POLICY BRIEF

Public Policy and Strategies
for
Counter-Terrorism in Pakistan

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STUDY OF
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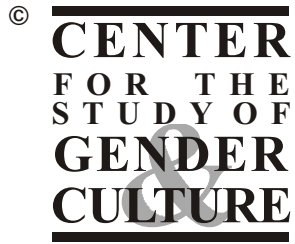
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1. **Introduction Case for a National Counter-Terrorism Policy**

In 2009 alone, over 2, 225 civilians have been killed in terrorist attacks in Pakistan, while over 1,000 soldiers of the Pakistan Army surrendered their lives defending their country from these attacks. The ongoing fight against extremist terrorists has also caused uncounted billions in damage to property and business, besides shaking the foundations of security that any citizenry relies on. The response from the Government of Pakistan has been politically clear: denouncing terrorism and acts of mass violence. Terrorist actions and tactics have been decried across the political spectrum in the country and by all official representatives globally. However, there has been less clarity and commonality in action.

Pakistan along with the 191 other member countries of the United Nations General Assembly, signed the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** on September 8, 2006 wherein a commitment was made to denounce terrorism and take concrete actions to prevent such acts and respond appropriately. However, in practice, much of the active response beyond statements is largely ad-hoc, reactive and ill-coordinated. Part of the reason for this is clear: this is a radically new form of threat that the country has not faced at this level before and is not prepared for. However, that is also true for most nations globally. Their responses have varied, but almost invariably include clear strategic directions to guide institutions and society to face growing threats from extremist terrorists at multiple levels.

The Government of Pakistan has also expressed the intent to declare a counter-terrorism strategy: the Prime Minister made this statement publicly in July 2008. A joint, closed-door session of Parliament approved a 14-point resolution on October 22, 2008 that was declared by the Prime Minister as a "policy framework" for future policy and strategy development. Since then no strategy has been made public, while over 3,600 civilians and 1,325 soldiers have died in terrorist violence. The resolution itself is a broad-based declaration of intent, which is strongly concerned with United States "drone attacks" and the presence of foreigners on Pakistani soil. However, it offers little direction for action, for instance emphasizing "dialogue" as a primary tool for conflict management without specifying any details.

1: **http://www.un.org/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml#plan**
   last accessed January 7, 2010

2: Zaidi, Mosharraf (2009) "Where's that Counter-Terrorism Strategy?",
   The News, Saturday January 2, 2010. **(http://www.thenews.com.pk/daily_detail.asp?id=216509**
   last accessed January 7, 2010).

3: Cf. Daily Times, October 23, 2008.
   (http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\10\23\story_23-10-2008_pg1_1
   - last accessed January 7, 2010).

In such a situation, the framework resolution may offer a lead-in to development of a policy, but that is a step yet to be taken. Furthermore, a policy would only be a precursor to a practical strategy with action steps. The challenges of formulating a workable strategy to face the terrorist threat is a formidable one in itself, made harder by the diverse political, constitutional and practical conditions in the provinces and the center, as well as by the persistent deficit in financing. Such challenges do not, however, obviate the need for a strategy, but rather frame the realistic parameters within which it must be made

The primary driver in formulating a policy and a strategy for countering terrorism is the recognized principle that "security is delivered through consent and never through force." In other words, only a military-style campaign will never be sufficient to quell the terrorist danger, which has been proven last year by events in FATA and NWFP. Most political scientists and analysts globally now acknowledge that the term "war on terror" is a misnomer; response by governments is actually a "struggle", reflecting the reality that "counter-terrorism is not principally a military campaign, but should be a **civilian-led, broad-based counter-insurgency directed against criminals."** Part of the reason for this is the need to actively involve a range of civilian institutions, for instance law enforcement agencies, as well as a broad cross-section of society and communities. These, and other, factors complicate counter-terrorism, making it more than a military strike in FATA or Swat (although those may be important also). Rather, counter-terrorism is now recognized as belonging to a broader realm requiring coordinated action at multiple levels and across multiple sectors. The most common, successful, first step globally in such a case has been the development of a central policy and/or strategy to guide government actions. Such developments globally can be useful for Pakistan, where such a macro-policy is urgently needed, although unique ground realities demand that any policy be locally evolved. The purpose of this brief is to make the case for, and suggest some parameters of, such a policy in Pakistan, while focusing on the more neglected aspects of the struggle against extremist terror.

4: Briggs, Rachel, Catherine Fieschi and Hannah Lownsbrough (2006) Bringing it Home. London: Demos. **(http://www.demos.co.uk/events/bringingithome** - last accessed January 7, 2010).

5: Chatham House (2004) "Responding to Terrorism and Other New Threats and Challenges in Central Asia and Afghanistan", Report of a seminar in May 2004. London: Chatham House. **(http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/12765_200504_rep_responding.pdf** - last accessed January 7, 2010).

6: Counter-terrorism strategies of the European Union and United Kingdom may be most relevant to learn from (cf: **http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st14/st14469-re04.en05.pdf** - last accessed January 7, 2010).

2. Parameters of a National Counter-Terrorism Policy

The task of formulating a **counter-terrorism policy and strategy** is formidable, particularly in light of the implementation gap of most public policies in Pakistan. In this case, the country also has to deal with complex networks of terrorists, not the convenient but misleading single labels such as "Taliban" applied by most Western media. Rather, the terrorist threat to Pakistan extends across provincial and national borders, in a space where traditional boundaries between domestic and international politics, as well as between government and society, have become blurred and interconnected. Consequently, the formulation of a public policy also requires a **networked approach**, involving institutions at multiple levels nationally (federal, provincial and local) as well as internationally. Such involvement has always been a challenge in Pakistan, but would be a necessary principle in any useful counter-terrorism policy. Also, the impact on and involvement of multiple agencies across society would require, as a principle, that any policy **include adequate consultation mechanisms during preparation and implementation.** Following the example of most nations globally, the Pakistan government would have to establish such mechanisms at the local, provincial and federal levels, besides including representatives of industry and civil society. Discussions in Parliament would also be a necessary step, possibly through the Parliamentary Committee on National Security. Such mechanisms may be mandated to continue functioning into the implementation of a policy. Initial coordination responsibility may reside under the Prime Minister (through the Secretariat) or in the Cabinet Division.

One of the reasons for a lengthy and extensive consultation process is the need to **articulate publicly the Government's detailed intent, values and framework for action.** Irrespective of future implementation, this declaration is important in itself to mobilize support and guide actions. As a principle, a policy should contain such an elaborated statement of vision and values. The 2008 resolution offers a sound consensus point to develop a more detailed vision and framework for coordinated action, but requires further deliberation. One major concern in this regard is a clearer statement on the Government's understanding of the root causes of terrorism, which is not yet clear in the resolution or in various government statements.

In line with the policy of the United States, the Government of Pakistan has also declared in the resolution that a "stake" needs to be built among the population in peace and democracy, especially in the tribal belt, and that this requires access to economic development opportunities. This has been argued for consistently over the past decade. This analysis must remain, however, only a partial answer, since it does not explain the active leadership by affluent, even highly educated terrorists in Pakistan and elsewhere. It also does not explain the fast recruitment by terrorists in areas in the country which are not

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7:   **Briggs et al (2006) op.cit.**

traditionally poor, including central Punjab and Karachi. Likewise, such a "structuralist" interpretation ignores the importance of ideas, especially the uniform religious rhetoric by terrorists and their idealization of a "conservative utopia". These ideas are being widely and uniformly disseminated, and there is no doubt that they are being eagerly accepted by recruits and sympathizers of terrorists. Finally, a structuralist, economic argument also ignores the relatively uniform political agenda of extreme terrorists, for instance regarding US and NATO presence in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, while lack of economic incentives may be part of the root cause for terrorism, it cannot be the only one. Experts now generally agree that, "Force alone is insufficient [in the struggle against terrorists]; it is vital to win the **battle for 'hearts and minds'** in order to separate extremists and terrorists from the people they are trying to mobilize." A detailed, consultative policy statement would allow the Government of Pakistan the opportunity to explore such causes more fully and decide action accordingly.

A detailed analysis of the root causes of terrorism allows the Government of Pakistan not only to present its vision publicly, but also to guide and coordinate actions effectively internally. Based on a comprehensive analysis, the Government can indicate different forms of actions needed by various institutions. If force alone is not sufficient to counter terrorism, as has been argued above, then a policy must encompass at least two broad realms of strategic actions, as below.

3. Counter-Terrorism Security Strategy

The **first form of strategy required is security-related.** Most countries have by now developed such strategies as part of broader counter-terrorism policies. Typically, security strategies are divided into three dimensions, exemplified by the European Union Counter-terrorism Strategy:

1: Protect: To protect citizens and infrastructure by taking pre-emptive measures to reduce vulnerability to attack. This dimension includes improved security of borders, transport and critical infrastructure to prevent infiltration. Finally, it also includes intelligence gathering through surveillance and counter-surveillance to try and know pre-emptively when and where an attack is likely to take place. This is primarily an internal security area in Pakistan it would require active coordination by the Ministry of Interior, but close involvement of investigative/intelligence agencies, border security personnel, Armed Forces, and local police. There are no relevant provincial or district departments to coordinate efforts in this dimension, which has been part of the problem in protecting citizens from attacks Government may decide to allocate additional responsibility in this regard to an existing provincial department and local department.

8: Chatham House (2004) op.cit.

9: Chatham House (2004) op.cit.

10: **http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st14/st14469-re04.en05.pdf** last accessed January 7, 2010.

1. Pursue: To pursue and investigate terrorists across provincial and national borders. This dimension seeks to impede planning, travel, and communications of terrorist networks and to disrupt logistical support of those networks. It also employs methods to cut off funding and access to materials used in attacks by bringing them under regulation. Finally, it also involves bringing terrorists to justice. In Pakistan, operationalizing such a dimension would require active coordination between prosecution and investigative/intelligence agencies, for instance the interior and law ministries at the federal level, police and public prosecution departments at the provincial level, and local police and law departments in the districts. The office of Attorney General would also need to be involved, especially in pursuing known terrorists across borders.

2. Respond: To prepare society to manage and minimize the consequences of a terrorist attack. This dimension recognizes that despite best efforts, it may not be possible to pre-empt and prevent all terrorist actions. There is, therefore, a need to enhance multi-institutional capabilities to deal with the aftermath of terrorist acts and to respond in a coordinated and effective manner. This includes short-term, emergency rescue and medical services as well as medium-term caring for victims and their families. This dimension is based globally on the fact that established and clear protocols help minimize response times and build institutional capacities to deal with attacks after they have occurred. Thus, fire control, ambulance services, search and rescue teams, and hospitals all need protocols, at least at the district level to be mobilized after an attack. Coordination at the district level needs to be decided in advance, for instance in the office of the District Coordination Officer. In the medium-term, counseling services (for instance in existing hospitals and crisis centers) need to be engaged for survivors of terrorist attacks and/or their families.

These parameters are only guidelines for developing a detailed counter-terrorism strategy under a broad, national policy. They not only need to be adapted nationally, but also specifically in the case of each province. Contrary to general perception, the primary challenge is not financing, but actually devising a **workable strategy** and creating the **appropriate protocols and cooperative mechanisms** with adequate monitoring. Implementation of broad-based strategies has been a long-standing problem, but the need is now more urgent than before. It is the argument here that a workable strategy needs to be developed in any case as a guide to actions, irrespective of the financial capacity of the Government.

3. Financing a counter-terrorism security strategy, of course, remains a concern. Just to present a recently published example, there are 670 full inspectors in Karachi, earning less than 1/50th the salary of the equivalent level (staff sergeant) in one province (Queensland) of Australia. To provide these 670 inspectors only half the salary made by Queensland staff sergeants, the Government of Sindh would need an additional Rs2 Billion per annum, or 9% of the current annual budget for the Sindh Police. If the entire current police force is upgraded with equivalent salaries and equipment, the extra amount required would easily exceed the current Police budget of the province. In addition, Pakistan's police: citizen ratio is already lower than many countries who do not even face such a threat level.

If investigative, intelligence, response and security agencies are included, the financing required is very large. A first step in this regard is to map present capacity of the institutions to be involved, and then map the resources and capacity paths required to bring them up to the necessary level. Clearly, this is a medium-term engagement, where progress can be benchmarked over a period of time. It is here that the Government can approach external supporters, for instance the Friends of Pakistan and others. However, in order to make a legitimate case for financial support, the Government has to present a clear counter-terrorism policy, path towards development of a security strategy, and a plan of action for implementation.

4. Counter-Terrorism Political Strategy

The **second form of strategy required under a Counter-terrorism policy is political and cultural**. This strategy builds on the appreciation that **terrorism has multiple causes**, not only petty criminality. The October 2008 resolution by Parliament in Pakistan also recognizes that some form of political engagement is needed to address the terrorist threat in the medium- to long-term. However, the resolution then points to "dialogue" with terrorists as the next step. "Dialogue" with terrorists has been a constant refrain in Pakistani politics, although the 2008 resolution does mention that dialogue can only be entered into minus the threat of force.

The results of "dialogue" speak for themselves. The Swat "peace deal" of 2008 and 2009 broke down almost as soon as it was formulated. Other attempts at "dialogue" have also failed to bring peace or the ending of terrorist attacks. Part of the problem has been that there is no one group of terrorists to dialogue with. Another part has been that "demands" by terrorist groups are often undemocratic (such as dismantling of the constitutional judiciary) or beyond the reach of the Government of Pakistan's scope (such as NATO intervention in Afghanistan or political configurations in Palestine). However, the main concern in the call for "dialogue" has been that it is perceived as the only alternative to use of force. Such is not the case. Rather, it is necessary to first analyze the underlying conditions of actions to determine whether and what kind of "dialogue" will work.

Such an analysis and coordinated action is the realm of a political strategy to counter terrorism which would seek to **prevent the occurrence of terrorist attacks**. While such an analysis has yet to be undertaken in Pakistan, a basic theoretical framework may be useful to guide this.

4.1 Worldviews and Culture

Historically, it is evident that "dialogue" relies on subjective interpretations of facts. These are guided by "**worldviews**", or the frameworks of ideas and beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts in it. World views, or *Weltanschaaungen*, are formed collectively from the unique experiences of a people over several millennia, and are reflected in their languages, syntactic structures and untranslatable connotations and denotations. They comprise (1) a descriptive model of the world, (2) an explanation of the world as it is, (3) a response to the question, 'where are we heading?', (4) values, or responses to ethical questions such as 'what should we do if…', (5) a methodology or theory of action, responding to questions

such as 'how should we attain our goals?', (6) a theory of knowledge, or the way of knowing the difference between 'true and false', and (7) an account of the origin and way in which this world view was constructed. World views are, by and large, a set of assumptions which we hold (mostly subconsciously) about the basic nature of the world. Obviously, at one level all human beings share a *somewhat* similar world view, but at a more meaningful level there are also immense differences between distinct sets of individuals. These are, in short, cultures. That is, different cultures have different responses to the questions above, and determine different identities. Clearly, cultures are historically determined. In other words, different historical events have occurred to different sets of individuals, or communities, resulting in different cultures. So, world views are cultural, and distinguish one community from another community. That is why cultural expressions such as poetry, painting and music of different cultures are so distinct and unique.

At the same time, however, world views are not just *constructed by history*, but also *construct history* themselves. So, on the one hand, the history of a people largely determines how they look at the world, what they consider right and wrong, and what they believe in as true or false. But also, on the other hand, that very world view determines how individuals within that community will remember the past, what they will consider important and what they will choose to ignore, what justifications they will find for one type of action and what arguments against it they will sideline. So, **world views or cultures,** shape **or** socially construct **an individual**. Culture, then, is more than just poems, paintings and musical compositions. Rather, it is the ground within which an individual identity is shaped or formed. Culture as a world view determines whether an individual chooses to educate girl children or not, or any one citizen accepts or authority or not, or whether an activist decides to accept violence as a way of solving problems. By constantly deciding this, and by these decisions becoming a part of history and further shaping our culture, world views are thus self-perpetuating- they sustain themselves.

4.2 Culture of Violence

The notion of world views can be used to examine religiously-oriented violence in Pakistan. Of course, there are many factors at work, including economic depravation, political marginalization, and so on. However, underpinning all of them are basic world views and psychologies that do not allow resolution through simple use of force or naïve notions of dialogue in a vacuum.

Instead, it is useful to examine the world views or cultures underlying these acts of violence. There is a growing body of social research based on interviews with arrested perpetrators of terrorism, or would-be suicide bombers, or even analyses of speeches and texts released by such groups. This evidence and analysis suggests that those initiating **'terrorist' acts convey one clear psychological message** (sometimes subconsciously but often consciously): "we are accountable to no one but ourselves, and we can do what we like to attain our objectives." This message is reinforced by repeated acts of violence such as suicide bombings, in which obvious targets (such as political figures) as well as 'collateral' targets such as civilians attending a rally or at a major road crossing, are damaged or even killed. This act of violence is not motivated by revenge or profit, such as in a robbery; in fact there is a financial loss is incurred by the

perpetrators. There is, often, not even any clear indication as to who carried out a particular act of public violence, or what that act was aimed at specifically. The sheer number of such incident now target political, security, foreign and related personnel seemingly at random. The point is made, again and again, that 'we can act as we like to achieve the objectives that we ourselves have defined for all of society, and we need not answer to anybody to justify these actions.' Embedded in this very act, then, is not just the immediate physical damage to life or property. Rather, at the same time, **those perpetrating these acts are threatening the very basis of democracy with their psychological message of lack of accountability**.

This is **a culture of authoritarianism** which allows one group to impose its world view on all of society, at any cost. This is one reason why 'dialogue' in and of itself is of limited use between 'terrorists' and 'democrats': the assumptions about how the world works, what is needed to improve it, and what means are justifiable to reach those goals are completely opposed in the two world views.

Important to the survival and legitimacy of any world view, then, is its perpetuation. In order to perpetuate a world view, its basic assumptions and frameworks are **mediated**. That is, viable ways are found of communicating it to as many individuals as possible in such a manner that when future statements are made, they are justifiable and hence legitimate within that world view. The construction of world views is, of course, a very long process, drawing upon interpretations of history and analyses of the present world. It is undertaken in concentrated fashions individually, for instance in isolated training environments; communally, for instance in group discussions and gatherings; and publicly, for instance through radio broadcasts or television interviews. The fact that violence is very often targeted at modes of free expressions, such as private television, music, paintings, and clothing, is an indication of the **intimate link between cultural symbols and perpetuation of world views**.

4.3 Political/Cultural Strategy to Counter Terrorism

In this backdrop, a **more nuanced strategy is needed to counter terrorism than "dialogue"**. Recognizing the fundamentally distinct worldviews of terrorist attackers, "dialogue" with the legitimate government of Pakistan, with its own worldview, cannot be fruitful or result in success. Rather, a political/cultural strategy is needed that can address the way in which terrorists are mediating their message or terror and authoritarianism. A political/cultural strategy can thus be more effective in preventing terrorism by generating and supporting alternative worldviews. As above, socio-economic development can only be one part of this effort to help citizens build a stake in a peaceful and democratic Pakistan. What is also needed is to address the authoritarian religious rhetoric by supporting alternative, democratic and peaceful religious scholarship and voices. In doing so, the Government of Pakistan can effectively counter the message being propagated uniformly across the country in different degrees. A strategy would aim to engage in the "battle to win the hearts and minds of people". By ensuring that the terrorist actions *and agendas* are illegitimate, the Government can cut off the supply of any popular support to terrorists and make it difficult for them to operate nationally.

Again, like for a security strategy, such a political/cultural strategy would require mobilization of a number of institutions at different levels, including universities, research centers, and the media. Most importantly, there is a dearth of soundly argued, well-researched visions that can attract popular support. In order to develop these, the Government can only support medium- to long-term efforts, for instance research and scholarship.

5.Conclusion

An argument has been made in this policy brief for a detailed counter-terrorism policy to be produced by the Government of Pakistan to build on the initial resolution passed by both houses of Parliament in October 2008. Such a policy is now urgently required for the Government of Pakistan to publicly declare its detailed vision, values and framework for coordinated action against terrorism. In line with global developments, some parameters for the preparation and outline of a policy have also been described above in the two strategic realms of security and politics as linked to culture. The first (security strategy) may guide and coordinate Government actions to protect, pursue and respond in connection with counter-terrorism. The second (political/cultural strategy) would help the Government to facilitate prevention of terrorism by tackling the underlying worldviews and culture of authoritarian terrorism. There is no doubt that such a policy would require an unprecedented effort to formulate, finance and implement. But in view of the casualties in the ongoing struggle against terrorism, the need for such an effort has never been greater.

List of Recommendations

1. The Government of Pakistan should immediately initiate steps to formulate a national, public Counter-Terrorism Policy.

2. The Policy should be prepared in appropriate consultation with government and non-governmental bodies at the district, provincial and federal levels. Initial coordination responsibility may reside with the Prime Minister Secretariat or the Cabinet Division. A key component of the policy must also be adequate consultative and collaborative mechanisms at all levels of government. Global policy development may be useful guidelines, but the Policy would need to be evolved entirely locally to be legitimate and relevant.

3. The Policy should include a more detailed analysis of the causes of terrorism than has so far been made public. This would have to include more than mere criminality by rogue groups or lack of access to economic development opportunities, neither of which sufficiently explain the facts.

4. The Policy may contain or lead to two strategies. The first, a Counter-Terrorism Security Strategy, may encompass actions to protect, pursue and respond in connection with counter-terrorism. As a first step, a mapping of relevant agencies and non-governmental stakeholders would be needed, along with their capacity analysis and resource requirements. This could be used to develop a plan of action for which external financing may be sought.

5. The second aspect flowing from the Policy, a Counter-Terrorism Political/Cultural Strategy may encompass coordinated actions to prevent terrorism. Building on the recognition that terrorists operate from an undemocratic, authoritarian worldview, this strategy may facilitate generation of independent, democratic voices and research to counter terrorist ideology