



# SPECIAL REPORT

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## ABOUT THE REPORT

This report reviews the progress to February 2015 on Pakistan's counterterrorism policy frameworks and highlights related key strategic and operational issues. Funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), its original focus was on Pakistan's National Internal Security Policy in the context of 2010 when devolution reforms shifted. This scope shifted in light of the attack on an Army school in December 2014 and the subsequent announcement of the National Action Plan against terrorism.

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*Raza Rumi*

# Charting Pakistan's Internal Security Policy

## Summary

- Pakistan's recently announced National Action Plan focuses on combatting both terrorism and militancy and addresses endemic insecurity and radicalization. The plan follows in the wake of the National Internal Security Policy, which has been in place for more than a year.
- These two policy frameworks underscore the commitment of the government to implement counterterrorism operations. Implementation of both, however, is affected by the civil-military divide that defines Pakistan's power landscape and by the altered governance architecture since the onset of devolution reforms of 2010.
- Pakistan's historically entrenched civil-military imbalance puts the military in the driver's seat on all issues related to national security. The current civilian government has enabled the military to take the lead on internal security arrangements as well.
- Internal security challenges of Pakistan are directly related to its external security policy, especially with respect to India and Afghanistan.
- Centralized management of internal security policies, however, is fraught with difficulties. It is unclear whether the provincial governments "own" the National Internal Security Policy and how far the central government is enabling reform to achieve results.
- Progress to date remains mixed. In fact, recent decisions indicate that key counterterrorism goals, such as action against proscribed militant outfits and madrasa regulation, may have been diluted to prevent backlash from religious militias. Counterterrorism efforts cannot succeed without dismantling the militias that have operated with impunity.
- To effectively counter internal militancy and external terrorism, Pakistan's policymakers will need to harness both civilian and military institutions. To do so, they need to develop a multifaceted strategy that incorporates a national intelligence directorate, an internal security adviser, enhanced jurisdiction of the National Counter Terrorism Authority, parliamentary

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participation in counterterrorism, increased financial commitments, education reform, provincial counterterrorism strategies, and altering public narratives. Such measures need to be implemented in letter and spirit with complementary institutional reforms.

## Background

Pakistan's governance has seen major upheavals and incremental democratization over the past decade. Its civilian space, especially since the anti-Musharraf movement of 2007, has expanded into an ongoing democratic transition. Whether this shift is permanent—given the country's traditional rule by military or quasi-military regimes—remains to be seen. The two most recent elections, in 2008 and 2013, however, have deepened the importance of electoral politics and the return of civilian institutions.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, extreme turbulence in internal security challenges characterizes the democratic decade. Terrorism and insurgencies have challenged state capacity and adversely affected the morale of the country and its economy.

From 2002 to 2014, at least 19,886 civilians died in or from incidents of terrorism and militancy.<sup>2</sup> Militants have killed an additional 6,015 security personnel, including four general officers.<sup>3</sup> Leading political parties—including the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Awami National Party, and Muttahida Quami Movement—have been directly targeted for criticizing Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other terrorist groups over the years. Even leaders from conservative religious parties, such as Jamiat-e-Ulemai Islam (F), were attacked in recent years.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, various militant groups have also attacked religious minorities, members of rival sects, and members of other ethnic groups. The government reports that 13,721 terrorist incidents took place<sup>5</sup>: Of these incidents, 523 occurred between 2001 and 2005, and another 13,198 between 2007 and late 2013.<sup>6</sup> This wave of terrorism has also resulted, according to government estimates, in losses of up to \$78 billion to the national economy as foreign investment dried up, businesses moved abroad, human capital emigrated, and the cost of doing business in Pakistan increased.<sup>7</sup>

The landscape of militancy is both complex and worrying for the future. An estimated thirteen militant groups are actively fighting the state under the TTP banner.<sup>8</sup> In addition, twelve sectarian militias are closely linked with the TTP and the larger militancy network.<sup>9</sup> Jihad groups, such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), operate to support the insurgency in the Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir,<sup>10</sup> a disputed territory between India and Pakistan where a movement for autonomy is also underway. While groups like LeT and JeM do not target the Pakistani state or civilians, their breakaway factions have joined the antistate insurgents over the years.<sup>11</sup>

As if Pakistan's woes were not enough, since 2007 its southwestern province of Balochistan has been affected by a formidable insurgency in which at least four separatist groups—the Baloch Republican Army, Baloch Liberation Army, Balochistan Liberation Tigers, and United Baloch Army—operate expressly to liberate the province from the rest of the country, targeting military and paramilitary personnel and installations.<sup>12</sup>

This intricate web of insurgencies has at times appeared to be out of control.<sup>13</sup> Pakistan's India-centric strategic view of national security is a major factor that has led to such an impasse. The Pakistani military defines national security as confronting what it terms security dilemmas posed by the country's hostile relations with India and Afghanistan. The military contextualizes these dilemmas by pointing to geography, historical disputes, an insecure region, and ongoing great power geopolitics.<sup>14</sup> Pakistan's civilians have not only absorbed this worldview through public narratives set by textbooks, mainstream media, and official policy documents but also back it.<sup>15</sup>

Viewing India as a perpetual enemy, Pakistan neglected internal statebuilding and fostered violent groups that fought on behalf of the state against India. For a long time, Pakistan did not acknowledge its growing internal instability as a clear and present threat. Furthermore, thirty years of conflict in neighboring Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal areas also fuelled militancy. The situation that unfolded in the 1990s, following the withdrawal of the Soviet Army and a loss of Western interest in the region, gave militants an opportunity to expand their networks while Pakistan attempted to ensure security on its borders by using these militant groups to its advantage. Use of religion to fight communism, and later to establish dominance in Afghanistan, created a blowback of religious militancy, which first engulfed the region and then spread to Pakistan.

To understand how Pakistan has made certain security-centric choices over the last few decades, it is imperative to explore who controls the country's security and policymaking structures.

## Who Is in Charge of Policy?

Conceptually, civilian control over policy and management of state security is rooted in the rationale that the security of the state is subordinate to the broader objectives of a nation. Kohn summarizes it succinctly: "The purpose of the military is to defend society, not to define it."<sup>16</sup> Civilian control of security matters ensures that political courses of action (to make peace or wage war) are handled by representatives of the people rather than by just a few individuals or military entities.<sup>17</sup>

In Pakistan's context, civilian control could be interpreted as the absence both of overt military interference in the policymaking process and of a military coup or the threat of it.<sup>18</sup> Civilians can exercise this control by making decisions regarding the country's defense policies; by setting the political direction of the security policy, including strategic and operational priorities; and by making decisions on the organization, deployment, and employment of security forces, all while allocating resources and exercising accountability mechanisms.<sup>19</sup> This essentially means that the state's military security apparatus implements policy rather than sets it.

Pakistan's military has directly ruled the country for more than three decades. This has entrenched the dominance of the military over the political process, policymaking, and administrative apparatus of the state. The military considers decisions on the country's foreign and security policies its exclusive domain. It resists interference in such spheres and management of military affairs by the political leadership. According to the constitution, the military is placed under the federal government. In practice, however, during much of the country's history the federal government has been under the control of the military. During the brief interludes of civilian rule, the federal government has worked under the overall policy direction of the military. Formal lines of authority aside, the appointments, budgets, and operations of the country's leading military intelligence services—the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and military intelligence (MI)—are also controlled by the Army's General Headquarters rather than the civilian executive. Thus, whenever civilian executive has tried to bring about a policy shift in the country's foreign affairs and security calculus, it has been thwarted, except for the brief period when Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (1973–77) managed to control and direct the country's foreign affairs.

During its five-year term from 2008 to 2013, the PPP government essentially abdicated responsibility for forming a strong national counterterrorism policy and internal security strategy.<sup>20</sup> In June 2008, soon after taking over power, the government declared that the Army chief would be the "principal for application of military effort" and would decide on military operations in tribal regions.<sup>21</sup> Five years later, Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani lamented his earlier assertion that the PPP-led government wanted to launch a military operation in North

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Waziristan but that then military chief General Ashfaq Kayani was “reluctant” to do so.<sup>22</sup> In May 2011, when the military came under widespread criticism at home and abroad following the U.S. raid in Abbottabad that killed Osama bin Laden, it presented the PPP government an opportunity to take a step toward gaining control of formulating the country’s security policies, but again the PPP government and parliament left it to the Army to deal with the security challenges.<sup>23</sup>

The Pakistani polity is divided along multiple political, ethnic, and religious lines, as well as along institutional divisions between civilian and military authorities. The resulting political instability undermines the government’s ability to craft a coherent and effective policy. Elected civilians have not been able to exercise control over security policy due to a weak political system; dysfunctional political parties; lack of political institutions, such as parliamentary committees or think tanks; and the militarization of the civilian bureaucracy. This has translated into the absence of capacity among the political elites to take charge and manage policymaking. Even if a policy is adopted, the state has to ensure that all political and institutional stakeholders support the policy framework and direct their operations toward implementing it. Building that consensus and sustaining it for the long term in a polity is a herculean task. Mechanisms that ordinarily regulate political and institutional rivalries are weak, and given Pakistan’s turbulent history, unelected institutions prevail over policy direction and outcomes. Any consensus is bound to be short-lived in the face of intense civil-military competition.<sup>24</sup>

## Policymaking Architecture

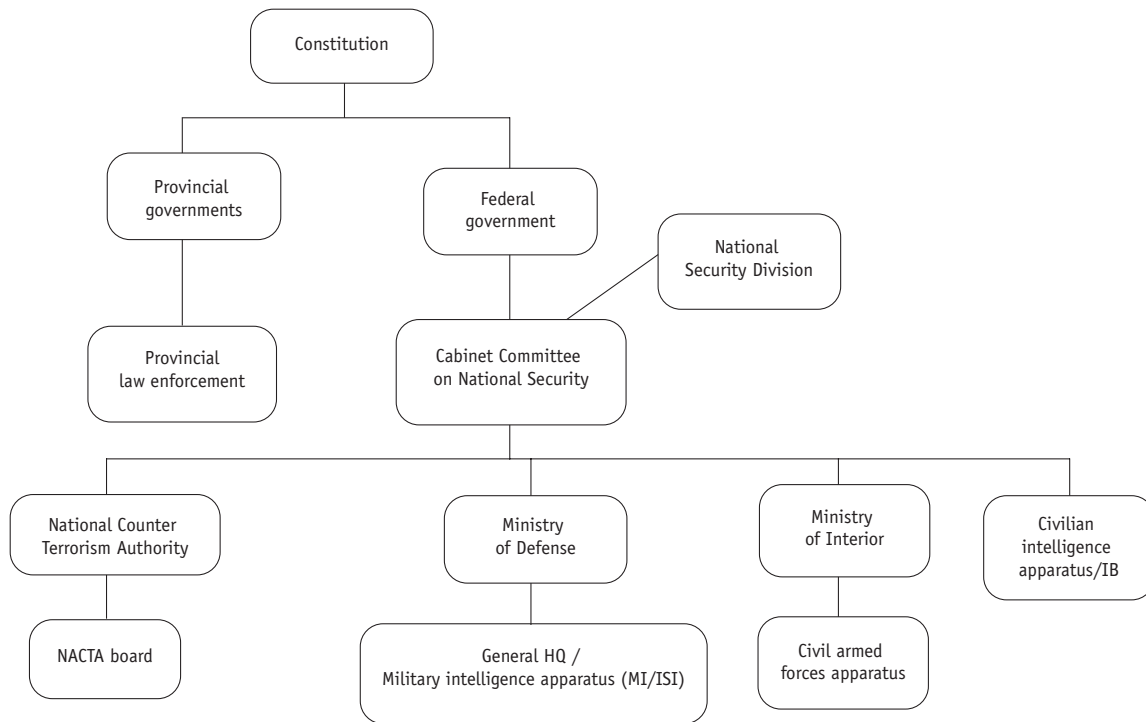
In August 2013, shortly after coming to power, the new Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)—or PML-N—government decided to reframe and rename the Defense Committee of the Cabinet as the Cabinet Committee on National Security (CCNS).<sup>25</sup> Chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, it includes the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, interior, and finance, as well as senior military leadership—the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee and the chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The CCNS, as a subcommittee of the federal cabinet, is the highest institutional forum where federal ministries, civilian intelligence apparatus, and military institutions—including its intelligence outfits—come together under the guidance of political leadership and form policies. In 2013, it was also announced that the CCNS would “formulate a national security policy that will become the guiding framework for its subsidiary policies—defence policy, foreign policy, internal security policy, and other policies affecting national security.”<sup>26</sup> Later, a National Security Division was also established within the federal civil service bureaucracy to support the CCNS, overseen by a senior bureaucrat.<sup>27</sup> Figure 1 summarizes the current organizational structure of Pakistan’s internal security architecture. The idea behind the reformulated CCNS was to seek better coordination with the military and reassert that the cabinet and the prime minister were in charge of national security. However, it has been far from effective over the past year.

At the federal level, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) is the overall body responsible for law and order and security within Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> The Ministry of Defense (MOD) also theoretically plays an important role in that it is mandated to deal with policy and administrative matters pertaining to the armed forces. According to the rules of business of 1973, the three branches of the armed forces—Army, Navy, and Air Force—route their official business through the MOD.<sup>29</sup> In reality, the forces are virtually autonomous and their linkage to the MOD is merely administrative, the latter exerting little or no power over the budgeting, operations, or personnel management within the defense forces.

In 2010, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was created by a civilian government and given the mandate to formulate and monitor the implementation of national counterterrorism strategy. The NACTA board is quite similar to the CCNS and is headed by the prime minister; it additionally includes provincial representation and greater inclusion of

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**Figure 1. Pakistan’s Internal Security Architecture**



civil bureaucracy. The Army chief of staff is not a member. NACTA, together with the MOI, is meant to coordinate and interact with provincial representatives and relevant provincial law enforcement agencies. In practice, NACTA has been dormant since its inception, caught amidst various turf wars over information-sharing between the intelligence agencies and the MOI and the placement of NACTA under the MOI or the prime minister’s office.<sup>30</sup>

## Federalism and Policymaking

Establishing a unified internal security policy is further complicated by debates over federalism and the distribution of authority between Pakistan’s central and provincial governments. Pakistan’s history is replete with efforts to grapple with federalism and the delicate center-provinces balance. From the onset of nationhood in 1947, inequality of income and services between the provinces led to the smaller provinces regarding both the federation and the larger Punjab Province with suspicion. Historically, the internal security and measures for countering terrorism have been viewed and continue to be a function of the central government.

Even as it outsourced security matters to the military establishment, the previous PPP-led government undertook major constitutional reforms to correct federal imbalances. Political consensus led to the Eighteenth Amendment to the constitution, passed with the support of all political parties in 2010. The amendment is a package of 102 amendments to various sections of the constitution, making key areas of policy exclusively provincial domains. Specifically, it strengthened and expanded the purview of the Council of Common Interests (CCI)—an interprovincial body to negotiate and settle federal-provincial matters. During 2010 and 2011, a total of 201 functions, institutions, and organizations were devolved to the provinces, re-allocated within the federal government, or, in very few cases, abolished. Of these, 103 functions, organizations, or institutions were completely devolved to the provinces.

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Debate was considerable on whether the provinces had the necessary capacity. All provinces set up special working groups to handle the new powers and mandates. This debate is unresolved, and some provinces, such as Punjab, have demonstrated better adaptation to new roles, assigning staff and setting up new administrative units, than others.

The amendment was backed by the 2009 seventh National Finance Commission Award, which increased the provinces' share of federally collected tax revenues from 49 percent to 57.5 percent and dropped the federal share to 42.5 percent. All provinces of Pakistan continue to struggle to enhance their own revenues, collectively financing only 11 percent of their expenditures through provincial tax and nontax sources.<sup>31</sup>

The constitutional balance of powers on security policymaking is complex. Law and order and policing have always been a provincial matter. But Article 148 (3) of the constitution confers powers to the federal government to give directions to the provinces in case of any threats to internal security. Furthermore, Article 149 (4) also provides the federal government the power to direct the provinces in maintaining peace and tranquility in the provinces. At the same time, part 5 of the constitution makes it mandatory for the federal government to support the provinces administratively, financially, and materially in peace and wartime. The federal government has, however, shed many of its powers and most importantly a sizeable chunk of resources since 2010, limiting its ability to hand out additional resources. Nor does it have direct control over many provincial functions. The CCI is the highest body for interprovincial negotiations, and without a consensus decision within it, federal directives to provinces carry little weight.

Since devolution, additional fiscal resources have been made available to all the provinces. The provinces have increased their allocations for improving the security situation, countering terrorism, and maintaining law and order in the last five years. Table 1 shows related provincial budgetary allocations.

**Table 1. Provincial Budgets for Internal Security**

	Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Balochistan
2010–11	69.2	29.6	24.7	10.9
2011–12	73.78	39.1	18.81	12.7
2012–13	81.86	39.3	23.3	13.5
2013–14	93.7	48.6	23.7	16.4
2014–15	113.2	54.08	28.5	20.2

Source: Provincial budget documents and reports, respective years

Note: All figures in Rs billion.

The greatest increase in the budgetary allocations can be seen for the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. Balochistan has also devoted additional resources. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), the most affected province by terrorism, has not devoted sufficient additional resources. However, federal grants and programs focusing on countering terrorism—especially in the conflict-ridden region of Swat—are not reflected in the provincial budgets.

## Formulating New Policies

The 2013 elections brought the PML-N back to power, with a substantial electoral mandate, at the national level after a lapse of fourteen years. The party promised during its election campaign, among other things, to develop a coherent counterterrorism policy and internal security strategy. Its manifesto for the election states that neither

militancy nor terrorism can be countered by mere use of force. This is a problem that has penetrated deep into the vitals of society and therefore needs a well-thought out, comprehensive, and sustainable plan of action that should include economic, social, administrative and political initiatives and measures to root out this menace....It is equally important to overhaul and modernize the security sector in order to establish democratic and parliamentary oversight on intelligence services and to achieve better surveillance, improved coordination among intelligence agencies and enhanced capacity for counter insurgency forces at different levels.<sup>32</sup>

Pakistan's first National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was approved by the full cabinet in February 2014, setting out goals to establish and ensure writ of the state within Pakistan's territorial boundaries, defeat extremism, and launch counterterrorism measures to protect citizens from all internal threats. The NISP was conceived and formulated by the Ministry of Interior and NACTA in December 2013, and subsequently reviewed and approved by the CCNS in January and the full cabinet in February 2014.<sup>33</sup> Later, the government presented the NISP in the national assembly on February 26, 2014, to build political consensus on tackling terrorism.<sup>34</sup>

The NISP is divided into three parts: strategic, operational, and secret. The interior minister described the strategic section as the government's efforts to talk with militants who were willing to engage in a dialogue and conduct targeted military operations against those willing to fight.<sup>35</sup> The operational component demonstrates the government's resolve to ensure the security of the public through a series of concerted efforts at the national and provincial level. The secret component of the NISP remains classified.

### ***NISP Highlights***

- Establishes the Directorate of Internal Security (DIS) under NACTA, integrating "all grids of tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence, civil and military, under one roof"
- Establishes a modern, well-equipped federal rapid response force (RRF) made up of counterterrorism departments and police with nationwide reach and the capacity to coordinate with police and both civilian and government armed forces
- Integrates mosques and madrassas in the national and provincial educational establishment
- Enforces a comprehensive nationwide arms control regime
- Prevents both cybercrime and misuse of mobile phones, electronic devices, and social, electronic, and print media that in any way threaten internal security
- Enforces a robust border control regime to interdict illegal cross-border movement of persons, goods, drugs and precursors, weapons, and any other material that threatens internal security
- Supports capacity building and modernization of all facets of the criminal justice system including judiciary, police, and high security prisons nationwide

### ***Implementation Plan***

The NISP details an elaborate and ambitious implementation plan that divided responsibilities between federal and provincial governments, classifying them as hard (such as a new security force) and soft (such as madrasa reform) initiatives, including within them suggested timelines and financial sources for each activity. The central government provided political direction but had only limited capability to implement it, thwarted by both the power of the military intelligence apparatus and the necessity of getting provinces on board with respect to its key commitments. Most important, the overlapping national security institutions at the federal level inhibited the task of implementing such a policy in a coordinated and efficient manner.

Implementation was also constrained by political instability within the country as opposition parties led street protests and a prolonged antigovernment sit-in beginning in July 2014. This crisis diverted the attention of the government away from the business of policymaking and policy implementation—even as the military launched a decisive operation against terrorists in North Waziristan—and toward ensuring its continued political survival in office. This said, it is difficult to predict whether the absence of political agitation might have meant greater ownership of the policy.

Ten months after the NISP's formulation and a devastating attack on the Peshawar Army Public School in December 2014, an All Parties' Conference presided over by Prime Minister Sharif announced—with the military brass in attendance—an additional twenty-point National Action Plan (NAP) to counter terrorism and extremism. The NAP essentially rearticulated the goals and objectives of the NISP but offered two additional features: Implementation of the death penalty for convicted terrorists and the establishment of special military courts to fast-track terrorism related trials of “jet black” terrorists.<sup>36</sup> Subsequently, amendments in the Army act were made to extend its jurisdiction to try any person on the offence of terrorism and sectarianism under military law in a military court.<sup>37</sup> Earlier, the military used its public relations wing to convey the remarks of the Army chief that the military courts were “not the desire of the Army, but [the] need of extraordinary times.”<sup>38</sup> The political leadership was also asked to forge consensus to root out terrorism and make bold decisions.<sup>39</sup>

***The National Action Plan essentially rearticulates the goals and objectives of NISP, but offers two additional features: Implementation of the death penalty for convicted terrorists and the establishment of special military courts to fast-track terrorism related trials of “jet black” terrorists.***

### ***National Action Plan Agenda***

- Enforce executions for terrorists sentenced to death
- Establish special trial courts under military officers
- Forbid all armed organizations
- Strengthen and activate NACTA
- Take action against hate literature
- Eliminate all sources of funding of organizations
- Forbid banned organizations from operating under another name
- Create a special antiterrorism force
- Protect religious minorities
- Register and regulate seminaries
- Ban airing views of terrorist organizations in print and electronic media
- Prioritize reforms in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and the return of internally displaced persons
- Dismantle terrorists' communication networks
- Stop spread of terrorism on the Internet and social media
- Continue Karachi operation
- Give autonomy to Balochistan to handle security
- Act against sectarianism
- Formulate comprehensive policy for Afghan refugees
- Establish criminal law reforms for intelligence operations
- Develop constitutional amendments for military courts



## Policy Management Challenges

Both the NISP and NAP aim to integrate security efforts across federal and provincial governments. Their goals are to engage all relevant stakeholders, dismantle terrorist networks, and ensure deterrence by operationalizing the available capabilities (and enhancing them during implementation) of security organizations to defeat internal threats to state security. Both the NISP and NAP provide the way forward if they are implemented in a timely and coordinated way. Such implementation, however, is complicated by continued tensions between the central government and the provinces over security policy formation, the uncertain role of NACTA as a coordinating body for counterterrorism efforts, divisions over intelligence-sharing across civilian and military security services, and questions of how to effectively operationalize counterterrorism policies through police or dedicated units. Furthermore, the federal government amended the NAP during the first quarter of its implementation, diluting the counterterrorism strategy by eliminating three key elements: action against banned groups, madrassa reforms, and repatriation of Afghan refugees. This move was ostensibly to avoid backlash from jihadists.<sup>40</sup>

### *Overcentralization*

Following the introduction of the NISP in February 2014, the federal government announced that Prime Minister Sharif would take all four provincial chief ministers into his confidence and seek their input for enhancing coordination between federal and provincial governments with respect to counterterrorism. A meeting was held, but the constitutional body for policy coordination, the Council of Common Interests, was bypassed. The process continues previous patterns of centralized federal governance.

Provinces were not fully consulted when the NISP and NAP were formulated, however. Varying degrees of ownership thus make implementing each of them difficult, particularly given that the ruling PML-N does not govern any province other than Punjab. The most vulnerable province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is governed by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, and the province, though in agreement with the broad goals of the NISP and NAP, was not fully on board with the federal vision.

The military has also stepped in to steer provincial management. In the wake of the December 2014 Peshawar attack, new “provincial apex committees” to oversee the implementation of the NAP have been formed, comprising senior civilian provincial officials, Army commanders, and the ISI. These committees effectively bypass NACTA coordination. As of late February 2015, apex committees in three provinces had met, the Army chief leading in at least two of the meetings. The military has highlighted the importance of this forum as a civil-military coordination mechanism. But the provincial chief minister of Punjab, for instance, participated in the meeting as a member under the leadership of the Army chief.

On the provincial government side, the Punjab government has enacted the Punjab Strategic Coordination Act 2014 to establish an institutional mechanism for effective counterterrorism measures and to formulate provincial security and counterterrorism policy.<sup>41</sup> According to the act, a provincial security council and provincial strategic coordination board would be set up to supervise interaction with federal and intelligence agencies, monitor police operations, and carry out research and policy work, among other tasks.<sup>42</sup> Nothing substantial has been done yet to implement this law, however.

The NISP and NAP also detail parliamentary oversight of security affairs and the role of parliamentary committees in monitoring implementation. For civilian control of internal security and institutionalized response to countering terrorism, the role of parliamentary bodies is central. At the local level, local governments are vital instruments of state governance and responsible for basic functions at the district and grassroots levels. They have a crucial

role to play in education, vocational training, and madrassa oversight because they can reach the largest number of people. Despite several court orders, most provinces have operated without elected local bodies since 2009, partly because of resistance from political parties at the provincial assembly level. In the absence of local governments, the critical translation of counterterrorism policy goals—such as better vocational training, educational improvement, and public campaigns against radicalization—into practice will remain severely constrained.

### ***NACTA's Role***

As noted, NACTA has been dormant since its inception and remains a victim of turf wars between intelligence outfits. Its legal status is also a subject of debate. Under the federal government's rules of business, internal security is the responsibility of the MOI, which also oversees the various paramilitary forces. NACTA is meant to coordinate between various ministries and intelligence agencies. Is it an executive body under the prime minister or an autonomous authority with wide-ranging summoning powers? These questions remain unresolved. Courts have been involved in this controversy by accepting petitions on the inappropriate staffing of the organization.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the legal uncertainty, the NAP called for NACTA to be activated on an emergency basis for countering terrorism; correspondingly, NACTA's leadership has changed, and its staffing has been augmented. On December 31, 2014, on the order of Prime Minister Sharif, the first meeting of the NACTA executive board was held to develop measures for counterterrorism; by law, the board is required to meet at least once every quarter.<sup>44</sup> Additional resources for the body have not yet been detailed, and it is unclear how many of the commitments will translate into an increased budget for NACTA. Despite the announcements, NACTA capacity remained unchanged at the end of March 2015.

Given the role of the CCNS, there are further questions regarding NACTA's role in policy formulation. The national security adviser and the newly established National Security Division advise on and coordinate external affairs and security policy issues with the government and CCNS. NACTA's formal relationship with other ministries and agencies is unclear and impedes its authority given that Pakistan's bureaucratic apparatus operates under a business framework—institutionalized compartmentalization—under which each ministry jealously guards its mandate and does not allow overarching agencies to pass instructions. Reporting and sharing information with NACTA as an affiliate of the MOI presents a major challenge for many federal ministries and intelligence agencies that fall outside the MOI's operational and financial control.

### ***Coordination Challenges***

New internal security plans call for a Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) to be established under NACTA, where all intelligence agencies, including the ISI, will share intelligence information with NACTA and through it with other law enforcement organizations of the federal and provincial governments. The ISI has reportedly been reluctant to share information with NACTA because it is sensitive about the security of intelligence coming from its sources, which include military-oriented intelligence. A senior security analyst has concluded, "The Joint Intelligence Directorate...never got off the ground reportedly because the military [the army] does not want to cede that turf to the civilians."<sup>45</sup>

The JID is in fact a reworked version of a NISP plan to create the Directorate of Internal Security with staff from civil and military branches of the government. Its specialized wings were meant to share intelligence on internal security threats and to monitor cybercrimes, border control and immigration, financial trails, money laundering, Interpol coordination, and international cooperation. The most crucial task of the envisaged DIS was to provide early

warnings to law enforcement agencies of terror threats and the suspect militant groups. The government has yet to fully operationalize the JID.<sup>46</sup> De facto arrangements of military intelligence outfits leading counterterrorism operations continue.

### ***Role of Dedicated Forces***

Three months after the federal cabinet approved the NISP, a rapid response force of paramilitary troops and police began patrolling in the federal capital, Islamabad. The primary mission of the RRF in Islamabad is to “check crime and terrorism.”<sup>47</sup> NACTA, along with the commanders of paramilitary troops, rangers, the MOI, and Islamabad police, coordinates the operations and patrolling of the RRF in the federal capital.<sup>48</sup>

In January 2015, the first members of the Punjab Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF) completed their training by special operations commandos of the Pakistani Army and are now dedicated to counterterrorism operations in the province.<sup>49</sup> The provincial government has merged the existing Punjab Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) with the new ATF, citing failures by the CTD to perform its core functions of identifying and arresting leading terrorists, dismantling their support networks, cutting off their financial streams, and pre-empting their plans.<sup>50</sup> Other provinces have followed suit. A month later, the first members of Balochistan ATF graduated in Quetta, also trained by the military.<sup>51</sup> Balochistan also has a dedicated police Counterterrorism Command, headed by a senior police officer.<sup>52</sup> The Sindh government, in line with the NAP, has decided to raise its own ATF.<sup>53</sup> Sindh has also decided to establish a dedicated CTD and a police Crime Investigation Wing, which also acts as a counterterrorism unit.<sup>54</sup> The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government still has to initiate a special-purpose counterterrorism force but has established a new CTD with a wide-ranging mandate of intelligence collection, surveillance and monitoring, registration of terrorism cases, investigation of terrorism cases, arrest, and research and analysis.<sup>55</sup>

These new departments and units are nascent, and it is too early to assess their performance. However, the creation of new specialized counterterrorism units does not address the critical issues facing the main police force or other existing bodies. Punjab’s CTD previously had a sizeable quantity of state-of-the-art surveillance equipment, but much of it lay dormant.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the police department is not oriented specifically to counterterrorism thinking. Analysts have raised questions about the military’s preparedness in counterterrorism operations and policing and how applicable police training is now to a dedicated counterterrorism force.<sup>57</sup>

### ***Need for Broader Police Reform***

The central role of police in counterterrorism operations is widely acknowledged. In today’s world, policing is a specialized task, with sub-specialization in many functions of policing within the police force. Thus, the police become the backbone of result oriented counterterrorism operations. The police leverage its relationship with the community and local knowledge for effective counterterrorism measures. For people, the police is their first point of contact with law enforcement and the internal security apparatus of the state. Thus, if their relationship lacks mutual trust, both tend to lose.<sup>58</sup>

All four provinces have their own police forces. However, efforts since 2008 to reform the police structure has been minimal. Many key reforms carried out in 2002 under General Musharraf’s regime were reversed when the elected governments took over in 2008.

As noted earlier, provincial governments have substantially increased financial resources for the police departments. The KPK government, for example, increased its budgets for law and order improvements by 66 percent over the last five years, and more funds were allocated for increased salaries, improved health facilities, and compensation packages for those killed during terrorist attacks. The current structure of the police is not designed to fight an insurgency,

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however, though they have been at the forefront of fighting terrorism. The current strength of the Peshawar, KPK police force is six thousand, though experts suggest that an induction of eleven thousand would be more appropriate given a city population of 6.7 million.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, the Punjab government increased its budget by 61 percent from 2010 to 2014. These allocations are for the overall sector, however, and if inflation is taken into account, actual police budgets have in effect been static.<sup>60</sup>

Sindh also increased its funding for law and order across the province, by 54 percent over the same period.<sup>61</sup> Although the Sindh police have received modern equipment and more resources in recent years, the force remains far from capable of effectively responding to the array of challenges confronting provincial security.<sup>62</sup> The TTP dominates thirty-three of Karachi's 178 administrative units, nearly a third of its area, which has a population of more than 2.5 million.<sup>63</sup> The strength of the Karachi police force stands at 26,667. Meanwhile, it reportedly needs a minimum of one hundred thousand personnel to effectively police the megacity.<sup>64</sup> Federal paramilitary troops—the Rangers—in close partnership with the Sindh police are conducting targeted intelligence-based operations against criminal groups and networks in Karachi. In the first nine months of this operation, more than 2,250 criminals associated with various groups and wings were arrested.<sup>65</sup>

Balochistan, which has been facing a serious insurgency since 2007, has invested in law enforcement agencies. Most of these funds have been directed to increasing salaries and compensation packages of those killed in the line of duty. The Balochistan situation is complex because the jurisdiction of police is confined to towns and cities; the remaining 90 percent of provincial territory is policed by local levies in conjunction with local tribal chiefs. These forces have been supplemented by the paramilitary Frontier Corps. Addressing the situation in Balochistan requires extending the legal framework of the state to the entire province; efforts were under way under Musharraf's rule but were soon abandoned.

### ***Unclear Financing***

Despite these budget increases, federal counterterrorism policies such as NAP are silent on the crucial question of how provincial administrations will be compelled to undertake police reforms and allocate more resources, particularly given that the federal government is not making additional allocations for its counterterrorism agenda.

While unveiling the NISP, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Khan stated that 32 billion Pakistan rupees would be required to implement it. A bulk of this cost, 22 billion, represented provincial expenditures, and 10 billion were foreseen as the federal share of NISP activities.<sup>66</sup> However, in the budget for fiscal year 2014–15 (which came after the approval of the NISP), the federal government reduced allocations for NACTA from 95 million to 92 million, of which 63 million were earmarked as administrative and salary-related expenses. Furthermore, the government also significantly reduced budgetary allocation for the interior division, which manages agencies responsible for internal security matters (such as paramilitary forces), by nearly 40 percent in the FY 2014–15 budget.<sup>67</sup> If the federal budget is an indicator of policy commitments, the NISP is clearly not a top priority. In response, neither have the provinces earmarked specific budget lines for the NISP. Rather, provinces increased budgets for provincially controlled law and order measures and organizations.

### ***Madrassa and School Curricula***

Madrassa networks linked with militant groups have emerged as a major challenge for Pakistan's counterterrorism operations. For instance, the police in Rawalpindi and Islamabad reported that the outlawed TTP received strong support from certain Deobandi religious seminaries.<sup>68</sup>

Pakistani media have also reported how religious seminaries in the capital city were actively supporting TTP by acting as intermediaries and guarantors between terrorists and their victims of extortion.<sup>69</sup> Other madrassas have been active participants in sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia groups.

Madrassa and mosque mapping and their regulation are important components of both the NISP and the NAP. The present government has announced its intention to formulate a comprehensive policy to regulate madrassas while introducing constructive curricula reforms and also to curb foreign funding of select religious seminaries.<sup>70</sup> At least five hundred madrassas were identified as spreading extremism and accepting funds from abroad. More than ten thousand were asked in December 2013 to register with the federal Ministry of Education.<sup>71</sup> These steps, coupled with NISP and NAP proposals, have invited severe backlash from right-wing religious parties.<sup>72</sup> However, coercive measures are not akin to instituting sound legal and regulatory arrangements. The reaction thus far has been to arrest and round up suspects rather than improve the regulatory environment.

Government statistics put the number of registered religious seminaries at 22,052 across the country, an estimate on the lower side given that most madrassas are not registered or monitored. The Pakistan Madrassa Education Board (PMEB) was formed in 2001 with the objective of modernizing traditional religious seminaries and countering extremism. In June 2002, the Deeni Madaris (Voluntary Registration and Regulation) Ordinance 2002 was approved. This new law mandated madrassas and religious schools to register with the PMEB and to have their sources of funding monitored; anyone found teaching sectarian hatred in a madrassa could be jailed for two years.<sup>73</sup> Registration has stalled, and the PMEB has been dormant in recent years; the Wafaq-ul-Madaris confederation of madrassas has historically resisted regulation efforts.<sup>74</sup> Recent decisions by the Ministry of Interior indicate that madrassa regulation will be postponed because religious lobbies in the country oppose it. This is a blow to counterterrorism policy implementation in its early stages.

After the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, curricula development and reform has become a provincial subject. Sindh has made the most progress in reforming its curriculum.<sup>75</sup> Ethics teaching has been introduced in grades 2 and up, and new textbooks with reformed and progressive curriculum have been printed and are now used in teaching.<sup>76</sup> In Punjab, the provincial education department has begun revising its curriculum, but the job is far from complete. In KPK, the PTI government has reversed the earlier reforms of 2006 and reintroduced materials related to jihad in its current curriculum initiative.<sup>77</sup> A coalition partner in the province government, the conservative Jamiat-i-Islami, is pushing its goals of a religious-oriented curriculum and in so doing is creating a major controversy in the province.<sup>78</sup> The revised chemistry textbook for grade 9 has added eighteen Quranic verses, and chapters on non-Muslim figures of the past in Pakistan studies books for grade 8 have been removed.<sup>79</sup> Elsewhere, because it has no textbook board of its own, Balochistan teachers use Punjab textbooks, though curriculum development is still carried out by the provincial government.<sup>80</sup>

The NISP and NAP both highlight the importance of rebuilding public narratives that challenge the interpretations of Islam popularized by militant organizations, but little progress in this regard has been made. Two areas where resetting of the narratives is required pertain to mainstream views: that terrorism is a reaction to policies of the West and that it is a result of interference from neighboring India. On both counts, there is little evidence of any substantial headway despite the pronouncements of policymakers. For this to happen, the military's strategic view, which is essential to Pakistan's imagination of its security, needs revision.

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## Conclusions

According to media reports, during the first two months of 2015, police and security agencies questioned 183,557 people, which resulted in the arrest of 8,800 extremist militants across the country.<sup>81</sup> In addition to these interrogations and arrests, the military claimed in February 2015 that it had killed 293 terrorists in ongoing operations in tribal areas since the Peshawar attack on December 16, 2014. Military efforts to decapitate the TTP and al-Qaeda and to downgrade the Haqqani network have also brought a turnaround in Pakistan's relations with both the United States and Afghanistan. Pakistan has also asked the Afghan government to eliminate TTP havens in Afghanistan. Analysts now believe that the Pakistan Army is likely to facilitate negotiations between the Afghan government and Afghan Taliban.<sup>82</sup>

Attacks by terrorists and militants have also continued, however. Terrorists have specifically targeted the Shia community in particular. Militant groups and their leaders remain free to organize rallies. For instance, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior banned the radical anti-Shia militia group Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat years ago, but the group continues to operate freely across the country. Initial efforts to curb sectarianism and hate speech have been encouraging: More than two thousand people have been arrested across the country for spreading hate literature. Such crackdowns, however, in the absence of a coherent plan, tend to be temporary at best and ineffective at worst.

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The most high profile and heavily debated aspect of the National Action Plan has been the revival, after a nearly ten-year hiatus, of the death penalty for terrorists. But executing terrorists has dubious deterrent effects and is ultimately a knee-jerk reaction to a deeper malaise. Hangings en masse will not replace the need for a long-term strategy to address Pakistan's internal security challenges. Similarly, setting up special military courts and empowering the military overlooks the fact that counterterrorism simply constitutes a different version of war. The Pakistani military has been part of the spread of extremism and militancy. It is unclear whether the military will abandon its erstwhile strategic assets—that is, jihadist militias that further its regional security goals. Without reversing the core foreign policy objectives, especially with regard to Afghanistan and India, the NAP will remain detached from reality.

The NAP provides an umbrella counterterrorism framework, which, with the exception of the new military courts, is an extension of NISP policy commitments. For the first time, a government that came to power through the ballot box has attempted to craft a national policy on internal security and address key challenges in a single narrative. This effort has also identified gaps in the responsibilities of the state and past actions that have not yielded results. A response emanating from a civilian perspective is a giant leap forward from the traditional narrative of looking at events from a military defined lens of Islamic Pakistan under threat from foreign-sponsored sources.

But democratization of the Pakistani political system through elections in 2008 and 2013 does not necessarily mean that the political actors are in charge of policy.<sup>83</sup> Recent events have shown that the de facto power of the military remains intact. In June 2014, the decision to launch an offensive in North Waziristan came from the military leadership and was announced through the military's press wing.<sup>84</sup> The civilian endorsement of this operation came later. Similarly, since the attack on a Peshawar school in mid-December 2014, the military has been calling the shots, and once again the civilian government has abdicated its responsibility to handle internal security.<sup>85</sup> Currently an ad hoc arrangement at the province level is manifest in apex committees led by military commanders. These measures need to be replaced with more sustainable ones that provide for provincial ownership of a nationwide counterterrorism policy framework.

Internal security cannot be tackled without first forming a coherent and overall national security policy and strategy that reviews and address both internal and external security environments and incorporates all dimensions from military power to foreign policy. Although they

recognize the fallout of past Afghanistan and India-centric external policies on the internal security environment, both the NAP and the NISP are ultimately silent on reversing the external dimensions of the security policy.

## Recommendations

Recommendations for Pakistani policymakers include the need for an internal national security adviser, jurisdiction over NACTA, provincial counterterrorism strategies, a national intelligence directorate, parliamentary participation in counterterrorism operations, financial commitments, consensus on education reform, and public narratives against militancy.

**Appoint a national internal security adviser.** Pakistan has its national security adviser, who assists the Cabinet Committee on National Security on national security issues with external and foreign policy implications. The government also needs to appoint an internal security professional, someone experienced and senior in the field, to ensure that internal security policy is implemented appropriately and to monitor coordination across government on behalf of the CCNS, reporting directly to the prime minister. The military high command would need to be taken on board in this decision, and their input would be vital. Without strong leadership, initiatives such as the NAP and NISP cannot go far. The prime minister on his or her own simply cannot discharge all the necessary functions related to counterterrorism plans. A senior adviser would steer the process on the behalf of the minister.

**Place NACTA under the prime minister's secretariat and use the Council of Common Interests as the apex monitoring institution.** An empowered federal level counterterrorism agency with nationwide jurisdiction should not be underplayed. A strong NACTA is needed to tackle transprovincial issues, especially deradicalization and madrasa reform efforts. NACTA jurisdiction so far has been controversial and a thorough review is needed. Given the wide-ranging scope of the NISP, NACTA would likely work best under the prime minister's office and independent of the MOI. Such an arrangement would address the sensitivities of intelligence agencies reluctant to share information with a subordinate body of the Ministry of Interior, yet have the necessary political clout to oversee the NISP at the policy and operational level.

As NACTA performs its key coordination role and implements the NAP and NISP, the Council of Common Interests could be empowered to periodically monitor both NACTA's progress and the implementation of counterterrorism operations. Any issues between provinces and NACTA could then be addressed at the CCI forum. The NACTA board, which includes provincial representation, can also play a vital role for coordinating policies on internal security.

**Devise provincial strategies to take the counterterrorism agenda forward.** Provinces are autonomous in pursuing their own security-related programs and policies rather than being obliged to follow the direction set by the federal government. Both the NAP and NISP treat all four provinces equally in terms of their capacity to undertake implementation. Provincial differences must be taken into account, however, and both the NAP and NISP revised based on input from the provinces so that goals are set against existing capacities. Long-term capacity-building plans can be devised to address existing gaps.

The nature and scale of terrorism clearly varies from province to province. Priorities usually differ as well. In addition, implementing the twenty points of NAP simultaneously is simply not always feasible. TTP-related violence is common across provinces, for example, but in some provinces, such as Punjab, sectarian groups need to be taken on first. Provincial authorities are well advised, though, to prioritize their efforts under the umbrella of NAP. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the current mechanism of using apex committees is purely ad hoc, and replacing it with province-specific strategies is in order. Provinces can as needed cooperate with one another and with the federal government to streamline their approaches, but essentially they

need to be as autonomous as possible, certainly in implementing policies. Autonomy ensures ownership of counterterrorism frameworks and can help overcome fears of recentralization, especially in smaller provinces.

**Assess and establish a workable model for a national intelligence directorate.** The viable functioning of the proposed national intelligence directorate remains an open question. To what extent will military intelligence outfits, most importantly the ISI, cooperate and share critical and vital intelligence? Would a civilian head be acceptable to the military? If he or she is from one agency, will the other agencies accept it? Although the military has backed the NISP effort and supported the idea of a national intelligence directorate, translating this support into the actual sharing of information and reduced turf wars between agencies is vital. It could be done through strong oversight by the prime minister on a regular basis (daily as in other jurisdictions, such as the United States) and being constantly engaged with heads of federal agencies through various suitable forums.

**Involve parliament's national security-related committees in counterterrorism operations.** Parliament has been conspicuously missing in terms of both the design and the oversight of counterterrorism responses thus far. The parliamentary committee on national security and interior could easily be given oversight authority to periodically review the state of the NAP and NISP implementation, as well as the workings of NACTA. This would also ensure that NACTA and various intelligence agencies operate within legal boundaries. Additionally, the parliamentary committee could review coordination mechanisms between provinces and the federal government and highlight any gaps in the process, which would later be addressed as needed through legislation.

**Fulfill financial commitments.** As noted, the Interior Ministry has previously estimated that 32 billion rupees would be required to implement the NISP and reactivate NACTA. For NAP, the cost has yet to be worked out. Islamabad has not yet released funds for the NISP and has only recently announced funds for NACTA. Law and order is a provincial subject, and due to fragile internal security situations, provinces have substantially increased their spending on provincial law enforcement and intelligence organizations. The lack of provincial ownership has translated into little or no financial support for the NISP by the provinces. If the federal government plans to implement NAP and reactivate NACTA, it could start by making fiscal allocations to centrally controlled bodies and organizations related to the implementation of NAP and NISP. Effective implementation of counterterrorism plans would require additional allocations from provincial and federal revenue shares.

**Build political consensus for education reform.** The NAP and NISP are both silent on how to undertake key reforms related to educational and religious curricula. Most of these policy areas now fall under provincial domains, and the NISP overlooks the fact that federal government can no longer launch changes on provincial subjects. The need is urgent for platforms such as the Council of Common Interests to articulate this and agree on the direction of reform for interprovincial consistency and outcomes that are consistent with NISP objectives.

**Reset public narratives against militancy.** A coherent narrative on militancy, the Taliban, and ongoing antiterrorism efforts in the country and the region is vital. At present, what gives rise to terrorism is not clearly identified, leading to disarray in responses and even greater confusion. Military and civilian leadership—including all political parties—need to end endemic doublespeak on issues such as talks or fighting with the TTP and the nature of Pakistan's relationship with the United States. The perception of terrorism as a reaction to U.S. policies or Indian interference needs to be given up because it has misled millions of Pakistanis. Distinctions between militant groups—pro-state and anti-state—accomplish little other than to erode people's trust in state institutions, obfuscate policy response, and strengthen militants fighting the state.



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