NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COUNTERING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM

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Abstract

Today Pakistan is faced with the most serious existential threat since its independence, unfortunately this threat emanates from within and our existing structural and attitudinal failings are exacerbating the problem. Extremism is a state of mind while the terrorism is a tool for violent manifestation of extremism - the reasons for both vary from ideological to socio-economic disparities to quest for rights and justice to plain psychological. The nature, extent and footprint of extremism and terrorism in Pakistan, too spans the entire spectrum. Pakistan’s existing strategy to counter the two menaces is stated to revolve around the three Ds of Deterrence, Development and Dialogue, however barring the first there is little progress to account for. There are some workable contemporary models which Pakistan can draw pertinent lessons from and appropriately modify to suit our environment. The paper proposes a proactively multidimensional yet a workable strategy of SHAPE i.e. to Seek out the perpetrators of terror, Heal the discontent and the victims, Administer justice and governance, Prevent and protect against extremism and terror attacks and Engage communities, neighbours and the international community against the two evils. Taking a holistic view of the existing challenges and the environment an attempt has been made to suggest viable policy guidelines encompassing socio-economic, political, legal, ideological, military, informational and other related planes.

Introduction

Terrorism threatens both the security and ability of people to live their lives in peace. In recent years, a new form of terrorism has emerged, bringing together domestic and international movements. Internationally, these draw on perceptions of particular nations’ foreign policies, unresolved regional conflicts such as Palestine and Kashmir as well as the extremist ideology associated with Al Qaeda, which sees governments in Muslim countries as ‘un-Islamic’ or
apostate and considers the use of violence against them as religious duty. Domestically, extremism and terrorism emerge from deeper and longer-term factors, including political and socio-economic exclusion. Particular challenges are presented by modern technologies, which allow propaganda, communications and recruitment opportunities to terrorist groups, support radicalisation, and encourage violent extremism. Events or individuals do play a major role in the emergence of contemporary terrorist networks, but in developing strategies it is equally useful to focus on the effects and outcomes.

Aim

To analyse the phenomena of extremism and terrorism in Pakistan and propose a National Strategy for countering Extremism and Terrorism.

Contemporary Pakistan

Terrorism and extremism damage the purpose and security of the nation state. This paper is based upon a national purpose that "Pakistan shall be a sovereign state wherein the principles of democracy, equality, tolerance, and socio-economic justice as enunciated by Islam shall prevail". For Pakistan, the rising trajectory of terrorism is clear: from 56 recorded incidents in 2002, resulting in 102 deaths, the figures rose to 1946 incidents and 2380 deaths in 2009. While Pakistan has always been mildly sectarian, today, it is not only confronted with its most serious internal threat but is bound by geography to suffer threats spilling over from Afghanistan as well. Prudent as Pakistan’s counter-terrorism policies and strategy of political engagement, social development, and selective use of force are, these have yet to deliver lasting results. The success of military operations in Swat, Bajaur, and South Waziristan will not deliver lasting outcomes unless reinforced by measures appropriate to address the underlying causes. The alarming indices of Pakistan’s economic and social sectors represent a serious security challenge to the country. The divisions on sectarian, religious, ethnic, and ideological lines combined with socio-economic disparities and weak governance all contribute to the increase and expansion of existing fault lines. Beyond the
casualties, the socio-economic costs of terrorism to Pakistan too are substantial with losses for 2007-08 adjudged at over US$8 billion\(^5\) while the Pakistan Security Research Unit\(^6\) suggests losses of around US$ 35-40 billion since 2001-02\(^7\).

**An Overview of Terrorism and Extremism**

Although the real motives may be masked by a range of competing agenda, terrorism emerges from grievances borne of political oppression, cultural domination, economic exploitation, ethnic discrimination, and religious persecution. Extremism is a social phenomenon that can be reflected in a state of mind or through attitudes and may be based on perceptions. It is generally described as having political or religious ideas / actions that are extreme and thus not found not normal, reasonable or acceptable to most people, in other words they claim to violate common standards of ethics and reciprocity. It is founded on judgments of inequitable or unfair treatment; deprivation from economic equity, lack of access to opportunities, stereotyping, discrimination, or communal segregation. Cause of extremism may be the extremist himself that may be reflected in his relationship with his family or society including all the contradictions between faith and behaviour, ideals and reality, religion and politics, aspirations and achievements etc. Corruption of regimes with their disregard for the rights of their people, lack of social justice and the consequent state of helplessness also act as strong contributory factors. Religious alignments too may become vehicles for projecting extremism. The radicalization process links extremism and terrorism and is the adoption of an extremist belief system, including the willingness to use, support, or facilitate violence, as a method to effect societal change; however, not all extremist attitudes lead to violent behaviour.

Achieving an internationally agreed definition of terrorism has proved difficult\(^11\). The use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to both state and non-state actors, but difficulties emerge when the use of violence is perceived as legitimate. There are, however, commonalities among definitions\(^12\) and these include an intention to cause a political or coercive effect.
through pressures aimed at a particular target audience. Terrorism is invariably planned and intended to achieve particular goals and is rationally employed against selected targets rather than a random act. A definition may be seen as “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons and/or property by an individual, group, community or a state for the purpose of intimidating or coercing a government or a people for political, social, ethnic, economic, or religious purposes”\(^1\). Terrorists believe they have no alternatives for their political, economic or religious grievances, therefore they resort to violence to gain publicity and force acceptance of their demands. Causes of terrorism may be historical, cultural, religious, economic, social or political. Unresolved international disputes; like Kashmir and Palestine, have also led to adoption of violent means. There is a relatively small range of motivating factors for the terrorist; these are indigence\(^1\), ideology, injustice, identity or an international agenda; these encompass, revolution aiming to collapse a particular regime, state-sponsored terrorism\(^1\), criminal terrorism where terror is used for material gains\(^1\), nationalist terrorism for seeking a separate state, religious terrorism to further what is seen as divinely commanded purposes and ideological terrorism aiming to alter a belief system.

Extremism is closely associated with terrorism but two are not the same. Extremism is a state of mind whereas terrorism is a physical act. Extremists insist on their beliefs and are intolerant of others’ views while terrorists resort to violence to achieve their objectives. Some extremists use terrorism as a technique or a tool for manifestation of their ideals. It is prudent to emphasise that all terrorists are extremists but all extremists are not terrorists.

**Extremism and Terrorism in Pakistan**

There are many reasons for terrorism in Pakistan, ranging from sub-nationalism to ethnic, sectarian, and religious divides. Each group has its own ideology, grievances, sources of funding and politico-religious influence. For most of its existence, Pakistan had been free of terrorism, save sporadic and specific acts of religious and sectarian nature. However, the Afghan Jihad, with underlying polarization and economic disparity, together with General Zia’s
Islamization drive, turned Pakistan into an ideological battleground fuelled by drug and Kalashnikov culture. During this period numerous Madaris were established which were later used as seminaries for Afghan Jihad. The total number of Madaris which was barely 137 in 1947\(^8\) reached to thousands by the turn of the century. Jihadi culture thus took its roots in our society and gained patronization of politico-religious parties. Sectarian organizations subsequently emerged on the political scene. Abetted by societal weaknesses, extremism transformed into terrorism. Defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan too emboldened the Jihadi Non State Actors (NSA) that subsequently manifested through a new form of international terrorism. The tragedy of 9/11 added new dimensions to terrorism while in Pakistan it gained impetus as a reaction to Pakistan’s support for coalition operations in Afghanistan. The situation further aggravated in 2007 after the Lal Masjid episode which gave fillip to the activities of a new religio-political organizations like Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. This, in 2009, challenged the government leading to military operations in Swat and FATA. Extremism and terrorism are no longer specific to the tribal areas, Pakistan’s societal, economic, judicial, and governmental weaknesses provide space for extremism and terrorism to thrive. Additionally, there are also close links between organised crime, black money and external elements. The overarching picture includes Al Qaeda and its misplaced ideology of ‘Jihad’ and its agenda to establish a parallel government in the name of Islam and objectives which include withdrawal of Pakistan Army from FATA, the eviction of US/NATO troops from Afghanistan, and to re-establish a Taliban Government\(^9\).

It is also worth mentioning that the structural weaknesses present in our society helped these organizations grow into powerful NSAs. Pakistan over the years has shown dismal performance in achieving Human Development Goals. – the existing inflation rate hovers around 11\(^{10}\), unemployment between 5.5% to 15.2%, population growth around 2%, a literacy rate of around 54%\(^{11}\) and poor health care – We spend only about 2.6% of our GDP on Education and health\(^{12}\). Our poverty stands at 33.4% ranking 101 out of 135 countries and literacy at 54.2% which is 134th out of 182 countries assessed in the world\(^{13}\). Pakistan’s 141\(^{st}\) position\(^{14}\) on the
Human Development Index in 2009 is indicative of our challenges. Pakistan also suffers from corruption and bad governance due to many factors some of which are politicization of state institutions and public functionaries, lack of transparency, checks and accountability, weak enforcement of rule of law and rent seeking behavior of decision-makers. Corruption in Pakistan over the last three years increased by 400% and our ranking now is 139 out of 180 countries in the world\textsuperscript{15}. Economic prosperity and social development cannot take place in a lawless society. The criminal justice system today has become inefficient and despite the efforts made under National Judicial Policy of 2009, the backlog of cases awaiting adjudication in various courts is still over 1.3 million\textsuperscript{16}. There is also a pronounced lack of uniformity in the education system and three different categories of private and government schools and Madaris have created distinct disparities in our society; the resentments created are leading to hatred and polarization. Besides, due to pronounced sectarian cleavages, the Shia-Sunni as well as intra sectarian conflicts are on the rise. Extremists of one sect are now willing to annihilate the other while some Madaris continue to encourage extremism. Some political and religious groups also maintain undeclared militant wings who incite hate, conduct target killings and resort to myriad pressure tactics against governments. Of course all these internal factors and the weaknesses of our society provide opportunities to external elements to have a field day in Pakistan. The Taliban movement in the border areas aims to pursue the Afghan conflict, resist foreign forces and establish Islamic rule, carving out a sphere of influence within FATA and parts of KPK\textsuperscript{17}. It is also orientated towards providing safe havens to Al-Qaeda and its affiliates and their agenda is woven deeply into the fabric of both local politics and feed on local grievances. The Pakistani Taliban or the TTP, in spite of drawing their inspiration from the movement across the border, are distinct from both Taliban of Afghanistan and the mainstream religious elements in Pakistan, even though there are critical linkages between them\textsuperscript{18}. The strategy of TTP revolves around projecting militant activities as struggle against infidels and creating public perception that security situation will improve if government withdraws its support to US.
Contemporary Counter Extremism / Counter Terrorism Strategies

The difficulties associated with terrorism are well known and there are numerous examples of national counter-terrorism strategies. However, one size does not fit all and each tends to be designed to meet particular national needs. Nevertheless, some of the tools derived through international experiences are applicable within Pakistan. Since 2001, international work on counter-terrorism has moved away from traditional policing and application of draconian measures to a focus on communities. Analysis shows no evidence that a draconian approach produces any increase in the effectiveness of counter-terrorism. Community alienation, for whatever reason, plays an important part in sustaining extremism and violence.

UK / US Models. Examples of contemporary strategies include the UK Model with its Four Ps – Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare and the US Four Ds Model. The latter aims to Defeat terrorist organisations through relentless action; to Deny terrorists the support and sanctuary they need to survive; to win the war of ideas and Diminish the underlying conditions that lead people to embrace, rather than shun terrorism; and, to Defend against terrorist attacks.

India. Conversely, India’s official report points up the failures inherent in an event driven or episodic counter-terrorist strategy and where containment is effectively left with law enforcement and security forces. India lacks both a coherent strategy and a long-term vision on counter terrorism. The report also points to the need to improve “intelligence network and policing capacity at both central (union) and state levels to meet the challenges and the fundamental importance of a legislative and administrative framework.”

Other Countries. In Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia the emphasis is on development of the ‘Prevent Strategies’ through centralised control, aiming to tackle the longer-term issue of terrorist groups regenerating. Their policies are marked by regional
cooperation, which has some relevance to Pakistan’s position with Afghanistan. Saudi Arabia has followed a three-pronged Counter Terrorism strategy of Prevention, Cure, and Care, which is described as a very successful model. In addition to combating terrorism by force through security and law enforcement, the Saudi government put in place an effective legal system to dissuade and punish terrorism, prevent terrorist financing through charitable donations and money laundering. Additionally a host of reforms in education, information and other social sectors have also been undertaken.

Not all historical models of counter-terrorism policing deliver long-term success and may increase a community’s alienation from the security forces, perhaps exemplified by unsuccessful techniques applied against Irish terrorism in the UK. Such techniques also generally require a need to review legal machinery and tighten legislation to meet the fresh challenges when dealing with domestic terrorism or extremism.

**Lessons for Pakistan.** There are a number of lessons to draw on:-

- Countering extremism and terrorism require a holistic strategy with strong central control, a greater emphasis on political, educational, and economic initiatives and less on military operations. Regional terrorism requires full engagement with the neighbours.
- Remedial measures should be focused on education, health, welfare and the elimination of poverty.
- Presence of a strong political will, patience, amnesty, and compromise for reconciliation and building social cohesion.
- Need for an effective de-radicalization campaign backed by intellectuals, academics, religious scholars and the media, aimed to eliminate the idea of terrorism and violence and supported by intellectual effort to uproot the extremist ideology.
- The police need to be in the lead with the military in a support role; prolonged military operations tend to alienate the populace.
Analysis of Pakistan’s Existing Counter Extremism and Terrorism Strategy

Pakistan does not have any officially declared/notifiedocumented Counter Extremism/Terrorism Strategy. The strategy developed during the last regime concentrated around a military response, despite recognition of the need, little importance/resource allocation was accorded to other strands. The present political government has attempted to follow other strands of policy in this regard but with little success. Pakistan’s existing response so far could be described as “Three Ds”, namely Deterrence, Dialogue and Development. The government’s first choice of strategic response is to deter terrorism through the military and civilian organizations. The Pakistani Law enforcing Agencies (LEAs), especially the military, have been the instrument of deterrence. As aptly illustrated by Operation Rah-e-Rast in Swat Valley and Operation Rah-e-Nijat in South Waziristan, the military approach has been to sanitize the affected areas and hold the area till the rebuilding starts. This was the first time in the history of the country that Pakistan’s military was deployed in the region. The Police force was ill-prepared for this and therefore paid dearly by sustaining heavy losses. However, success has been achieved and efforts are now being made for joint efforts for undertaking socio-economic development, failing which the effects of success delivered through Military action would diminish with the passage of time. The government is also engaging locals as part of the strategy and is building consensus for clearing the areas from the terrorists.

While the relevant stakeholders are making efforts to combat terrorism and extremism, the strategy lacks coordination and coherence. Weaknesses include a lack of a comprehensive coherent National Counter Terrorism strategy, a lack of a comprehensive National Action Plan, the absence of a consolidated National Threat Assessment and fragmentation of efforts between different stakeholders sans an effective coordinating structure. In sum, efforts are sporadic, reactive, ad hoc, and predominantly military with little role of complimenting elements of national power.
Improved investigative techniques and international cooperation have increased the capability of the country’s law enforcement agencies, but much remains to be done in this regard, especially in the police force. Apart from being seen as corrupt, the police in Pakistan are ill equipped and lack the resources to deal with terrorism. In-service training, especially for the lower ranks, is almost non-existent; the ratio of police personnel to the population that they serve is ill adjusted to the task; and most police staff is kept busy with non-policing tasks like providing security for fixed installations and VVIPs. Pakistan’s institutional weaknesses have also resulted in the slow implementation of government decisions at the grass-roots level. A few ‘spoilers’ in key posts too can gravely damage the state because of the government’s inability to control them, even though it wishes to do so. Thus, institutional inadequacy can be seen paralleled with an inexplicable reluctance in certain high quarters to fully grasp and act against terrorism.

While individual departments and organisations have been receiving their usual annual budgets and funds for undertaking their operations against the militants, little funds for socio-economic development of the affected areas have been received from FODP; an action that is critical for determining success. Thus the two prongs of Development and Dialogue largely remain unaddressed.

Even though the government has taken strong policy measures against Jihadi organizations involved in terrorism in Pakistan, and there has been a marked decline in their activities, both domestic and international stakeholders are still not fully bereft of doubt. Part of the problem lies in the approach of the government to tackle this existential challenge. The government has so far acted in a piecemeal fashion of post-crisis reactions induced by external stimuli, rather than adopting a concerted pro-active strategy to avert a dangerous threat to national security. Every time the government responds to an international catastrophic event, it creates resentment among the local population. Moreover, there are also lapses in the way in which the government responds to such situations. For example, in the crackdown on Madaris following the London bombings, the police in Islamabad raided a female seminary, which created a public outcry in the traditional Pakistani
society and resulted in the removal of three high-ranking police officers from their posts.\textsuperscript{29} The Lal Masjid crisis of July 2007 erupted when the government’s hand was forced due to a sudden increase in the activities of the extremists and the diplomatic pressure arising after the kidnapping of Chinese nationals.

Today Pakistan is faced with the challenge of managing perceptions on War on Terror both internally and externally. Domestically, some leaders of national stature neither own this war nor condemn the terrorist activities, especially the suicide bombings in which thousands of innocent lives have been lost. On external front, Pakistan faces the dilemma of trust-deficit with its coalition partners who think that it is not doing enough against the terror networks. The Indian media is also in a traditional frenzy blaming Pakistan of nurturing the terrorist organizations. Still there is no formal institution at the national level to formulate and execute an information strategy. Despite having a very vibrant media, the government appears to have failed to capitalise on its reach to manage public perceptions, especially international, and countering militants’ themes are yet to be tackled.

The porous Pak-Afghan border too provides tremendous flexibility to the terrorists in their cross border activities. As a result, when military action is undertaken, these elements cross the border in to Afghanistan where they enjoy a relative freedom of movement and space to re-group, owing to support of their Afghan sympathizers and limited foot print of Coalition Forces on ground. This in turn, facilitates weapons and narcotic smuggling, which provides a boost to the criminal activities in the country. To prevent the cross border movement of the terrorists, Border Control Mechanism will have to be strengthened and finally the inability of the government to publically own or prevent a spate of drone strikes inside Pakistan and the consequent collateral damages undermine the credentials of a representative government.

**Relevance of Historical Models**

The historical models of counter-terrorism policing rarely deliver long-term success and may increase a community’s
alienation from the security forces, perhaps exemplified by earlier unsuccessful techniques applied against Irish terrorism in the UK or Indian policies in Kashmir. Particular conclusions are:-

- **Need for Legal & Constitutional Measures.** Counter-terrorism generally requires a review of legal machinery and tighter legislation to meet the fresh challenges when dealing with domestic terrorism or extremism.

- **Social Cohesion.** Underpinning contemporary counter-terrorist strategies is the concept of social cohesion, which draws on police engagement with the community as a source for information, followed by broader levels of trust and interaction. There is a need for effectively tackling sectarian issues through a balanced and even-handed approach by the police towards each community, irrespective of ethnicity or religion.

- **Poverty and Extremism / Terrorism.** Karin von Hippel suggests, there are a number of components associated with terrorism which at least provide the space to allow terrorism to take hold. The first of these is poverty; although there is no direct link between poverty and terrorism, terrorists will use the condition of the poor as justification to broaden their appeal. Equally, poverty promotes madrasa enrolment as the poor have no other option but to send their children to these free institutions.

- **Radicalisation.** The radicalised and unregulated madaris may develop radical agendas, predating a need to accelerate registration and reform. While resourcing of quality education is difficult, the capacity of the education system at local level, constrains rapid reforms. On recruitment and radicalisation, there is a need to properly understand the process. For example, generally, prisons are judged as areas for recruitment of criminals and there is a need to counter radical (to counter for countering) influences in prison.

- **Funding.** The issue of funding stretches beyond simply equipping LEAs, as funds are required to compete with terrorist organisations that are providing employment opportunities to the disaffected. Governments must
effectively meet socio-economic needs, if necessary, through international assistance.

- **International & Domestic Influences.** There must be a forward-looking strategy and some of the factors that currently sustain terrorism, both international and domestic, are likely to persist. Some groups in the Islamic world are likely to continue to support the political agenda associated with Al Qaida – although fewer are likely to support Al Qaida’s operational activities. Internationally, many of the conflicts and disputes, which show no signs of early resolution, may be exploited by contemporary terrorist organisations, while those areas of Pakistan with failing governance are likely to remain a concern for the near future.

- **Globalization and Technology.** The evolution and availability of technology will continue to enable terrorism and in some ways make it easier for terrorist organisations to threaten both international and domestic interests.

- **Use of Military.** The use of the Pakistani armed forces in counter-terrorism will remain an essential component in the medium term. The use of an army within its own country’s borders against one’s own people is fraught with presentational issues, even more so with the use of airpower, and demands constant efforts to retain public support. There is often a perception that the military dominates counter-terrorist operations, which distorts understanding. Clausewitz argues that ‘in less intense conflicts political aim is more complex and more prominent’ and in counter-insurgency the division of effort is judged as 20% military and 80% political action\(^{32}\). The ideal is an overtly police-led capability and the building of appropriate paramilitary police capability – a capacity that needs to be built. A secondary point is that continual use of military forces in paramilitary roles, ultimately blunts their military capability and requirements of conventional warfare e.g. Pakistani Army has undertaken 203 major operations since 2002, while in Waziristan the Army has been engaged in 35 major operations and 107 minor operations\(^ {33}\). At the higher end of counter-terrorism operations, the issues are markedly similar to counter-insurgency\(^ {34}\), where people are part of the
battlefield. Military engagements can take place anywhere, with civilians around, against civilians, and in defence of civilians. Civilians are one of the targets and objectives to be won, as much as an opposing force.

**Principles of Counter-extremism / Terrorism (even Insurgency Operations)**

There are a number of principles, which underpin counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations. First is the appreciation of the primacy of political purpose that any counter-terrorist strategy must always aim at long term objective by focusing on political outcome and not simply be event driven. Second is ensuring unity of effort across government. Third is recognition and adherence to the human dimension and how the nature and culture of the population defines the tools which are most appropriate; human security is often fundamental to wider governance processes and brings in or helps gain and maintain popular support. Fourth is neutralization of the power of the extremist / terrorist, not necessarily by force but encompassing political, socio-economic levers and by encouraging engagement with the political mainstream as well as drying up the resource pool. Fifth is operating in accordance with the law, an aspect that goes to the heart of human rights and sustaining public support for government policies and security force operations. Finally integration of intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination. This reflects both domestic and international intelligence efforts as well as those between local and central government levels and between different security agencies.

In looking at the resolution of terrorist campaigns, the Rand Corp in 2008 examined some 648 terrorist groups, active over the period 1968 to 2006. While statistics alone do not reflect which of the aforementioned tools were applied and whether in isolation or combination, the findings indicated that 43% ended due to political negotiations, 40% were eliminated by local police/intelligence efforts, 10% ended because they achieved their objectives and 7% ended because of military activity.
Proposed Counter Extremism and Terrorism Strategy

Despite the range of underlying causes, there are a number of principal components to any strategy. These components or strands are not however mutually exclusive and cannot be applied piecemeal. While it is true that not all such components will be necessarily applicable in every case, one common factor is the application of effective governance to ungoverned spaces. In terms of their application, the various components require persistent and coherent action. The terrorist groups find it difficult to survive in a coherent form under continuing political, socio-economic pressures and the rule of law. The resulting fragmentation constrains the activities of terrorist groups. However, at this point the provision of wider support to the community is essential to address such fragmentation and to preclude emergence of smaller self-generating terrorist groups. For measuring success, purely quantitative measures are inadequate; these must be supported by qualitative measures e.g. surveys of perceived risks, literacy levels, healthcare and not simply the number of attacks.

Components of Strategy

The principal components of the proposed strategy can be described as SHAPE, an acronym that proposes to seek out the perpetrators, heal the causes and effects, administer the people and institutions, prevent terrorism and extremism and engage the community. The objective of the proposed strategy is to ‘make Pakistan safe from extremist and terrorist violence, and eliminate the underlying conditions, which give rise to extremism & terrorism’.

Seek-out. To detect, disrupt and defeat violent extremists and successfully prosecute them by addressing the inadequacies of legal framework. Pursuing terrorists and reducing the threat encompasses proactive intelligence, investigation capability and a high-capacity prosecution process, from evidence collection to post-prison supervision and religious and psychological counselling.
Heal. This strand demands a population-centric approach and addresses political alienation of marginalized communities; a process in which some groups believe they have no stake in the country. This requires re-establishment of the government - writ through reorganization of justice, police, and governance mechanisms, underpinned by socio-economic reforms, employment and education opportunities. Winning hearts and minds requires a community-led approach to tackling violent extremism, enhancing community resilience and having an effective rehab and reintegration plan.

Administer. This component aims at improvement of governance mechanisms, organizing a methodology of a cross-government, inter departmental coordination machinery, mobilizing community and institutions and establishing a coherent plan for protection of critical national infrastructure.

Prevent: Terrorism has a range of effects which include loss of life, weakened social cohesion, retarded socio-economic development, weakened economy, radicalised youth, weaponised society, and damaged resolve to fight back. The strand of Prevention and Preparation encompasses areas like; Finding ways to prevent the dissemination of terrorist related material and knowledge, identifying capabilities needed to tackle various types of terrorism in Pakistan – in essence a National Risk Assessment, action against those who defend terrorism and abet violence. Ensure effective border, drug, finance and weapon control mechanisms, protection against ‘insider’s threats’: and need for institutional checks. With Pakistan’s greater electronic connectivity there is a need to ensure security of critical systems against cyber attacks and to prevent the misuse of commercially available hazardous substances.

Engage. There is a need to correct the ideology behind violent extremism, especially by supporting mainstream voices and protecting individuals, vulnerable to recruitment. The appeal of a simplistic ideology is easier to understand than democracy and human dignity and plays more easily among the poorly-educated. This process needs to be underpinned by a comprehensive strategic
communications and media programme, engaging moderate and reconcilable elements through a political dialogue and engaging neighbours and international community in a meaningful support for WOT.

Policy Measures

There is a range of recommendations, however, there are no quick fixes and each measure requires a concerted and continued effort which must be coupled with measurable targets and outcomes as well as appropriate review processes. Although many of these recommendations can be initiated relatively quickly, it must be appreciated that most outcomes are unlikely to emerge until the medium-term. Measures intended to address the underlying factors and grievances will naturally require sustained implementation over several years. The importance of the counter extremism / terrorism strategy requires direct ministerial oversight and accountability for each recommendation. The proposed response has been discussed under the three heads of NACTA, Counter Extremism and Counter Terrorism.

NACTA

Counter extremism & terrorism require a structured policy that encompasses all components of counter-terrorist effort and cross-government support, including that from provinces. It is proposed that NACTA should be established as a government department with a ministerial head, answerable directly to the Prime Minister. The ministry’s task may be expanded to encompass all aspects of countering extremism and terrorism. NACTA must immediately publish its strategy, which must encompass all of the components of the counter-terrorist and counter-extremist effort, with cross-government support, including that from the Provinces. NACTA should be responsible for ensuring that funding is targeted on vulnerable communities; it must have the authority to redirect funding by other ministries to particular initiatives. NACTA will also require Provincial nodes answerable to itself and support from local intelligence agencies, operating under the control of law enforcement agencies. In nut shell, it is proposed to Re-design
NACTA and extend its remit, through appropriate legislation at the earliest possible, so as to make it the highest level Focal Body for policy, decision making as well as implementation of strategy.

For the purpose of NACTA reorganization and functioning, it is essential that all the federating units have a voice in the policy level decision-making, affecting them. It is therefore proposed that NACTA should function through an Executive Committee, headed by the Prime Minister with members including ministers for Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Education, Health, Religious Affairs, Law & Parliamentary Affairs, provincial Chief Ministers (including Gilgit Baltistan), Governor KPK, Prime Minister AJK and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, the Co-opted Members to be other Governors, Chief Secretaries, Services Chiefs and Heads of the intelligence agencies. NACTA Executive Committee should meet on quarterly basis or when needed and its mandate should include policy and direction as well as the allocation of resources once policy decisions are made, the Minister NACTA to assume key role in implementing the decided policies through a Secretariat having representatives of concerned ministries, provinces, armed forces and intelligence agencies with the proposed tasks to formulate policy options for NACTA, translate decisions of Executive Committee, advise / ensure / oversee implementation and provide regular feedback to the Executive Committee. It is also proposed to have, under NACTA, a National Intelligence Data Base that must feed centralized analysis and dissemination – ensuring interagency collaboration between various Intelligence & LEAs, NADRA, Immigration etc and create data base on areas like profiling suicide bombers, likely sources of financing, IED and other explosives types & patterns, record / surveillance of immigrants/refugees, record of property sale / renting, record of affectees of terrorism and related issues.

COUNTER-EXTREMISM

Ideological Response.

- A flawed but simplistic ideology of hate is easier to understand than the messy construct of democracy and human dignity as it plays more easily among the poorly
To counter it, the recommended is four pronged strategy i.e.; promote correct and progressive interpretation of Islamic ideology focusing on tolerance, mutual acceptance, moderation, balance and respect for human life. De-radicalization of youth through education, appeal to Pakistani nationalism and Social justice.

➢ The response must also protect people’s civil and human rights and that must manifest through:
  • Nurturing moderate theological leadership through universities so that religious leadership re-transferred back to where it belongs i.e. learned scholars.
  • Across the board condemnation of extremism and terrorism i.e. no distinction between good and bad terrorists.
  • Govt to progressively assume responsibility to regulate places of worship i.e. Mosque registration, permission for new mosques & madaris and oversee activities of suspected individuals etc.
  • It is also proposed that NACTA launch a de-radicalization campaign, in consultation with Council of Islamic Ideology under the slogan of “The Message of Islam” through religious scholars. The aim being to:-
    o Identify extremist ideologies/themes in different groups and formulate correct responses in the light of Islam.
    o Send message of tolerance, moderation and balance.
    o Regularly visit /address universities, institutions, madaris.
    o Media campaign with emphasis on areas of convergence between various factions.
    o Work on religious decrees through consensus / Ijtehad of respected scholars / leaders of all sects, to nullify the messages of hate, suicide bombing and intolerance etc.
    o Rehabilitation and use of reformed extremists to spread the correct message.

Education
➢ Literacy and knowledge are important to enable communities to resist both extremism and terrorism and stopping distorted ideologies from taking roots. The present status of efforts is, at best, inconsistent and often poor or non-existent; the provision
of education remains woefully inadequate. Policies currently aim for 86% literacy by 2015 and a minimum 4% of GDP expenditure on education. An increase in education expenditure is essential, with short-term additional needs of affected areas being channelled through NACTA.

- It is also proposed to create of a Provincial Academic Service (PAS), with status and remuneration on par with Central Superior Services. The PAS must be responsible for quality of induction, training, and career progression of teachers; persons holding management positions must receive appropriate training and remunerations.

- Federal curriculum and syllabi guidelines may continue to be made and implemented by provinces but under federal guidelines and federation must retain the right to correct the parts of education syllabi, that are found offensive or promoting extremism.

- Checks are also recommended through establishment of community-based District School Board Systems; the boards, being made up of local respected citizens, to be responsible for school management and correct functioning.

- To change the mindset of youth from jingoistic to more cultured and refined citizenship, there is a need to introduce new chapters on achievers in science, art, literature, medicine etc more than the focus on usual war heroes.

To address parallel systems of education, there is a need to link schools, colleges, universities and technical institutes through an integrated syllabi / standard of examination and recognition system.

**Madrasah Reform.** In Madrasah reform, there is a need to address the fragmentation of effort and responsibility by strengthening of Madrassah Reform Board and continue to implement and build on Madrassah registration and reforms project. The aim is being to ultimately integrate religious education with formal education and strengthen lines of communication between government and Madaris. There is also a need to improve coordination, understanding, and consensus building among the five factions of Ittehad e Tanzeemat al Madaris.
Corruption. Terrorism funding has links to crime; endemic corruption is conducive to terrorism. The effectiveness of any anti-money-laundering campaign will be limited in an environment that allows free capital transfers across international borders. While it is important to meet wider societal economic needs (as in family remittances) there is a need for a cultural shift to achieve success. Pakistan has all the appropriate legislation but has yet to turn the legal corner. A new impetus is required by way of a strong Financial Intelligence Unit and creation of an effective anti-corruption agency. A transparent and accountable Anti-Corruption Commission remit should operate nationally without any political interference. Its chairman to be a person of good repute, appointed for a fixed period under a constitutional cover, and he/she should be aided in this job by professional representatives of civil society, on required bases. Such a measure also requires support through a wider cultural change, better check of financial regulations and legislation to introduce stiff punishments at the highest / strategic level. The key to success of such an exercise lies in transparency, accountability and impartiality.

Counter Terrorism Related Issues

Having enumerated measures specific to counter extremism, few measures related to counter-terrorism are discussed hereunder. However, it needs to be understood that most counter-terrorism related measures inherently address counter extremism as well.

Socio-economic Development. Socio-economic policies take time to deliver and longer still for any trickledown effect to emerge. Besides governance, the two key areas hampering development are the lack and wastage of funds and capacity issues. Following is suggested in this regard :-

➢ To address funding inadequacies and their correct utilization. Pakistan first has to look inward and it is proposed to have a complete freeze on defence expenditure and rationalization of non-development budget at present levels for next three to five years.

➢ It is also important that the government prepares coherent development plans to seek international assistance.
Simultaneously, a funding process needs to be established for socio-economic development at the heels of counter-terrorist operations. This should include micro-finance schemes and assigning priorities to achieve of MDGs, all of which are related to human development, in communities most affected by terrorism.

- All processes must be accountable and transparent and supported by appropriate data collection and target setting and a system of external audit / inspections must be encouraged and instituted.
- Appropriate policies are in place to tackle missing factors of production, such as human capital and infrastructure, as is the package to attract Foreign Direct Investment. Measures must be enforced to constrain domestic capital flight.
- In capacity building, the key issue is to improve management so as to ensure correct and timely utilization of funds, policy consistency, data collection and target setting for projects under political leadership, for development activities, aided by local community and the bureaucracy, avoiding frequent transfer of civil service decision-makers.
- Finally, there is a need to engage international community, NGOs, Pakistani diaspora and private sector and it must be impressed upon the west / partners that investment in developmental works in affected areas, is directly proportional to the long-term safety of their homelands.
- Few measures specific to FATA & other disturbed areas; to address the governance vacuum, formation of Dist / Agency Reconstruction Teams (DRTs) dedicated for each area is proposed. Such teams should comprise a pool of selected officers / staff of Dist Management, Police, line departments, NGOs and community members and may even be given performance-based incentives or conversely face accountability for failing to deliver. Such an arrangement ought to be a ‘transitional arrangement’ wherein the Army gradually hands over responsibilities to DRTs, which will eventually re-transform into regular district administration. The proposed tasks for such an organization are to manage IDPs, relieve Army after operations, improve governance and development indices, and manage rehabilitation and reintegration.
Legal Aspects. There are also a number of wider legal aspects that need to underpin any new strategy; for instance, all training must include an understanding of human rights. Counter-terrorism provides a particular challenge in establishing the right balance between the individual and the community as a whole. There are 13 universal legal instruments and three amendments which aim at preventing terrorist acts that cover a wide range of issues including the safety of NBC materials and protection of maritime navigation and fixed platforms on the continental shelf. Negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism with a focus on criminalizing terrorist offences are ongoing. Pakistan will need to remain fully engaged in this process. It is recommended to implement judicial reforms and increase the effectiveness of the criminal prosecution process, from evidence collection to post-prison supervision and reform special anti-terrorist courts. A process supported by a re-energized Joint Investigation Teams comprising ISI, FIA, IB, Police Special Branch, MI and others should be initiated. Similarly a mechanism for protection of judges, witnesses and employees is also needed. As for the measures specific to affected areas only, it is proposed that the government must keep its word and implement appropriately modified Nizam-e-Adl, in Malakand Division for a trial period of five years. Finally for the affected areas of FATA/PATA, the Frontier Crime Regulations should be abolished and basic constitutional rights be granted, in consultation with tribes, through a phased programme.

Political Initiative. Dialogue is a key to solutions confronting Pakistan, there is a need to drive the Balochistan package forward and engage in dialogue, from a position of strength, with all reconcilable terrorist elements, including the TTP and all dissident elements of Balochistan with focus on general public/commoners; traditionally the element of patriotism and loyalty towards Pakistan is still relatively more among the simple village folks as compared to some Sardars. Besides, there is also a need to initiate a domestic process of interfaith / sectarian dialogue and afford protection to such initiatives.
Information Campaign. There is a need to initiate a comprehensive Strategic Communications programme which is coherent and highlights government and military’s achievements and hollowness of extremist ideology – to retain popular support and win war of ideas; the aim being to sensitize and energize masses through engagement of all stakeholders and provide advice/ focal point to local authorities and general populace on the protection of public places. Engage communities as a vital part of counter-terrorism, with particular emphasis on communities suffering most from terrorism or inadequacies of government policies. Also provide an advice focal point for local authorities, commercial facilities and the population on protection of public places, including protection against toxic materials.

Policing. Pakistan has seen at least five identifiable studies during the 1990s and there is a consensus that the institution suffers from corruption, inefficiency, and limited capabilities. This requires a number of measures ranging from amending outdated legal and institutional mechanisms through creation of neutral and unified command structures and addressing capacity issues. Police failures arguably compound the threat of religious extremism and terrorism. A lot is required in this field including; establishment of community policing and a partnership model drawing together the police, local authorities, and the community, amendment of current police legislation to reflect current challenges and create institutional structures that ensure neutrality and democratic control, need for national standards for police recruitment and training, capacity-building programme encompassing a ‘train and equip’ process including development of police and FIA forensic capabilities – some practical components of capacity building may be orchestrated by the Armed forces, reviewing the remuneration of police officers and all the aforementioned need effective protection, at the highest level, to enable total de-politicisation of the department.

Military Aspects. It is time the government gradually begins to reduce its reliance on military tool and use it as a short term shock therapy alone. For conduct of operations it is proposed to alter the focus from large scale, resource and casualty intensive operations to intelligence driven sub-tactical strikes, with focus on
targeting leadership, support and resourcing networks. Operations are also recommended in remaining FATA, however, they must precede intelligence led operations to create and exploit existing cleavages & internal dissension among various Taliban factions. There ought to be a condition based but clear ‘Exit Strategy’ for military wherein it is able to ensure smooth / functional transition to civilian setups and re-assume the role of a deterrent as opposed to the applied force. On the issue of UAV (drone) strikes inside Pakistani territory, the government must take people in to confidence, failing which it should re-negotiate the provision of logistic support and Pakistan’s air space. Finally, there is a need to formalize joint training and exercises between police, CAFs and the Armed Forces.

**Risk Assessment.** Initiate a centralized risk assessment and a register of critical national infrastructure drawings by way of capitalizing on expertise and knowledge held by communities, industry, and the government sector. Establish a coherent national recovery and management plan for the swift recovery of critical national infrastructure following terrorist incidents. The National Risk Assessment should also drive training and capacity for law enforcement agencies, and include specifications with regard to standards of protection in both military and critical civilian systems against cyber attacks and the security of hazardous materials as well as application of passive measures. Second, is taking action against those who defend terrorism and violent extremism and undermine community cohesion. Third is border security, not only physical barriers but also tackling issues of false documentation and multiple-identities. Fourth is protecting against threats from insiders and guarding against the illegal transfer (theft and sale) of identity and security information.

**Target Terrorist Resource Networks.** Institute strict joint border control mechanism with Afghanistan and Iran, undertake selective terrain friction measures through fencing, mining, and surveillance mechanisms, with or without Afghan consent as well as review easement rights and undertake assessment of relocation of villages straddling border regions. Simultaneously develop a maritime counter-terrorism strategy supported by intelligence-led
boarding operations to inspect documentation / cargo. Most importantly target sources of supply and, in this regard, there is need to re-negotiate the terms of Afghan Transit Trade to include an on site inspection / taxation at port of entry along with random spot inspections enroute. This will likely lessen the possibility of arms, logistic support of terrorist organisations. For constraining financial sources, launch a concerted counter-narcotics campaign, with inter-agency and community support. Fully prosecute the requirements of money-laundering legislation and institute mechanisms to dry up financial sources of Havala /Hundi, through extension of formal sector to affected areas, and the charitable funding should only to be permitted for government registered Madaris and institutions and be subject to audit.

Community Engagement. There is a range of community related recommendations including; establishment of a National Advisory System under NACTA, to provide advice to community on tackling extremism and terrorism and providing a medium to report suspicious activities, initiate youth programmes, sports & extracurricular activities, transform mindsets and promote inter-faith and inter-sectarian harmony by nurturing moderate theological leadership through universities and youth programmes and finally, the government must engage civil society and business community to play a role in development of affected areas through exchange programmes, financial assistance and possible sisterhood of areas, especially between cities of Punjab and Sind with affected areas of KPK and Balochistan.

International Components. There are two principle international components, which must be coherent with Pakistan’s counter-terrorist strategy. Pakistan’s international standing is directly affected by its success in tackling groups which perpetrate not only domestic extremism but also those which pursue an international agenda; legitimacy issues apart, whenever terrorist groups with real or perceived links to Pakistan carry out attacks in other countries, there is inevitably a judgement on Pakistan’s ability and sincerity. Secondly regional cooperation is essential to tackling cross-border terrorism especially the terrorism in FATA which cannot be disconnected with the trajectory of Afghani and ISAF
counter-insurgency operations and represents a risk to Pakistan’s counter-terrorist strategy.

**Periodic Review.**

Delivery of the Strategy requires close cooperation between a wide range of organisations and stakeholders: local authorities, government departments, devolved administrations, the police, security agencies and intelligence agencies, emergency services, the Armed Forces international partners and multilateral organisations. Neither intelligence nor implementation mechanisms can be perfect. Due to environmental dynamics, there is a need for constant and comprehensive reviews of the strategies. It is therefore recommended that strategy and adjustments should be reviewed at periodic basis at each level, wherein all the stakeholders, departments and agencies, must give a detailed resume of the progress and identify shortfalls, if any.

**Timelines**

If history is an example, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland and Malaysia all took over 25 years, before any semblance of stability began to emerge. Though Pakistan is in the spiral of violence since 2002, there is still some time to go, before the effects of terrorism will began to wane away. As for timelines for success of strategy, there are no quick fixes and each measure requires sincerity and persistence. Unfortunately, considering the impoverished state of economy and internal dissension, time is not on Pakistan’s side. Therefore all the proposed measures are required to be initiated on urgent basis i.e. within one year; it is believed that the emergence of any discernible positive effects is likely to vary from medium to long term i.e. 3 to 10 years.

**Conclusion**

Extremism and terrorism are contemporary challenges to many nations. Such problems do not go away without concerted and well-articulated strategies at national, regional, and global levels. Pakistan has been experiencing more than its fair share of
extremism and terrorism and this paper has attempted to identify gaps in the nation’s strategy to counter the problems and proffer a response strategy. However, strategies and policies, no matter how well thought out, are always as good as the ability of the individuals to implement them. There is however optimism that this time around, Pakistan would conscientiously implement an effective counter-extremism/terrorism strategy so that, sooner rather than later, the twin monsters of extremism and terrorism are brought under control in Pakistan.

Authors

National Security Paper is a joint effort of a seven member panel headed by Brigadier Mirza Kamran Zia, including Commodore Muhammad Hisham (Navy), Air commodore Akmal (Airforce), Mrs Azra Mujtaba (Civil Services), Mr Abu Ahmed Akiif (Civil Services), Group Captain David Hayward (UK) and Group Captain OA Akinyele (Nigeria). The group leader Brigadier Kamran Zia is currently working as Director - Center of Excellence for Peacekeeping Studies (CEPS) at Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA) in National Defence University, Islamabad.

Notes

1 Coined by the panel, in consultation with NDC 09-10.
4 Abou Zahab Mariam, Sectarian Violence in Pakistan , Local Roots and Global Connection Institute of Regional Studies, Global Terrorism Genesis, Implications, Remedial and Countermeasures, Pan Graphics Printers Private Limited, P-383.
6 University of Bradford
Nazar Ahmed, “Dissolution of Traditional Institution in Pakistan”, 1996 and interview with Chairman Pakistan Madrassa Board by Panel, May 2010

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Aarish Ullah Khan, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, September 2005.

The state’s deliberate distancing from a policy to use Muslim extremist and militant elements for its proxy campaigns began when President Musharraf, in the post 9-11 scenario, jettisoned the Afghan Taliban, and by association all their co-conspirators inside Pakistan, when US demanded a reversal of Pakistan’s politico-military strategy towards Afghanistan and Kashmir. Although some of the sectarian terrorist organizations were proscribed prior to 9/11, the President’s speech of January 12, 2002 was a watershed: “We must check abuse of mosques and Madaris and they must not be used for spreading political and sectarian prejudices... Our mosques are sacred places where we seek the blessings of God Almighty. Let them remain sacred. We will not allow the misuse of mosques... If
there is any political activity, inciting of sectarian hatred or propagation
of extremism in any mosque, the management would be held responsible
and proceeded against according to law. We want to ensure that mosques
enjoy freedom and we are here to maintain it. At the same time we expect a
display of responsibility along with freedom.” (source: www.millat.com/president/1020200475758AMword%20file.pdf)

29 ‘Crackdown on Seminaries leads to shake-up in Police: 15 booked under 3

30 Pickering, S McCulloch, J and Wright Neville D. Counter-terrorist Policing:

31 Karin von Hippel 2005. International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism, and
Available from http://summit.clubmadrid.org/contribute/five-steps-for-defeating-
terrorism.html


33 HQ 11 Corps briefing to NDC09/10.

Rupert Smith KCB, DSO & Bar, OBE, QGM.


36 NACTA spokesperson 16 February 2010.

38 A resilient community is defined as a group that takes intentional action to
enhance the capacity of its citizens and institutions to both respond to and
Community Enterprise Canada Section 1 p5. Available at www.globalfacilitators.org.

39 A resilient community is defined as a group that takes intentional action to
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Community Enterprise Canada Section 1 p5. Available at www.globalfacilitators.org.

40 The Millennium Development Goals are 8 goals to be achieved by 2015 and
drawn from the Millennium Declaration adopted by 189 nations in September
2000. The goals are: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; Achieve universal
primary education; Promote gender equality and empower women; Reduce child
mortality; Improve maternal health; Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other
diseases; Ensure environmental sustainability; and Develop a global Partnership
for Development.

41 Daily Times, Pakistan. 12 April 2010