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Press Release

‘National Action Plan (NAP): Progress and Challenges’



‘Terrorist attacks are no longer confined to borderlands, they have penetrated Pakistan’s sacred and previously safe spaces such as mosques, markets, parks and schools. This dramatically new face of terrorism warrants a holistic approach in which all stakeholders, from the civil-military leadership to the media, judiciary, academia and civil society all need to be increasingly more capacitated.’ This was stated by **Dr. Kamal Uddin Tipu, Member, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA)** at the one-day workshop titled ‘**National Action Plan (NAP): Progress and Challenges**’ organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

Sharing the latest progress and status of each of the 20 Points of the NAP, Dr. Tipu informed the participants that with 11 Special Trial Courts notified, 190 cases had already been transferred to them. More than 4388 terrorists had so far been arrested in action

against armed militia and 2477 cases registered to counter hate speech and extremist material. There was now a ban on proscribed organisations and individuals from making public and media appearances. He said that establishment of counterterrorism force units was well underway in each of the provinces as well as the federal capital. **In order to choke terrorist finances, 322 arrests had been made, 214 FERA/Hawala Hundi cases registered. Approximately 356.56 million had been recovered so far, he shared.**

Dr. Tipu admitted that although NACTA is a key counterterrorism entity with focus on coordination and preparation of national counterterrorism and counter extremism strategy, there have been some teething problems that have impeded its overall performance such as lack of human resources. However, despite this and other institutional and coordination bottlenecks, NACTA has made considerable progress in drafting a robust national narrative on terrorism and extremism. The first ever National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014-2018 has been formulated to protect Pakistan's national interests by addressing critical security issues. It is an important blueprint based on principles of mutual inclusiveness and integration such as dialogue with all stakeholders; isolation of terrorists from their support systems; and enhancing deterrence and capacity of the security apparatus to neutralize the threats to Pakistan's internal security, he said.

Mr. Hamid Ali Khan, Director General Counterterrorism at SASSI and one of those responsible for the formulation of the National Action Plan gave a comprehensive historical analysis of the dynamics of terrorism in Pakistan. He pointed out that while there have been internal factions dividing the nation, they have been fuelled by the external and regional environment. The Pak-India relationship has been plagued by hostility and suspicion and the recent arrest of a RAW agent on Pakistani soil is concrete evidence of Indian attempts to destabilise the country, he said.

While Pakistan and Afghanistan are inseparable neighbours, the Afghan security situation directly impinges on our security. Presence of NATO Forces in Afghanistan dragged Pakistan into the front lines of the war on international terrorism with the slogan to “do more” and consequently, the social fabric of our society has been shaken impacting our internal security and national integrity, he lamented.

Mr. Khan pointed out that the 20-point National Action Plan was evolved with input from all segments of the government and non-government arena with unanimous consensus to root out terrorism, militancy and extremism. Sharing its achievements, he shared that Operation Zarb-e- Azab has achieved remarkable success with **more than 3,000 terrorists killed** and terrorist communication networks broken and disrupted. The operation in Karachi since late 2013 has led to significant improvement in the law and order situation with **86% decline in terrorism; 60% decline in target killings and more than 890 terrorists, 235 kidnappers and 8,834 murderers arrested**. NACTA should be strengthened and given the charge to spearhead NAP. NACTA's Executive Board, headed by the Prime Minister, should hold its meeting as soon as possible, he recommended.

Dr. Tughral Yamin, Associate Dean Centre for International Peace & Stability (CIPS) shared a National Action Plan Scorecard and provided a general overview of public and media perception about the Plan. He was of the view that in order for the Plan to work, the Centre, provinces and the military need to be on the same page and substantial financial resources allocated towards its implementation. He called for reforms in the police and judiciary, besides choking funds of terrorist organisations, which remains difficult since these organisations tend to mask themselves and reemerge under new names, he observed.

Dr. Khuram Iqbal, Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, National Defence University was of the view that **nationalism is the antithesis to all forms of terrorism in Pakistan**. He shared the various mediums, including films and dramas, that were being used as part of Pakistan's National Counterterrorism Narrative. While appreciating these efforts and communication mediums, he stressed the need for identifying more credible and authentic 'messengers' for dissemination of the national narrative. He was of the view that it is crucial to look at the long-term agenda and investing on young cohorts of religious scholars; creating dedicated chairs in universities and learning from best global practices such as Egypt's counter terrorism strategies.

The workshop was attended by renowned experts from the academia and the key government officials including Prof. Dr. G. Raza Bhatti, Head, Madrassa Reforms Committee & Member Operation and Planning, Higher Education Commission; Mr. Vakil Ahmed Khan, Former Secretary Religious Affairs, & Former Chairman, Pakistan Madrasah Education Board; former Ambassador Mr. Ayaz Wazir; Dr. Muhammad Khan, Head, Department of International Relations, National Defence University; Dr. Nazir Hussain, Associate Professor, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad; Dr. Moh. Mujeeb Afzal and Dr. Musarat Amin, Assistant Professor, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi.

The workshop was chaired by IPRI's President and former Ambassador Sohail Amin who concluded the proceedings by outlining some of the recommendations put forth. All panelists and discussants unanimously agreed that the NAP was a useful instrument and with strong political will, a responsible citizenry and a combination of de-radicalization programmes and well-defined counterterrorism narrative, the menace of terrorism would be rooted out of the country.