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PRESS RELEASE

IPRI MEDIA WORKSHOP

“Hybrid Warfare and Pakistan’s Readiness: Time for National Narrative Construct and Strategic Foresight”

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Pakistan is an open state not a security state; and through the coordinated efforts of the government, military and the message of peace, for the first time, India was globally isolated. This was stated by **Mr Fawad Hussain Chaudhry, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting** at the One-Day Media Workshop on “Hybrid Warfare and Pakistan’s Readiness: Time for National Narrative Construct and Strategic Foresight” organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

The media workshop aimed to look at the emerging geopolitical trends, challenges at the regional front and the strategic foresight to counter hostile narratives. Delivering his keynote address, the Minister said that the issue of hybrid warfare is the most important one

in today's globalized, Internet-centric world, where countries like the US are also grappling with its impact. "Hybrid warfare is just another name for age-old adage of propaganda war", he said. "But now more so than in the past, kinetic warfare has become secondary and hybrid warfare has come centre-stage." He shared that after the 1950s, technology development changed the face of war and warfare. Hybrid



warfare can led to grave impacts if an idea and its presentation is able to convince millions. Speaking about Pulwama, the Minister said that "for the first time, Pakistan outclassed India because the government and ISPR made coordinated efforts to push Pakistan's message of peace, while India talked of war. India was globally isolated given such coordinated efforts. Modi risked the lives of millions of people for the sake of winning the coming elections," he remarked. Mr Chaudhry concluded that in order to move into the new century, the government plans to bring the international media back to Islamabad from Delhi so that they can see for themselves that Pakistan is an open state not a security state. "We need the international media in Pakistan to project and highlight our message of peace and goodwill." Mr Chaudhry also stressed the importance of modernising and reforming state media to win the battle against hybrid warfare threats.

Welcoming the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, speakers, media and diplomats to the Media Workshop, *Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique*, President of IPRI acknowledged the "outstanding manner in which Pakistan handled the Pulwama episode. State organs, including the media, acquitted themselves very well to protect the national interests and project the national narrative during a highly charged and explosive situation." He outlined how diffusion of technologies and connectivity through computers, tablets and smart devices has become a means to induce paralysis to a state's war machinery. "The role of soft power is much more pronounced and free and rapid flow of information through social networking sites has brought the conflicts to every home. The flip side of it all is that there is this over-securitization of society where everything under the sun ends up being branded as fifth generation warfare," he said. President Saddique further pointed out that although, Pakistan has achieved credible full-spectrum strategic deterrence yet conventional military and indeed overall national power potential vis-a-vis India remains, highly asymmetric. The ensuing

situation encourages India to resort to indirect strategy and strategic coercion on every possible opportunity, real or stage managed. He warned that adversaries of Pakistan are “openly eyeing to undermine the grand strategic project of CPEC and exploit some of our internal fissures to achieve their nefarious designs. They would not hesitate to employ covert and overt means to destabilize Pakistan. Given this scenario, our security strategy ought to synergize all elements of national power i.e. political, diplomatic, informational, military and soft power tools both for defensive and offensive realms”, he concluded.



In the working session chaired by **Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi**, Associate Professor from the Quaid-i-Azam University highlighted that hybrid threats and fifth generation warfare have become a staple of Pakistan’s security vocabulary. It is important to understand how decision-making elites perceive, define and respond to such threats. “Ethnic social, sectarian, ideological fault lines exist in the country that stand to be exploited by outside powers. However, a balance needs to be created between a securitized narrative focused on threats and enemies and opportunities that cater to the political, economic and social development of Pakistan. While we focus on threats, we should not also lose sight of our ability to provide basic functions and services to people of our society,” he concluded.

On the issue of legal challenges in countering hybrid threats in Pakistan, **Mr Ahmad Nazir Warraich**, advocate and expert in international law stressed the importance of enforcement of the relevant laws; hiring competent law officers on merit; and reforming the criminal and civil procedure codes for better case management to nip any nefarious designs against the state.

Providing a detailed overview of the narratives and technologies used in hybrid warfare, **Lieutenant General (R) Khalid Naeem Lodhi**, Former Defence Secretary, highlighted that it is important for Pakistan to first put its house in order rather than

blaming an “enemy” for issues that may be genuine home-grown problems. To counter any present and future hybrid warfare threats, he recommended placing the existing and well-provisioned Joint Services HQ under the Prime Minister reinforced by civilian/military and specialized resources such as the NSA and CJSC being responsible for planning, organizing and executing future strategies to counter fifth generation warfare threats.

Discussing media strategies in countering hybrid warfare, *Mr Shahzad Nawaz*, filmmaker and media specialist called for more focus on a “forward narrative” rather than counter narrative in tackling the challenges of fifth generation warfare. He also recommended that the government, think tanks and media should adopt inclusive, holistic and linear strategies in order to reclaim Pakistan’s culture, and consolidating one’s history. He stressed the importance of media regulations & accreditation; and revisiting Pakistan’s education curriculum according to the needs of the contemporary times.

Mr Mirza Masood Baig from PTV World; Dr Syed Rifaat Hussain from the National University of Sciences and Technology; Dr Vaqar Ahmed Khan from the Sustainable Development Policy Institute; Ms Fereeha Idrees from Abb Takk News; Dr Muhammad Khan from International Islamic University, Dr Ahmad Ijaz Malik from the Quaid-i-Azam University; and Mr Jamal Aziz from the Research Society of International Law (RSIL) also spoke at the workshop. They stressed that in view of the emerging political power competition, Pakistan needs to look at all threats holistically, and rather than relying on military strategy, gear up at the political, economic and diplomatic fronts. The country needs to have a political narrative, based on consultation along with a coherent strategy to counter any hybrid threats. While sociocultural grievances and insecurities need to be addressed by the government, Pakistan also needs to manage its economic image, strengthen think tanks abroad and be loud about the country’s competitive advantage. This will guard the country against inimical elements and frustrate the subversive pursuits targeted at isolating and weakening Pakistan, it was recommended.

