

Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Policies to Curb the Menace of Terrorism

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Abstract

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) initiated ten months before the Peshawar Army Public School (APS) assault in Dec 2014, when an all Parties meeting was directed and chaired by the PM Nawaz Sharif including the top army brass, pronounced an inclusion of twenty Points of National Action Plan (NAP) to impede the terroristic and extremist activities in the country. Recently, through a thought-process, the detailed NAP fundamentally redesigned and included two more points while setting the motives of the NISP: the establishment of Army courts to manage the postponed trials of “jet black” terrorists and death penalty reinforcement for the attackers of (APS) and other has terrorists’ activities to curb radicalism and militancy in the state. In view of this scenario, this paper attempts to propose some reflections on what are the policy management challenges in implementation of NISP and NAP? What are the deficiencies of state’s regulatory authorities which plague the effective implementation of NISP in Pakistan? What are the perils and prospects of NAP? And what are the achievements of NAP thus far?

Keywords: National Internal Security Policy, National Action Plan, National Counter Terrorism Authority

Introduction

The most recent NAP has been devised to combat the challenges raised by both militancy and extremism and spotlights the ongoing radicalization and insecurity. The plan comes into play as a result of formulation of NISP that has perpetuated for over a year. Currently, the aforementioned two policy outlooks underline the government’s commitment to launch counter-terrorism operations. However, since the beginning of devolution reforms in 2010, the changed governance political structure and the civil-military divide that outlines Pakistan’s power-landscape impacted the implementation of both the policy frameworks.

Historically, what empowers the military to influence all state decisions relating to security is civil-military disparity in the long run. The military is on the front to tackle internal security issues as per the description of the plan and the discretion of the civilian government. With respect to Afghanistan and India, the external security issues are directly related to the internal security. However, there are many serious internal security challenges faced by the Federal administration of internal security frameworks. Whether the provincial governments are assigned the authority on the NISP is not certain and that how far is the Federal government capable of inflicting reforms to achieve the desired results. So far the progress remains mingled. Recent stats of the progress signal a dilution of the counter-terrorism goals, which are originally established to take action against banned extremist groups and Madrassa Mafia, into combating the repercussions from religious sectarian militias. The militias working with impunity are a bar to the success of counter-terrorism goals and that it is necessary to curb that insurgent capacity in order to achieve peace. For this purpose, Pakistan’s officials must harness both military and civil institutions. To effectively achieve this goal, a diverse and strong strategy is needed to incorporate an Internal Security Adviser, National Intelligence Directorate, Parliamentary participation, enhanced financial commitments, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), provincial strategies on counter-terrorism, education reforms and changing public narratives. There must be a practical implementation of such measures with necessary improvements.

Important Points of NISP

After a lapse of 14 years, Muslim League Nawaz came back to power with a heavy electoral mandate in 2013 at a national level. The party, among other promises, proposed to establish a cogent internal security policy and

counter-terrorism strategy. Its electoral mandate holds that the force and war are no solution to the internal extremist war. This wave of terrorism has deeply pierced into the communities and needs to be eradicated through a well thought-out, sustainable and comprehensive strategy and policymaking that should comprise of political, social, economic and administrative measures to extirpate this evil. Some overhauling and improvement in the security structure is the need of an hour so that with a modern apparatus, a parliamentary and democratic oversight on security agencies could be shifted to the better surveillance of the society with improved co-ordination between counter terrorism forces and the intelligence (Dawn, 2014).

The Cabinet approved the first National Internal Security Policy (NISP) of Pakistan with full voting support in Feb 2014, and espoused motives to set out proper implementation of the writ of the central government within national boundaries, launch counter-terrorism policies and overthrow insurgency to tranquilize the society from all internal menaces. In December, NACTA and the Ministry of Interior (MOI) mutually established the NISP and in Feb 26, 2014, an approval was taken by the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS). Subsequently, on Feb 26, 2014, for the purposes of achieving mutual consent of all the parties on countering extremism, the central government revealed the NISP in the National Assembly.

There are three divisions of the NISP: Operational, Secret and Strategic. As per the description of the MOI, the strategic part focuses on negotiations with those militants who agree to a dialogue and those who don't, are at the hit-list of the security agencies and operations are launched to tackle those unwilling ones. The operational section concentrates on the government's resolutions to make sure the civilian security through a planned strategy and actions conducted both at provincial and national level. The secret section is classified.

NISP Details

Under NACTA, builds Directorate of Internal Security (DIS), interpreting all grids of strategic, operational and tactic intelligence, military & civil, under single forum to counter terrorism and establish its departments, Response Force is built up with national reach and the competency of co-operating with both armed and civilian forces (Police) to secure Madrassas and religious places in the provincial and central establishment. Below are the major strategies initiated under the NISP:

1. Establishes arms preventive measures nationwide.
2. Eradicates the illegal use of electronic devices, cell phones, and electronic, social and print media which poses threat to the national security as well as keeps check on cybercrime.
3. Interdicts illegal cross border activities, runs and oversees border control and the illegal movement of precursors, drugs, goods and persons. Weapons and any other threatening material is to be expelled.
4. Modernization of the apparatus of internal security system and all domains of justice system, judiciary, high-security prisons and police at national level.

National Action Plan Agenda

1. Capital punishments for "jet black terrorists" sentenced to death
2. Establishments of Army Courts under military supervision
3. Interdicting all other terrorist organizations
4. NACTA enforcement and implementation
5. Execute action against hate-speech
6. Ban on the funding of banned organizations
7. Restricting banned wings to operate under camouflage
8. Establishment of a special counter-terrorism force
9. Safety to religious minorities
10. Regulation of seminaries
11. Restoration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) & bringing improvements in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)
12. Disassemble extremist's communication networks
13. Check on the spread of extremism on social media and the Internet
14. Continuation of Karachi Operation
15. Assigning adequate authority to Balochistan to tackle security issues
16. Prevention of sectarianism
17. A comprehensive strategy for Afghan refugees
18. Refinement of Criminal Law for intelligence operations
19. Amending constitution for Military Courts

Policy Management Challenges

It's the responsibility of the NISP and the NAP to integrate security aspects across regional and central administrations. Their responsibility includes disassembling extremists' networks, engaging all stakeholders and

keeping check by utilizing the resources of security institutions to root out internal evils and ensure security. Both the NAP and NISP gives a more convenient way out if policies are applied in a practical, coordinated and timely manner. The only thing likely to bar the implementation is the contention between provincial and the central government over strategic security formation, the indefinite arena of the roles of NACTA over security assurance and counter-terrorism efforts, provision of information sharing between military and civil security services. Another barricading element is to speculate how to operate and implement the stated strategic measures on counter-terrorism through police or established units. Moreover, during the first quarter of the formulation of NAP, Federation made necessary amendments to devolve the counter-terrorism policy (Yusuf, 2015).

Over Centralization

In February 2014, upon the introduction of the NISP, the central government narrated that Prime Minister Sharif would set up a consensus, seeking the confidence and opinions of all four Ministers of provinces, upon extending co-ordination between provincial and central governments as regards counter-terrorism. A resolution was held but the Council for Common Interests (CCI) and the constitutional institution for policy implementation was not considered. So the previous course of actions keeps the process running. (Dawn, 2014).

However, provincial governments were not taken into confidence upon the formulation of the NAP and NISP. Indefinite degrees of authorities keep blocking the progress of each of them, especially provided that the only focus of the Nawaz administration seems to be Punjab, neglecting all other regions outright. The opposition party Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf governs the most endangered province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and despite of being in line with Federal stipulations, it is still not on board with the Federal agenda.

The NAP and NISP likewise reveals parliamentary scrutiny of security undertakings and the part of parliamentary boards of representatives in observing execution. The responsibility of parliamentary boards is preliminary in internal security check and degree of responsiveness of the institutions to counter terrorism. At regional level, provincial bodies are the key tools of Federation that are answerable for fundamental goals at the grass-root levels (districts). Since they have an access to the general public at large, they are to play a significant part in ensuring vocational training, education and Madrassa observation. Owing to the pressure from regional governments at provincial level, most provincial states have been running without electoral local bodies since 2009 despite several court orders. Without local bodies, the basic interpretation of counterterrorism objectives—for instance, public organizations against extremism, education, instructive changes, and better vocational trainings—for putting them into practice will continue to be seriously compelled.

The Role of NACTA

The National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was establishment not just to made a long-terms assessment of terrorism in Pakistan, additionally would guarantee that all acts of terrorism in shape of radicalism, terrorism, and uprising would be treated with due iron hands. As the incomparable national counter terrorism non-military personnel body, NACTA can impact general national security arrangement adequately exchanging, at the appointed time, the responsibility for national security approach from the military to the nonmilitary personnel government in Pakistan (Dawn, 2014). There needs to be a strong system of coordination and communication between the central and provincial governments, security institutions and military intelligence in order to put NISP into proper implementation and to repel insurgency for which no such system is ever-established. However, NACTA is proposed to provide with such a set-up to maintain internal safety with the given mechanism (Dispatch News Desk, 2014).

All policies get confirmed and approved by the Governors' Board of NACTA and chaired by the PM. Ministry of Interior (MOI) plays as the head of the Executive Committee and Board's stakeholder as well as perform the task of overseeing the policies. The matters of human resource management and budget-allocations are done by the Board. At the moment, there needs to be proper injection of human resources, financial backing and intelligence sharing into NACTA.

To put into practice the light aspects of NISP and supervise them, there shall be formulated an office for the task called as Directorate of Research and Coordination (DRC). There is need for a public narrative to be pronounced in open for the purposes of countering the menace of fanaticism, insurgency and terrorism. This demands a mutual consensus of the provincial and central administrations and institutions based on the stipulations of 1973 Constitution and provisions of the strategy. Both the NISP and NAP itself declares the terrorists as the enemies of the nation.

Coordination Challenges

New Internal Security strategies require NACTA to establish a Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) under its supervision. It's also essential for all intelligence services to convey and disseminate information to the central and the regional states governments as well as to the Internal Security forces such as Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) through NACTA. As per sources, the information sharing from the ISI and the NACTA is sensitive because

of the expected threats related to it, in which military-oriented intelligence is also included. The Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) does not essentially entrust that turf to the public because of the army interference, as asserted by a report of an analyst (Newsweek Pakistan, 2014).

In fact the NISP plan was reworked and translated into the Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) to establish Directorate of Internal Security (DIS) and the staff included army and civil branches of the central government. On internal safety challenges, information sharing is done by its expert outfits so as to keep check on immigration, money laundering, cybercrimes, internal cooperation, border control and Interpol coordination. The most sensitive priorities of the specialized JID were to alarm the security institutions of the suspect terrorist wings and the posed militant threats. The JID is yet not fully into effect. (Express Tribune, 2014). The key operations countering terrorism are still going on due to the 'de facto' management of the army security forces.

Role of Dedicated Forces

A Rapid Response Force (RRF) consisting of police and paramilitary personnel was built up to patrol the central capital city, Islamabad, 3 months after the formulation of the NISP approval from the central Cabinet. The Rapid Response Force is liable to monitor militant activities and crime in the federal capital. (Express Tribune, 2014). The patrolling and monitoring of the Rapid Response Force is in the charge of NACTA which additionally include the officials of rangers, the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Islamabad police and the paramilitary troops (Express Tribune, 2014). The special task forces of the Anti-terrorism Forces (ATF) of the Punjab were appointed to tackle terrorism in the Punjab province and military expert and trained commandos provided training to the ATF in January 2015. (Ghumman, 2014). Through a merger made by the provincial government, the Counter-terrorism Department (CTD) absorbed into the ATF owing to its reported failures to arrest and identifies the key suspect of militancy, disassembling their sponsor-outfits, targeting their strategies and destroying their fiscal aids (Kharal, 2013). Other local administrations have applied the similar strategy. Later on, Military trained another recruits of the Balochistan Anti-Terrorism Forces (ATF) (Shah, 2015).

There is a dedicated police command in the province of Balochistan which is overseen by a senior police official (Balochistan Police, 2015). The Sindh Government has followed suit and prepared its own ATF and proposed to create a police Crime Investigation Wing (CIW) & Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) (The News Tribe, 2014). However the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has yet to establish a specialized task force for countering militancy, it has, on the other hand, formulated Counter-Terrorism Department with definite and clear instructions to provide surveillance and monitoring, intelligence collection, trying terrorism cases, arresting terrorists and registration of terrorist cases as well as analysis and research (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2015).

It is too hasty to interpret the performance of these bodies since they are too active nascent since their inception. Nevertheless, the various issues and challenges encountered by the police force and other security agencies are not attended by the formulation of these task bodies. Evidently, the Punjab government's CTD possessed highly equipped apparatus to for monitoring but it was not used as effectively as proposed (Manzoor, 2013). Likewise, the objectives set for police department are not in line with counter-terrorism strategies. Criticism is arising as to the effectiveness of the military's performance in operations and the effectiveness of the police force in dedicated specifically for countering militancy. (Capital TV, 2013).

Need for Broader Police Reform

However the part played by police in counter-terrorism activities is noteworthy. In modern day, the police department is divided into many sub-departments in regard to policing which is a targeted task. The central role of the police is result-oriented in respect of operations because the police has to hold close association with various local communities and retains updated information for efficient counter terrorism activities. For civilians, the first and the foremost department to interact with law enforcing agencies and security outfits of the country is the police. There, the lack of trust between these two domains may lose grounds (The News, 2013).

Each provincial government has its own police department however the struggles to bring reforms in the department have been weightless since 2008. Upon the elected government taking over in 2002, a number of improvement were denounced which were conducted under Gen Mushraff's administration in 2008.

The enhanced financial capacitance for police departments has been brought over, as mentioned earlier such as the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa increased budgetary figure for security improvements by 66% since previous 5 years. For the financial assistance of the families of martyrs who lost lives in the war on terror, additional funding was made to their heirs as to compensation packages, pensions and increased health facilities. However, the police are not capable of fighting terrorism in its present form, although their presence on the forefront in operating against insurgents was praiseworthy. Analysts proposed that the introduction of 11 thousand police force was required corresponding to the Peshawar's 6.7 million population although it has 6 thousand force at present. Likewise, during 2010 to 2014, the government of Punjab also increased funds for law and order by 61%. (The News, 2014). These fund distributions are so far for the entire section and actual police department budgetary

figure have immovable given the inflation rate is considered while interpretation of the figure.

In the same period, the government of Sindh proposed a budgetary increase of 54% for internal security order (Government of Sindh, Finance Department, 2014). However due to ownership of more advanced and modernized resources and equipment, the police force of Sindh has comparatively shown effective responsiveness to tackle the issues encountered by regional security outfits (Saeed Shah & Syed Shoaib Hasan, 2014). Around 2.5 million of population in Karachi covering a 34% of its area with 178 surveillance units is under the influence of TTP (Crisis Group Reports, 2015). Karachi police force has around 26,667 personnel and analysis shows that it needs an additional induction of 100,000 personnel to efficiently manage the megacity (Mansoor, 2014). The rangers (central paramilitary units) jointly with the Sindh Police carrying out operations based on intelligence sharing and curbing the militant networks in Karachi. And it succeeded in capturing over 2,250 terrorists partnered with various outfits and wings within first 9 months of launching the operation. (Haider, 2014).

Since 2007, terrorism has badly affected Balochistan and it has staked its resources in enforcing law and order in the region. Most of what was resourced by it was allocated as regards compensation and salaries of the martyrs died during the duty. The controls of Balochistan police are confined to cities and towns, therefore the situation over there is even more perplexing; the other 90% of the region is monitored by tribal chiefs in partnership with regional security bodies. The paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) provides these forces in order to address the situation in Balochistan which demands expanding legislative outlook of the province; Mushraff's regime strived to address the reforms however it remained dormant later on.

Unclear Financing

In spite of the allocation of funds, central counter-terrorism bodies are reluctant to speak on the possible solution to convince the regional government to impose reforms and utilize the resources more effectively. Meanwhile, the federation has barred from budgeting any more funds for the purpose.

The Ministry of Interior (MOI) Nisar Ali Khan reportedly described the additional need for 32b PKR for the applicability of the NISP despite unveiling it. A lot of this cost, 22 billion speaks to common spending and 10 billion gave under the Federal NISP activities. (Sher & Azad, 2014). However, in the financial plan for the 2014-15 year (which occurred after the endorsement of NISP), the national government cut subsidizing for NACTA 95m-92m, incorporating 63m in managerial costs identified with pay rates. Moreover, the legislature has additionally fundamentally lessened the spending distribution for inside division, which deals with the organizations in charge of interior security, (for example, paramilitary services), around 40% for the monetary year 2014-2015. (U.S. Institute of Peace Reports, 2015). If the government spending plan is a political duty marker, NISP is unmistakably not a need. Accordingly, nor are the regions of particular spending lines for the NISP. Rather, the areas have expanded the common spending plan for the states and control and check over institutions.

Madrassa and School Curricula

Another compelling barricade challenging the security agencies the Madrassa networks. As per reports endorsed by Islamabad and Rawalpindi police, there has been a strong involvement of some Madrassas in supporting the banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Azeem, 2014). The religious Madrassas are found to be involved in activities acting as backers or guarantors of TTP and their sufferers of extortion in Islamabad, as reported by some media groups (Azeem, 2014). Other sectarian religious groups have been accomplice in the act of violence against Shia and Sunni Madrassas.

The NAP and NISP are responsible for the regulation and monitoring of the Madrassas and religious places such as mosques, churches. The government proposes to build up an extensive and all-encompassing strategy to monitor Madrassa networks by inducting productive improvements and preventing outside sponsorships of such sectarian religious wings (Javed, 2013). Fifty percent (50 %) The operations of the federation in conjunction with the policies of NAP and NISP received adverse feedback from right-wing religious institutions. However, regulatory steps and arrangements and coercive measures are poles apart. So far the response has been practical rather than technical; it is to capture the suspects instead of reforming the regulatory structure. (Tankel, 2011:224). The operations of the federation in conjunction with the policies of NAP & NISP received adverse feedback from right-wing religious institutions (Rahman, 2014).

In the country, an estimated number of registered Madrassas is around 22,052, and most of the seminaries are unregistered and out of security check. (Express Tribune, 2013). The Pakistan Madrassa Education Board (PMEB) is meant to modernize the traditional religious institutions in order to expel extremist factors out of the sectarian clergy and it was formulated in 2001. (Iqbal, 2003). It is in the mandate of the NISP and NAP to bring forth public awareness that addresses the real definition of Islam as opposed to the posture endorsed by the militant literature, but the success of this narrative is still wriggling. (Hasan, 2014).

Critical Overview

The ongoing war on terror and military operations greatly disturbed the lives of people on one side but on the other

side proved the great resilience of the nation in this perspective. The nation was never prepared to coup with such huge internal and external outcomes. In the opinion of the researchers the nation is tremendously effected psychologically in this war against terror, however, the operations against militancy will continue on many fronts but here is one thing needs to be highlighted that the traditional strategies adopted against the militants should be revised and advanced accordingly in order to counter the militants effectively. In fact the civil government and military personnel are doing every possible effort to control the militancy nationwide and to minimize whatever psychological effects of this war on the society. The unity amongst the political leadership and civil military coordination shows the motives and strength of the nation (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

The establishment of different councils for the purpose to consider all these issues and to suggest the long term planes and adjustments; like the Madrassas registration and curricula development, FATA and Balochistan situation normalization and political-economic lift is also sowing that Pakistan is keen for social transition and development. Security forces and other government agencies investigated 183,557 individuals, out of which 8,800 suspect terrorists arrested throughout the country in 2 months of 2015, as per media reports. (Hashim, 2015). Since the APS attack in Peshawar in Feb 2015, army announced to have effaced 293 militants in the operations in addition to the captures and interrogations. There has been a fruitful change in the relations with United States and Afghanistan after the achievements in the course of operations to cut off al-Qaeda and TTP networks and decapitate the Haqqani group. Central government also call for Afghani government to exterminate TTP resides and sources in their region. Therefore it is opined that the Pak military is clearing the way for mutual dialogue between Taliban and the Afghan government (Sethi, 2015).

The imposition of capital punishment for the suspect terrorists was the top most heated domain of the National Action Plan (NAP) and it revived after a period of 10 years. (Hussain, 2015). The execution got many negative reactions. There will be a necessity for the formulation of a strategy to keep check on internal security of the country. Likewise, Governments and the analysts omit to notice that the sort of war terrorists are carrying is quite different and simply establishing army courts to stop them is not enough. Another part is whether army shall give up strategic resources such as Jihadist militias is unclear. The National Action Plan shall remain dormant regarding India & Afghanistan unless the crucial foreign policy motives are not altered. (ISPR, 2014).

Conclusion

The National Action Plan is a positive strategy but not as much equipped as required to counter the well-built menace of terrorism going on in the country. The nation has got the potential, and meeting up of the military and political powers gives a positive indication as to consistently find an answer for it. There are, however, some appealing issues too in the arrangement which are likely to endanger the motives it is embarked to meet. The current arrangement, which is approved in haste without necessary consultancy, has shifted major momentum of the counter-terrorism strategy on the army. From the application of authority to legislation duties and arrests now rest with the security forces. Every one of these issues is satisfactorily is investigated by the board of directors, yet a long accord and consultation would be required to concentrate on a portion of focuses: for the occasion, political compromise with non-conformists in Balochistan, changes in FATA, and the observing, enrollment, and the remote financing of Madrassas. Clear benchmarks would help accomplish the goals of the arrangement and it needs responsibility and straightforwardness. Apart from this, it must break into long-, medium-, and short haul motives. The issue, in order to be investigated in more detail, would require further enactment.

After Peshawar assault, the reaction to domestic security shows a greater degree of harmony than a shift in state's mechanism to deal with counter-extremism. The problem with the National Action Plan is a deadly drive and its indistinct mechanism supporting army. Carrying out arbitrary arrests and executions, and setting up stringent counter-extremism legislation, failing to make citizens any safer, deprive them of fundamental rights. The root causes of extremism and terrorism, without changes in the state's policy-making, will remain unresolved, thereby letting the savage extremists and insurgents to continue exploiting the absence of the authority of law. It is far from being a reality to restore peace in FATA via militarized approach; hanging civilians without straightforwardness and sentencing them in military courts while bypassing the legal, and non-military personnel law-requirement offices of assets are the most inadequate and unreal arrangements to counter terrorism. The civilian and elected administration, instead of further degrading the criminal equity structure, should upgrade police's ability to examine, avert and distinguish wrongdoing and to hinder parallel army structure which redirected limited resources and has made perplexity.

The switching and changing concessions to the security arrangement shall need reasonable efforts from legislators and law-makers. They should drive counter-terrorism procedure by framing non-military personnel considering almost zero resistance towards bestial extremist wings with no refinement between bad militant and good militant, as the official has repeatedly vowed. Furthermore, the government should spend this money on the education of the people which poor cannot afford rather than expending huge sums of money on military expenditure and defense. It is worthwhile to know that the key factor behind involvement in extremist activities is because people are alien to rationalism and cannot do reasoning, and even sometimes lack morale and ethics.

Therefore, it is important to assess root causes in order to fully prevent the ongoing wave of extremist activities in Pakistan.

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