**Security, The State and the Citizens**

[Dr Zafar Khan Safdar](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/dr-zafar-khan-safdar/)

March 25, 2024

The notion of security for people encompasses the complex relationship between personal welfare, social stability, and the efficient operation of institutions. It includes both psychological and physical safety as well as the government’s responsibility for maintaining public safety.

Through the creation and implementation of laws, the establishment of strong law enforcement organizations, and the provision of emergency services, the state plays a crucial role in maintaining citizen security. In order to provide societal security, trust and shared responsibility are essential, and communities are vital in promoting a cooperative and trusting culture. Citizen security encompasses not just physical security but also economic, social, and environmental security. It is a difficult endeavour that calls for ongoing attention and public discussion to strike a balance between security and freedom.

State security is a shared responsibility between the state apparatus and citizens. However, capacity building of the common man remains neglected. It is only when protectors of people sensitize the public to combat perceived or real threats that the security blanket can provide necessary insulation from violence. A proactive approach to educate the mass, especially frequent contacts like car attendants, coolies, rickshaw pullers, vegetable vendors, and shoe shiners, is crucial.

Repeated intense waves of suicidal attacks, bomb blasts and target killings in different parts of the country have really shattered dreams of the young and the old.

Reporting suspicious movements and identifying suspicious objects to the public and professionals is essential for the war against terrorism. Mass support is crucial in the war against terrorism. Mobile technology should be energized for early warning systems and people should be educated on their responsibilities towards society. Citizenship should be considered the strength of a nation. There is a need for detailed coordination of activities, professional intervention, and mass media to educate the environment and make people aware of their role in the advance warning system. NGOs will play a more significant role in educating the public on modern terrorism intricacies.

Besides the human resource being referred to above, it is equally important to provide adequate updating in terms of technology and equipment. A well-planned close circuit TV and acoustic and aromatic sensors should be strategically placed at sensitive target locations. The high security zones need to be attended well with positioning of early warning systems deliberated upon with professionalism. It is equally important to have a good communication network and reliable communication systems.

Terrorism, extremism, naxalism are mere semantics, trying to define the levels of credits which the initiators enjoy and counters are planned in accordance with the definition. Unfortunately, we fail to realize that these variants are interwoven and it is extremely difficult to differentiate as also to identify when a particular phase enters the next phase. The Government requires enthusing and winning the environment with initiatives which will make a difference to the citizens and hence a citizen-oriented plan has to be worked out to bring about a change in society and the society should become the focus of all future endeavors.

Pakistan since independence has been focusing on its national security due to perceived threats from India. During the Cold War, the country adopted a state-centric approach, leveraging the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union to develop a national security state primarily focusing on India. Over time, Pakistan has dedicated significant resources to national security, with military becoming a key institution in shaping and executing its foreign and security policies.

We need to get information on the possible targets and those responsible and tasked to carry out such acts. To achieve this, we have to educate the environment, the people of different walks of life and empower the poor on the road by giving them simple incentives and motivating the people to become facilitators and providers. The Non-Government Organizations should work toward this regard and educate the people who do not get formal education. Along with such a measure, there is a need to introduce formal education in this area in schools and colleges.

There is a requirement of a structured approach in tackling this menace and relevant guide lines need to be issued to all the stakeholders, who have an important hand in spreading the message and in impacting the minds of the people. It is time for our citizens to wake up and realize the gravity of the problem of not contributing in identifying an impending disaster and not doing one’s own duty of becoming a part of the country’s security apparatus.

It is high time that that state should educate the environment, people of different walks of life to address potential threats. Repeated intense waves of suicidal attacks, bomb blasts and target killings in different parts of the country have really shattered dreams of the young and the old, and it is often wondered if such a dastardly act could have been avoided if only the people in the compartment and around were even bothered to notice some uncanny device or a bag or a person planting it in an innocuous place, which would have surely caught the eye of someone.

Why do we only reflect on the past and then try and assess what went wrong? Why can’t we become more proactive and the newsmakers facilitate in creating more awareness amongst the people on essentials of citizenship. It is with the support of the citizens of the country, that we can expect the security situation to improve. For it is only in awareness that we can feel more secure and our population of over 25 million must show the world on how to combat the curse and project themselves in a positive manner as perhaps “Emerging Pakistan.”

*The writer is a PhD in Political Science, and visiting faculty at QAU Islamabad. His area of specialization is political development and social change. He can be reached at zafarkhansafdar@yahoo.com and tweet@zafarkhansafdar*