

## Roundtable discussion on National Security Policy (January 20th, 2022)



## Introduction

The School of Governance and Society (SGS) arranged a roundtable discussion on the 'National Security Policy'. The keynote speakers who participated in this academic engagement were: Prof. Naveed Elahi (Moderator), Dr. Rabia Akhter, Director, Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore, Khawaja Khalid Farooq, PSP, former IGP, Dr. Seemi Waheed, Sarmad Saeed Khan, PSP, former IGP, Prof. Rahat-ul-Ain, Abid Sherwani, DG & co-founder UMT, Lt General (Retd) Ghulam Mustafa, security analyst and, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami, Chief Editor daily Pakistan. The learned participants shed light on various contours, contents and dimensions of the policy. In the opening lines Dr. Naveed Elahi pointed out that the previous National Internal Security Policy 2018-23 was not consulted while formulating the NSP. Dr. Rabia was of the view that NSP was a step in the right direction and was quite comprehensive. Former IGP Khalid Farooq considered it a disjointed document which lacked cohesion. Mujib ur Rehman Shami seconded this opinion and termed it more of a loose compilation of various existing ideas. Gen. Mustafa appreciated the NSA, Dr. Moeed and his team for producing a good policy document. Sarmad Saeed Khan, former IGP, stated that there was always room for improvement and this document could be further improved with the passage of time.





## Discussion

*Prof. Naveed Elahi* welcomed all the participants to the round table and thanked them for taking time out for the discussion on a very important policy. He appreciated the effort put in the making of this policy but pointed out a yawning omission that the preliminary documents: National Internal Security Policy and National Action Plan were not consulted. Also, the significant policy stakeholders were not engaged in the making process. He pointed out that implementation mechanism was conspicuously missing. He opened this discussion and invited the learned guests to give their views.

*Dr. Rabia Akhter* Director, Centre for Security, Strategy and Policy Research, University of Lahore, commented that the National Security Policy is citizen-centric and she illustrated the impact of NSP on some related policy problems like the inclusion of gender-based violence in the broader national security framework and also, taking into account the non-traditional security threats. It is a well-articulated policy as it elevates the national cohesion and federal integration; but it lacks the crucial element of implementation. She highlighted that the policy was a road-map which has to be trod with the equal participation of the policy stakeholders.

*Khawaja Khalid Farooq*, PSP, former IGP considered the NSP as a long unwieldy wish list which appeared to be disjointed and compiled in a hurried manner. It appeared to be compilation of various themes and theories which made it confusing and unimplementable. It is not clear that all stake-holders were consulted or their input was included in it. Most importantly resource allocation and system to measure the outcome were not included in it. There is need to review it and make essential improvements to make it doable.

*Dr. Seemi Waheed* appreciated the initiative but termed it an aspirational document because a policy document has to define how it will be implemented and who will do it. The essential elements like who is going to do what, how, when, and which are the resources available in order to execute the policy, are missing. She pinpointed that the discourse of 'national security' is not all about the armed forces, as security of social, political and economic fronts has also been taken into consideration. Strategically, we need security of our federal and provincial subjects including education, health, food, employment, etc. She pointed out that the policy appeared to be lacking in the bottom-up policy making as common citizens were hardly consulted to know about their problems, issues and aspirations.



*Sarmad Saeed Khan*, former IGP maintained that NSP was well-formed but needed to be open for changes and timely improvements to keep it relevant for the times to come. It was better if the previous efforts and documents like National Internal Security Policy 2018-2023 and National Action Plan were properly consulted and relevant parts were incorporated in the NSP.

*Prof. Rahat-ul-Ain* focused on human security and specifically on ‘food security’. He questioned whether it was mentioned in the National Security Policy or being analyzed in this document? In the Global food index 2019, 160 countries have been evaluated, Pakistan ranks 88 among 160 countries. We have National Food Security policy 2018 and it's been decades since we are complaining about the implementation of policy. In the Global Hunger index, Pakistan comes on 88th and in the human development index Pakistan also ranks at the lowest. There are many hurdles on the way to human security, even after 18th amendment Ministry of food, agriculture and livestock comes under the provinces. In 2011 Federal Ministry of National food security and research was established. There is a food department in each province, and in Islamabad there is Nutritional Research Institute and couple of others as well. Despite the presence of all these institutions the situation of food in our county is deteriorating. There is chronic malnutrition in children. We make policies but we do not know how to implement them properly. NSP also seemed to be plagued with this issue.



*Abid Shervani* DG & co-founder UMT, propounded that the National Security Policy is a policy that is made for four years. National security gains strength when our internal security is strong. For this purpose, we ought to achieve self-reliance in all fields, especially economy, energy security and food security. He lamented that we lack direction in terms of the management of human resource specifically our youth and emphasised on gaining 'knowledge capital'. Undeniably, we make policies behind the doors but unless we do not implement those policies on grass root levels and we do not take the feedback, these policies are bound to fail and falter.

*Lt General (Retd) Ghulam Mustafa*, a senior security analyst commented that Pakistan needs to focus on traditional and economic security. We need to work on strengthening our economy which is basis of all sorts of security, ranging from national security to human security. We have policies but we are just striving for the right action plan. Lastly, it is not about the execution of public policies but we should also pay attention to the sustainability and continuation of public programs.

*Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami*, Chief Editor daily Pakistan, maintained that the NSP was no more than a long list of tasks we wish or desire to do but there is no cohesiveness in it. Moreover, it clearly lacks the doability as financial aspect has been ignored and there is no implementation plan.



## **Conclusion**

At the end Prof. Naveed Elahi expressed gratitude to all the participants for their valuable insight and pertinent input on the National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan. He encapsulated the discussion that there were two major concerns of the participants; one unwieldiness of the document and, second, lack of implementation plan. Thanking the participants, he added that the School of Governance and Society, UMT, is committed to hold such discussions on public policy issues on regular basis.



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