



NATIONAL ACTION PLAN: ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITATIONS

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February 04, 2019

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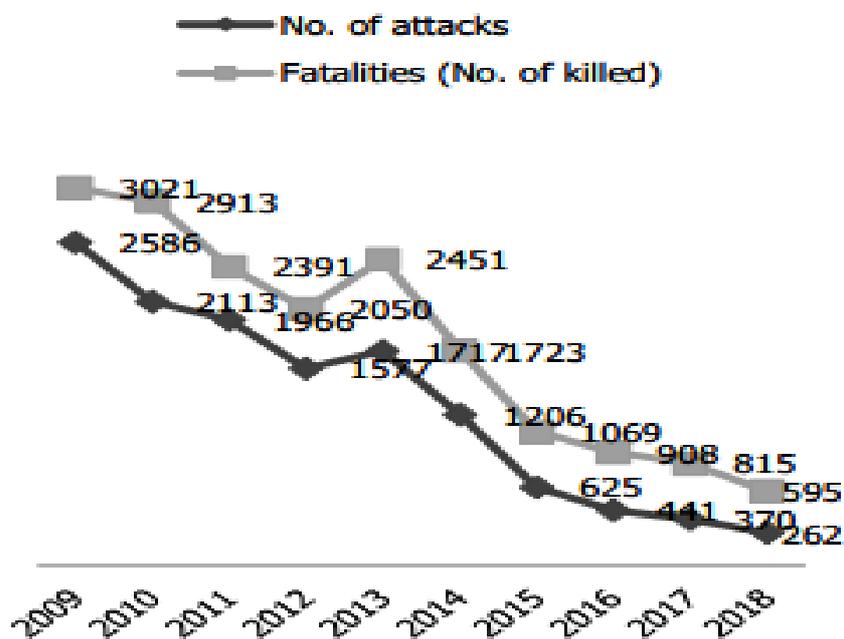
Pakistan has experienced the wave of terrorism for around two decades for which the nation has borne a huge cost in both human and economic terms. Pakistan has borne the brunt of terrorist attacks that have killed more than 70,000 people and loss of \$130 billion to its economy. ¹

The menace of terrorism afflicting Pakistan cannot be attributed to a single cause. A host of internal and external factors led to the spate of terrorism. Initially, the state machinery found itself unprepared to respond to the daunting challenge of countering the terrorism in a coordinated manner and till December 2014, the state response towards the evil machinations of the terrorists remained largely reactive and sporadic. After Army Public School attack on December 16, 2014, a national consensus was evolved to come down hard on the terrorists through a concerted national effort. Whereas the National Internal Security Policy 2014 pointed out the broad policy guidelines and long-drawn reforms in various state institutions, a need was felt to chalk out an Action Plan with specific, mostly quantifiable and ultimately time-bound agenda to curb the scourge of terrorism. In order to address the root cause of terrorism and extremism in the holistic manner, a 20-Points National Action Plan (NAP) for countering terrorism and extremism was framed by NACTA/ Ministry of Interior in consultation with the stakeholders and approved on December 24, 2014 by the Parliament.² The National Action Plan spelled out the specifics for the counter-terrorism drive in the country.

¹ National Action Plan(NAP) Directorate, NACTA.

² National Counter Terrorism Authority, NACTA, <https://nacta.gov.pk/nap-2014/>

Since then, there has been much debate about the performance of National Action Plan and its implementation issues, but very few efforts are taken to project the achievements of NAP. NAP is being implemented with full vigour and commitment in coordination with all provinces, security agencies and other stake holders. The effective implementation of NAP has registered significant improvements in overall law and order and internal security situation in the country, including a discernable downward trend in terrorism incidents, thus establishing the writ of the state throughout the territory of Pakistan. In 2018, a gradual decrease of 29% can be visibly seen in the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan from previous year. The total number of terrorists incidents in 2017 were 370.³



Source: Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies.

Analysing the performance of NAP, special trial courts were setup under the supervision of Army under the 21st amendment to the constitution of Pakistan. According to National Counter Terrorism Authority, since the inception of NAP, 415 cases have been processed under speedy trials.⁴ To ensure against miscarriage of justice, the trial cases in military courts are initiated and initially investigated by local police and Counter Terrorism Departments established in Police. Considering

³ Pakistan Security Report 2018, "PAK Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)", January 28, 2019.

⁴ National Action Plan(NAP) Directorate, NACTA.

these courts as a deterrent to terrorism, the current government is on the verge of taking up the issue of military courts — once again to extend the life of these courts.⁵

The aim of NAP was to revitalize the institution of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), but satisfactory results were not achieved. A budget of Rs.1643 million was allocated in 2017/18 to fulfil the human resource requirement of NACTA.⁶ Similarly, establishment of an effective Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) was also visualized, but which has not materialized yet. JID was predicated on idea of intelligence fusion, analysis and assessing future trends. It was conceived with a vision to establish professionally dedicated, operationally focused, technologically competent and highly adaptive national fusion setup under “Intelligence Collection and Fusion Centre (ICFC)” which will be capable of delivering timely and relevant intelligence based on input from various agencies and departments. JID’s goal is to manage and pool effective intelligence works undertaken by both civilian and military intelligence agencies of the country, and aims to increase intelligence sharing with the Police Departments, Provincial and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies. The idea is great, but unfortunately has not yet been implemented. The summary to recommend to the federal government to close down its Joint Intelligence Directorate was moved but no decision has been taken yet.⁷

Funding is vital for continuation of terrorist's activities. In the absence of adequate implementation measures, terrorists and terrorists organizations could muster funds from a variety of sources. Considering the steps taken by Financial Action Task Force to put Pakistan on gray list, there are some important steps that Pakistan has taken under National Action Plan. Pakistan has taken practical steps to check Terror Financing, which include:⁸

1. Setting up of a National Task Force on choking financing of terrorism - a coordinating body of over 20 federal and provincial organizations to combat financing of terrorism.
2. Effective regulations of Branchless/internet banking.
3. Establishment of Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) units in all provincial Counter Terrorism Departments.

⁵ Govt considering extension in tenure of military court, Pakistan Today, December 19, 2018, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/12/19/govt-considering-to-extend-military-courts-tenure-report/>

⁶ NAP Directorate, NACTA.

⁷ Imran Mukhtar, "Nacta wants to abolish joint intel directorate, law wing", January 11, 2019, <https://nation.com.pk/11-Jan-2019/nacta-wants-to-abolish-joint-intel-directorate-law-wing>

⁸ NAP Directorate, NACTA.

4. CFT has been made an integral part of provincial investigations.
5. Monitoring of movement of persons under 4th Schedule of Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 and of money, to effectively combat money laundering/ terrorist financing.
6. Till August, 2018 919 cases of Hawala/Hundi have been registered; 1209 people involved in such cases have been arrested; and Rs. 1489.918 million has been recovered since 2015

According to NACTA there are 32,272 religious seminaries in Pakistan.⁹ In order to regulate them, two separate Madaris data and Madaris registration forms have been developed by NACTA in consultation with Ittehad-e-Tanzeem ul Madaris Pakistan. In Punjab and Sindh, the 100 per cent details of Madrassas have been recorded, whereas 80 per cent work has been done in KPK and Baluchistan till December 2018.

Dismantling of communication network of terrorists has also been achieved by National Action Plan. Before 2015, there was no bar on mobile Sims which people could register under their name. Most of the Sims were unregistered and were used in terrorist's activities. Hence, a colossal exercise was carried out during 2015-17 under which 98.3 million Sims were blocked and proper biometric system for issuance of Sim was placed to deal with this issue.¹⁰ Now, biometric verification allows the registration of SIMs to be verified and genuine citizens of Pakistan who have certified identity documents.

Considering the impact of social media and its impact on the life of people NACTA has launched applications like Tatheer and Chaukas in which any terrorist's activity on social media can be reported to the concerned authority by any citizen of Pakistan. Similarly, bringing the Karachi operation to its logical end is also a success of National Action Plan. After Karachi operation 98 per cent decrease in terrorists activities were observed in the past three years.

Pakistan is in a phase where it needs to review its progress in war against terrorism. The commitment to implement National Action Plan was an outcome of the nation's resolve against terrorism, but the hurdles in its implementations cannot be ignored. During last four years, no institution has taken full responsibility for NAP's implementation. Its ownership also remained disputed among federal ministries and provincial administration. The success achieved till date is commendable, but the war on terror is not over yet. This war is now entering into the new phase of hybrid warfare where Pakistan would need to modify its strategy. Hence, there is a dire need to

⁹ NAP Directorate, NACTA.

¹⁰ Ibid.

tweak and strengthen the National Action Plan. More target-oriented and specific security objective are to be achieved yet as general security objective has already been achieved through NAP.