CYBER WARS: A paradigm shift from Means to End

Abstract

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The last couple of decades have seen a colossal change in terms of the influence that computers have on the battle field, to an extent that defence pundits claim it to be a dawn of a new era in warfare. The use of computers and information in defence has manifested into various force multipliers such as Information Operations, C4I2SR Systems, Network Centric Warfare, to the extent that commentators are terming this information age as a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). These advances have not only revolutionized the way in which wars are fought, but have also initiated a new battle for the control of a new dimension in current contemporary world: The Cyber Space.

Over time cyber warfare has assumed the shape of an elephant assessed by a group of blind people, with every one drawing different meanings based upon their perceptions. Under these circumstances there was a gradual paradigm shift in military thinking and strategies, from the strategic aspect to the tactical aspect of cyber warfare laying more emphasis on cyber attacks and counter measures. This resulted in the formation of a notion that cyber warfare or information warfare is a potent force multiplier, which in a sense downgraded the strategic aspects of cyber war to a low grade tactical warfare used primarily for a force enhancement effect. The author believes this is wrong, cyber war is a new form of warfare and, rather than cyber war merely being an enhancement of traditional operations, traditional operations will be force multipliers of cyber war.

This paper tries to shelter myths woven around cyber warfare so as to illuminate the strategic aspects of this relatively misinterpreted notion. This paper will elucidate the scenarios and mechanisms illuminating, the process of using the strategies of cyber war, so as to achieve conventional objectives. The paper will also analyze the doctrine and strategies including first and second strike capabilities with regard to cyber war. This paper identifies a paradigm shift from the conventional belief of cyber warfare acting as a force multiplier for conventional warfare to the recognition that conventional warfare will be acting as a force multiplier around cyber war and hence making cyber war as the principal means of achieving grand strategic objectives in the contemporary world order.

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