



Center for Global & Strategic Studies

**Role of National Action Plan (NAP) in Stabilization of
Internal Security of Pakistan**

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In Pakistan, 16th December has deep emotional associations as the country endured two great tragedies on the same date. In 1971, Bangladesh dismemberment and APS school massacre 2014, both events transformed the country. The scars are reignited when each year nears its completion, however, the recent APS incident galvanized entire Pakistan. It is believed that Pakistan is a country, which is on the verge of winning the war on terror inside its territory after Sri Lanka's success

against Tamil Tigers in its northern province. This paper analyzes the impact of the National Action Plan on the improvement of security situation in Pakistan.

Understanding National Action Plan (NAP)

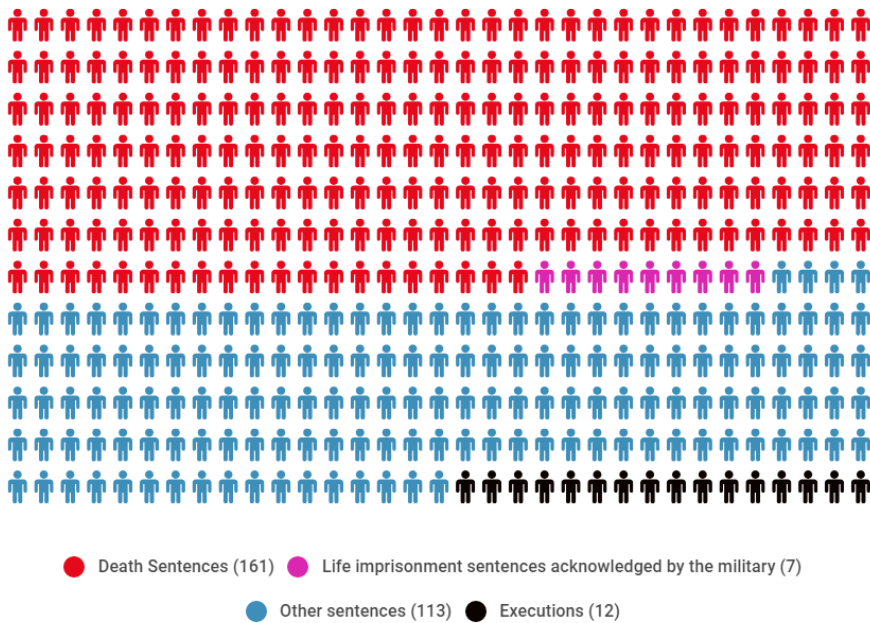
Pakistan's civil and military leadership united under one roof to chalk out future course of action in the wake of brutal attack on Jinnah International Airport, Karachi on 8th June, 2014. It was agreed in principal to cleanse the country of terrorism, if progress has to be achieved. The threat of violent extremism was identified as an existential threat. Hence, the leaders from all the political spectrum and military agreed on a 20 point agenda. It was formulated to give future direction to the country in the wake of extraordinary circumstances. Since its implementation, the results of the National Action Plan started to show positive results and violent attacks on military, civilians and installations decreased immensely. Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad is the continuation of the previous successful operation of Zarb-e-Azb. It was mainly focused on across the board combed operations to cleanse the remaining error elements from the cities. This trend has continued and improvement has been evident with each year. To assess the objectives which are ensuring improved security conditions, we analyze the main components of NAP.

Salient Features of National Action Plan

1. Execution of convicted terrorists
2. Establishment of special trial courts
3. Ensure no armed militias are allowed to function in the country
4. Strengthening and activation of NACTA
5. Countering hate speech and extremist material
6. Choking financing for terrorists and terrorist organizations
7. Ensuring against re-emergence of proscribed organizations
8. Establishing and deploying a dedicated counter-terrorism force
9. Taking effective steps against religious persecution
10. Registration and regulation of madrassas
11. Ban on glorification of terrorism and terrorist organizations through print and electronic media
12. FATA Reforms
13. Dismantling communication networks of terrorist organizations
14. Measures against abuse of internet and social media for terrorism
15. Zero tolerance for militancy in Punjab
16. Taking the on-going operation in Karachi to its logical conclusion
17. Baluchistan reconciliation
18. Dealing firmly with sectarian terrorists
19. Policy to deal with the issue of Afghan refugees
20. Revamping and reforming the criminal justice system

Military Courts: Military courts were formed after passing of 21st amendment in Constitution to expedite the sentencing of terrorists in view of the weak and sluggish judicial system in Pakistan. The tenure of the courts was initially determined to be two year with subject to extension with the agreement of the concerned parties. The performance can be summarized with the following figures. Since 2014, nearly 300 prisoners have been hanged who were involved in attacks on the security forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). In addition, seven terrorists were executed for their involvement in APS Peshawar massacre and attacks on Ismaili community.

Military Courts Verdicts



Year	Incidents
2011	70
2012	185
2013	127
2014	176
2015	79
2016	34

The year-wise decline in violence

(Note – In 2017 there was a 12 percent reduction in violence than previous year¹)

¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/143406/pakistan-remains-vulnerable/>

Registration and Regulation of Religious seminaries: The leadership of the country decided to curtail the roots of extremism. The religious seminaries provide free education to its students which is the reason why it attracts millions of students who mainly belong to the underprivileged class. However, there were growing cases of some elements who were bringing these institutions name into disrepute and perpetrate heinous acts of violence and terrorism. Under the National Action Plan, the Law Enforcement Agencies sealed 102 seminaries and curtailed the financing of worth 1 billion rupees. Furthermore, 190 seminaries are kept on watch who had links with foreign donors.

Details of the sealed seminaries in different provinces are as follows:

Sindh	87
Punjab	02
Khyber Pukhtunkhwa	13

Terror Financing: The terrorist outfits cannot sustain insurgency unless they are beneficiary of foreign funding. Pakistan is faced with hostile neighbors to its eastern and western borders. Furthermore, some states who lost their comparative advantage in the region also seek to destabilize Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan envisions to curtail all sorts of terror financing, and actions were taken in conjunction with government financial institutions. The State Bank of Pakistan has frozen 1 billion rupees against 126 accounts and also recovered 251 million rupees in connection with Hawala and Hundi (financing) to banned organizations.

Banned Groups: Sectarian terrorism was perpetrated by banned outfits which created an atmosphere of insecurity in the country. Target killing was on the rise before the attack on APS in 2014. In order to pacify the internal security situation, it was decided under the National Action Plan (NAP) to shift 7293 people to fourth schedule while 188 were added to Exit Control List. In addition to that, 1026 cases were lodged while 236 terror suspects were arrested.

Hate Speech: The Law Enforcement Agencies have confiscated 1500 books while sealing 71 shops who were distributing material that fall under the category of hate speech.

Ban on glorification of terrorists in media: The correlation with physical attack on a person or a group leading from the verbal hate speech on the basis of race, religion and language is very close. In 2015, the German Justice Minister wrote to Facebook demanding a better enforcement of laws relating to slander and hate speech. This reinforces the need to restrict those elements in order to lessen the possibilities such crimes. In this regard, the government has placed a ban on airing any material pertaining to the publicity or giving air time to the terrorists. PEMRA is advised to cancel the licenses of the TV channels which are in violation of these rules.

Misuse of Loud speakers: The use of loud speakers to disburse a narrative without the permission of government is illegal. In view of National Action Plan to discourage its negative use in spreading sectarian hatred, actions are being taken by the government under the "Amplifier Act" . According to the government sources, 7,000 cases have been lodged while 6,855 alleged hate-preachers were put behind bars. Furthermore, 1500 people were convicted in hate speech.

Sim Verifications: In various acts of terrorism, the Law Enforcement Agencies observed the usage of unverified Sims. It was a general practice before the implementation of “National Action Plan” that verification was not necessary and was subject to later verification. This loophole was covered in 3 months, resulting in the verification of 97.9 million cellular sims. Furthermore, 5.1 million cellular sims that were unable to be verified were promptly blocked.

Repatriation of Afghan Refugees: In the spirit of brotherhood and compassion, Pakistan allowed almost 3 million refugees to stay in Pakistan. However, it presents two basic problems pertaining to Pakistan. One, they are mostly located in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hence, severely stressed the weak resourced units of Pakistan. Secondly, most of the Afghan refugees are unregistered and various terror incidents in Pakistan suggest direct link between some elements present in the community. In this regard, Pakistan has deported 3416 Afghan refugees belonging to KP, FATA and Baluchistan.

FATA Reforms: The FATA was enduring tyrannical laws under Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR) due to which the people of the concerned areas were disenchanted. The National Action Plan (NAP) rightly identified the issue as important, requiring conscious attention of the state. Hence, FATA reforms committee was constituted under auspices of former advisor to Prime Minister to oversee the much needed reforms. The committee met with the influential tribal leaders, civil society as well other stakeholders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. FATA reforms committee assembled a report which proposed the merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a landmark decision, a bill was passed in the national

assembly which extends the jurisdiction of Supreme Court and Peshawar High Court to FATA². However, further action is required in this regards.

Conclusion

The National Action Plan chalked out a clear course of action against the elements who threatened its existence. Although, an impetus was provided by the tragic APS massacre to fast-track the actions, however, the consensus from across the board political spectrum is encouraging. Furthermore, it has also cleared doubts about selective action against terrorists. Pakistan has seen a sharp decline in the terror fatalities and normalcy has returned to the country. Internationally, focus has shifted towards economic opportunities present in Pakistan rather than horrific events of violence. Pakistan's economic hub Karachi is the heart of Pakistan. The decline in violence has positively impacted the economy of Pakistan which has been internationally recognized. Furthermore, Civil-Military leadership was on the same page to counter the violent extremism and terrorism. Anti-state elements like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan were dealt serious blows and it is evident that Pakistan is on the verge of eliminating it altogether from its soil. Nowadays, the group mostly perpetrate major attacks from across the western border. This is a huge dynamic shift towards winning war of insurgency in Pakistan. However, efforts need to be undertaken to enhance the capabilities of non-military law enforcement agencies. Better training and equipment should be provided to enable them to tackle the terror suspects in a better way.

² <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/01/12/national-assembly-extends-sc-high-courts-jurisdiction-to-fata/>