, incentives, political support, urgency, importance) that reflect the views and incentives of multiple relevant actors.

Incorporating consideration of MDH into existing approaches and activities, rather than addressing it in isolation, would eventually strengthen understanding of the humanitarian environment and security risk evaluation, and inform analysis of the wider concerns around the protection needs of civilians. Such knowledge can then be used to adapt the organization's network, security set-up and operational responses, including its humanitarian dialogue with relevant stakeholders.

#### **Short-To-Medium Term**

While guidance, tools, skills and policy are being developed – a process that takes some time – other steps can be taken in the meantime. Discussions and exchanges among and within humanitarian organizations need to be promoted to raise awareness, share experiences and address doubts/questions, including with regard to security and image.

The Government through their practitioners and Civil societies can then be encouraged to:

- update their stakeholder mapping and analysis to include actors that can exert an influence on the spread and dynamics of MDH. This can be accompanied by an information ecosystem assessment (IEA), ideally led by a multidisciplinary team and conducted through partnerships with other organizations (for example, news and/or fact-checking organizations).
- map relevant information needs regarding MDH across different domains of expertise (such as protection, assistance, communication and security). This needs to be accompanied by a review of current activities to scan the information environment – which can include news, social media and other sources, such as dialogue and engagement with the people and communities affected – with the new IEA in mind.
- assign clear roles and responsibilities to those who will be monitoring and documenting MDH, and clarify where the information will be recorded and how it will be shared among teams.

### **Medium-To-Long Term**

- ***Raise awareness and provide support to incorporate consideration of MDH into protection and prevention analysis and activities.***  
This can include developing guidance, training and tools for detection, assessment and response, as well as engaging with relevant stakeholders. It can take the form of e-learning, workshops, video conferences involving experts or the creation of a repository of relevant information about MDH to foster independent learning. Those resources will be richer if informed by operational experiences and tested practices. In addition, efforts to incorporate consideration of MDH in analyses of the information environment are essential to support wider institutional efforts and improve the digital literacy of staff.
- ***Conduct more research and step-up collaboration.***

Misinformation, disinformation and hate speech together form a set of complex phenomena involving both social and technical systems, with multiple actors pursuing varied goals, motivated by different incentives and interacting via multiple connections. To address MDH challenges, these systems need to be understood as a whole – not as a sum of individual parts – and the connections within and between them need to be recognized. The development of conceptual foundations to address MDH could include the following elements:

- **Turning research into practice**

It is also important that humanitarian organizations – and the sector as a whole – explicitly address the issue of MDH in their policy and advocacy efforts based on research. A clearer commitment to identify, articulate and evaluate the potential risks and harms that digital information technologies and their uses can present to both the people affected and humanitarian organizations is necessary and would be helpful.

This conceptual work must build on relevant evidence and studies, and provide a basis on which to explore and articulate the ways in which MDH can affect humanitarian organizations' work and priorities. It would also help translate theory into practice and inform the design of appropriate responses and solutions. To that end, it will be important to explore how helpful IHL, other relevant bodies of law and key existing humanitarian policies and standards are in addressing MDH issues.

2. We live in an age of social media you cannot quell the freedom of speech but what can be done is to set an example in jurisprudence of Pakistan which sets the limitation of freedom of speech which are subject law and order. In any country there are those limitations in order to curb the spread of fake news and disinformation. There is a lawful punishment in case of any disinformation or fake news in Singapore. In Pakistan we don't have any proper legislation. But there is an issue in legislation also, its potential to be misused or misapplied or there could be

backlash. An holistic approach needs for domestic legislation to counter fake news and disinformation.

3. Robust international lawfare strategy to counter disinformation. Laws are only applicable within the country. But disinformation is beyond geographical boundaries. This strategy shall be based on desirability of people of outcomes which means that those people or policy makers which identify the national objectives shall be central to this strategy. They need to distinguish news and information and people rights of access to information.
4. Pakistan needs to have international voice that can come thorough global media house or create its own to tell its story more accurately.
5. Have a national data storage capacity where we can store our own data under our own laws and protect our own citizens.
6. Massive development of youth through proper planning and execution. Pakistan needs to disinform its youth itself to convert them into human capital, not human resources. We need to convert our own huge interest, human wisdom into human capital. So, they can defend themselves. It is not the job of the army or the Air Force, Navy or forces in Pakistan to defend every single tweet. Inform, encourage, and equip your own young people with knowledge and skills required to do this.
7. Inform the demographics preemptively, we have to create a new national narrative in Pakistan. Shape a new national narrative in Pakistan under the preview of current threats in Pakistan. We have to inform demographics who are repeatedly attacked, we have to strengthen their sense of unity.
8. Develop the capacity to be able to investigate certain threats and deal with that before they happen or disrupted while there are happening.

9. Improve the quality of our public policy. We have to improve the quality of the policy at a government level. The communication coming our government to the citizen is very, very weak and outdated.
10. Pakistan needs to establish deterrence. That has to be a cost to targeting Pakistan, focus on the cyber-attacks, information attacks, there has to be a doctrine.
11. State of Pakistan needs to develop links with the industry. We have to have linkages with the social media companies, we can leverage the 223 million potential users and use our market cap to change laws and introduce their policies in our favor such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and everybody else storing Pakistan's data.
12. Pakistan has to create an information environment where citizens are not threatened. If we create a climate of fear, for example, if a young man or young woman sends a tweet, and they are living in fear, you're actually playing in the paradigm of your enemy, because that is exactly the sort of disunity they want. So, we have to create, we have to strictly implement the constitutional right to freedom. So, there's a dynamic information environment that nurtures the very nature of the Pakistani state. And the citizen feels safe in the sense in the state, and they have a stronger response with the country for the government for the armed forces.
13. State needs to feed and create intelligent solutions, protect our investors, our economy is not disrupted. Sometimes we have to learn the value of tactical silence, maybe go in silence over something, in certain circumstances is more valuable than putting out communications that can come back to haunt you.
14. Pakistan needs a paradigm shift in our economic planning and policy making. Pakistan is very vulnerable economically. However, the shift shall be based on the concept of national economic security. Our neighboring countries despite the turmoil they are doing good. No governments have given special focus on economic policy.

15. Introduce a proper economic security framework. For that the foremost thing to be done is to create an office dedicated to the national economic security. There are ministries and offices dedicated to economics of Pakistan but their mandate is totally different. What we need office of national economic security is for to economic project management so that those sectors and projects could be identified which are of key and vital strategic significance. For example, Pakistan has IT economy and it gets good share in shape of foreign remittances but what needs to be done is to enhance that potential through holistic framework approach which can be done through office of national economic security. This office shall be comprised of high powered multi stakeholders board of governors from all organs of state including judiciary and military. The purpose of this office is to have project coordination and project continuity in place. Furthermore, this office shall be given enough authority that even if there is a change in government this office ensures that certain projects remain intact and continues its progress. The establishment of such office shall be taken as a matter of economic emergency.
  
16. Narrative shaping has to take roots from the early age. If you look for example at the "YouTube Kids" application which is prolific among young kids, most of its comprehensible content is in Hindi. The cartoons and stories our children are memorizing are coming directly from a hostile country. It is therefore recommended that the State should build a dedicated lab for developing high quality Pakistan centric cartoons and other animation in Urdu and encourage, facilitate and fund private studios to do so. PTV can also play a leading role in making this happen.

PHOTO GALLERY



# PHOTO GALLERY



PRESS COVERAGE



# news and disinformation, experts assert at a National Conference

by Asia Free Press — April 16, 2022



ing finance. f April 11 (2022), banks received ications for housing finance unting to Rs409 billion, which was ily Rs57 billion a year ago, reflect- n increase of more than seven s, according to a statement issued ie central bank on Thursday. ese, banks have approved applica- amounting to Rs180 billion and rrsed Rs66 billion. : shows an increase in approvals of : than 11 times," the statement adding that banks had approved cations amounting to only Rs16 n in April 2021.

from Rs204 billion a year ago. Banks have also achieved almost 11 of the housing and construc finance target of Rs405 billion for first quarter of 2022. "To improve the provision of finan for the housing and construc tor to increase adequate housing in country and boost construction se activities, the State Bank of Paki (SBP) with the support of the gov ment has taken several measures s July 2020," the statement sai October 2020, the government : mented these efforts by introduci markup subsidy scheme - comm known as 'Mera Pakistan Mera Gha



bad: A Group photo of participants of National Conference under the auspices of Islamabad Ins

