

Roundtable  
Discussion  
Series

# CHALLENGES OF INTERNAL SECURITY

## NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND STRATEGY



National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP)



Rountable Discussion Series

**CHALLENGES OF INTERNAL SECURITY  
NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF  
NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY AND STRATEGY**

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National Institute of Public Policy

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## Rector's Message

It was a distinct privilege to convene this roundtable deliberation on the subject of "Challenges of Internal Security: Need for Implementation of National Security Policy and Strategy." The gravity of the diverse internal security challenges our nation is confronting cannot be understated, as our nation's capability to effectively address these threats is imperative for ensuring an environment conducive to peace, stability, and prosperity for our citizens. He stated that, over a decade, Pakistan has witnessed many action plans and comprehensive national security policies, however, persistent challenges have been the lack of will and commitment to implement those policies. Furthermore, the institutional conflicts, instability and political transitions turned out to be the last nail in the coffin. This pattern of policy discontinuity undermined the state's ability to confront the multidimensional threats of terrorism, extremism, sectarian tensions, and emerging transnational threats. He pressed the need for a sustained, cross-partisan commitment towards comprehensively operationalising a cohesive long-term national security strategy tailored to Pakistan's unique needs. There is a need to adopt a multipronged approach along with a judicious balance between the measures taken by the government with a focus on addressing the root causes of these menaces. Moreover, the role of civilian institutions in counterterrorism efforts must be strengthened through capacity building and empowerment. While the military has played a crucial role in traditional operations, it is essential to shift towards a paradigm where civilian authorities take the lead, supported by the armed forces and intelligence agencies in areas where civil administration lacks access.

We convened on this occasion, representing a diverse array of stakeholders united by a common objective: to safeguard the internal security of our nation. Through constructive dialogue, critical analysis, and collaborative efforts, we endeavoured to chart a course towards sustained cross-partisan commitment and operationalisation of a cohesive long-term national security strategy.

Dr. Ijaz Munir

## Foreword

Ever since the Taliban government came into power in Afghanistan in August 2021, there has been a tangible spike in terrorist acts in Pakistan, especially in KPK and Balochistan. This persistent surge necessitated reviewing national security policies in Pakistan to arrest this rising threat to the country. Ironically, Pakistan formulated several national security policies and plans during the last decade but hardly one could be partially implemented, that too for a limited period. Despite the worsening security situation and an uptick in the multifaceted external and internal threats to the country, these policies have remained shelved and made little contribution to arresting the situation. Obviously, during ten years, different governments came into power but all refrained from implementing these policies. Thomas R. Dye's insightful input is quite relevant to explain this inaction, "Public policy is whatever governments choose to do or not to do". It can be construed that the successive governments made a willful choice to avoid implementation, for the reasons best known to them.

To discuss this issue, NIPP invited the most experienced security experts, analysts and practitioners to express their views on the need for the implementation of national security policies and to ascertain the reasons for slack implementation of these policies and strategies. The panellists showed great enthusiasm and eagerness to engage to attend the debate on a very pertinent and current issue. It is evident from the fact that on the day of discussion, there was a VVIP movement in the city due to which the Mall Road, on which NIPP is located, was closed. Many other roads were also closed for security reasons. Five out of seven panellists, Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd), Former Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army, Mr. Shaukat Javed, Former IGP Punjab and Former CT Minister, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, PSP, Former IGP, ICT, Mr Muhammad Amir Rana, Director of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), and Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Chairperson of the DSS Department, QAU, braved their way through the barricades and blockades and reached the venue. Mr Mujib ur Rehman Shami, Editor and Anchor, and Dr. Rabia Akhtar, Director of the Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore, got stuck in the thicker layer of security and could not reach the venue despite their best efforts.

At the outset of the discussion, Ms. Sabina Babar, Research Fellow, NIPP, rightly pointed out in her presentation that precisely four national security policies were formulated by the governments during the last decade, each with the potential to significantly impact Pakistan's internal security landscape, i.e., National Internal Security Policy (NISP) of 2014-18; National Action Plan (2014); National Internal Security Policy (NISP) of 2018-23 and National Security Policy 2022. Unfortunately, all could not be implemented in letter and spirit.

First, the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-18, a 94-page document, termed the first-ever internal security policy, was articulated by the Ministry of Interior and National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) in December 2013, and subsequently reviewed and approved by the cabinet in February 2014. It set the goals to establish and ensure the writ of the state within Pakistan's territorial boundaries, defeat extremism, and launch counterterrorism measures to protect citizens from all

internal threats. Ironically NACTA itself has remained a spineless department that failed to perform due to turf war and internal debilities. Axiomatically, NISP 2014 could not see the light of the day. Institutional conflicts and political instability, including widespread protests and government crises, stymied its implementation. This failure underscores the challenges of coordinating across overlapping security institutions and the distractions posed by the struggle for political survival.

The second policy was formulated after a grim wake-up call on 16 December 2014 when the terrorists mercilessly gunned down 145 students and teachers at Army Public School Peshawar. At that point, the government decided to take the terrorists head-on. Thus, a National Action Plan (NAP) was formulated to tackle the terrorists, extremists, and their facilitators in urban areas. Military operation Zarb-e-Azb was launched to tackle the insurgents and terrorists in tribal areas. It was a hurriedly hatched 20-point plan, written on two pages, with two lines explaining every point. The responsibilities heaped through it were enormous which needed every point to be prioritised and strategized to make it work. Sans strategic foundation, necessary for sustained success, initially it worked well in some areas like Punjab and Karachi but soon the steam petered out of it. Now, despite a tangible rise in terrorism and cross-border excursions for the last more than two years, NAP has not been activated.

Building upon the foundation laid by NISP 2014 and NAP, the third policy, National Internal Security Policy 2018-23, was formulated at the fag end of the tenure of the government. This updated policy acknowledged the emergence of new threats, such as extremism, alongside the successful containment of older ones. To address security challenges comprehensively, NISP 2018 focused on three primary domains of interventions i.e., Administrative, Ideational and Socio-Economic. Sadly, it too fell victim to the end of a government term, highlighting a persistent cycle of policy neglect.

The fourth policy came three years later, known as National Security Policy 2022–26, on 14 January 2022, terming it an unprecedented comprehensive national security policy. It was also unveiled a couple of months before the end of the government in March 2022. Axiomatically, keeping to the tradition of shelving the policies of the previous governments, the next government ignored NSP to the hilt and it is lying somewhere in the cold corners of forlorn official drawers of the Ministry of Interior. This pattern of neglect not only illustrates the challenges of policy continuity across different governments but also reflects a broader issue of prioritization within Pakistan's national security agenda.

It is relevant to mention here that despite over four decades of battling terrorism, particularly in the post-9/11 era, Pakistan lacks an officially articulated national counter-terrorism strategy. The success of the UK's 'CONTEST' strategy offers a model worth considering, suggesting that an integrated and well-implemented approach could yield better outcomes than the current piecemeal knee-jerk tactics. Similarly, a leaf can be taken out of Singapore's domestic counterterrorism (CT) apparatus, which has demonstrated its effective ability to detect, deter, and disrupt threats.

All the panellists agreed with the findings and presented their viewpoints and reasons for the non-implementation of these policies. They examined the topic from all angles and provided pertinent suggestions and recommendations, which have been included in this report.

As a new government is in the saddle, confronting the rising terrorism and insurgency especially that is aimed at CPEC must be its top priority. The key to resilience lies in the implementation of security policies and strategies, ensuring concerted and sustained efforts to overcome the formidable challenges posed by internal and external adversaries.

Dr. Naveed Elahi  
Dean NIPP

## Team NIPP



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## Panelists of the Roundtable Discussion



**Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd)**

Former Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army



**Mr. Shaukat Javaid**

Former IGP Punjab, Former CT Minister



**Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, PSP**

Former IGP, ICT



**Mr. Muhammad Amir Rana**

Director Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)



**Dr. Shabana Fayyaz**

Chairperson DSS Department, QAU

## Summary of the Proceedings

This roundtable discussion was the third event of series of Roundtable Discussion organised by NIPP, aimed to critically examine the multifaceted challenges of internal security in Pakistan and the need for effective implementation of a comprehensive national security policy and strategy.

The objective of the roundtable discussion was to gather relevant information, raise critical thinking, and facilitate a constructive dialogue among key stakeholders to address the prevailing internal security threats confronting the nation.

The Roundtable started with a presentation conducted by the NIPP research team, providing an analysis of the current terrorism landscape and an overview of the four National Security Policies formulated to date. Subsequently, a set of 'Points to Ponder' was shared to guide the ensuing discussion. The esteemed panel, comprising Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd), Former Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army, Mr Shaukat Javed, Former IGP Punjab and Former CT Minister, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, PSP, Former IGP, ICT, Mr. Muhammad Amir Rana, Director of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), and Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Chairperson of the DSS Department, QAU, shared their invaluable insights, analyses, and suggestions on the subject matter.

The panellists engaged in a comprehensive discourse, addressing various aspects of the internal security challenges and the policy frameworks designed to tackle them. They highlighted the recurring pattern of formulating comprehensive security policies, only to witness their inadequate implementation across successive political transitions. This policy discontinuity has severely undermined Pakistan's ability to confront the multidimensional threats of terrorism, extremism, sectarian tensions, organised crime, and emerging transnational challenges effectively. The three-hour session concluded with the consensus that the challenges of internal security demand a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained approach that transcends political affiliations and prioritises the national interest.

The details of the proceedings are given below.

## Road Map of the Roundtable

1. Current Situation of Terrorism in Pakistan
2. Four National Security Policies
3. Issues of non-implementation
4. Reasons of Failure
5. Why Do We Need a National Security Policy?
6. Best Practices to Follow
7. Discussion

## Current Situation of Terrorism in Pakistan

The discussion commenced by looking at the current security situation of terrorism in Pakistan, which remained volatile, with a surge in terrorist attacks and cross-border excursions since August 2021.<sup>1</sup> The year 2022 had witnessed 380 militant attacks resulting in 539 deaths and 836 injuries. The year 2023 witnessed the double number of militant attacks 600 plus across the country in which 976 people were killed and 1354 injured.<sup>2</sup> The statistics paint a concerning picture. As of the year 2024, there had been a staggering 70 percent rise in attacks compared to previous years, accompanied by an alarming 81 percent increase in resultant deaths and a 62 percent surge in the number of wounded.<sup>3</sup> The data further revealed a disturbing trend of an average militant attack per month escalated from 32 in 2022 to a concerning 54 attacks per month in 2024.<sup>4</sup> What's even more concerning is that this upward trajectory has been consistent since 2020, with each passing year witnessing a notable increase in terrorism-related incidents. The below graph indicates the surge in attacks specifically during 2023.

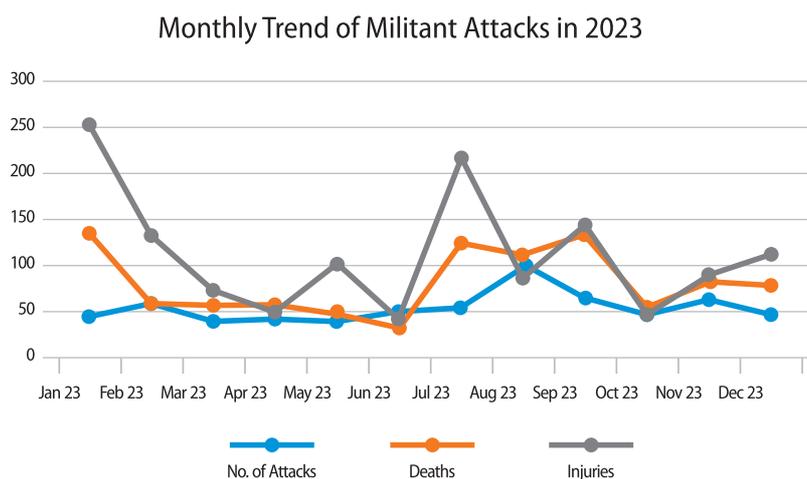


Figure 1: Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) database, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile, 2023.

1. 'Annual Security Report 2023 | Pakistan | CRSS', accessed 2 May 2024, <https://crss.pk/annual-security-report-2023-pakistan/>.
2. 'Annual Security Report 2023 | Pakistan | CRSS'.
3. 'March 2024: A Decline in Overall Militant Attacks, Rise in High Profile Incidents - Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies | PICSS', accessed 2 May 2024, <https://www.picss.net/articles/march-2024-a-decline-in-overall-militant-attacks-rise-in-high-profile-incidents/>.
4. Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile - PICSS Annual Report 2023; Annual (Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies | PICSS, 5 January 2024), <https://www.picss.net/downloads/picss-annual-report-2023/>.

Providing the analysis of regional share in militant attacks it was highlighted that the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP/KPK) emerged as the most severely impacted region, with militants orchestrating 37% of attacks, while the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) region, now merged districts, witnessed 29% attacks.<sup>5</sup> Sindh reported 35 militant attacks, constituting nearly six percent of the total attacks in the country.<sup>6</sup> Punjab documented 14 militant attacks, representing almost two percent of the total attacks. Additionally, one militant attack each was reported from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit-Baltistan, and Islamabad Capital Territory.<sup>7</sup>

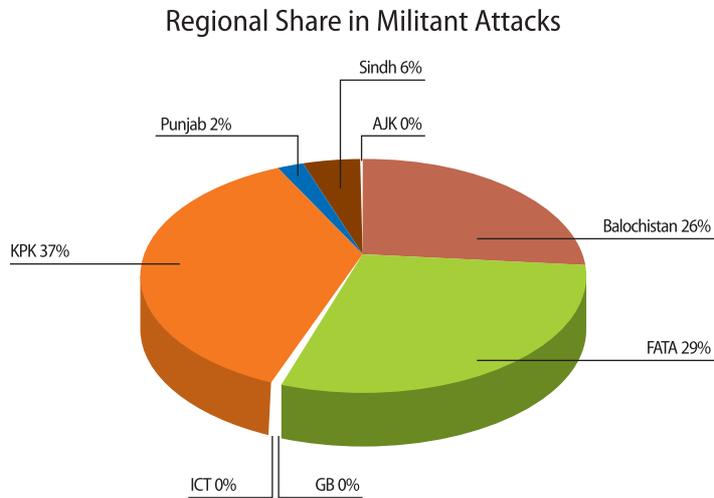


Figure 2: Regional Share in Militant Attacks, PICSS Annual Report 2023

While giving the comparative analysis of 2023 and 2024, region-wise, it was pointed out that Balochistan recorded a 96% surge in violence.<sup>8</sup> The Sindh province also saw a nearly 47% rise, however, in the regions of KP, Punjab, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) there were decreases in violence by 24%, 85%, and 65% respectively. Despite a decrease, the recent suicide attack on a convoy of Chinese engineers in the Shangla district of KP is of great concern.<sup>9</sup> Overall, GB had suffered the highest number of fatalities in a decade. Unfortunately, these figures indicate that currently, terrorism is on the rise in Pakistan. The staggering increase in attacks, casualties, and the geographic spread of militant activities across the country is a severe threat to national security, regional stability, and economic progress. It is deeply concerning that despite numerous security policies and operations, the scourge of terrorism continues to persist and intensify.

5. 'Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile - PICSS Annual Report 2023'; 9.

6. Ibid

7. Ibid

8. 'Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile - PICSS Annual Report 2023'.

9. 'Five Chinese Nationals among Six Killed in Suicide Bomb Attack in Pakistan', Al Jazeera, 26 March 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/26/five-chinese-nationals-killed-in-suicide-bomb-attack-in-pakistan-police>.

## Four National Security Policies

After giving a bird's eye view of the current situation of terrorism in Pakistan, the presentation moved towards the important question of what Pakistan has done so far to cater for the declining security situation. It was highlighted that overall, up till now only four National Security Policies were introduced with no National Counter-Terrorism Strategy all along.

### National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-2018

The first policy, known as NISP 2014-2018, emerged from collaborative efforts between the Ministry of Interior and NACTA in 2014. Designed to foster political unity in the fight against terrorism. However, despite receiving political backing from the central government, its implementation encountered significant hurdles. Firstly, the government's capacity to execute the policy was limited. Secondly, the volatile political landscape further complicated efforts. Amidst these challenges, the government found its attention diverted by other crises, including a decisive military operation in North Waziristan.<sup>10</sup> Ten months after the NISP formulation the attack on the Army Public School in December 2014, resulted in halting the strategy all along.

### National Action Plan 2014

It was highlighted that with the attack on the Army Public School, the National Action Plan known as the Second Security Policy was formulated. The NAP rearticulated the objectives of its predecessor but introduced two significant features: the implementation of the death penalty and the establishment of special military courts. Implementation of the NAP had seen certain hurdles. Firstly, it was perceived as a reactive consensus following the school attack, lacking a well-thought-out strategy. Secondly, concerns were raised about the Interior Ministry's diminishing role within four months of its inception. Thirdly, issues such as the effectiveness of the death penalty and the regulation of religious seminaries remained unresolved. As NISP and NAP were introduced simultaneously, they faced impediments extending beyond mere implementation issues. Key reasons for their partial failure also included over-centralisation and poor coordination with provinces. Internal disputes within NACTA hindered its activity despite its mandate. While resistance from intelligence agencies impeded the establishment of a Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID). Furthermore, the promised dedicated counter-terror force under NAP failed to materialise. Clarity regarding financing for counterterrorism was lacking, and resistance to madrasa reforms persisted. These challenges underscored the complexity of NISP and NAP, rendering them largely unimplemented policies.

10 Muhammad Amir Rana, 'A Review of National Internal Security Policy (2013-18)', n.d.

## National Internal Security Policy 2018-2023

The NISP 2018-2023 emerged post-NISP and NAP, aiming to address security challenges comprehensively. It focused on three main domains: Administrative, Ideational, and Socio-Economic. To target these areas effectively, a 6Rs framework (re-imagine, reconcile, redistribute, recognise, regional approach, and reorient) was recommended. The partial failure of the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2018-2023 could be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, it lacked ownership and political will from the start, hastily approved by the previous government and subsequently neglected by the new government. Outsourcing counterterrorism (CT) and countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts to the military worsened the issue, revealing a lack of civilian leadership and accountability. Instead of proactive ownership, successive governments relied on legislation and new entities, failing to effectively address extremism and radicalisation. Overall, all these aspects resulted in less or no implementation of this policy.

## National Security Policy 2022-2026

Moving forward to the fourth and last policy, the analysis highlighted that the National Security Policy of Pakistan 2022-2026 was introduced in 2022 and approved by the federal cabinet almost a month prior. However, despite formulation and partial disclosure to the public, full implementation of this policy remained pending. A major obstacle to its implementation was the limited timeframe, as the government's tenure ended in 2023. The successive governments made no mention of adopting this policy. Moreover, the policy lacked clarity regarding institutional reform and practical implementation strategies due to its secretive nature.

The analysis highlighted the several challenges that National Security Policy faced. Firstly, a lack of national cohesion in adopting the policy. Secondly, cross-border militancy threatened the defence and territorial integrity, this was further aggravated by Afghanistan's reluctance to curb jihadist activity. The issue has turned worse due to the presence of undocumented Afghan refugees. In the foreign policy domain of this national policy, the aspects of countering negative narratives from adversaries like India are persistent. Along with that government is struggling to manage relations with major powers like the US and China amid global polarisation. Lastly, this security policy has addressed non-traditional threats like illiteracy, poverty, and human security, however, these issues require comprehensive solutions which were mentioned nowhere in the policy.

## Why Do We Need a National Security Policy?

A National Security Policy is essential for any country due to the multifaceted challenges. In the case of Pakistan, it had constantly faced threats like terrorism, extremism, and insurgencies, necessitating a structured approach to stability. Externally, challenges such as cross-border militancy demanded strategic foresight. A National Security Policy is indispensable for any country as it encompasses the strategic plans and measures necessary to protect the nation from a wide array of threats. It ensured the protection of citizens, sovereignty, democratic system, economic stability, critical infrastructure, and national values. By providing a framework for coordinated and comprehensive security efforts, an NSP enhanced a nation's ability to safeguard its present and future. Moreover, a well-defined NSP fosters national cohesion. When citizens perceive a unified approach to security, they feel more secure and confident. Additionally, addressing socioeconomic disparities is integral to stability. An NSP can incorporate policies that promote equitable development, reduce poverty, and enhance education and healthcare—aligning with long-term security interests.

## Best Practices Worldwide

Drawing inspiration from successful security strategies around the world, Pakistan can enhance its approach to national security. For instance, the UK's CONTEST Strategy emphasises prevention, protection, pursuit, and preparation, showcasing the value of coordinated efforts across government agencies and stakeholders.

Similarly, Singapore's Domestic Counterterrorism Apparatus focuses on robust intelligence gathering, community engagement, and proactive measures to identify and neutralize threats. Moreover, lessons from successful counterterrorism efforts in Sri Lanka (against the LTTE) and Italy highlight the importance of addressing the ideological foundations of terrorism through deradicalisation programs and counter-narratives. By integrating these best practices, Pakistan could develop a tailored and effective security strategy to address its unique challenges.

## Points to Ponder

A few questions were posed in the discussion by the panellists:

1. Why Pakistan has failed to implement national internal security policies?
2. Why the successive governments ignore the implementation of these security policies?
3. What is the antidote to overcome this persisting apathy and ensure effective policy implementation to grapple with diverse security challenges?
5. What changes and amendments are required in the strategic approaches and legal frameworks to tackle internal and external security threats effectively?
6. Why there is no officially articulated national counterterrorism strategy in Pakistan?
7. Have these indifferent approaches exacerbated the non-traditional aspects of security, including population, health, climate, water, food, and gender security?

## Discussion by the Panelists

### Mr Shaukat Javed

Mr Shaukat Javed initiated the discussion, highlighting the current ground situation following the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. He pointed out a surge in various percentages annually since 2020, citing increases of 79% in 2021, 43% in 2022, 60% in 2023, and 70% as of 2024. He characterised the state's response to this surge as lopsided and reactionary. Additionally, he recounted the events surrounding the launch of the first national security policy in 2014, including the terrorist attack on Karachi airport by the TTP and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. This incident led to the initiation of the military operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan. He also mentioned the tragic incident at the Army Public School, which resulted in the loss of 150 lives, primarily school children.

While discussing the implementation of the first National Action Plan (NAP), he highlighted the 20 points of NAP were extracted from the 2014 National Internal Security Policy. These points were categorised into two types: kinetic and non-kinetic measures. He noted that only six out of the 20 points were addressed, leaving 14 unattended, which included reforms in madrasas, revamping of the criminal justice system, and other matters. He criticised the response to this policy shortfall as knee-jerk and characterised by hollow slogans, expressing resolve after each incident but lacking substantive action. He underscored the absence of a practical, comprehensive, and holistic policy, emphasising the lack of coordination among agencies and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). He noted the compartmentalisation of their work and highlighted the need for improved coordination to address the challenges effectively.

Mr Shaukat Javed addressed the formation and subsequent challenges faced by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). He lamented that the law governing NACTA had been amended 23 times. Consequently, it was placed within the Ministry of Interior, under the command of the Interior Division. Therefore, Pakistan's premier intelligence agencies, ISI and IB, which report directly to the Prime Minister, didn't give the required attention and response to NACTA's directives. He proposed to relocate NACTA from the Ministry of Interior to the Prime Minister's Office under the National Security Adviser to give it some muscles.

He, however, appreciated NACTA for its coordination with provincial CTDs and the development of national narratives. He highlighted NACTA's role in addressing the requirements set forth by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Furthermore, he critiqued the sole emphasis on kinetic actions which resulted in short-term successes but stated that the state faced a resurgence of terrorist incidents post-2020. He attributed this resurgence to various factors, including the change in government and the withdrawal of US forces, which eliminated the drone threat and allowed terrorist groups greater freedom of movement, particularly the TTP. He expounded upon the significance of

non-kinetic actions in countering terrorism, stressing the lack of long-term policy and response by the Pakistani government and relevant agencies. He observed a tendency for civilian institutions to take a secondary role during kinetic actions, with the military assuming primary responsibility due to its capacity to operate in areas physically occupied by terrorists. Drawing a comparison with the United States' response to the 9/11 attacks, he underscored the importance of civilian authorities and institutions in addressing such crises.

He opined that Pakistan's heavy reliance on the military in counterterrorism efforts had partly resulted in the neglect of capacity building in civilian institutions. He advocated for a shift in this paradigm, emphasising the lead role of civilian institutions, supported by the military and intelligence agencies in areas where civilian authorities lack access. Reflecting on the National Security Policy of 2022, he praised its comprehensiveness but criticised its lack of an action plan and timelines for implementation.

Addressing the political dynamics surrounding the policy's implementation, Mr Shaukat Javed called for a bipartisan approach, emphasising the national importance of counterterrorism efforts. He urged the current government to prioritise the policy's implementation, regardless of political affiliations. In terms of organisational restructuring, he recommended elevating NACTA to the National Security Division under the National Security Advisor. He proposed appointing the NACTA chief as the ex-official secretary of the National Security Division, thereby ensuring closer coordination between counterterrorism efforts and national security initiatives.

He mentioned that Rangers had their primary duty elsewhere and should only come sparingly in aid of civil power, which was their second duty. However, internal security had become their primary duty, and he believed these trends needed to be reversed. He briefly discussed the Karachi dispensation, mentioning that the first time it was undertaken in the early 1990s, the military was put in command with the GEOC in charge during Nawaz Sharif's tenure as Prime Minister. The parliament approved this scheme, and the military, assisted by Rangers and police, dug trenches and conducted combined patrolling, resulting in a significant crime reduction. However, the city looked like a siege or an occupied area. When the government was toppled, this scheme was abandoned, and crime rose again. The second dispensation came in the late 1990s, with the IB and police taking the lead. They developed intelligence, apprehended people, and some extrajudicial killings occurred, leading to a reduction in crime. However, this was short-lived as the government of Benazir Bhutto was toppled, and the new government had different priorities.

The last attempt was made with Rangers as the lead authority, assisted by police, and the army as onlookers. Crime came down again, achieving similar successes as the previous attempts. However, he believed this would be short-lived and not everlasting until the root causes were eradicated and civilian institutions were developed, empowered, and equipped with the necessary will. He shared his personal experience as an SSP in the 1980s, where he put his foot down and sent back Rangers, who were there after the burning of the US Embassy. He stayed there for four years without any incidents or the need for

Rangers. Later, as the IG Punjab, his first request to the then Interior Minister Mr Rehman Malik was to send back Rangers, which he reluctantly agreed to, except for the tribal areas of DG Khan and Rajanpur. His tenure remained peaceful without Rangers because alternate arrangements were developed.

## **Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd)**

Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd), the Former Chief of General Staff of the Pakistan Army, stated that the phenomena Pakistan is facing comes in grey zones, where there is no cease-fire, unlike conventional operations where two forces fight, and there is a cease-fire. In grey zone operations, there is no cease-fire, and a clear line of total peace cannot be drawn. He mentioned that this phenomenon will not end but fade out over the next many decades. There was a spike in violence from 2007 to 2013, which then receded, but the intensity, frequency, and devastation of the current situation are not the same as between 2008 and 2015.

He discussed the security policy formulated in 2014, the National Action Plan, and the 2018 policy. The important aspect was the high-intensity military operations against terrorists, which were becoming successful, as were the law enforcement operations. The process of taking that success to stability was happening in 2014. The first policy was to counter violence, while the 2018-2022 policy aimed to stabilise by addressing the factors, actors, and dynamics of the previous policy. He stated that combining both policies into a 10-decade policy would be right, but the state was unable to implement it, and giving a policy after five years is not the right thing.

The speaker mentioned the common belief that correcting madrassas would result in countering radicalisation. However, he emphasised the need to analyse data, documents, and recorded evidence. During his operation in Swat, the first large-scale operation, they caught 500 terrorists involved in killing and suicide bombings. When interviewed, the evidence revealed that only 16% had links with religion, while 84% were not linked with religion. He discovered that 99% of the terrorists were away from their families, staying in hostels, and physically and mentally controlled by teachers. The 1% were day scholars with normal family patterns who did not go towards terrorism. The common denominator for the 84% was poverty, as none of the 500 people were from affluent families.

He stated that this domain, which is not part of law enforcement or civilian or IB, is the same in Karachi, Sindh, Balochistan, and Punjab. Poverty is present, but the question arises as to why this is not the case in GB and AJK. The reason, he explained, is better administrative management and higher education levels in those areas. People move to places where they have opportunities to work, as part of their social behaviour.

The speaker mentioned the recent spike in terrorism incidents in Muzaffarabad, Bisham, Gwadar, Karachi, and many other unreported places. He emphasised that the reasons behind the phenomena

are not all local, and to counter and fight it, they need to be more effective. He recommended integrating, coordinating, and dividing responsibilities based on the existing policies, structures, and scattered experiences. He emphasised the importance of deterring and preventing these incidents and fixing responsibilities.

In response to Shaukat Javed Sahib, the speaker stated that the military had allowed the system of public order to progress equally with the population, which has doubled in the last 35 years. In Karachi, at a particular stage, the violence was contained, and 5,400 violent criminals were caught by Rangers and handed over to the police. However, in those three years, they only got 11 prosecutors willing to work with the forces. To exert pressure, their pay was stopped. The speaker mentioned that they wanted to revive and strengthen the police, but unfortunately discovered that there was no standard organisation of the police, with the lack of job cards, strength, and processes. They wanted to create an ideal police station.

The speaker compiled a report on the police forces and discovered that all four provinces had different policies, including reserve police and railway police. The total strength was 500,000, with a budget calculated, including special grants, of not less than 500 million rupees. He stated that the force has more budget and equipment, and if analysed at the national level, the police could work under the resources. However, the force is not interested in worrying about the police or working on tasks for which it is not organised or trained.

He mentioned the Karachi police department's situation in 2014 and 2024, stating that over 300 police buildings were empty. The MQM implemented community policies, and the infrastructure was there, but Rangers did not disable it. He referred to Tariq Khosa's book "Faltering State" where Kusa Sahib was converting B areas into A areas, but the day he stepped down, it was reverted to the old system.

The speaker stated that Rangers have accommodation outside Karachi, however, due to the internal security situation they could not be moved out of the city. When viewed in military terms, Rangers are a potent force that can defend border areas. He emphasised the need to liberate the Karachi police and bring it to a metropolitan police force. The IB was providing information to Rangers, and civil officers and their teams can also work. He suggested bringing forward these officers on merit to strengthen the police force.

He stated that the last 20 years have not been just about terrorism and counterterrorism phenomena but also a decade of experience in service delivery. The changes in 20 years have been significant, with the 18th Amendment having a cumulative effect on all of them. He mentioned that the internal challenges increased, mainstream political parties became regionalised, and resource distribution turned sour. He emphasised that with all the arrangements and the distribution of resources, the provision of security also needs to be improved.

## Dr. Nasir Akbar Khan, PSP

Dr. Nasir Akbar Khan, PSP, former IGP Islamabad, expressed gratitude to NIIP and Dean for inviting him. Dr. Khan pondered the significance of the 2014 National Security Policy, questioning its necessity after many years of Pakistan's existence. He credited the efforts of those involved in crafting the policy, acknowledging it as a significant document globally. He reflected on the criticism of the policy's comprehensive nature and the challenges of implementation, particularly in achieving progressive and integrated approaches. Dr. Khan noted the rejection of certain points by the cabinet, highlighting the changing dynamics following events like Operation Zerb-e-Azab and the APS attack. Regarding policy implementation, he emphasised the importance of political will and the need for clear boundaries between security and political realms. He acknowledged achievements in security measures but noted the failure to effectively communicate them. He questioned the timing and necessity of the National Action Plan (NAP) following the APS attack, considering it a rebranding rather than a confidence boost in existing policies. He highlighted successes in implementing security measures but acknowledged the issue of ownership and overshadowing by political dynamics.

Dr. Khan emphasised the need for reevaluation and effective communication of achievements, acknowledging both successes and areas for improvement in security policies. He highlighted that the presence of military or Rangers is not the issue, as the current circumstances differ significantly from the past. With access to knowledge and information readily available, it's essential to empower the younger generation rather than hold them back. Failure to do so might result in a brain drain, with talented individuals seeking opportunities abroad. According to him, it's crucial to address the current situation and work collaboratively with capable individuals to craft and implement effective policies. Political will is necessary for successful policy implementation, but selective implementation hinders progress and contributes to the challenges faced by Pakistan. He was of the view that coordination between intelligence agencies and law enforcement is vital for effective security measures. The NISP highlighted the role of the police as the primary line of defence, followed by civil armed forces and the military. However, it took time to instil this mindset among decision-makers. He pressed the need for investing in intelligence and law enforcement for cost-effective security measures. According to him, solutions exist, but overcoming current thinking patterns and addressing censorship are necessary steps to implement them effectively. He ended his discussion by stating that, insincerity between rhetoric and action creates confusion and undermines progress.

## Dr. Muhammad Amir Rana

Dr. Muhammad Amir Rana iterated that the issue of national security has always been a focal point of national interest where academicians and scholars have mostly been accused of targeting state institutions. The response of authorities ranging from crafting national security policies to their implementation is seen as reactive instead of progressive nature reflecting anxiety on the part of

the state functionaries. This resultantly has compelled institutions to take steps in haste. He further envisioned policymaking as an evolving and ongoing process where implementation and designing go side by side. He acknowledged that a total of 13 national security documents, including policy papers and comprehensive national security guidelines have been issued by authorities up to this point. The current policy document for 2022-2026 is also built upon considering previous efforts and exercises.

He commended that the implementation of policies is derived from need, and there exists a strong association between economic connectivity and its bolstering effects on the internal security of a country. He appreciated initiatives currently being pursued through the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SiFC) to foster an environment of investment and economic stability within the country. Similarly, the better geoeconomic state of the country corresponds to heightened resilience against security threats. He also disclosed that initiatives of SiFC signify adherence to all policy parameters by institutions. Consequently, it also strengthened the intensifying securitisation process of the country with the added benefit of restructuring the process of accountability and transparency for institutions.

In his opinion, it has been observed in the past that the practices of state institutions are not up to mark when it comes to resolving inter and intra-organisation disputes. Mostly the focus of institutions is on fixing their internal issues which hinders in evolving them into sustainable models. Instead of addressing internal issues and making necessary remedies, they often seek to exert control over other departments. It was further argued by him that such organisations should operate independently without external influence. Similarly, the situation of law-governing bodies responsible for monitoring peaceful situations on streets also exhibits a lack of coherence and convergence of security concerns. He suggested an audit of the foreign assistance that had been donated previously by international bodies to garner evidence of security targets that remained unattained. It was also postulated that international players have an indirect effect on Pakistan's internal security the reason being the investment of resources on others' land.

From Dr Amir's perspective, all nations and societies propagate two prevailing ideologies. The first is the mainstream narrative, endorsed by the state and the dominant ethnic group or majority population of the country. The mainstream narrative discourse remains influential only when it's accepted by a greater proportion of people. Contrary to that, alternative narratives also persist within societies. For example, in the case of the US, this is evident in the form of "white narrative", and in Pakistan, it may be currently exemplified by TTP or formerly by Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and other extremist factions. He said that the issue lies when organisations are least bothered about shaping and nurturing their narratives over time.

He further stated that as a nation, we often dwell on past mistakes. For instance, he remembered that when TTP was pushed back into Afghanistan, we initiated talks with them again, which turned out to

be a misstep. This decision wasn't made by one political administration; it was a collective choice of state institutions in 2019. It was rather a pivotal lesson for the state institutions not to engage in talks with terrorist groups.

He opined that the current scenario is similar in the context of Balochistan where there is a marked disparity between policy formulation and its practical implementation. The pace of policy adoption has also been sluggish, necessitating the imperative overhaul of institutions such as NACTA and the CTDs. He concluded his speech by stressing the need to adjust to the changing global terrorism landscape and to exercise increased vigilance against terrorist threats in future.

## **Dr. Shabana Fayyaz**

Dr. Shabana Fayyaz expressed gratitude towards the National Institute of Public Policy for allowing her to participate in the forum. She reflected on her father's experience graduating from the same forum in 1979 and discussed issues such as policymaking, national integration, and the disconnect between the public and private sectors in Pakistan. She emphasises the importance of working in the field and addressing misperceptions and different definitions of nationalism across the country.

She discussed the importance of integrating different ethnic groups in Pakistan, highlighting the need for people from different provinces to work together and learn each other's languages. She also mentioned the role of youth in society, noting that many feel marginalised due to unequal economic opportunities. She emphasised the need for policies that promote inclusivity and equal opportunities for all citizens.

She discussed the challenges faced by youth and economic migrants in Pakistan, emphasising the need for exposure to outside perspectives. She highlighted the importance of addressing psychological fear and instability, as well as promoting responsible journalism. She also touched on the threats and opportunities presented by digital media, particularly in tackling issues such as cyberbullying, harassment, blasphemy, minority rights, and gender security in Pakistan.

Dr. Shabana emphasised the importance of digital literacy for youth, highlighting the need for training on using various online tools such as search engines and plagiarism checkers. She expressed frustration that many students are not motivated to learn these skills, attributing it to a lack of proper training and emphasis from instructors and parents. The focus should be on educating parents first to set a foundation for teaching digital literacy to students.

She highlighted the need to combat misperceptions in traditional security and repackage dialogue to address concerns about media influence and propaganda. She discussed concerns about the allocation and performance of resources in various sectors, such as the police and military. She

mentioned issues with lack of funding leading to inefficiencies, as well as debate over the necessity of traditional security measures. Additionally, she highlighted the importance of considering gender aspects in national policies.

Dr. Shabana underscored the importance of addressing issues like food and climate security and suggested creating a series of related concepts. She urged the need for segmentation and cooperation among agencies in Pakistan, mentioning the lack of collaboration and communication between various departments. She opined that management officers were too good, but their hands were tied due to political pressures. Dr. Shabana criticised the lack of accountability and objected to the selective rule of law where the son of a leader may get away with crimes while others face consequences. Last but not least, she urged the leaders to take the lead in addressing the glaring internal issues.

## Analysis

The roundtable discussion aimed to critically examine the challenges of internal security in Pakistan and the need for effective implementation of a comprehensive national security policy and strategy. The discussion commenced with a presentation by the NIPP research team, providing an analysis of the current terrorism landscape and an overview of the four national security policies formulated to date. The analysis presented by the NIPP research team highlighted the surge in terrorist activities in Pakistan, with a 70% increase in attacks, an 81% rise in resultant deaths, and a 62% surge in the number of wounded individuals in 2024 compared to previous years. The regional breakdown of militant attacks revealed that the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) regions were the most severely impacted, accounting for a combined 66% of the total attacks.

The research team provided an overview of the four national security policies: the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-18, the National Action Plan (NAP) 2014, the NISP 2018-2023, and the National Security Policy 2022-2026. The analysis highlighted the recurring pattern of formulating comprehensive security policies, followed by inadequate implementation across successive political transitions, leading to policy discontinuity and undermining Pakistan's ability to effectively confront multidimensional threats. The speakers acknowledged the surge in terrorist activities in Pakistan since 2020 and criticised the state's response as reactionary and lopsided. They highlighted the partial implementation of previous security policies, such as the National Action Plan (NAP), with crucial aspects like madrasa reforms and revamping the criminal justice system left unaddressed. Several speakers advocated for relocating the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) from the Ministry of Interior to the Prime Minister's Office under the National Security Adviser to enhance coordination among agencies.

The need for a balanced approach between kinetic and non-kinetic measures was emphasised, with a shift towards civilian institutions taking the lead role in counterterrorism efforts, supported by the military and intelligence agencies in areas where civil authorities lack access. Some speakers questioned the necessity and timing of certain security policies, considering them as rebranding efforts rather than confidence boosters in existing policies. They acknowledged achievements in security measures but noted the failure to effectively communicate them and the lack of sustained political will across political transitions, leading to policy discontinuity.

The importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism, extremism, and sectarian tensions through a multipronged approach was stressed. They stressed the need to strengthen civilian institutions and promote their lead role in counterterrorism efforts, supported by the military and intelligence agencies. Some speakers commended initiatives aimed at fostering economic stability and investment, which bolster internal security. However, they criticised the lack of coherence and convergence among law-governing bodies responsible for maintaining peaceful situations. The need

to address alternative narratives within society and shape and nurture mainstream narratives over time was highlighted. Concerns about resource allocation and performance in various sectors, such as the police and military, were raised. The roundtable discussion revealed a consensus among the speakers acknowledging the partial failure or inadequate implementation of national security policies in Pakistan. Several factors contributing to this failure were identified, including:

1. Lack of sustained political will and ownership across political transitions, leading to policy discontinuity and lack of commitment to implementation.
2. Inadequate coordination and cooperation among various agencies and institutions involved in counterterrorism efforts are exacerbated by institutional conflicts and power struggles.
3. Overemphasis on kinetic measures and a lack of focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism, extremism, and sectarian tensions through a multipronged approach.
4. Lack of capacity building and empowerment of civilian institutions, resulting in an over-reliance on the military for counterterrorism operations, even in areas where civil authorities should take the lead.
5. Failure to effectively communicate achievements and build public confidence in security policies and measures.
6. Inadequate attention to non-traditional aspects of security, such as socioeconomic disparities, digital literacy, and gender security.

Overall, the roundtable discussion provided a critical analysis of the challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of national security policies in Pakistan, while offering valuable insights and recommendations for a more effective and sustainable approach to address internal security threats.

## Conclusion

The deliberations during the roundtable discussion have underscored that Pakistan's internal security landscape is confronted by a complex array of challenges that necessitate a cohesive, meticulously coordinated, and enduringly sustained response that transcends partisan political affiliations. Despite the recurring formulation of comprehensive national security policies, their inadequate implementation across successive administrations has severely undermined the nation's ability to effectively confront the multidimensional threats posed by terrorism, violent extremism, sectarian tensions, organised crime, and emerging transnational perils.

The overarching consensus that emerged from the discourse highlighted the pressing need for a paradigm shift in Pakistan's approach to internal security. This transformation must entail the strategic strengthening of civilian institutions through capacity-building initiatives and the empowerment of law enforcement agencies to assume a proactive leadership role in spearheading counterterrorism endeavours. Concurrently, the military and intelligence apparatus should function in a supportive capacity, facilitating operations in areas where civilian authorities encounter accessibility constraints. Furthermore, the discussion highlighted the indispensable significance of adopting a holistic strategy that harmoniously integrates robust kinetic measures with comprehensive non-kinetic initiatives meticulously designed to address the deep-rooted causes of radicalisation, socioeconomic disparities, and long-standing grievances that perpetuate the vicious cycle of violence. Fostering an environment conducive to national cohesion, promoting inclusivity across all segments of society, and nurturing a persuasive counter-narrative to counter the insidious ideologies propagated by extremist elements were identified as critical components of an effective, sustainable national security strategy.

The panellists' insights stressed the necessity for sustained political will, cross-partisan ownership, and extensive institutional reform to ensure policy continuity and the consistent, unwavering implementation of security frameworks across successive administrations. Enhancing coordination among various stakeholders, streamlining intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and revamping legal frameworks to tackle emerging challenges were identified as crucial imperatives that must be prioritised.

In essence, the roundtable discussion underscored the urgency for Pakistan to formulate and operationalise a comprehensive, multidimensional, and adaptable national security policy that places the well-being and security of the nation and its citizens above all other considerations. In this case, it would be prudent to draw inspiration from global best practices while tailoring them to Pakistan's unique context, capitalising on the nation's strengths, and addressing its specific vulnerabilities.

## Recommendations

1. National Internal Security Policy must be officially articulated and implemented with full vigour and zeal to combat the security issues across Pakistan in a deliberate, planned and sustained manner.
2. All agencies and departments must adhere to the national security policy and an oversight parliamentary committee should be formed to gauge their performance and conduct in this regard.
3. There is a need to enhance capacity building and empowerment of civilian law enforcement institutions. Equip and train civilian forces to lead counterterrorism operations in urban areas. Gradually transition the military to a supportive role in areas inaccessible to civilian forces.
4. NACTA ought to be brought under the Prime Minister's Office to ensure closer coordination among the various agencies for counterterrorism efforts and national security initiatives.
5. Prioritise the allocation and timely release of funds earmarked for the development of newly merged districts in KP. Expedite the disbursement of committed resources to establish critical infrastructure and institutions. Ensure financial resources are not affected by political transitions or delays.
6. There is a need to develop a proper national narrative in response to the terrorists' narrative. It should not be just a tit-for-tat answer to the terrorists' narrative as was contained in NACTA's national narrative which was primarily driven by the Paigham-e-Pakistan, signed and promulgated by around 1800 religious scholars and ratified by the religious elite only. A narrative based on socio-economic well-being, meritocracy, justice and security for all, irrespective of their affiliations and affinity, must be developed.
7. Integrate, coordinate, and divide responsibilities based on existing policies, structures, and scattered experiences. Revive and strengthen the police force by addressing organisational issues, job cards, strengths, and processes. Enhance service delivery, resource distribution, and provision of security in line with the 18th Amendment.
8. Engage with those movements which are not attributing toward any incident of violence and have their members elected by the parliament. There is a need to change the policy towards them and engage in meaningful dialogue, as forcing them could lead to violence.
9. Conduct an audit of foreign assistance to identify unattained security targets and reallocate resources effectively.

10. Stop playing with non-state actors and say goodbye to the policy of "good Taliban" and "bad Taliban," which had backfired. All counterterrorism action should be based on credible data developed by academics, not just military officers, police officers, or administrative officers.
11. Illegal and undocumented foreigners, especially Bangladeshis and Afghans, should not be allowed to roam freely in the country and indulge in economic as well as unlawful activities.
12. Raise a central CTD, separate from NACTA, which is not a field organisation, to investigate interprovincial and cross-frontier terrorism incidents.
13. Expedite the recruitment and training of police, administrative, and judicial personnel for the merged districts. Establish a dedicated police training academy and judicial academy in the region. Deploy experienced officers from other districts to mentor and build the capacity of the local workforce. Ensure proper equipment, infrastructure, and resources for the law enforcement agencies.
14. Constitute a high-powered committee led by the Prime Minister to oversee the development of the merged districts. Include representation from federal, and provincial governments, military, intelligence agencies, and local communities. Conduct quarterly progress reviews, address inter-agency coordination issues, and make course corrections.
15. Address socio-economic disparities, psychological instability, and responsible journalism through comprehensive policies. Focus on Enhancing digital literacy, addressing cyber threats, and incorporating gender aspects in national security policies.

## Postscript: Operation Azm-e-Istehkam A New Chapter in Pakistan's Counter - Terrorism Efforts

In the two months following the April 23, 2024, Roundtable Discussion on "Challenges of Internal Security: Need for Implementation of National Security Policy and Strategy," a significant development has emerged in the country's approach to combating terrorism and extremism. On June 22, 2024, the Central Apex Committee on National Action Plan (NAP) approved Operation "Azm-e-Istehkam" (Resolve for Stability), marking a new chapter in Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts.

This latest initiative builds upon a long history of military operations aimed at combating terrorism within Pakistan's borders. Since 2001, the country has undertaken numerous operations, including Enduring Freedom, Al Mizan, Sher Dil, Rah-e-Haq, Rah-e-Rast, Rah-e-Nijat, Zarb-e-Azb, and Radd-ul-Fasaad. While these operations demonstrated Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism and achieved tactical successes, their long-term strategic efficacy has been debated.

The recurring nature of these operations has highlighted the limitations of relying solely on kinetic measures to address the complex, multifaceted challenge of terrorism. During the Roundtable the experts have argued for a more comprehensive approach that integrates military action with socio-economic development, political reforms, and ideological counter-narratives. Operation Azm-e-Istehkam appears to acknowledge this perspective somewhat.

Launched under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Azm-e-Istehkam aims to integrate and synergise multiple lines of effort to combat extremism and terrorism comprehensively and decisively. The operation approval came after the National Action Plan (NAP) Apex Committee meeting on Saturday. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's emphasis on the joint responsibility of all levels of government and institutions in combating terrorism directly addresses concerns about over-reliance on the military. His statement that "placing the responsibility solely upon a single institution will be a blatant mistake" echoes a more balanced approach between kinetic and non-kinetic measures, with civilian institutions taking a more prominent role in counter-terrorism efforts. These remarks come after a Chinese minister's statement that in a turbulent world of rising uncertainties, "stability within the country is essential for development".

A key feature of Azm-e-Istehkam is its consensus-based approval, involving all stakeholders including provinces, Gilgit Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This broad-based support addresses one of the primary criticisms raised during the roundtable - the lack of sustained political will and ownership across political transitions. By securing buy-in from all major stakeholders, the government has taken a crucial step towards ensuring policy continuity and consistent implementation, regardless of potential changes in administration.

The operation aims to focus on ensuring foolproof security for Chinese nationals, while important for maintaining crucial economic partnerships, inadvertently highlights the shortcomings of previous security

initiatives. This renewed emphasis on protecting foreign nationals raises questions about the effectiveness of past operations and the overall security environment in Pakistan. It suggests that despite numerous military campaigns and security measures, the threat to foreign interests, particularly those associated with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), remains significant. This persistent vulnerability underscores the limitations of purely military-centric approaches to counter-terrorism and the need for a more comprehensive strategy that addresses the root causes of extremism and instability. Moreover, the operation also falls short in outlining a clear strategy for countering online radicalisation and extremist narratives in the digital space, a growing concern in the age of social media and instant communication. Additionally, the absence of a robust plan for rehabilitating and reintegrating former militants into society represents a missed opportunity to break the cycle of extremism. These omissions raise concerns about the operation's ability to deliver long-term, sustainable solutions to Pakistan's security challenges.

Implementation and monitoring remain critical concerns, as the formulation of comprehensive policies has not been Pakistan's primary challenge; rather, it has been their consistent implementation. The operation's success will largely depend on the government's ability to ensure sustained implementation and regular progress monitoring across all involved agencies and institutions.

Furthermore, resource allocation poses another significant challenge. Given Pakistan's economic constraints, ensuring adequate and sustained funding for all aspects of the operation, particularly for the capacity-building of civilian institutions, may prove difficult. Political stability is also crucial, as the continuity and effectiveness of the operation could be affected by potential changes in government. Balancing security measures with civil liberties will be essential to maintain public support for the operation. As it intensifies, there is a risk of overreach by security agencies, potentially infringing on citizens' rights. Striking the right balance will be critical for long-term success.

While the operation mentions socioeconomic measures, the details and extent of these initiatives remain unclear. Effectively addressing the root causes of extremism, including poverty, lack of education, and social injustice, will be crucial for long-term success. The success of diplomatic efforts to curtail terrorist activities will depend heavily on cooperation from neighbouring countries, particularly Afghanistan, presenting a significant challenge in managing complex regional dynamics.

Operation Azm-e-Istehkam represents a potentially significant shift in Pakistan's counter-terrorism and national security approach. Its whole-of-government approach and emphasis on civilian institutions' role in counter-terrorism efforts could lead to a more balanced and sustainable security framework. This evolution in strategy may address some of the limitations observed in previous operations, offering an opportunity for further efficacy of counter-terrorism strategies in complex geopolitical environments. However, the true test of this operation will lie in its implementation, and only time will tell if it can overcome the challenges that have hindered previous efforts and deliver lasting peace and stability to Pakistan.

# Annexure

## Introduction of NIPP Team

### Dr. Naveed Elahi

Dean NIPP. Prior to this, he served in the public sector in various departments for more than three decades. He did his master's and PhD from King's College London, UK. He is the author of several books and taught national security, public policy, and foreign policy of Pakistan at various universities.

### Mr. Habib Ullah Khan

Additional Director Publications and Archives at NIPP. Prior to this role, he also served as Additional Director of Administration and Finance at the National Institute of Management Lahore. Previously held positions as Director I.T. and Deputy Director I.T. at the National Management College Lahore.

### Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid

Senior Research Associate at NIPP. He completed his PhD, from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, where his doctoral thesis was "Theory and Practice of police corruption control in Pakistan Case Studies of three Police Departments". He has also served as a Strategic Planning Expert in USAID projects in Pakistan.

### Dr. Ali Abbas

Research Associate at NIPP. He served in public and private academic and research institutes for more than ten years. He did his PhD in Economics from NCBA&E Lahore, where his doctoral thesis is on "Key Driving Factors of Business Cycle Synchronisation among Pakistan and its Trading Partners". He is the author of several research articles published in national and international journals in the field of environmental and development economics.

### Dr. Sumreen Khalil

Research Fellow at NIPP. She has completed her PhD from the University of the Punjab, Lahore-Pakistan. She has ample experience of teaching at various Universities. She has also served in the Administrative Functional Unit of Local Government Service.

## **Dr. Muhammad Abdullah**

Research Fellow at NIPP. He graduated with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) in 2011 from Lahore Medical and Dental College and later obtained a master's in public health (MPH) from Griffith University, Australia, in 2017. He has also been awarded by the governor as a "Best volunteer" for healthcare in Punjab.

## **Ms. Sabina Babar**

Research Fellow at NIPP holds an MPhil in International Relations from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. She has served as a Research Officer at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies, Lahore. She has held the position of a Researcher at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad. Prior to that she has also worked as a lecturer at the University of Central Punjab. She is a prolific writer with publications in national and international journals.

## **Mr. Sajid Sultan**

Statistical Analyst at NIPP. Before that, he was a Data Analyst at the Population Welfare Department, Govt of Punjab. He has also served in many other institutions as Lecturer as well as Controller of Examination. He has done MPhil in Statistics from Minhaj University Lahore.

## Panelists of the Roundtable Discussion

### Mr. Shaukat Javed

He is a former IGP Punjab, former CT Minister. He did his master's in public administration from the University of Punjab and joined the Police Service of Pakistan with the 1st Common Batch. He is an alumnus of Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow from the University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. Mr Javed served at various field and desk appointments in Punjab Police, Islamabad Police, and Intelligence Bureau. Prominent amongst them were SSP Islamabad, DIG Lahore, Acting Director General IB etc. He retired as Inspector General of Police, Punjab. After his retirement, he was appointed Member of the Punjab Public Service Commission and later served as the caretaker Home Minister of Punjab during the General elections 2018. Presently he is engaged in several Academic, Social, and sports-related activities

### Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (R)

He served in the Pakistan Army from April 1984 to December 2020. From 2008-10, Brig headed the Plans Branch of Military Operations Dte. CT Campaign 2008-13 was designed. From 2010-12, Commanded a brigade in Swat Op. 2012-13, Served at Kabul as SLO, Afghanistan. He led Rangers (Sindh) in Karachi Operation as Maj Gen in 2014-2016 As Lt Gen, in the capacity of CGS at GHQ, he also coordinated 'Operation Rud ul Fasad' in 2017-18. Similarly in 2018-19, Commanded 10 Corps, and handled operational situations post-Pulwama land and air skirmishes.

### Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, PSP

He belongs to the Police Service of Pakistan since 1999. He is well known for his innovative strategic planning, and reforms and leading for Technology Oriented Policing and governance approaches in Pakistan. He has been Inspector General of the Islamabad Capital Police. In 2015, he pioneered a new organization named Punjab Safe Cities Authority. He has been serving in various leadership positions for the last twenty-five years. His experience included leading multinational and multiethnic teams in national and international settings as well as in development organizations like UNDP, UNODC and UNWOMEN in Pakistan.

### Muhammad Amir Rana

He is the director of the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS). He had worked extensively on issues related to counterterrorism, counter-extremism, and internal and regional security and politics. He writes regularly for Dawn, Pakistan's leading English newspaper. He has also been invited to appear as an expert on electronic media, including CNN, BBC World, Al Jazeera English, Voice of America, Al-Arabia, and other Pakistani and international news channels. He was awarded with German Peace Prize 2016. He authored many books.

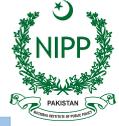
## Dr. Shabana Fayyaz

She is a Chairperson and Associate Professor at the Defense & Strategic Studies Department, Quaid-e-Azam University, and Islamabad. She holds PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) from the University of Birmingham, UK. She is the author of the book *Pakistan's Response to Terrorism: A Case Study of Musharraf Era*, 2020. Currently pursuing a research project on social media and CVE-Pakistan's Case, in collaboration with Swansea University's Cyber Threats Research Centre, UK. She participated in Harvard Kennedy School – Executive Education, on January 14, 2010. She also participated in the Annual Colloquium of the Institute of Inclusive Security, 8 January – 22 January 2010, Massachusetts (Harvard) and Washington DC.

## The Panelists and Team NIPP Group Photo



### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY (NIPP) Roundtable Discussion on Challenges of Internal Security: Need for Implementation of National Security Policy and Strategy 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2024



1st Row: Mr. Habib Ullah Khan, Lt. Gen. Bilal Akbar (Retd), Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Mr. Shaukat Javaid, Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, PSP,  
L to R: Addl. Director (P&A), NIPP, Former CGS, Chairperson DSS, QAU, Former IGP Punjab, Dean NIPP, NSPP, Former IGP, ICT,  
Mr. Muhammad Amir Rana, Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid, RA, NIPP.

2nd Row: Mr. Muhammad Junaid, Mr. Sajid Sultan, Dr. Ali Abbas, Mr. Inqram Elahi, Dr. Sumreen Khalil, Ms. Iram Masood, Ms. Sabina Babar,  
DD, LDA, SA, NIPP, RA, NIPP, Director B&P, DPI Colleges, RF, NIPP, DD, LDA, RF, NIPP,  
Ms. Hina Khalid, Dr. Shahla Akram, Ms. Sarosh Ejaz, ADS (MCMC), NCBA&E Lahore, ADS (MCMC).

3rd Row: Dr. Muhammad Abdullah, RF, NIPP.





## National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP)

The National Institute of Public Policy (NIPP) is an integral unit of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) and acts as a “Think Tank” for the federal government. It is the principal research arm of NSPP. With a team of researchers and in collaboration with its partner institutions, NIPP provides research-based policy advice to the Federal Government on matters of public policy and advises it on the issues of policy significance referred to it.

### Vision

An internationally recognized public policy research institute, acting as an independent think tank of the Government of Pakistan and a hub for public policy research in/on Pakistan.

### Mission

NIPP’s Mission is to improve the quality of public policy decision-making and service delivery by creating fresh knowledge and evidence and continuously improving the data, information, and communication management systems on key public policy issues in Pakistan.



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