

REPORT



**Islamabad
Policy Institute**
Supporting Dialogue for Peace & Development

NSP Webinar Report

Wednesday, February 02, 2022

5th Floor Ali Plaza, Jinnah Avenue,
Blue Area, Islamabad.
Tel No: 051-84444830
Email: info@ipiok.org
P.O. Box 3393, GPO Islamabad



NSP Webinar Report

Rapporteur

**Mobeen Jafar Mir
&
Mariyum Nadeem Bhutto**

Wednesday, February 02, 2022

Islamabad Policy Institute Pakistan

Introduction

The federal government released the public version of the newly formulated National Security Policy (NSP) on 14 January 2022. The first documented NSP of Pakistan has garnered praise as well as widespread criticism from various sections of society. The actualization of a symbiotic relationship between traditional and non-traditional security as well as putting economic security at the core to realise citizen welfare is a welcome move; however, major criticism has been leveled by experts on the lack of inclusivity of the stakeholders involved, and exclusion of parliament from the consultations during the policymaking process. Questions have also been raised regarding the absence of detail on required resource redistribution, the implementation framework, and whether the government is ready to address the concerns of civil society. Nevertheless, formulating a vision and future course of action for decision making is an appreciable step and the measure of formulating new policies according to the need of time and emerging challenges in the domestic, regional and international spheres should be routinized.

Moderator: Iftikhar Sherazi

Journalist

- It has been 74 years since Pakistan's independence, and during this time Pakistan has fought three major wars with its immediate neighbor India. At the same time, for three decades the subcontinent remained one of the central regions in the cold war, in which Pakistan also played a crucial role.
- Astonishingly, after 74 years the NSP has been published in a documented form that fundamentally claims to ensure human security, economic security, and internal security of Pakistan. It has given a roadmap for regional peace.
- As currently, it is the government of PTI, they are claiming that the policy is their initiative, meanwhile, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is also claiming that during its tenure, critical work had been carried out for the formulation of this policy.
- The debate is ongoing on whether all the relevant stakeholders were taken on board during the formulating of this policy document, most importantly, the PML-N, and whether there is an input of relevant political parties and the parliament as such documents are generally drafted with the consensus of all stakeholders.

Senator Farhatullah Babar**Secretary General PPP**

- Whenever national policies are made in this country, they are usually formulated by the security establishment and there is no input from other departments or civilians. Except for the National Action Plan (NAP), no security-related policies have ever been developed through inclusive consultations. However, even the NAP was revised recently without taking the parliament on board and all those political stakeholders who had endorsed the policy in 2014-15 were bypassed.
- It was announced that the state would negotiate with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and even considered pardons for hardcore terrorists, but nobody questioned this step of the government. It is not known what threats were there which made them bow down to the extremists.
- When the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was established, its major function involved bringing all intelligence departments under the Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID), but without informing any stakeholders it was abolished and replaced with the National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC) which is being run by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). National Crisis Management Cell was also made a part of NACTA. However, recently it was segregated but no one yet knows its functions and purpose.
- Security policy had been externalized and militarized due to these actions, which were taken without any discussion with the parliament. Thus, the members of the opposition boycotted the session of the parliamentary committee as they were not consulted.
- The formation of this national security policy is just a bureaucratic exercise with no input from the parliament or civil society. No policy can be successful without participation and inclusivity.
- There is a jugglery of words in the document as it is claimed that for the first time in 74 years, the government has decided on a course of action. It seems they want people and the world to believe that for such a long time the state of Pakistan was directionless.
- Big claims made in the document are just verbosity, hyperbole, and exaggeration. Human security is vast, comprehensive and it ranges from economic security to human freedoms, based on a spectrum. For the effective implementation of human security, the government of Pakistan must take the United Nations' definition of human security into consideration and ensure the implementation of the rights mentioned in it. Pakistan needs a comprehensive human security policy rather than a national security policy.
- Pakistan is a security-driven state. In this society, a soldier is considered more patriotic than a common man. Even the concepts of resource allocation and freedom of expression are securitized.

- A security-driven state cannot become a human security state, it should thus have been confessed in the national security policy that due to Pakistan's peculiar security environment, the country had that kind of policy for decades and now the direction would be to convert it into a welfare state, but there is no acceptance of this fact.
- A framework should have been given to alter the existing security-driven policy, strengthen democracy, and address the institutional imbalance.
- Pakistan faces a big security challenge in the form of institutional imbalance; between the civil and military, there is a vast distance, which wasn't acknowledged by the state.
- The policy of the government does not reflect the equitable economic distribution of resources as recently a rebate has been given to the military on electricity consumption.
- People from our defense institutions become the top Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) contractors, military companies become industrial commercial enterprises, and the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) becomes the biggest real estate enterprise; it shows that the economic playing field has been tilted in their favor.
- A central pillar of geo-economics is trading in the region and with the neighbours. The trade with India would not be allowed as India-Pakistan tensions serve the purpose of some institutions and they would not want to surrender their monopoly.
- Considering the experience of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and PML-N tenures, it can be said that trade initiatives with India have deliberately been thwarted.
- We need a paradigm shift in the form of a human security policy, which is not possible without revisiting the relationship between the security establishment and militant organizations.
- We have consciously and deliberately used non-state actors under the cover of the nuclear umbrella to project state power beyond borders and that is the underlying dilemma of Pakistan's security policy.
- There has not been proper discussion on this policy with stakeholders and civil society, otherwise, these problems would have been realised.
- A truth and reconciliation commission should be formed to acknowledge the mistakes made by institutions, parliament, and the judiciary. Let us begin with a clean slate.
- When a government had talked about setting our house in order, it was broadcasted as Dawn Leaks and the space for that government was shrunk.
- It should be accepted that we had protected non-state actors and now we are stopping them; there should be a verifiable mechanism for that.

- Even former heads of ISI have publicly acknowledged that if there were not any safe-havens, the Soviet Union and America would not have been defeated.
- This policy is an expression of pious hopes, vague promises, and tall claims without proper implementation.
- Whenever there is a discussion about holding the security institutions accountable and questioning their actions, we are accused of waging a war with the institutions.
- There are indeed many external and internal threats to national security for which military security is of paramount importance but amid all these threats, a big security challenge is an increasing gap between the military and civil society. Military and across-the-border security would be meaningless if this disconnect is not addressed.
- Security cannot be ensured only by atom bombs, gleaming submarines, and bombers. It is essential to ensure that the public is standing behind us, not just verbally but in spirit.
- The first step towards implementation would be to address institutional imbalance with substantive action and across-the-board accountability. Implementation is not possible as long as others are held accountable for their actions but military man is not.

Khurram Dastgir Khan**Vice-President PML-N**

- The NSP has nothing new to offer but is a comprehensive and updated form of the Internal Security Policy proposed by the government of PML-N in 2014.
- Though it reiterates the government's commitment to promote 'unity in diversity,' and celebrate the country's 'ethnic, religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity,' it falls short of a practical modus operandi to achieve the goal.
- The utter cluelessness of the architects of the document about tackling the challenges of missing persons in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; the rising popularity of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), and the provision of the constitutional rights to the people of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), demonstrates a lack of understanding to redefine internal security dynamics through democratic and lawful means.
- By wide-spreading and suffixing 'security' to every single domain, the document makes the notion of security entirely meaningless and overshadows the burning issues afflicting the country.
- Despite the federal government's oft-repeated commitment to reverse the country's security-centric approach by pushing ahead with a policy framework bracing geo-economic outlook, the government's domestic initiatives to alleviate poverty and unemployment are incapable to achieve the goal in the foreseeable future.
- The major substantial and practical strides in the direction of securing geo-economics were made during the government of PML-N. In 2014, Islamabad signed the first-ever defence cooperation with Moscow, and it was followed by the signing of a historical geo-economic agreement, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2015. In the subsequent year in 2016, the government signed the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (Tapi) gas pipeline. In 2017, Pakistan became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). And in the same year, Islamabad hosted the heads of Iran, Turkey, and Central Asian Republics for the 2017 summit of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). These all practical political moves by the previous government highlight how closely it held the notion of geo-economics in formulating its policy discourse and there is nothing new if the incumbent government takes received ideas and regurgitates clichés for gaining political mileage.
- The NSP document is impractical as while proposing resource allocation for the equitable development of smaller cities, it lacks a practical strategy and talks little about slashing the defence budget, which consumes a lion's share of the economy.

- It lacks the consent of the parliament and other primary stakeholders, including the citizens of Pakistan, and the civil society was also not taken into confidence. The document has compromised the Kashmir issue as it is devoid of any practical strategy to solve the issue with neighbouring India.
- Two major challenges faced by the people are the government's continued dealings with non-state violent groups which continue to attack citizens and armed forces, and, the absence of genuine commitment to upholding the constitution in both letter and spirit.

Andleeb Abbas

Parliamentary Secretary on Foreign Affairs

- The NSP provides comprehensive guidelines and directions to secure citizen-centric interests. The only criticism the document receives is concerning its implementation and mechanics, but it is laudable that the document has generated an academic and political discourse not only in Pakistan but around the world. Unfortunately, for 74 years, our national efforts did not bear fruit due to the absence of any holistic policy framework.
- The previous governments' lack of direction to secure human development resulted in missing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Despite the UN concerns about high mortality rates in Pakistan, no past government ever established a Mother & Child Hospital (MCH) in the country. The incumbent government is working on the seven such hospitals.
- We are pursuing a development model based on export-led growth, rather than a flawed debt-led model traditionally followed by the previous governments, which temporarily gave an impetus to growth but the economic bubble burst because it was not based on sustainable grounds.
- The PTI's poverty alleviation programme is being hailed as the world's fourth most significant initiative in tackling the scourge of poverty. Even the World's Competitive Index ranking of Pakistan has improved significantly last year. It has even surpassed neighbouring India in this regard. The present government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan has also made impressive strides in the realm of health security by introducing health cards, free of cost, for all citizens.
- Cyber security will be a cornerstone of our military modernization plan because the nature of hybrid warfare is likely to intensify in the future.
- Previously, there were two different systems prevailing in Pakistan. In one system, the rich were given special treatment while the poor were treated discriminately. We are planning to form a system where rule of law reigns supreme.
- We are ready to accommodate dissenters and warmly welcome any kind of constructive criticism. It is not an act, not a law, it is a policy.

IPI Findings

1. The NSP is a re-invented version of old geo-economic policies and offers nothing new but oft-repeated political clichés.
2. The document lacks the consent of two primary stakeholders: the parliament and the citizens of Pakistan.
3. It is short of a comprehensive strategy to secure the wishful ideas put forth in it.
4. Its goals are at variance with the policy initiatives taken by the incumbent government.
5. The document ignores to proffer a practicable policy plan to resolve the Kashmir issue.
6. The shortcomings and mistakes made by various institutions of the state have not been acknowledged, ignoring the first step towards altering the existing policy.
7. There is a lack of a framework in the document which could show that the security-driven policy of the state would be altered.
8. Pakistan faces a critical challenge in the form of institutional imbalance which is not acknowledged in the document.
9. There is a lack of a verifiable mechanism to ensure that the government is working on human security and citizen welfare as claimed in the document.