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## National Security Policy of Pakistan (2022-2026): Review



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## A Brief Prelude:

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022, the Government of Pakistan issued the much-touted National Security Policy of Pakistan (NSSP) 2022-2026.

The public version is a 62-page document released by the National

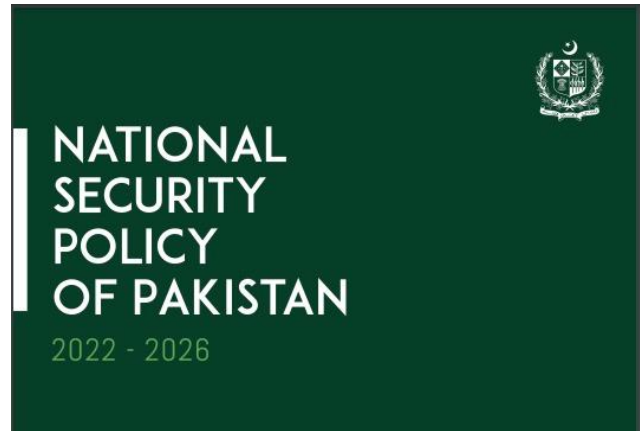


Security Division (NSD) that contains eight sections with an executive summary. The document is claimed to be 'Pakistan's first national security policy document' and it seems to be a good omen to set a roadmap and policies to curtail sociopolitical and economic menaces. In keeping with the practical implementation, the Government has produced a comprehensive National Security Policy (NSP) document by placing Human/individual security vis-à-vis economic progress at its core. The Government's efforts in formulating such a robust guiding plan must be appreciated. The NSP has already signaled that it will likely to produce fruitful outcomes in the coming times. The Government has prominently and comprehensively characterized emerging Non-traditional Security challenges, i.e., food security, climate change, hybrid warfare, health etc. It has also given consideration to certain other elements of national security, including culture and economy. The due diligence reflects a strong approach adopted by the Government to incapsulate a wide range of multi-dimensional subjects according to the changing domestic, regional and global dynamics.

## The Rationale of Analysis:

The NSSP reflects that the Government has followed a more vigorous approach of identifying the hierarchy of national purpose, aims, objectives, and interests.

The NSP 2022-2026 seeks to “co-locate Pakistan in emerging global trends and



identifies policy objectives and priority areas” under a prevalent and foreseeable global and regional environment. It claims to articulate “a citizen-centric Comprehensive National Security framework for Pakistan” that aims to ensure the wellbeing, security, dignity, and prosperity of our people. This is a clear manifestation that the Government is prudent about the economic dimension and will strive for substantial improvement. The policy also highlights additional actions to support the country’s objectives and foster sustainable development. The document includes eight sections amid policy options and priority areas. The key areas are as follows:

i. Policy Formulation:

This section showed clear priorities of the Government, i.e., the need for periodic reviews and the process of making a detailed national security policy amid varieties of new aspects.



ii. National Security Framework:

This section elaborated the main concept of national security and discussed it in detail. The Government has linked traditional and non-traditional strands of security under one umbrella document to provide overarching direction and guidance. In this regard, the major features are pragmatism or introspection, proactiveness, prioritization, and consistency in achieving desired targets.

iii. National Cohesion:

National cohesion remained one of the significant salient features vis-à-vis Pakistan's culture, identity, socioeconomic disparities, and institutional capabilities. National integration and cohesion promote political stability in a country which is very important for socio-economic development. This section provides important guidelines to preserve culture, identity and enhance social unity in Pakistan.

iv. Securing our Economic Future:

The '*extractive model*' of any Ad hoc authority creates political chaos as they maximize their needs only at the expense of the lower class. However, if a state is blessed with inclusive institutions, the economic growth would be stronger. Inclusive institutions establish open markets and provide equal opportunities to the people that enhance their living standards. Thus, to achieve economic security and sovereignty through sustainable growth, inclusive development and financial solvency is the main priority area of the government. In this aspect, NSP provides guidelines to the Ad hoc institutions in order to create better economic policies and achieve economic stability.



The government paid special attention to the broader goals, i.e., trade, investment, connectivity, fiscal management, energy security, education, human development, and technological transformation.

v. **Defence and Territorial Integrity:**

National defence and territorial sovereignty are the main elements of national power. A bird eye view of present policies, strategies and especially of NSPP 2022 shows that Pakistan's main focus is to counter conventional threats (maritime competition, regional situation) and hybrid/information warfare vis-à-vis maintaining economic stability. Pakistan had success in the past and foiled many attempts by the opponents, especially India. In this context, NSSP provides a proactive approach and dilates upon securing Pakistan's economic future, identifying challenges and opportunities.

vi. **Internal Security:**

In today's complex and uncertain global environment, there is nothing more important than security, whether for an individual, community, or state. However, in a changing paradigm, no state can ensure its national security without ensuring human security as well as related aspects of non-traditional security. The session discusses that Pakistan pursues a policy of zero tolerance for any groups involved in terrorist activities on its soil. With national resolve and dedication, Pakistan has fought one of the most successful wars against terrorism in the past two decades.



vii. Foreign Policy in a Changing World:

In the era of geo-economics, economic security is perhaps as important a part of national security. In international relations, multinational agreements and mutual interdependence are essential for successfully conducting statecraft. Foreign policy comprises of three levels, i.e., conception, content and implementation. These all shaped by the more or less realistic vision of the outside world that national policymakers have and by the cost – benefit analysis of possible gains and affordable losses for the country they serve by pursuing certain goals and taking specific risks. Thus, this section focused on enhancing Pakistan’s global outreach and building strong relations with countries and institutions for global peace, security, and stability. A robust foreign policy framework with set goals and targets is important to project Pakistan’s soft image.

viii. Human Security:

Human security has taken a prominent place in the security studies’ field and has established itself as a useful umbrella notion which helps to conceptualize particular political rhetoric. It is quite multifaceted and demands caution when analyzed in different contexts. The NSP examines areas like population, migration and securities in health, climate, water, food and gender. The policy objectives identified are climate-resilient development, promoting sustainable agriculture to ensure availability and affordability of food, and the empowerment and inclusivity of women and transgender.

## Conclusion:

After analyzing the National Security Policy of Pakistan (2022-2026), I believe it is significant due to its timing and content. International or regional security dynamics have been evolving



quickly. There is a need to understand and adapt to the new trends in international relations. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the National Security Policy of Pakistan has many innovative steps in the context of Pakistan. It is the first time that the Government has explicitly recognized the humanitarian angle of security and considered Non-traditional security challenges to be tackled with a holistic approach. In my opinion, Pakistan's first formal NSP is a step in the right direction and it must be debated at all levels. The government efforts and focus to build the nation's resilience to achieve economic security vis-à-vis individual wellbeing must be praised and welcomed.