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**Author (s):** Dr. Muhammad Shafi  
Dr. Muhammad Ali Dinakhel

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Dr. Muhammad Ali Dinakhel  
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## National Security Policy of Pakistan (2022-2026): Introduction and Impact on Political Landscape of Pakistan

\*Dr. Muhammad Shafi

\*Dr. Muhammad Ali Dinakhel

### Abstract

Pakistan announced its new national security policy, 2022-2026, on January 14, 2022. The new policy is claimed to be citizen centric, focuses human and economic security. It is different from traditional concept of national security that rely on strengthening military and defense. The new policy, shifted the focus of the state on the human security, first time in history of Pakistan. This study focuses on the introduction of the new non-traditional concept of national security first time introduced in Pakistan and initiate debate on its impact on the political landscape of Pakistan.

*Key Words:* National Security Policy Pakistan, Human Security, Economic Security, traditional concept of national security, non-traditional concept of national security .

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\* Assistant Professor, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar

\*\*Research Associate, Area Study Centre, University of Peshawar

## **Significance and Scope of the Study**

The research topic is important and significant in the sense that till date a traditional concept of national security prevailed in Pakistan. The national security policy of Pakistan 2022-2026 (NSP), a non-traditional concept, stipulates national security extended to seven subject areas, such as, national unity, governance, economic security, human security, territorial integrity, internal security and foreign policy of Pakistan. Only one component, the military security, of traditional concept of national security, comprise part of this new policy. However, the challenge is how to shift from state-centric notion of traditional concept of national security prevailed for decades in Pakistan to the new vision followed by its implementation. For the purpose much research is further needed to ensure the shift towards human security as a main frame of reference. Furthermore, the National Security of Pakistan: 2022-2026 (hereafter NSP) seeks to locate national security in the economic security of the country. It envisages expanding the national resources and its equitable redistribution of dividends among the deprived segments of the population. However, the challenge is how to operationalize the concept in reality is million dollar question .

## **Concept of National Security**

The national security is an umbrella term, reflected everywhere in a nation's overall state policy. Under the overarching national security policy, all the sectoral policies, of various sectors, are framed according to it and later translated into operational strategies and action plans. In US and UK, national security is named as 'National Security Strategy' and 'Grand National Strategy', respectively. (Singh: 2015) .

The concept of national security during much part of the 20th century, was understood strictly in term of military power and strategic readiness. However, new realities of life forced the states to shift focus on other acute emerging challenges, such as, poverty, human security against pandemics, rising violence in the society, water depletion, climatic issues and bulging overpopulation. Pakistan is one of the top four contributor to the growth of world population (United Nations, 2021, p. 33). The bulging population has direct association to many socio-cultural and economic problems in the country. In November, 2021, the Senate standing Committee of Pakistan was informed that crime, such as,

murder, bag-snatch, house robberies, stealing and fraud are on the rise for the past three years. The root causes are price rise, inflation, and contracting job opportunities in the country (Abbasi, 2021) .

Thus, overshadowed by new circumstances and emerging reality, the concept of national security also realigned and confining it to military warfare and national defense alone, is committing fallacy of reductionism. The recent political unrest in Sri Lanka, is an eye-opener that led to killing of Ministers (Aljazeera, 2022). Therefore, threat to the national security may not emerge from a non-stat actor, or a hostile neighboring state but within the confines of the state self (Robert: 2021). As a consequence, the scope of new concept of national security is broader and cover a number of socio-economic, political and cultural fronts, such as, capability of the state to protect citizens, strengthen economy and develop institutions. Besides, national security policy also impinge upon a variety of other securities ranging from political, energy, homeland, cyber space and environmental security. National security also needs to rely on other nontraditional tactics by combining political, economic, and military power, along with diplomacy (Robert: 2021).

The objectives of the national security, hence, should be so fixed to meet all the impending threats as mentioned above .

### **Objectives of National Security**

National security policy is framed in order to address all the visible and invisible, potential challenges and threats to the national security. Thus, one of the major objectives of a national security policy is to frame a national strategy to handle national challenges in light of national values (Janjua: 2022). The task therefore, necessitate a thorough assessment of all potential threats to national security. The assessment is usually derived from the input of civil society and security agencies that are relevant to security. This will help in setting realistic and achievable goals. Precise priority and consistency in decisions also depends on a better vision of national security.

To put it other way, a national security policy is a set of broad guidelines for creating strategies that connect various elements of national power for a long list of doable plans. Thus, national security policy is an axil that works both ways, creates grip and coherence, in an overarching national policy, serve as a network

of policies, such as, defense, economic, foreign relations, media and internal security. Concrete measures for achieving the objectives of the NSP are not visible in the NSP document (Ansari, 2022). National security policy, in some states, framed by national leader and political parties that reflects a paradigm or framework through which a leader view and understand the world as a source of his or her government vision. Obama, ex US President was known for his novel perspective regarding national security policy of the U.S. He associated national security to the human security by including economy, non-proliferation of arms and climatic changes as sources of threats (National security strategy, 2015). In 2017, Trump, another U.S. ex- President, prioritized China and Russia, as revisionist powers, as sources of that to the national security. He removed climate change from the national security priorities (Eilperin, 2020). Trump favored competition instead of believing on community of interest in the international arena .

### **Comparison of Present and Past NSP of Pakistan**

Before introduction of new NSP 2022-2026, the previous national security policies in Pakistan's remained traditional prioritizing military dimension of state security as compared to security of the population. There are many reasons for it. Frequent derailment of democracy, geostrategic situation and involvement in regional conflicts tilted the balance to a more traditional approach to national security. Therefore, the country remained far behind in terms of human security. The new NSP 2022-2026 of Pakistan shifted the focus of national security from traditional one. In a message by the adviser on national security of Pakistan clarifies the concept of national security. He described that the new national security thinking pursues increasing economic resources for the purpose that Pakistan may simultaneously strengthen both traditional and non-traditional security. He further elucidated that a prudent approach towards national security is to keep economic security at the core, judiciously handover the dividends of a strong economy to further strengthen human security and national defense (NSP, 2021).

### **Who frame National Security Policy?**

The US, the national security policy is named National Security Strategy. It is framed every year at the National Security Council in the White House in Washington D.C. Furthermore, both the legislative and executive organs are engaged in formulating national security policy for the reason to promote a common understanding between Congress and the executive branch on national security. The involvement of legislature, the U.S. Congress, also entail legitimization of the requests for resources. Involvement of executive, the US President, meant communicating the executive's strategic vision to foreign friends and allies. In Pakistan, the current national security policy approved by the Prime Minister Imran Khan on January 14, 2022 (Dawn, 2022).

In principle, while framing national security policy, various sections of society may include in conceptualizing, especially involvement of both the Executive and legislative organs of the government as practiced in United States state. Furthermore, while framing of new national security policy, perspective of the government and various state institutions is required.

### **Brief History of Pakistan national Security Policy**

Right from its earlier years of independence, Pakistan remained a national security state and adopted a state-centric notion of national security, generally considered as traditional concept. Traditional perspective on national security prioritizes national defense, territorial integrity, internal security and diplomacy while the non-traditional outlook regarding national security emphasizes broader elements that may impinge on a country's economic health and citizen well-being (NSP, 2021). Many reasons can be associated why Pakistan adopted traditional

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concept of national security in the past. One such reason was that national security policy remained blurred and could not be conceptualized clearly. Secondly, even if it was conceptualized, it was dominated by traditional framework, the state-centric rather than people centric approach. The state centric perspective was due to traditions of the personalized-decision-making process which is a hallmark of weak democracies. Weak political regimes in Pakistan always favored traditional concept of national security in order to appease military establishment to sustain the political government. Military establishment, stronger on traditional concept of security, could dictate weak regimes to orient national security policy under a specific frame of reference. However, the new NSP 2022-2026, country's first ever non-traditional national security policy, signed by Imran Khan, the ex-prime Minister, signed and unveiled in Islamabad on January 14, 2022. It is reported by the NSA (National Security Adviser) that some 600 academics, analysts, civil society members and students were accessed for an inclusive document. It is also described that the said document also took input from Pakistan's cultural and ethnic diversity to promote cohesion.

### **National Security Policy: 2021-2026: Main Features**

The new national security policy is reportedly, ascertained through repeated discussions and views of several federal institutions as well as provisional governments as stated above. It is first time that such a comprehensive national security policy is framed by the government and equally it is also a slow transition that Pakistan is now shifting to the Non-traditional concept of National Security, focusing people, national economy and other socio-economic indicators as the main sources of national security instead of state security alone. NSP, launched in January 2022, is a precedent-setting and an ambitious document (Levesques,

2022). Non-traditional security threats have been acknowledged at par with the conventional ones for the first time in NSP (Leeza, 2022). The new national policy is not only addresses national defense and military but searches for national security by creating formal linkages between human prosperity, safety, nation's economic and military security. Thus, the new national security policy recognizes the interconnectedness of both traditional and non-traditional elements as part of national security responsive for the coming decades. The NSP 2022-2026, includes seven main areas as sources of national security, the national cohesion, good governance, economic security, human security, territorial security, internal security, and foreign policy. It seems that in the new policy only one notion traditional notion, the military security, has been added. For the first time in Pakistan, the NSP in Pakistan has taken a comprehensive approach to security including, human security and economic security (Akhtar, 2022). The most prominent aspect of NSP is its visible transition from traditional notions of national security toward a balanced and symbiotic relationship with non-traditional elements. (Khalid, 2022).

### **A Hybrid Policy**

The new National Security Policy of Pakistan: 2022-2026, is a comprehensive, citizen-centric policy, a product of long deliberation. And one new thing is that it is applauded by military establishment of Pakistan. The document draws out a five-year plan extending over a period of four years, 2022-2026. The policy will serve as a guide to orient nation's foreign policy, national defense, and economic policies to guide overall national decision-making. In the new policy economic security is considered as the core and there are guidelines for various sectors. The new vision reflects that achievement of economic security, in turn, will help achieve the national security objectives. If the original document of the



new national security policy is analyzed, its sub section, entitled as, *Framework*, clearly reveals national security as a combination of traditional concept and nontraditional concept of national security. Traditional Security concept focuses on defense, territorial integrity, internal security, and diplomacy, while non-traditional security concept comprises broader elements that addresses a country's economic health and citizen well-being. Thus, under the new policy document, government of Pakistan must ensure citizens' safety, security, dignity, and prosperity (NSP, 2021). No one can doubt that first time framing a new concept of national security is an achievement of both the political government and military establishment. Specification and bringing definiteness to national security vision was important because it cleared out any misuse or abuse of the concept of national security for personal motives. The report in the Arab News, look at the *national security policy of Pakistan: 2022-2026*, as citizen-centric framework that seeks to secure an economically resilient Pakistan. Thus, it may be concluded that Pakistan new national security policy draw on two concepts of security, thus a hybrid one, which may prove auspicious for the state in future.

### **Civil-military Consensus:**

The most important characteristics, of this new national security policy, is the civil-military consensus. The consensus and extension of cooperation from military establishment also indicates the emerging realization inside the military establishment to give space to civilian input in national security affairs. Rather, the new approach, the civil and military consensus to redefine the state security paradigm is a positive development. The new National Security Policy seeks to support national security through a robust national economy as economic security. A strong national economy, expanding national resources, its equitable

redistribution and targeting the deprived segments of the population is what the new concept emphasizes on. However, the real challenge is building a broader national consensus on it and operationalizing the concept empirically. In addition to that, getting approved by parliament is necessary but not sufficient reason, there is also a need to encourage a public debate on it. Also, it should not be seen as a policy of a particular government but of the state (Hussain, 2022).

#### Impact on political landscape of Pakistan

New *national security policy of Pakistan: 2022-2026*, has the potential to have positive impacts on the political landscape of Pakistan provided it is implemented. Although input of opposition political parties in parliament was not encouraged. The national security adviser, asserts that the new policy was developed in consultation of various stakeholders in different areas and professions. But even then it is a good start to shift the focus of national security policy from traditional to a non-traditional one. However, the next crucial test of the new policy is how well the subordinate ministries are allowed to formulate their respective policies in light of NSP 2022-2026. Leaving aside other impacts which is outside the parameters of this paper, what impact the new national security policy, is expected to have on political landscape of Pakistan? Right in the initial stages, while the policy was under process, just before its presentation for approval the parliamentary committee on national security was briefed. The opposition members boycotted the briefing (Hussain, 2022). The current political landscape of Pakistan is resonated with growing acts of terrorism both on political and religious basis in ex Fata and Baluchistan, are serious threats. How the new national security policy impacts the current political landscape, is to be determined by the future positive apolitical indicators in the coming years. Taking main political forces into confidence is important. Confrontationist policy

either by government or military establishment will be a biggest stumbling block in achieving and assuaging the challenges on political landscape of Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

National Security of Pakistan (2022-2026) is a hybrid national security policy, comprising on both traditional and non-traditional concepts of national security. Seven subjects reflecting non-traditional perspective on national security such as national unity, governance, economic security, human security, territorial integrity, internal security and foreign policy of Pakistan have been included in the NSP of Pakistan. New realities of life forced the state to shift focus on other acute emerging challenges such as poverty, human security against pandemics, violence in society, water depletion, climate issue and over population. However, one major challenge is to assess how this new policy assuages the current fragile political landscape of Pakistan.

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