



WEBINAR

THE NEXUS OF DISINFORMATION

**HOW AFGHANISTAN, INDIA AND ISRAEL
SHAPE ANTI-PAKISTAN NARRATIVES**

 **11 AM**  **Tue, 25th Nov, 2025**

BRIEF REPORT

Conceptual Framework

The webinar explored the emerging disinformation nexus in which Afghanistan, India, and Israel-linked digital networks coordinate multi-layered influence operations aimed at undermining Pakistan's political stability, foreign policy posture, and international reputation. These actors rely on recycled footage, AI-generated visuals, impersonation techniques, and OSINT-style misinformation to weaponize digital platforms, particularly X, rapidly circulating fabricated content that outpace verification efforts and shape public and diplomatic perceptions. Drawing on patterns seen during episodes such as the Iran-Israel escalation and past Pakistan-India tensions, the discussion situated recent Afghanistan-related narratives within a broader landscape of information operations and psychological warfare, where perception manipulation, narrative dominance, and confusion creation function as strategic tools. The session further examined the geopolitical motives behind such campaigns, the policy and communication gaps that enabled their amplification, and the pressing need for Pakistan to strengthen its information-security ecosystem to counter coordinated external influence operations.

Speakers



Dr. Rabia Akhtar

Director of Center for Security Strategy and Policy Research

Dr. Rabia Akhtar, Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Lahore and founding Director of the Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research (CSSPR), is a leading Pakistani scholar on national security, disinformation, and emerging technologies. With a PhD in Security Studies from Kansas State University, her work critically examines South Asian deterrence dynamics, the role of media in the age of deepfakes, and the impact of coordinated information warfare on state security. As Editor of Pakistan Politico and a former member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs, Dr. Akhtar combines academic expertise with policy experience, making her a central voice in Pakistan's discourse on counter-disinformation, strategic communication, and security narratives.



Dr. Mohammad Irfan Ali

In-Charge of the Department of Politics and International Relations

Dr. Mohammad Irfan Ali, In-Charge of the Department of Politics and International Relations, is a scholar of International Relations with a strong background in media and political analysis. Having previously taught at the University of Central Punjab's Faculty of Media and Mass Communication, he brings a unique blend of academic insight and practical media experience to his work. Dr. Ali has contributed columns

to major newspapers, led the Urdu programming section at FM 92.6, and frequently appears on television as a political analyst. With over twenty publications in HEC-recognized journals, participation in national conferences and policy forums, and active involvement in academic development initiatives, he is recognised for his contributions to research, teaching, and informed public discourse.



Salman Jawed
Director PAYF

Salman Javed is a media and diplomacy professional with over 15 years in strategic communication and public diplomacy. He currently leads initiatives that bridge policy, youth engagement, and digital storytelling to strengthen Pakistan's public diplomacy and regional outreach. An alumnus of Punjab University, National Defence University (NDU), Naval War College, and Harvard Kennedy School, he has been associated with several think tanks and youth-led organizations, mentoring emerging voices and promoting dialogue across cultural, economic, and knowledge domains.



Amna Hassan
Research Coordinator, South Asia Times

The webinar was moderated by Amna Hassan, who opened the session by underscoring how coordinated disinformation has become one of the most underestimated security challenges facing Pakistan today. She noted that while the country's political and strategic debates often focus on conventional threats, the rapid rise of multi-state narrative manipulation, particularly from Afghanistan, India, and Israel-linked networks, has received far less structured attention. Amna emphasized that the purpose of the discussion was not merely to catalogue grievances or cite isolated incidents, but to unpack the larger ecosystem in which these narratives are produced, amplified, and weaponized. She stressed that understanding this information battlespace is essential for designing credible responses, strengthening public resilience, and ensuring that Pakistan does not continue to cede narrative ground to external actors.

Discussion Points

Salman Jawed: Director PAYF

Overview of the Disinformation Nexus

Evolution of Influence Operations

- Influence operations are not spontaneous; they are layered, structured, and strategically sequenced.
- Since 2010, with the rise of social media propaganda, Indian networks began running large clusters of fake accounts.
- Post-2015, this evolved into institutionalized disinformation ecosystems.
- EU DisinfoLab exposed the largest coordinated anti-Pakistan network, operating for 15 years through 100+ fake think tanks, NGOs, and media outlets.

Post-Truth Era and AI-Driven Propaganda

- Instead of declining, disinformation campaigns have intensified, especially post-May 2025.
- India and Afghanistan are now running AI-generated content, including AI-generated nashids featuring anti-Pakistan messaging.
- Major crises like Pulwama and Balakot followed similar disinformation patterns.

Narrative Themes and Patterns

- The nexus consistently promotes narratives portraying Pakistan as: A rogue state, terror hub, destabilising actor, or Muslim Ummah betrayer.
- Recent themes include: Punjabi supremacy discourse pushed by Afghan and Indian accounts. Pakistan–Turkey “neo-colonial” alliance narrative. Greater Balochistan agenda, heavily amplified in May 2025.
- MEMRI launched a “Balochistan Desk” headed by Mir Yar Baloch, whose account activity traced back to India. MEMRI is run by former Mossad officers (since 1999).

Evidence Through Platform Transparency

- X's latest feature revealing account locations has exposed that many leading anti-Pakistan accounts are based in India, Afghanistan, and Israel, validating the existence of a coordinated nexus.

Need for Renewed Academic and Policy Attention

- Although earlier discourse highlighted these networks, the debate faded over time.
- The current surge of coordinated info-ops requires reviving research attention and constructing a firm evidence-based case around the nexus.

Dr. Irfan Fani: Head of department Politics and IR at University of Central Punjab.

Historical Context and Contemporary Challenges

Media's Central Role in Shaping International Relations

- From Gutenberg's printing press (1459) to the telegraph, radio, and finally the internet, each innovation transformed political communication.
- The internet blurred the line between truth and disinformation, posing unprecedented challenges.

Global Disinformation Ecosystems

- Recently, Israel has consolidated exceptional control over mainstream media.
- CBS News was reportedly acquired by a right-wing Zionist lobbyists.
- When surveys showed a 55% global tilt toward Palestinians, Israeli media networks intensified narrative control.
- Discussions on buying TikTok to alter its algorithm indicate strategic intent to weaponise platforms.

India's Post-9/11 Narrative Engineering

- India reframed the Global War on Terror to target Kashmiri freedom movements by labelling them as terrorism.

Impact on Pakistan

- Disinformation portraying Pakistan as unstable has:
- Burdened Pakistan's economic perception globally.
- Contributed to MNCs withdrawing from the country.
- Pakistan urgently requires a National Digital Agenda to confront multi-layered disinformation threats.

Dr. Rabia Akhtar: Director of Center for Security Strategy and Policy Research

Strategic Response Framework

PRISM: New Analytical Platform

- CSSPR has launched Pakistan Risk, Incident and Security Monitor (PRISM):
- Documents and analyses terrorism, political violence, and disinformation operations.
- A resource for researchers, analysts, and policymakers.

Reality of the Afghanistan-India-Israel Nexus

- The nexus is real and operational, not speculative.

- Its depth and effectiveness require a multi-layered counter-disinformation strategy.

Five-Pillar Strategy for Pakistan

1. Rebuild Credible Local Narratives

- Empower journalists from Balochistan and KP with information, access, and training.
- Highlight human development, counter-violence, and governance success stories.
- Local narratives have greater legitimacy than official statements alone.

2. Strengthen Digital Literacy & Psychological Resilience

- Train communities, especially youth, to recognise psy-ops and disinformation patterns.
- Educated citizens often underestimate psychological warfare, this perception must change.

3. Synchronise State-Society Communications

- There is a stark disconnect between state messaging and public perception.
- A whole-of-society communication strategy must accompany counter-terrorism operations.
- 48,000 Intelligence based operations launched in 2025 mean little without effective narrative framing.

4. Diplomatic & Legal Countermeasures

- Regularly expose India's disinformation networks at the UN and other forums.
- Challenge Israeli narrative manipulation tools like MEMRI, which openly hosts separatist material.
- Ask why such organisations operate freely despite promoting secessionist agendas.

5. Digital Counter-Operations

- Establish rapid-response units to debunk fabricated content.
- Train civil society in OSINT and digital investigations.
- Monitor cross-platform activity using AI and open-source intelligence.

Strategic Communication Around CPEC

- CPEC remains a primary target of external disinformation loops.
- Coordinated messaging by Pakistan and China is essential to protect the project's narrative integrity.

Final Message: Reclaiming the Epistemic Space

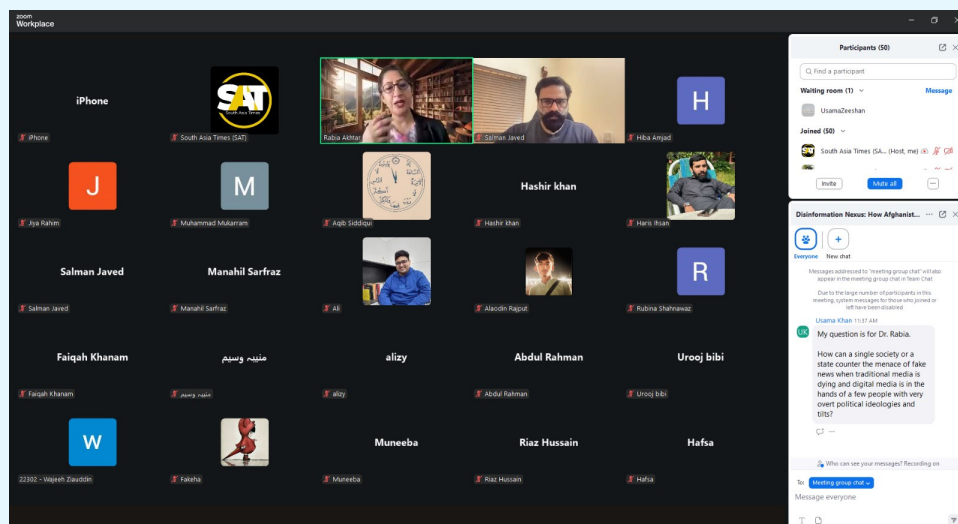
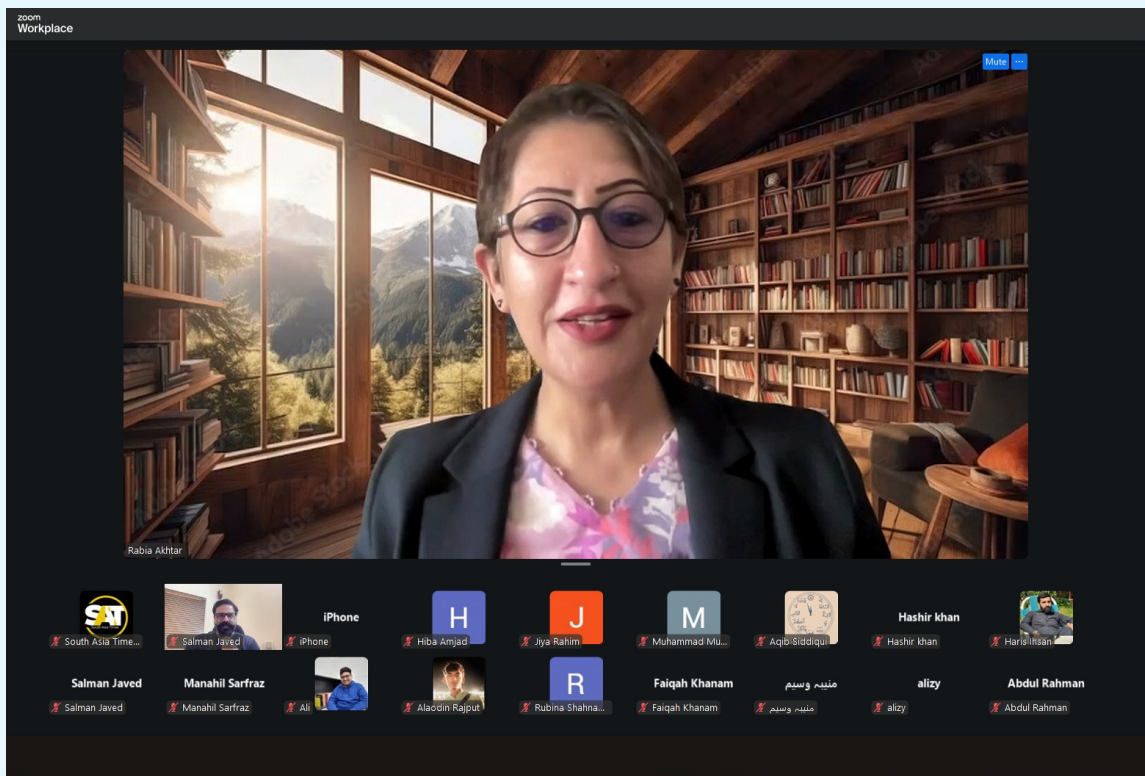
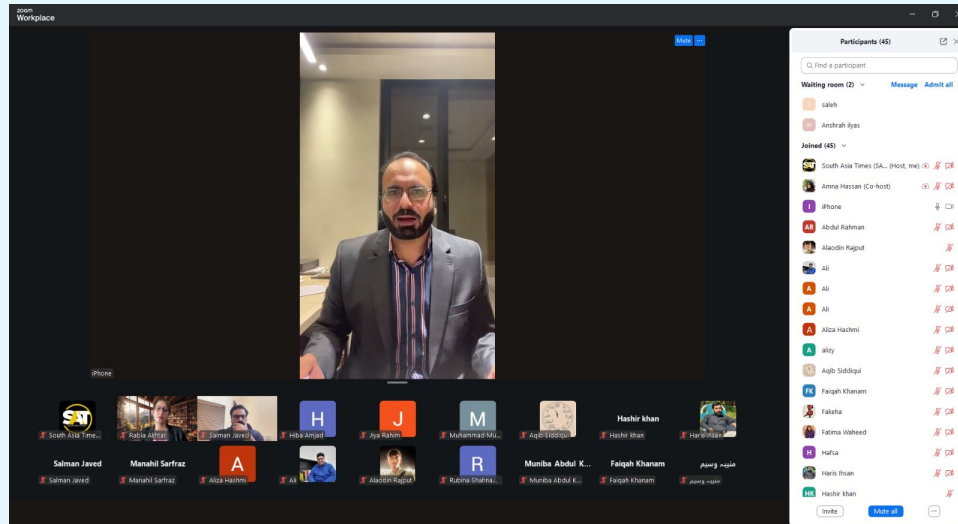
- Disinformation is an epistemic threat, the power to define Pakistan for the world.

- The nexus thrives because Pakistan leaves an information vacuum.
- To reclaim narrative space, Pakistan must:
- Document truth,
- Amplify it consistently,
- And build human-centred narratives grounded in local realities.

Policy Recommendations

- **Establish a National Counter-Disinformation Unit** that integrates state institutions, academia, and private digital-security experts to track, map, and respond to coordinated influence operations in real time.
- **Develop a Rapid Response Protocol** for debunking viral fake news, including pre-approved communication lines, cross-platform monitoring, and verified government channels that issue timely clarifications.
- **Strengthen Local Narrative Production** by empowering journalists and community media in KP, Balochistan, GB, and AJK with training, access to information, and support for human-centred storytelling to counter externally manufactured narratives.
- **Institutionalise Digital Literacy Programs** across universities and civil society platforms to build public resilience against AI-generated misinformation, selective truthing, and bot-driven amplification.
- **Enhance Pakistan's Diplomatic Signalling** by regularly presenting evidence of operations by Afghanistan, India, and Israel-linked networks at the UN, OIC, EU, and other forums to shape international understanding of the threat environment.
- **Deploy OSINT and AI Analytics** within security and foreign policy institutions to identify cross-platform narrative flows, detect origin points of influence campaigns, and integrate these insights into national security assessments.
- **Strengthen Strategic Communication on CPEC and Regional Affairs** through coordinated Pakistan–China messaging to counter narratives that frame the project as exploitative, unstable, or a geopolitical liability.
- **Modernise Cyber and Information Laws** to clarify responsibilities of platforms operating in Pakistan, establish transparency requirements for high-risk political content, and enable lawful action against coordinated foreign digital operations.

Webinar Highlights





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