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NIOC's 14th Advisory Board Meeting

Monthly meeting of NIOC's Advisory Board (AB) was held virtually on Friday 04 Dec 2020. The following AB Members participated: Tariq Parvez, Zahid Hussain, Zubair Habib and Jawaid Akhtar. Samina Ahmed, being in Turkey, could not attend while Fasi Zaka had a pressing domestic issue. The Directorate was represented by the following: Tariq Khosa, Amir Rana, Ali Nekokara, Kashif Noon, Ammar Jaffri and Saroop Ijaz.

Director NIOC, Tariq Khosa gave an overview of the progress of the research study on the BHC Project on Gaps in CE Laws. The project had successfully completed its initial two phases. The director also informed that the NIOC's draft National OC Strategy was being peer reviewed by FIA and Nacta. GI-TOC had also recognised the significance of the initiative and agreed to get it reviewed by a few professional international experts.

The AB has approved and showed complete satisfaction on the following:

- NIOC's Proposal for support by GI Resilience Fund for 2021
- Fasi Zaka would roll out podcasts of various webinars hosted by NIOC during 2020. Eight serials were being finalised.
- NIOC's collaboration with PIPS would continue in 2021 in accordance with the MoU signed.
- Hassan Sardar, Manager Ops was tasked to come up with NIOC's Annual Report for 2020.

Back to the Dark Ages?

By I. A. Rehman

THE government seems to have decided to take a great leap backward with its proposed punishment for persons found guilty of rape, for which the penalty even at present is death.

It has decided to add to the Pakistan Penal Code section 376 B which says: “Exceptional first offenders or repeat offenders – Whoever is convicted of an offence under sections 375, 375 A and (or?) 376 may be subjected to chemical castration through a court order, irrespective of the applicable punishment; (i) In exceptional circumstances in respect of the first reported offence of section 375, or (ii) in case of a repeat convict of an offence under section 375”. ‘Castration’ is explained as “a process whereby a person is rendered incapable of performing sexual intercourse, for any period of his life, as may be determined by the court, through administration of drugs which shall be conducted through a notified medical board. However, this process will be carried out subject to the accused’s concurrence”.

The language of the sections being added to the statute is so loose and clumsy that it will drive lawyers and judges to despair. For instance, the expression ‘exceptional’ is frequently employed. Who will decide what is an exceptional situation? And the accused’s concurrence has no weight as nobody can opt out of his rights.

A more serious matter is the fact that the proposal is in flagrant violation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, a core human rights instrument duly ratified by Pakistan. This convention is considered inviolable to such an extent that even the death penalty is to be carried out in a manner that it is not deemed to be cruel or degrading. Doubts have already been expressed about the punishment of castration getting the approval of Islamic scholars. Besides, castration is not included in the schedule of punishments that can be administered to convicts.

Above all, the very idea of castration offends against the present-day human sensibility and concepts of human dignity. It must not be forgotten that even persons convicted of the worst possible crimes, including murder, cannot be deprived of their inherent dignity

of person. The modern mind will find the very idea of castration as punishment for any crime inhuman, vulgar and repulsive, and the product of a mindset in an advanced stage of morbidity.

The idea of punishing rapists with castration obviously springs from the theory of deterrent punishment which has caused much havoc in various societies. Will castration be a more effective deterrent than capital punishment? There is no evidence to support the possibility of an answer in the affirmative.

All theories of punishment are based on the premise that it will cure a wrongdoer of his aberration without damage to his inherent goodness or his capacity to reform his conduct. For that reason, punishments that damage a person's mind or body to an extent that he is drained of any capacity to liberate himself of criminal tendencies or influences must be rejected as being counterproductive. The search for effective remedies for crime, especially its new manifestations, demands much more than routine executive orders. While rape is common in Pakistan, studies on the factors contributing to its incidence, and on the various forms it assumes in different parts of the country, are too few to help in the planning of adequate and effective responses.

No discussion on remedies to rape can be fruitful without taking into consideration a number of society's characteristics, including the treatment of woman as a chattel, the tradition of segregation between the sexes, the practice of buying brides which bedevils young men with meagre resources, and the relegation of a poor housewife to the level of an unpaid labourer.

Everybody knows that rape cannot be eliminated by laws alone even if they are administered in an ideal fashion, and certainly not by raising the scale of punishments. The theories of crime and punishment have been changing all over the world as the frontiers of knowledge are extended. Muslim societies generally lag behind because of their obsession with the past. While Iqbal is honoured by the posting of guards at his mausoleum his call for de-freezing Islamic jurisprudence and freeing it of an imperialist stamp remains unheeded. Not only that, no attempt has been made to undo the Ziaul Haq decision about perpetuating the stranglehold of the traditional jurisprudence.

The government would be well-advised to approach lawmaking with greater care than has been the case in the recent past. In any law even the full stops and commas matter as they affect the lives and interests of the people. When the authors of the Penal Code started their work in the fourth decade of the 19th century they rejected some of the punishments that were in vogue during the feudal period on the ground of their being

derogatory to human dignity. It would be a sad day for Pakistan if punishments ruled out nearly 200 years ago were to be reintroduced in the 21st century.

The world has learnt through trial and error the dangers of hasty legislation. No great harm will be done if the government encouraged the people to discuss and debate the pros and cons of legislative proposals. The government may ask its underutilised law minister to find out how many states, Muslim as well as others, have discovered the benefits of castration.

The government must not forget that whenever the benefits of a proposed law are not plainly evident its life is limited to a couple of years. Let it fix the life of its experimental laws at two years at the most, so that their pros and cons are widely understood.

The fact that nobody should ignore is that the damage caused by castration could be irreversible.

The people of Pakistan face the daunting task of catching up with the world in their search for a dispensation that will respect all communities' right to live by their progressive ideals. Let their journey be facilitated as much as possible. In any case they do not deserve to be pushed back into the Dark Ages.

Tailpiece: Look at the order of detention passed against Ammar Ali Jan and the arrest of caterers in Multan and you will realise that the so-called New Pakistan is no better than a degenerated version of the old Pakistan.

Published in Dawn, December 3rd, 2020

Cyber harassment cases double in a year

Internet usage in country up 200% during pandemic

By Saqib Butt

A manifold increase in the use of internet during the coronavirus pandemic has also resulted in a rise in cyber crimes including harassment of women.

According to sources in the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) internet usage in the country has increased by about 200 percent during the pandemic. The sources said the FIA Cybercrime Wing had received double women harassment and cybercrime applications this year as compared to last year. About 8,000 applications about harassment of women were received last year, while about 16,000 have been received so far this year. About 2,000 of the complaints have been investigated, while investigation into the rest is underway. About 300 cases have been registered in two years.

Many social media groups are full of “leaked” objectionable pictures and vidoes of women. They are used for blackmailing and extortion by criminals. Fake pictures and video clips of prominent women are also common on te social media. There are a lot of immoral pictures and vidoes of housewives, showbiz stars, political leaders, Ticktokers and other women on social media.

In recent years, WhatsApp groups have also been used to share such content. According to investigators, the women falling victim to such harassment include those wo share their intimate pictures during a relationship and are threatened after a breakup, whose saved pictures and videos in their mobile phones are stollen during repair and those whose video chats are recorded. The women who paid the blackmailers mostly did not escape harassment for long.

A girl, speaking on the condition of anonymity said she had befriended a boy who after some time came to her home with a marriage proposal which was turned down by her family. She said the boy asked her to meet him again but when she refused he defamed her by spreading her photographs on social media.

The girl contacted the FIA in Lahore on which the boy was called and the pictures were found in his phone and deleted.

A psychologist, Dr Ayesha Shahid Sheikh said while talking to The Express Tribune that making obscene pictures or videos of people was linked with narcissism tendency of Self harm and liking to attract the attention of others. She said sharing someone else's damaging photos or videos was mostly based on revnege low moral values and finding pleasure in ridiculing or defaming another person.

FIA spokesman Mohammad Raza said the cybercrime wing did not delete pornographic material posted on social media unless an affected person applied for it. He said the citizens seeing immoral content registered complaints on which action was taken to block the link of such pages.

He said that some time ago, pictures and videos of a women associated with showbiz went viral on social media after which she requested the FIA to remove the content from all sites. As soon as the request was received, more than 100 links were blocked while the photos and videos were removed from dozens of social media accounts.

The spokesman said every socialmedia platform had its own prvacy policies. Sometimes when we receive a request we report the immoraland obscene content to the relevant social media people on their website but they do not delete the content because it is not wrong according to their policy. He aded htat an affected citizen could file a complaint with the FIA Cybercrime Wing and Paksitan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) for action to block the link to objectionable content.

Sordid business

By Zubeida Mustafa

FOR 20 years, the US State Department has been annually documenting the efforts or the lack thereof of governments to check trafficking in persons (TIP) that has become a massive crime worldwide over the years. The major success it has achieved so far is in creating public awareness about this abominable issue. In some cases, it has managed to get governments to legislate on the matter in a bid to check the prevalence of the crime.

The TIP situation in Pakistan is horrifying for two reasons. First is its extraordinary rise in the two categories covered by the US report, namely, kidnapping for bonded labour and for trading girls in prostitution.

Most shameful is our government's own failure to investigate, prosecute and convict criminals involved in TIP. Worst of all, it has, in effect, become a partner in crime by dropping cases against the rich and the powerful as testified to by the American report. Official complicity in the crime allows the alleged criminals to be let off. As a result of its poor performance, Pakistan was downgraded to Tier 2 of the watch list in the report issued in July 2020.

In the 2019 report, Pakistan had been upgraded given its success in adopting the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018. But instead of moving forward, the country has slipped up in spite of a reasonably good law being in place. But that has been this country's tragedy – good laws but a failure to implement them.

Some examples from the latest TIP report are eye-openers. According to the report, Chinese and Pakistani traffickers joined hands to send over 620 Pakistani women to China ostensibly to get them married to Chinese men. Many of the women were abused while others were forced into commercial sex. The 31 Chinese who were charged were quietly acquitted. Foreign policy concerns seem to have overridden human rights in the name of 'Sino-Pakistani friendship' or the One Belt, One Road project.

In 2019, provincial police identified 19,954 victims of trafficking (15,802 girls) as compared to 19,723 in 2018, but no significant measures were taken to investigate the

crime and unsurprisingly there were no convictions. According to the report, those released/ let off on the government's orders included a parliamentarian, a judge and his wife, and an army major.

The Arabs have also emerged as major foreign partners in the TIP business with Oman being one of the main centres for abducted Pakistani women. The FIA, which is the security agency entrusted with the responsibility of investigating TIP crimes, has offices in three foreign capitals. Last year, it was investigating 800 cases in Oman alone. It is a pity that the government cannot provide protection to our own girls from predators of all shades.

This is a clear indication of the oppression and tyranny the girl child is subjected to in Pakistan. The irony is that most victims of TIP crimes are also victims of poverty and are underprivileged as well. Rape, when it happens, leads to such a hue and cry that the whole country is shaken to the core. But when young girls are trafficked, a strange and embarrassed silence descends on us. The irony of this strikes me hard.

Some attribute this phenomenon to the widely held belief that in cases of trafficking women are equally involved in a bid to earn money. Even if there is an iota of truth in this, it does not absolve society of its duty to protect and save our girls. Besides this attitude is largely misplaced. How can girls under 18 years, who are minors and need protection, be left to fend for themselves? They are the daughters of the nation and must be taken care of. But the most horrendous part of the story is the impunity with which the state actually acts against these little girls to enable some men to earn millions to provide carnal pleasure to a few.

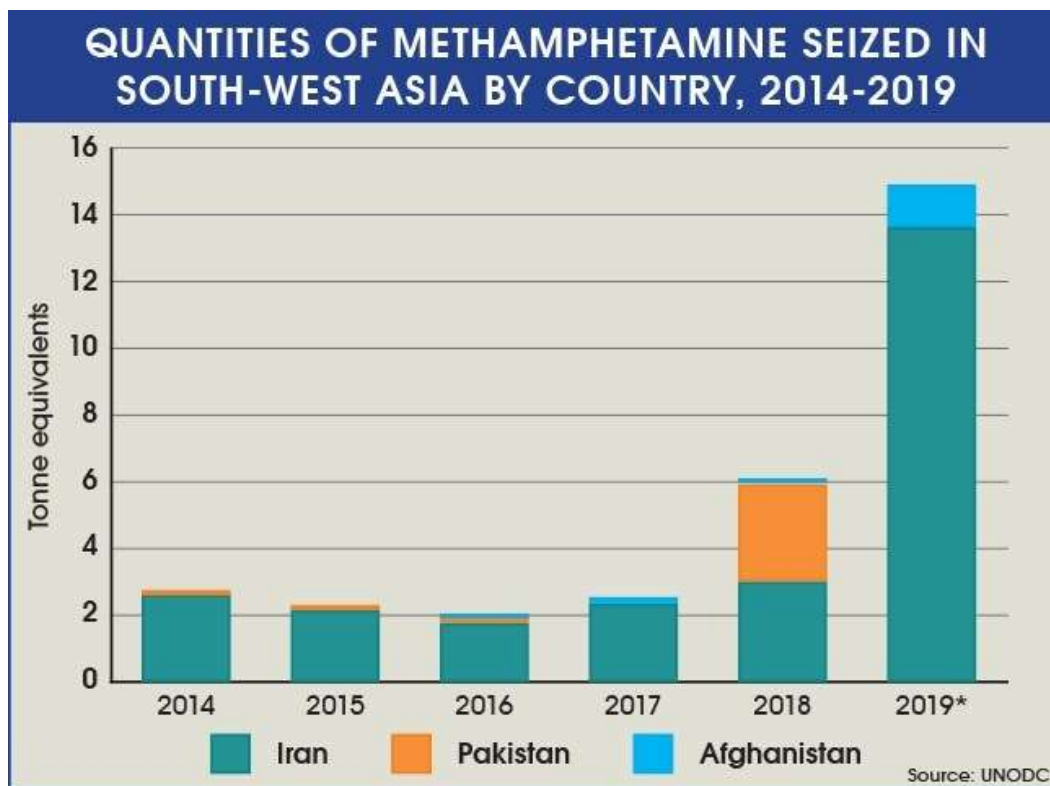
At fault is our corrupt police machinery, our inefficient justice system, a huge unscrupulous section of lawyers greedy for money, and of course our activists who prefer to remain silent in the face of this grisly crime.

If justice has to be done, these elements will have to act. To be commended are the 58 lawyers from Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur who have shown the magnanimity needed to offer legal aid pro bono to women victims of sex crimes. The Sindh Commission on the Status of Women has done well in taking this initiative along with the Legal Aid Society headed by retired justice Nasir Aslam Zahid. We do need such men and women of courage and integrity to break the appalling chain of evil and greed that paralyses our justice and police system. Trafficking is big business and the trillions it earns are used to bribe government functionaries to turn a blind eye to the existence of this lucrative business.

Published in Dawn, December 4th, 2020

Pakistan sees surge in methamphetamine seizures

By Amin Ahmed



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan experienced a significant increase in methamphetamine seizures between 2016 and 2018, and quantities of the drug seized increased more than 21 times from about 133kg in 2016 to 2.9 tonnes in 2018, reveals the 'Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment 2020'.

The report published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Thursday says the spike in seizures in 2018 is attributed to a single large seizure of over 2.5 tonnes of crystalline methamphetamine, leading to the arrest of an Afghan national.

The large number of seizures made at an international airport suggests that onward trafficking, for example, to the Near and Middle East, plays an important role.

Metham-phetamine appears to be emerging in the South-West Asia region along popular opiate trafficking routes. It seems likely that in Afghanistan the existing trafficking networks for opiates are also used for methamphetamine and some traffickers trade both.

The UNODC report says the synthetic drugs market in South-West Asia has grown in recent years, with methamphetamine seizures more than tripling from 1.9 tonnes to a record 6.1 tonnes between 2016 and 2018. Furthermore, in 2019, methamphetamine seizures of 13.6 tonnes were reported by Iran.

This amounts to more than double the seizures reported in South-West Asia in 2018, indicating a continued expansion of methamphetamine supply in the region. Though methamphetamine manufacture, use and trafficking have long been present in South-West Asia, this sudden surge of seizures in recent years is noteworthy.

The quantities of methamphetamine seized have increased significantly across all countries in the region. In Iran, there has been a resurgence in methamphetamine seizures since 2016. Despite an initial decline between 2014 and 2016, methamphetamine seizures in the country increased almost seven-fold from approximately 1.8 tonnes in 2016 to 13.6 tonnes in 2019, amidst a decline in the number of clandestine laboratories that have been dismantled since 2013.

In 2018, Iran reported that most of its methamphetamine seizures originated from Afghanistan and were either trafficked directly from Afghanistan or via Pakistan with a majority of it intended for markets outside the country. This surge in seizures was accompanied by a decrease in wholesale prices of methamphetamine.

Methamphetamine seizures also increased significantly in Afghanistan from about 9kg in 2014 to over 1.3 tonnes preliminarily reported in 2019. In Afghanistan, methamphetamine has been seized in tablet and crystalline form. Methamphetamine tablets typically contain a variety of other substances, including heroin and MDMA while crystalline methamphetamine is reported to be of high purity.

Amphetamine seems to have become entrenched in the regional market. In 2015, seizures of more than three tonnes of amphetamine were reported. Since then, seizures of the substance hit a peak of more than 3.8 tonnes in 2016 before decreasing and levelling at about two tonnes between 2017 and 2018.

Between 2018 and 2019, several amphetamine seizures made at international airports in Pakistan were intended for Middle Eastern countries such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and

the United Arab Emirates. However, in terms of weight, seizures destined for the Middle East represented a very small proportion of the total amphetamine seized by Pakistan.

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Changing strategies

By **Mohammad Ali Babakhel**

CAN we attribute the apparent decline in terrorism in 2020 to the erosion of extremist ideologies or to the militants' physical and territorial losses? Successful intelligence-based operations have either eliminated hardened terrorists or pushed them across the border. The Afghan peace talks, Covid-19 and influx of militants from other conflict zones to Afghanistan have all influenced the current landscape. Besides looking at incidence rates, we need a fair evaluation of the capability, capacity and ideological appeal of terrorist groups.

Once organisationally intact, over time the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan split into factions. Mullah Fazlullah's death has once again shifted the TTP's command from the Swati to Mehsud group. Mufti Noor Wali's ascendancy as emir redefined the TTP's priorities. Besides resolving inherent factionalism, these now include reconsolidation and searching for new partners.

In August, two breakaway factions, Jamaatul Ahrar and Hizbul Ahrar, rejoined the TTP. This development speaks of Noor Wali's 'reconciliation' efforts. The TTP's new priorities have also led to reported collaborations with ethnic sub-nationalist groups in Sindh and Balochistan, which not only undermine the TTP's ideological posture but also speak of its desperation.

Though the major kinetic battle seems almost over, ground realities suggest that the global war against terrorism has entered another prolonged phase of violent extremism. Military operations, target hardening and border fencing have established the writ of the state in weakly governed areas, leading to a significant reduction in the frequency and lethality of attacks. But to regain lost space and influence, these groups may form alliances or merge with each other.

The future relationship of the TTP and Afghan Taliban will likely remain limited to ideological linkages or operational collaboration. Though the TTP and Daesh (IS) are poles apart, collaboration may not only give the TTP a boost but also provide it access to technology and weapons, while Daesh may benefit from the TTP's dormant networks and geographical knowledge.

Sectarian and regional influences remain active in pockets of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Karachi, though there's been a shift from suicide to IED attacks. This raises several questions. Have they exhausted their reserves of would-be suicide bombers or are they trying to maintain their armoury? Are they facing problems in recruiting or financing? Is it because the masterminds were killed or the motivational speakers neutralised?

Terrorists have also transitioned from a blow-and-kill to a fight-and-die strategy. By targeting the Pakistan Stock Exchange in June, militants tried to undermine public as well as foreign investor confidence. The Peshawar madressah bombing and attacks in Kabul indicate that education institutions are now high-priority targets. Besides attacking the youth, they seek to exploit sectarian fault lines. 'Impact generating' activities are the new priority. To retain the sympathies of common folk, they continue to mainly target LEAs and security personnel.

There have been other changes. With people spending more time online in 2020, extremists are trying to gain influence in cyberspace. And while, historically, weather has determined the fighting season in Afghanistan, in recent times militants have tried to maintain pace throughout the year.

Since 9/11, 78 groups have been notified as proscribed organisations. In 2020, five groups (three ethnic separatist and two sectarian) were proscribed. Monitoring such groups is a concurrent jurisdiction where multiple departments collaborate. Pakistan has tried to maintain transparency and synchronise its efforts with international practices. It also made improvements to the surveillance and revision of persons placed under the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act. Presently 3,234 persons are on the list while previously there were 6,660. This reduction speaks of the transparency and improved working of CTDs.

In erstwhile Fata, besides intensified hard options, soft interventions coupled with local administrative reforms and community engagement will earn positive dividends. In Balochistan, establishing cadet colleges and youth skills development plans will help counter extremism. Biometric verification of SIMs has also proved effective. This should be revised to limit ownership to two SIMs per person. To counter foreign narratives, FM radio stations must be made functional in the tribal districts.

The six-year-old National Action Plan needs to be revised to facilitate stakeholders and readjust operational priorities. In the ongoing battle, adaptability and innovation will enable states to defeat terrorism. But success will not be possible without public empowerment and engagement in countering violent extremism.

Published in Dawn, December 5th, 2020

Reports of Al-Qaeda's Demise are Greatly Exaggerated | Opinion

By Colin P. CLARKE

In mid-November at The Soufan Center's annual Global Security Forum, Ambassador Nathan Sales of the U.S. Department of State Counterterrorism Bureau commented that "the question of who leads al-Qaeda core matters a little bit less today than it did a decade ago." Given recent news circulating online about the alleged death of al-Qaeda's current leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, this is more than just an academic issue.

If Zawahiri is indeed dead (news that was initially broken by terrorism expert Hassan Hassan but not yet confirmed by either al-Qaeda or the United States government), his death would be even more devastating considering it comes on the heels of the announcement that al-Qaeda's number two, Abu Muhammad al-Masri, was killed in Tehran by Israeli agents in August of this year. Given the killing of al-Masri, the alleged death of Zawahiri, and the targeted assassination of several other high-ranking al-Qaeda figures, including longtime veterans Abu al-Qassam, Abu Muhammad al-Sudani, and Hossam Abdul al-Raouf, the organization's senior leadership is reeling.

Yet, al-Qaeda has always been capable of adapting and evolving, but by shifting its organizational structure to afford its affiliates in the Sahel, the Arabian Peninsula and elsewhere with the operational autonomy to develop attack plans and map out strategic objectives, the group has sidestepped the dilemma of leadership decapitation. Since the rise of the Islamic State in 2014, al-Qaeda has focused on grassroots organizing in an attempt to make inroads with local populations in countries like Mali, Yemen, and Syria. By lowering its profile, including by working through front organizations, al-Qaeda has concentrated its resources on gaining popular support.

Most terrorism analysts expect al-Qaeda to tap veteran terrorist Saif al-Adel as the group's next leader, given the weight his name still carries and as a function of his jihadist pedigree. But even this is not straightforward. Like al-Masri, al-Adel is believed to be living in Iran, which makes him similarly vulnerable to the fate met by al-Masri, as well as open to the accusations that al-Qaeda is serving as a puppet of the Iranian regime,

accusations that al-Qaeda's primary rival, the Islamic State, is sure to promote aggressively.

What most of the recent analysis prematurely celebrating an end to al-Qaeda gets wrong is the organization's reliance on a central leadership figure in 2020. If Zawahiri is dead, it will unquestionably be a blow to al-Qaeda from a logistical perspective, especially given the terrorist leader's penchant for managing relationships between the core and its affiliates. However, the number of fighters under arms for al-Qaeda is estimated at upwards of 40,000 jihadists.

Meanwhile, affiliates including al-Shabaab in Somalia, Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in West Africa, Hurras al-Din in Syria, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent in South Asia, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen have each made significant inroads with local populations in the countries and regions where they operate, respectively. The ability of these affiliates to strike the West has been diminished, but the intent is still there. U.S. officials have recently noted that Hurras al-Din continues to plot attacks against the West. The chaos of the Syrian civil war has provided al-Qaeda militants and other jihadists with enough space to operate, specifically in Idlib Province in the country's northwest.

In his remarks at the Global Security Forum, Ambassador Sales also noted that al-Qaeda was "on the ropes." But that could change if the organization is able to make a strong comeback in countries where the United States is reducing its presence. With recent announcements by the Trump administration to draw down troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and perhaps Somalia, there is an opportunity for al-Qaeda to take advantage of the resulting power vacuum. Afghanistan likely presents al-Qaeda's most viable change to rebuild its network, with a minimal U.S. presence and a looming power-sharing deal that includes the Afghan Taliban, al-Qaeda is well-positioned to regroup. Al-Qaeda fighters remain "heavily embedded" within the Taliban and few knowledgeable observers expect the Taliban to distance itself from its longtime ally.

Given the way with which al-Qaeda central has devolved authority from the core to its regional branches, recent leadership losses may not be the death knell that many in the U.S. counterterrorism community might be hoping for. Al-Qaeda's demise has been predicted before, perhaps too many times to even keep track of. Earlier this year, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the group "a shadow of its former self." In some ways, that is true. Al-Qaeda's old guard—those jihadists that have fought with the organization since its inception nearly three decades ago—is an increasingly smaller circle.

The risk for the West is once again underestimating the organization's resilience. The U.S. military is ready to close the chapter on the so-called Global War on Terrorism, while preparing for the shift to great power competition with near-peer adversaries including China and Russia. Washington and its allies may be eager to move on, but al-Qaeda and its network of global affiliates will remain a significant challenge, and in some parts of the world may be poised for a major comeback.

Colin P. Clarke is a Senior Research Fellow at The Soufan Center.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own.

Published on [newsweek.com](https://www.newsweek.com), December 07, 2020

Strategy soon to check drug abuse among youth: PM

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: Revealing that there are over seven million drug addicts in the country, Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday announced that his government would devise a strategy to check drug abuse among the youth.

“Anti-Narcotics Force and National Accountability Bureau (NAB) alone cannot curb use of narcotics and corruption, therefore the whole nation and the government will have to make collective efforts to fight the menace,” the prime minister said while addressing an event held at the ANF headquarters in Chaklala, Rawalpindi.

“Seven million drug addicts in the country in fact means suffering and misery of the same number of families,” he added. Terming corruption and narcotics “cancer of society”, he said the government would devise a strategy to check drug abuse among the youth and save the future generations.

PM Khan said the relevant ministries, including education and health, would be taken on board to chalk out the policy in view of the growing trend of drug abuse at educational institutions. “I will call a meeting next week to discuss ways to address the challenge of narcotics on an urgent basis and the government will run an anti-drug campaign across the country and the entire nation will fight this menace as a united force.”

He stressed the need for raising awareness among the masses, particularly the youth, about the negative impacts of drugs in personal and social lives. Expressing concern over higher number of cases of drug addicts reported at schools and universities, he said: “We have to save our next generations from the shackles of drug abuse.”

The prime minister said the inspector general of Islamabad police had apprised him that the situation of use of drug ‘ice’ by students was alarming as it could leave a disastrous impact on their education and health. “We have to save our children and youth from ‘silent killer’ (ice),” he vowed.

Mr Khan said society had a significant role in promotion of negative trends by accepting earning of money through illegal ways and corruption. He said the government would enhance the flow of resources required to counter the menace of drug abuse in the country.

He lauded the ANF's efforts to eradicate drug abuse, but said the efforts by an institution alone could not produce results unless put in by society itself as the biggest deterrent.

The minister for narcotics control and senior officials of the ANF attended the event. ANF director general Maj Gen Muhammad Arif Malik briefed the prime minister on the operations of his organisation to curb smuggling of narcotics across the country and said the steps were being taken to ensure a drug-free society.

Earlier, the prime minister inaugurated the new building of ANF headquarters and laid a wreath on the memorial of martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Published in Dawn, December 8th, 2020

World will emerge from pandemic at terrible cost: Chomsky

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: No crisis that the world is facing is inevitable. There are feasible solutions, and they are in hand. But it's not enough to just have academic knowledge of what to do. Somebody has to take the knowledge and work with it.

This was said by internationally renowned scholar Professor Noam Chomsky in his talk titled 'Reflections on the future of democracy: nuclear threat and the looming environmental catastrophe in a post-Trump world' organised online by Habib University here on Monday evening.

Prof Chomsky said the election that took place in the United States recently was not over. He said eminent scientists and thinkers had tried to encapsulate their conception of the world security situation by a clock called the doomsday clock. When the clock reaches midnight that means termination of the species. The clock was set in motion shortly after the dropping of the atomic bombs in 1945; then it was set on minutes to midnight.

Every year that President Trump has been in office the minute hand has moved closer to midnight. Two years ago, it moved to the closest that it has ever been. Last January the analysts abandoned minutes and moved it moved to seconds. They [scientists] mentioned three crucial issues – the threat of nuclear war, the threat of environmental catastrophe and the deterioration of democracy. The scholar then added a fourth – the pandemic.

Prof Chomsky said the Trump administration continued with its project of dismantling the arms control regime which was of some protection against the threat of nuclear war. Any war [for example] between Pakistan and India will be essentially terminal. The Trump administration is also continuing to open up new areas in the country to fossil fuel exploration, continuing to dismantle the regulations which impose some constraints on fossil fuels and protect the people from emissions which can extremely harmful to health, particularly in this period when people are facing respiratory diseases.

On deterioration of democracy, Prof Chomsky said the Trump administration had purged the executive branch of the government of any independent voices. The Congress installed inspectors general to monitor the performance of the executive offices for corruption. He [Trump] took care of that by just firing them.

The scholar said the election on Nov 4 was a total disaster. The Republicans are not that different from Trump. They have drifted off the political spectrum years ago. They are ranked alongside the parties in Europe with neo-fascist origins. They are a party of environmental denialists, ultranationalists, evangelical Christians, militarists, xenophobic, racist and white supremacists.

On the mismanagement of the pandemic, Prof Chomsky said the world was suffering from it severely but it was the least of the four crises. “We will emerge from the pandemic at a terrible and needless cost. We can see that some countries have dealt with it. By Jan 10, Chinese scientists had identified the virus rapidly. By Jan 10, virologists all over the world knew what they’re facing, knew the kinds of measures that had to be taken. Some places the measures were taken, others not.

“We can see the difference. In China, life is pretty much back to normal. South Korea dealt with it expeditiously and effectively. Europe waited too long but finally most of Europe began to take significant measures. Others didn’t. India, Brazil, France and the US didn’t. These are the countries in the lead in facing the pandemic catastrophe.

“In the US the government has simply given up. The public has been inundated with propaganda from the right wing which says it’s a hoax. China has a vaccine which is in the advanced stage of testing. It hasn’t even been mentioned in the US.”

On the US presidential election, Prof Chomsky said the Republicans won the election at every level; the only office they didn’t win was the presidency. That was just hatred of Trump, not love of Joe Biden. Signs suggest that Trump will never concede that he lost by six million votes. He will presumably leave office on Jan 20, without conceding.

On the subject of democracy under threat from reactionary forces, the scholar said one of the developments in the past couple of years had been the growth of a reactionary international. It’s not formalised but is taking shape with Trump in the White House. It includes the most reactionary states in the world, the ones most bitterly attacking and destroying democracy. In the western hemisphere the leading member is Bolsonaro of Brazil. In the Middle East it includes the most reactionary states – the Gulf emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel. Israel has gone very far to the right. It is maybe the only country in the world where Trump’s popularity was overwhelming. It’s maybe the only country where the younger population is more reactionary than the older one.

To the east, he added, Narendra Modi's India was destroying the remnants of Indian secular democracy, crushing Muslim rights, placing Kashmiris under a vicious and brutal rule. Pakistan is not too far behind.

On what will happen when the Biden administration comes in, the professor said it's not very clear. The Democratic Party is torn between two groups. One is the management of the party. Then there's the popular base, mostly younger people, who are in the American context called the radical Left.

With reference to the Panama papers, he said there's been an enormous robbery of the general public. It's not going to the top 10 per cent, most of its going to the top 0.1pc tiny fraction of the population which has doubled the share of their wealth over the last 40 years. This has had a harmful effect on the functioning of democracy.

After the talk, Habib University president Wasif Rizvi, who co-hosted the event with Christopher Taylor, the university's academy affairs president, put a question about the possibility of a strike on Iran. Prof Chomsky said it's a possibility. The sanctions against Iran have absolute no legitimacy. So what's the threat of Iran?

The threat is that it's a possible deterrent. Countries that want to rampage freely in the region don't want deterrents, and there are two of them – the US and Israel. The US doesn't want the Israeli nuclear weapons to be inspected. It doesn't even officially recognise that Israel has nuclear weapons.

“Will there be a strike? Nobody knows. The Trump administration is in a state where it is willing to do almost anything. If the US were to attack Iran it won't be an invasion; it would be an attack from a distance. It's possible that Iran could respond. It has ways to respond. Weak military, but they do have missiles. The missiles can reach northeast Saudi Arabia. If they attack [it], the results are extraordinary not just for Saudi Arabia but for much of the world. If that happens it will be a massive war and then we're basically finished,” he added.

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Cybercrime costs to top \$1tr this year: researchers



Cybercrime is expected to cost the global economy more than \$1 trillion this year up more than 50 percent since 2018 a research report said on Monday-AFP/File

WASHINGTON: Cyber-crime is expected to cost the global economy more than \$1 trillion this year, up more than 50 percent since 2018, a research report said on Monday.

The report by McAfee Corp, in cooperation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), concluded that the cost of online criminal activity was more than one percent of global economic output, and also had significant non-monetary impacts.

The researchers noted a surge in a range of attacks including ransomware, phishing, business email takeovers, spyware and cryptocurrency theft.

Some of the increase can be attributed to weaker security with more people working remotely outside their workplace.

“The severity and frequency of cyber attacks on businesses continues to rise as techniques evolve, new technologies broaden the threat surface, and the nature of work expands into home and remote environments,” said Steve Grobman, chief technical officer at McAfee.

“While industry and government are aware of the financial and national security implications of cyber attacks, unplanned downtime, the cost of investigating breaches and disruption to productivity represent less appreciated high impact costs.”

The report was based on a survey of 1,500 technology professionals in government and business in the US, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Australia.

The impact of cybercrime included the loss of intellectual property and monetary assets, but also system downtime and damage to an organization’s reputation, according to the report.

“It is no secret that cybercrime can harm public safety, undermine national security, and damage economies,” the researchers wrote.

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Menace of drugs

The business is far too profitable to address from the supply side, and far too attractive from the demand side

The Prime Minister recently said the government would soon introduce a tough new anti-drug policy. While he gave no definitive timeline for when the new policy would be presented, some details were on offer. These included taking the input of the education and health ministries, and very likely the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) – since he was speaking at the inauguration of the ANF’s new headquarters. A positive detail was that the government would focus on awareness campaigns. This is important because we all know that punitive measures related to drug use rarely work.

The business is far too profitable to address from the supply side, and – for all the wrong reasons – far too attractive from the demand side. We also cannot use the shortcut of blaming Western culture. All four provinces have a long history of drug use embedded within the local culture, whether it be bhang, hashish, or opium. That is why awareness matters. Rather than using jail time to threaten people to not do drugs, we need to help them make educated decisions on why they should not be getting high. This is especially important when it comes to more powerful and refined drugs such as heroin or synthetics like methamphetamines, also known as ‘meth’ or ‘ice’.

Drugs function on a sliding scale, but blanket bans mean uninformed youngsters may not differentiate between them until they are already hooked. This is also where the PM contradicted his much more sound earlier position by claiming no attention was paid to drug eradication measures in the past. The fact of the matter is that those extreme eradication-based approaches are what got us here. While eradication efforts still matter, they need to be focused on high-value targets such as heroin and synthetics. This could be accomplished in part by removing jail penalties for the possession of small quantities of lesser drugs and replacing them with relatively low fines. This would let law enforcement focus on dealers and hard drugs while offering the added benefit of reducing police corruption. Despite the Premier’s apprehensions about Western culture, this approach has already shown success in many countries in the East and the West.

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Alternate remedies on corruption cases

Plea Bargain has always been a hot button issue and segments of our society still haven't acknowledged this concept

No society is free from corruption. Thus a criminal justice system meant to curb the menace of corruption is in place in the countries the world over. The justice systems, however, face enormous challenges across the globe. In order to swiftly reach logical conclusion on corruption cases and to go around these vast challenges and hurdles, to secure convictions in the cases, and to avoid lengthy trials; alternate remedies like Alternative Dispute Resolution and Plea Bargain are always considered as options on the table, especially in case of white collar crimes.

Plea Bargain (PB) has always been a hot button issue and segments of our society still haven't entirely acknowledged this relatively new concept which is enshrined in the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999. The PB's efficacy and potency can be asked from the thousands of victims of cheating who lost their hard-earned money to scams related to Modarba companies and housing societies and had pinned their hopes on the NAB's PB law. NAB successfully recovered the plundered money through the tool called PB. Those who lost their money to any such scam are more interested in getting their money back rather than seeing the culprit behind the bars after a lengthy and tiresome trial which usually concludes at the Supreme Court.

Does the culprit get a jail-free pass after returning the plundered money? Does NAB coerce or intimidate an accused to enter into PB? Who accepts the PB and who is responsible for determination of liability? Answers to these queries – which are misconceived by many and sometimes deliberately misconstrued – need clarification.

Section 25(b) of NAO, 1999 deals with the law of Plea Bargain which clearly indicates that the accused person, at any time after the authorisation of investigation, can opt for PB. The offer for PB is made by the accused and the NAB Chairman determines the liability; and if the ascertained amount is acceptable to the accused, only then the Chairman refers it to the Accountability Court for approval. It has been clearly enshrined in the said law that gains or assets acquired or made by the accused in the course or consequence of the offence will be made the part of PB. Recently the NAB Rawalpindi has made a huge recovery in a housing society scam, wherein the principal liability was Rs1.07 billion, and illegal gains worth Rs880 million were returned by the convict, hence taking the final PB

amount to Rs1.95 billion. All the amount received is being disbursed amongst the victims of the housing scheme. In the said case, the whole process from initiation of inquiry till the finalisation of PB took six to seven months, whereas the infamous Modarba cases have been under trial for 10 years and the affectees are still looking for their looted amount.

Under no circumstances, the amount of the PB can be less than the actual liability of the case. A team comprising relevant professionals along with the Investigation Officer of the case work out the liability of the case under the supervision of the Supervisory Case Officer and the Director concerned. It is then presented during a Regional Board meeting or an Executive Board meeting as the case maybe, wherein the competent authority decides the matter in consultation with the Board Members. To ensure transparency of the proceedings, the minutes of the meeting are recorded and circulated.

NAB has recovered more than Rs36 billion on account of PB since its inception and disbursed the same to the victims of white collar crimes and deposited it in the national exchequer. Only in 2019, NAB recovered more than Rs3.827 billion through PB.

It is pertinent to mention here that the accused entering into Plea Bargain shall be deemed to have been convicted, cease to hold public office, disqualified from becoming a member of any public body and shall not be allowed to avail any facility from any financial institution for a period of 10 years under section 15 of NAO, 1999. So, no individual enters into PB unless they realise that NAB possesses irrefutable evidence and there is no way the trial will conclude in their favour.

The only benefit which the accused draws out of PB is that after entering the deal, he no longer remains behind the bars. All the implications of Section 15 of NAO, 1999 as mentioned above are applied to him by the order of Accountability Court.

Another quandary which has time and again made the headlines is Judicial Custody and NAB Physical Remand or NAB Custody. It is imperative to understand the difference. When the accused is apprehended by NAB, his custody is obtained from the Accountability Court for the purpose of interrogation, recovery and confrontation with documents etc; and when he is no more needed by NAB or when the Accountability Court may deem appropriate, the accused is sent to judicial remand or judicial custody. During the physical remand with NAB, the accused is incarcerated in a clean cell with all the basic necessities along with regular medical checkups and medicine; home-cooked food is served with the court's permission; and access to relatives and lawyer is also granted. Although 90 days of physical remand is available with NAB as per law, the courts do not extend the physical remand beyond 15 days and even physical custody of accused is given to NAB by the courts after considering the medical condition of the

accused. And when the accused is sent to judicial custody, his custody is entrusted with the Accountability Court and the prison authorities, and NAB has nothing to do with the affairs of prison.

There is though always a room for improvement. Any change in laws in the interest of members of the public at large should be the prime objective of legislature, and intents of the legislature speak through the text of legislation.

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Fencing Gwadar

By Muhammad Amir Rana

IF fenced as planned, Gwadar will become the first ‘sealed’ city in Pakistan on the premise of security. Apart from the pros and cons of the plan, as well as the public’s reaction and the opposition’s criticism, it reflects on the state’s approach to responding to security challenges. Usually, fencing is considered one of the last resorts to deal with trans-border security threats and vulnerabilities. Fencing cities would, therefore, require even stronger reasons.

Gwadar certainly faces serious threats. The city is a prime target for Baloch nationalist insurgents, who during the last three years have perpetrated at least five major terrorist attacks in the district, including one in Gwadar city and others on the outskirts of Jiwani, Pasni and Ormara. As many as 20 security personnel and 20 civilians lost their lives in these attacks. The May 2019 attack on the Pearl Continental Hotel was among the deadliest attacks in the district. The Balochistan Liberation Army, which claimed the attack, badly damaged the building using explosives and rocket fire; the fourth floor was almost fully destroyed. Similarly, in October this year, militants targeted security forces that were escorting a convoy of the Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd from Gwadar to Karachi, on the Makran Coastal Highway. An alliance of Baloch insurgent groups called BRAS claimed the attack in which at least 14 people including seven Frontier Corps men lost their lives.

These terrorist attacks had raised questions about the security of the port and the safety of the Chinese workforce engaged in CPEC-related projects. However, many experts argue that fencing the city is tantamount to overplaying the threat. The Balochistan government asserts that the option of fencing selected areas is part of the Gwadar City Master Plan. Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani has claimed that, due to the threat of terrorism and demand of the people to provide security, some areas were being provided extra security by laying barbed wire under the safe city project. However, local accounts in Gwadar provide a different outlook.

Most people complain that, though the government has started an infrastructure rehabilitation plan for the old city, it has not yet resolved long-standing issues linked to

water and electricity supply. The federal government has recently announced a Rs600 billion package for development projects in nine southern districts of Balochistan. Gwadar locals, however, are not convinced that the city will get any share out of it or that the funds will be properly spent. At the same time, the new term 'south Balochistan' to describe the region historically known as Makran is making locals suspicious; they believe it could be an attempt to separate the region administratively from the rest of the province.

According to the new city plan, two entry and exit points will be established, which would provide a sense of safety to the Chinese workforce and non-Baloch residents in the city. But the larger question still remains: will it help in reducing security threats?

For one, in the attack on the Pearl Continental, terrorists had used the city route for their assault. The Baloch insurgency presents a considerable security challenge, but fencing the cities is not the answer. Baloch militant groups don't have the operational capacity to launch massive and coordinated attacks compared to groups like Al Qaeda, the militant Islamic State group and the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. In the worst-case scenario, if the Baloch insurgents somehow manage to launch a few large-scale attacks, their ability to sustain such attacks will remain under question.

Secondly, questions are also being raised about the country's prevention and combating strategies. Many would ask: why do security institutions opt for a defensive approach? Would it not give a sense of achievement and recognition to the insurgents?

Most importantly, why is the state not willing to opt for soft and political measures of countering terrorism, including reconciliation, which are not only cost-effective but also as fundamental as hard approaches to achieving long-lasting stability in the province? The state took a few half-hearted political initiatives, but these were never convincingly persuasive.

Economic growth requires a conducive security environment, and national harmony can create such conduciveness. However, national harmony cannot be manufactured or enforced, it requires trust among stakeholders, which can only be cultivated through dialogue and by strengthening the social contract.

It was India that first fenced its border with Pakistan. After the completion of fencing its borders with Afghanistan and Iran, Pakistan will become a fully fenced country. Perhaps Pakistan needs a comprehensive review of its national security priorities and practices.

The process of camouflaging ourselves in barbed wire, which started from the Afghanistan border and resulted in the fencing of our border with Iran, has now

transformed into fencing our cities. But fencing cannot guarantee that terrorists will stop their activities. They will find alternatives, as has been happening with the fencing at the Afghan border.

Successive governments have been working to finalise the National Security Policy, which has taken too much time. National security adviser Moeed Yusuf has provided a glimmer of hope that the draft will be ready by early 2021. So far, little is known about the contours of the NSP, except the promise that it will cover both traditional and non-traditional security dimensions and will especially focus on human security.

However, any exaggerated hopes cannot be linked with the upcoming NSP because it would largely be the result of a bureaucratic consultative process rather than an open discussion in parliament and public forums. Still, if it espouses a national cohesion strategy that builds upon dialogue with all stakeholders, it would be helpful in many ways. At least it could provide hope to the marginalised segments and regions of the country.

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Slain Taliban chief had life insurance policy, court told

By Naeem Sahoutara



Before his death in a US drone attack in 2016 Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour had purchased a life insurance policy from a private company in Pakistan using a fake identity. -Dawn Archives

KARACHI: Before his death in a US drone attack in 2016, Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour had purchased a 'life insurance' policy from a private company in Pakistan using a fake identity, it emerged at the hearing of a terror funding case against him and his absconding accomplices on Saturday.

The insurance company confirmed it to an anti-terrorism court in Karachi at the hearing of the case registered against him and his accomplices by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) last year.

It emerged during the investigation that the Taliban leader and his accomplices were involved in generating funds for terrorist activities through the purchase of properties on the basis of 'forged identities'. He had purchased five properties including plots and houses, estimated to be valued at Rs32 million, in Karachi.

Sources in the FIA told Dawn that when the matter was taken up before the court, the investigating officer appeared along with an official of the Pakistani insurance company and filed a report on its behalf. The report explained that it emerged during investigation that Mullah Akhtar Mansour had purchased a 'life insurance' policy by using a fake identity and had paid up to Rs300,000 to the company before his death in the drone attack on May 21, 2016.

While showing willingness to return the principal amount that he had paid, the insurance company had presented a cheque worth Rs300,000 to the investigators for depositing it to the court so that the amount could be deposited in the government treasury, the sources said. "However, the FIA investigators returned the cheque asking the company to pay the principal amount along with premium so that the whole amount could be deposited to the government treasury," the sources added.

On Saturday, the insurance company deposited a cheque worth Rs350,000 with the court, which had on Sept 24 ordered the company to deposit the amount paid by the slain Taliban leader for his life insurance policy before he was killed, the judicial sources confirmed to Dawn.

Also on a court directive, a property owned by Mullah Mansour in Karachi had been auctioned for Rs9,200,000 and the amount had been deposited with the court Nazir for depositing it in the government treasury, they said.

Properties in Peshawar, Quetta

The sources said that non-bailable warrants were again issued for the arrest of Quetta and Peshawar Mukhtiarkars (land revenue officers) for not appearing before the court to submit their respective reports as to whether the Taliban leader and his accomplices also owned properties in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as required under Section 88 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Previously, the court had ordered the authorities concerned in Peshawar and Quetta to stop salaries of the two officers for not submitting their reports despite the court directives.

The judge also sought reports from two private banks, Allied Bank Ltd and Bank Al-Falah, regarding the accounts purportedly obtained and operated by the Afghan Taliban leader and/or his accomplices along with details of the money deposited/transacted through them.

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The trust crisis

By Maleeha Lodhi

ONE of the key political issues in the global debate today is the steady erosion of people's trust in governments across the world. More than evident in the pre-pandemic era this came into sharper relief after Covid-19 struck. The issue of trust was in the spotlight when handling of the coronavirus crisis was assessed and it was found that where people had greater trust in their government, they listened to health advisories and complied with restrictions. This enabled authorities to manage the crisis better. The reverse held true in countries where trust was low, which compromised the government's ability to tackle the disease.

This has not been a function of the type of political system of a country. Instead, it has been a reflection of people's confidence in how competent their leaders have been in responding to the challenge. Positive perceptions helped build trust in governments.

But why has trust been declining in governments which today is accepted as a global phenomenon? A review of the literature on this – books and knowledgeable essays – reveals that multiple factors and their interplay may be responsible. The more plausible among those identified are the sheer scale and complexity of governance today, rising and unmet expectations, growing disconnect between political elites and the public, governments becoming too remote from citizens, economic performance becoming the touchstone of people's evaluation of competence, conduct of leaders, and the information revolution that has empowered people in ways that are truly unprecedented.

With a world moving at hyper speed, governments struggle to keep pace and are seen to act and deliver much too slowly. The short-term approach usually adopted by political leaders often overrides acting in the public interest in the long term. Many political leaders operate with mental maps of the past and do an unedifying job of understanding and responding to people's sentiments and grievances. All these factors undermine trust between rulers and the ruled.

There is little doubt that a more informed citizenry with access to multiple channels of information is more empowered and has several platforms available to make their voices heard. This empowerment also produces higher expectations which morphs into popular

discontent when governments are unable to deliver and address public demands. Therefore, technology has much to do in being a driver of mounting expectations.

The trust debate is hardly new even if its context has been changing. Reports that track global risks published annually by the World Economic Forum (WEF) have been highlighting this phenomenon for over a decade now. One of its reports, in assessing trust, called attention to a “legitimacy deficit” which referred to a sense that “we might nearly be better off without rulers”. The report observed this trend across the world in countries in very different stages of development.

Harvard scholar Joseph Nye, writing in one of WEF’s Global Outlook Reports, stressed the need for democracies to adjust to the long-term decline of trust in elected governments and the new challenges of the information age. This decline has been confirmed by several surveys. For example, a report last year found only 45 per cent of citizens in OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries trusted their government.

Scholars such as Nye tackled this rising trust deficit mostly from a Western perspective. A book that comes to mind in this regard is *The Fourth Revolution* published some years back but still relevant for its insights. Its authors, John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, argued that the West must address what they called the “7 deadly sins” which seemed to lie behind falling confidence. They include overlapping areas of responsibility in oversized governments, surrender of too much power to special interests and political paralysis and gridlock.

More recently, well-known scholar Francis Fukiyama wrote about the crisis of trust in the US and again, his observations have wider applicability. He argued that trust is built on two foundations. One, “citizens must believe that their government has the expertise, technical knowledge, capacity, and impartiality to make the best available judgments” – which of course speaks to government competence. The second foundation is “trust in the top end of the hierarchy”, in leaders and whether they inspire public confidence in knowing what they are doing and acting in the public interest.

A recently published book, *Democracy and Globalisation: Anger, Fear and Hope* by Josep M. Colomer and Ashley L. Beale, examines the issue from a fresh angle. Its authors explore the causes of what they see as the current crisis of democracy and why trust in governments and satisfaction with the way democracies work has been declining. They see more democracy across the world but less governance. They attribute much of the rising public disaffection to unfulfilled expectations and aspirations. Disruptions caused by technological change and globalisation have undermined the effectiveness of

governments to deliver the policies needed for sustained economic growth. What they call the Great Disruption has produced anger and fear. “People hurt by social and economic changes and lack of public delivery get angry and react against the rulers and the rules when their expectations are not met.”

Whether practicable or not, the authors’ recipe for effective governance is “democracy at multiple levels” with “reallocation of power at local, national, continental and global levels with innovative combinations of direct democracy, representative government and rule by experts”.

A key factor that emerges in the discussion of trust is the negative impact of political polarisation prevailing in countries – in both East and West – on the public’s view of leaders and governments. This has rightly been seen to cause waning public confidence in political institutions and those in charge of them. This should strike a familiar note in Pakistan and is directly relevant to the present state of play in the country. With political polarisation reaching a record level and the government and opposition locked in unremitting confrontation this cannot but affect the public’s opinion of their leaders especially at a time when their focus should be on the challenges facing the country. The lesson from the ongoing power struggle is that both sides can end up losing the trust of the people they seek to serve.

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Politics of police reform

By Afzal Ali Shigri

AT the time of elections and during their tenure, political parties vehemently profess their commitment to police reform. It is educative to read the manifestos of the three leading major political parties of Pakistan as a way of evaluating their intentions about reforming the police.

In their manifesto, the PPP deals with the police along with the civil armed forces, broadly mentioning the need for enhancing the autonomy, intelligence and operational capacity of law-enforcement agencies. This is followed by random mention of computerisation, counterterrorism, gender imbalance and response capacity.

The PPP manifesto then talks about the enhancement of resources and induction of police officers in terms of the UN peacekeeping experience to benefit from their work in conflict zones. This part of the document seems to have been drafted without any understanding of the role of civilian police as an essential part of the criminal justice system.

On the other hand, the entirety of the PML-N's wisdom and reflections on police reform seems to have been encapsulated in a single spare sentence pledging to "reform the police service through initiatives such as smart policing and community policing in order to make the police force citizen friendly and an efficient crime-fighting agent". To say the least, this is a sad reflection on the commitment of these major parties in reforming the most important arm of the state to maintain public order and peace in the country.

It is only the PTI that accorded this issue due importance and identified the broad fundamental issues of depoliticisation and strengthening of police. In addition to delineating the steps for achieving these objectives, the PTI undertook to replicate the KP Police Act, 2017, in other provinces, professionalise police through reorganisation and provide specialised training. It further undertook to improve public outreach to police and to address the gender imbalance by recruiting more females into the force.

The manifestos of 2018 rightly gave hope that the PTI would address this most important aspect of reforms comprehensively with due impact on the entire criminal justice system. However, it is unfortunate that after winning the 2018 election, the PTI demonstrated

conspicuous reluctance to follow the KP Act, 2017, with IGPs keen to implement the reforms in true spirit being shown the proverbial door.

The PTI has showcased the KP police reform as a model to be emulated by all police forces in Pakistan. On the other hand, the other three provinces, wrongly presuming that the 18th Amendment gave them the exclusive authority to legislate police law, sought various ways to frustrate any reform despite the existence of Police Order, 2002, originally the blueprint for the KP police law. While Punjab amended the Police Order, Sindh introduced a new law (albeit retaining some parts of Police Order 2002), and Balochistan reverted to Police Act, 1861, thus practically freezing any progress on reform. The federal government chose to continue with the 150-year-old Police Act for the capital territory.

A military ruler promulgated Police Order, 2002, for creating a politically neutral, democratically controlled and accountable police force. Ironically, successive political governments have refused to create the structures to ensure political neutrality and a credible accountability framework, thus frustrating the very purpose of the democratic principles so carefully woven into the 2002 police reform by a dictator. Due to the continued and wanton use of police by the party in power for political considerations, a people-friendly police force has remained an elusive dream, and ordinary citizens suffer at the hands of a police force which is functioning in a legal void to the lasting benefit of vested interests.

Dismayed by the inaction of political governments to reform the police and the resulting deterioration of the entire criminal justice system, the then chief justice of Pakistan, in order to address the root cause of the collapsing criminal justice system, decided to use the platform of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan for establishing a police reforms committee comprising nine former inspectors general of police with an established record of leading and implementing reforms at different stages in Pakistan. The sitting IGPs were also co-opted in this committee and comprehensive terms of reference covering all important aspects of law enforcement with an emphasis on relief to the vulnerable segment of the society was notified in 2018.

Within five months, the committee produced a two-volume police reforms report after in-depth consideration of all aspects of policing in Pakistan. It produced a model police law to be introduced in every federating unit of Pakistan. This law was based on the 2002 model incorporating some amendments to address new developments and challenges faced by the police in a fast-changing world impacted by information technology.

The second volume of this report specifically addressed urban police structures, the alternate dispute resolution system, police accountability, improvement in investigation, combating of terrorism by the criminal justice system and some amendments in various laws. This report was submitted to the government of Pakistan and the provinces with recommendation for implementation.

In the meantime, the issue of the jurisdiction of the federation and the provinces for legislation on police was also resolved by the superior judiciary during hearing of public interest petitions. The seven-member bench of the Supreme Court held that the federal government and the provinces had concurrent jurisdiction with primacy of the federal law in case of any conflict over provincial legislation. Yet even this judgement by the Supreme Court of Pakistan has been brazenly ignored.

Despite the existence of this recently drafted report by the sitting police leadership and nine retired senior officers with input from the highest level of judiciary, the government instead of benefiting from this contribution has chosen to ignore this document. This constitutes an unspoken refusal to reform the police as an autonomous and professional institution for ensuring the 'rule of law', an act that is anathema to the political elite. Police reforms will therefore remain a hollow political slogan with horrendous impact on future governance and politics of Pakistan.

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Countering extremism

By Tariq Khosa

THE government's decision to establish a commission "for implementation of national narrative and development of structures against violent extremism and radicalisation" is a significant move towards countering violent extremism (CVE) and terrorism (CT) in the long term. In a meeting last month, the cabinet approved the proposal submitted by the interior ministry and the draft legal framework is currently under consideration by its sub-committee on legislation headed by the law minister. This initiative requires debate and ownership by state and society.

The primary objectives of the proposed commission include: (i) providing a legal mechanism to curb violent extremism; (ii) enforcing national narratives and policies in line with the National Action Plan (NAP); (iii) establishing a policy review board under the commission to coordinate with ministries, government departments and academia; (iv) establishing a centre of excellence to conduct degree and diploma courses in CVE and CT; (v) establishing a national facility to design and implement strategies in deradicalisation, rehabilitation, and psychological and religious counselling of prisoners and detainees involved in terrorism; (vi) prohibiting offences related to VE and sectarianism; (vii) preparing deradicalisation modules, strategies and vocational training programmes for suspected terrorists and extremists; and (viii) promoting awareness through print and electronic media, publications, seminars, conferences, etc.

Extremism must be addressed through policies that include strategies and action plans, clarity on CVE laws, and national consensus on narratives. The first-ever National Internal Security Policy (NISP 2014-18) suggested "constructing a robust national narrative on extremism, sectarianism, terrorism, and militancy as the cornerstone of an ideological response to non-traditional threats". Mere words, no action. An under-resourced Nacta could not achieve this.

Also so far on paper alone, the NISP 2018-23 was nonetheless an improved version adopted after extensive consultation with all political parties, and contained an effective institutional mechanism designed in consultation with all provinces. What is the use of making policies if they are not to be implemented? Intriguingly, we still do not have a comprehensive national security policy despite having established a national security division a few years ago. A military doctrine has limited scope. An all-encompassing

security policy must prioritise socioeconomic and human development, supported by all elements of national power.

Nacta drafted detailed CVE policy guidelines in January 2018 after extensive stakeholder deliberations. These identified the drivers of extremism and covered areas such as the rule of law, service delivery, media engagement, education policy, promotion of culture and the four 'R's: reformation, rehabilitation, reintegration and renunciation strategies. Extremism was broadly defined as "having absolute belief in one's truth with an ingrained sense of self-righteousness". Such a mindset was then "likely to be accompanied with violence" to impose one's belief system. The CVE guidelines should have been adopted to reduce intolerance and violence in our society. Similarly, Nacta's policy review of NAP in 2019 found that actions were required in nine out of 20 points. The government should pay attention to the guidelines and policy review.

The 22-point, 120-page Paigham-i-Pakistan, was launched in January 2018 through the joint efforts of the Council of Islamic Ideology and Higher Education Commission. Currently, it has more than 5,000 signatories. It can be the basis of a national narrative against religious extremism. Reportedly, the CII is toying with the idea of converting it into law, thus criminalising any violations of the decree. This would be a dangerous path to tread, as witnessed recently with the Tahaffuz Bunyad-i-Islam bill in Punjab. The role of the state is that of an enabler and facilitator, not an enforcer, in matters of faith and belief of individual citizens.

Another recent development deserves attention. Extremism has been defined in the Citizens' Protection Rules (Against Online Harm), 2020, as "the violent, vocal or active opposition to fundamental values of the State of Pakistan including the security, integrity or defence of Pakistan, public order, decency or morality, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". This definition is problematic, ambiguous and likely to promote internal discord. It calls for serious review. It took more than two decades to restrict and rationalise the definitional aspect of terrorism in the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, when in 2019 a Supreme Court bench restricted its scope by delinking acts of terror from personal enmity or private vendetta. Similarly, defining extremism requires thorough deliberation.

In its report in 2013, the UK's Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism quotes from the 2011 Prevent strategy in which extremism is defined as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". The similarities between the UK's and Pakistan's definitions may be a coincidence, but it is

worth noting that the British government has abandoned plans to define extremism in law after being told it would criminalise legitimate political and religious activities.

Lord Anderson, former independent reviewer of UK's terrorism legislation, recently said, "The notion [of extremism] is far too broad to be suitable for legislation. Coercive state powers should not be applied to 'extremism', but only to specific types of violent, abusive and anti-social conduct that there is a sufficiently strong reason to prohibit." According to Sara Khan, appointed to head the UK Counter-Extremism Commission in 2017, "Government cannot tackle extremism alone. Extremism is complex and new laws may not result in a reduction. Civil society and communities are vital partners," and "Extremism is a threat to our rich diversity and fundamental freedoms, and it requires a whole society response."

Setting up a CVE commission is a good idea. However, I urge policymakers to pay heed to the words of Edith Wharton: "True originality consists not in a new manner but in a new vision."

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Harnai attack

WHERE security issues are concerned, it is clear that Balochistan – for years in the grip of separatist and sectarian terrorism – is still not at peace. While the separatist insurgency may be in a low phase, issues remain as militants retain their ability to stage attacks, specifically targeting symbols of the state. On Saturday night, at least seven FC personnel were martyred in the province’s Harnai district, with the military’s media wing saying “anti-state forces” were responsible. The Harnai attack may well be a reprisal to the killing of around 10 militants in Awaran earlier this month. Meanwhile, in October separatists had targeted a convoy in Ormara in which several soldiers and security guards were martyred. Though the frequency of attacks by separatist outfits may be down, these groups still pose a significant security threat to Balochistan, which means that the authorities need to scrutinise the situation and work out a new solution that can pacify the province.

One method is the militaristic one, where the security forces go after armed elements posing a threat to Balochistan’s peace. With external forces supporting these elements the security apparatus cannot let its guard down and must remain vigilant in order to thwart acts of terrorism. However, this alone won’t help. Other methods too must be employed to bring stability to Balochistan. For example, despite being a resource-rich province, the standard of life in Balochistan remains low, especially where health and education indicators are concerned. While the establishment says that sardars in the province have held up development – and this is true to a large extent – the fact is that successive governments in Pakistan have also done little to bring prosperity and development to all parts of Balochistan. This has given rise to genuine grievances amongst the Baloch, which have been exploited by inimical actors. Numerous administrations have talked about ‘packages’ for Balochistan, but these have failed to improve the lives of the ordinary Baloch. Therefore, to help eliminate violence from the province, a two-pronged strategy is needed. Firstly, the state must listen to moderate Baloch elements to help reach a political solution. Branding all those who fail to agree with the establishment’s viewpoint as traitors is not a productive approach. Secondly, the Baloch must see development on the ground – with schools, clinics, civic infrastructure in their towns and villages – so that they can be assured that the state cares about them and their children.

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