

SEMINAR REPORT

PREVENTION & COUNTERING TERRORISM IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

By

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INTRODUCTION: A seminar on, “Prevention and Countering Terrorism in Balochistan, Pakistan” was jointly organized by PDRE (Peace, Development, Research, and Education) and BUIITEMS (Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences) on June 26th, 2024 at 11 am at the Training Hall, BUIITEMS, Quetta, Balochistan. In the current interconnected landscape of the global community, terrorism poses a significant threat that transcends borders and requires a collective response from all nations. It is imperative to recognize that the challenge of terrorism cannot be successfully addressed in isolation, underlining the necessity for international cooperation and collaboration in combating this complex issue. Pakistan has suffered a lot due to terrorism at the beginning of the 21st century. In the war against global terrorism, Pakistan lost more than 830000 people and more than \$126 billion.



(The site of a bomb blast outside the office of an independent candidate in Pishin district, around 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Quetta on February 7, 2024, the eve of national elections)

All provinces of the country were affected by the menace of terrorism but Balochistan province suffered a lot due to different forms and manifestations of terrorism including suicide bombing and terrorist attacks. Terrorism in Balochistan harmed women, children, the aged, and young people. There is a need of peace advocacy and to spread awareness among young people particularly students and faculty of Balochistan educational institutions about the harmful impact of terrorism on society and prepare them to counter terrorism mentally and physically and save the society from the devastations of this menace. The feedback highlights that the said seminar proved a solid step in strengthening awareness and preparing the youth for united efforts against the scourge of terrorism in Balochistan.

Foreign investment in different projects in different parts of the country particularly in Balochistan has paved the way for raising the living standard of common people. For instance, the Gwadar Development project ushered in a new era for local people. Gwadar University was established there, providing higher education at the doorstep of local people. It was implausible without the Gwadar Deep Seaport project. It provided drinking water to local people which was a big issue for the local people. It provided electricity to local people and other facilities too. The new International airport and highways were constructed with Chinese financial support under CPEC.



(Police officers and members of the investigation team gather near a passenger van, after a blast at the entrance of the Confucius Institute University of Karachi, April 26, 2022)

Terrorism harms foreign investment and foreign-supported development projects launched under a win-win model for local people's benefit. It is important to understand that terrorism is a menace that is compromising the future of our young generation. It should be countered in all its forms and manifestations.

Terrorism stands as the primary asymmetric threat facing the security of Balochistan, Pakistan. It is posing a significant challenge to regional stability and prosperity. This pervasive issue transcends borders, nationalities, and religions, necessitating a unified effort by the people of Pakistan to address it effectively. The people of

Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to combatting this peril, demonstrating unwavering solidarity and resolve. The national counter-terrorism initiatives are centered on heightening awareness of the threat, bolstering capabilities for readiness and response, and deepening collaboration with partner institutions and other key stakeholders. A good counter-terrorism policy is practical with essential components that include a roadmap and mechanism for implementation. It is an important question how to reduce appeal to terrorism? One of the devastating effects of regional terrorism is the damage to the tolerant cultural and religious ethos of the country particularly in Balochistan. The people of Pakistan generally and Balochistan particularly are countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorism wreaked havoc in Balochistan, this devastating impact of the terrorist attacks in Balochistan publicly claimed by the terrorist organizations can be viewed through videos, audio, and pictures available on social media.



Military officials and residents offer funeral prayers for a soldier who was killed in an attack in the Kech district of Balochistan, in Dera Murad Jamali on January 27, 2022)

Renowned experts delivered presentations and vividly demonstrated the harm of terrorism in the seminar on the human and material damages that terrorism inflicted in Balochistan. Speakers in the seminar through their wisdom enhanced participants' recognition of peace advocacy. Terrorism is wasting the energies and time of young people and through awareness programs, capacity building, and engagement, the time and energy of youth can be protected from the brunt of terrorism. PROGRAM SCHEDULE: After the recitation of the holy Quran and the National Anthem of Pakistan the stage secretary, Ms. Fiza Batool, a BS student introduced the topic of the seminar and showed the video clips of Terrorist attacks on the stock exchange in Karachi and then on Gwadar port for the information of the participants. Four Keynote speakers delivered presentations/speeches in the seminar.

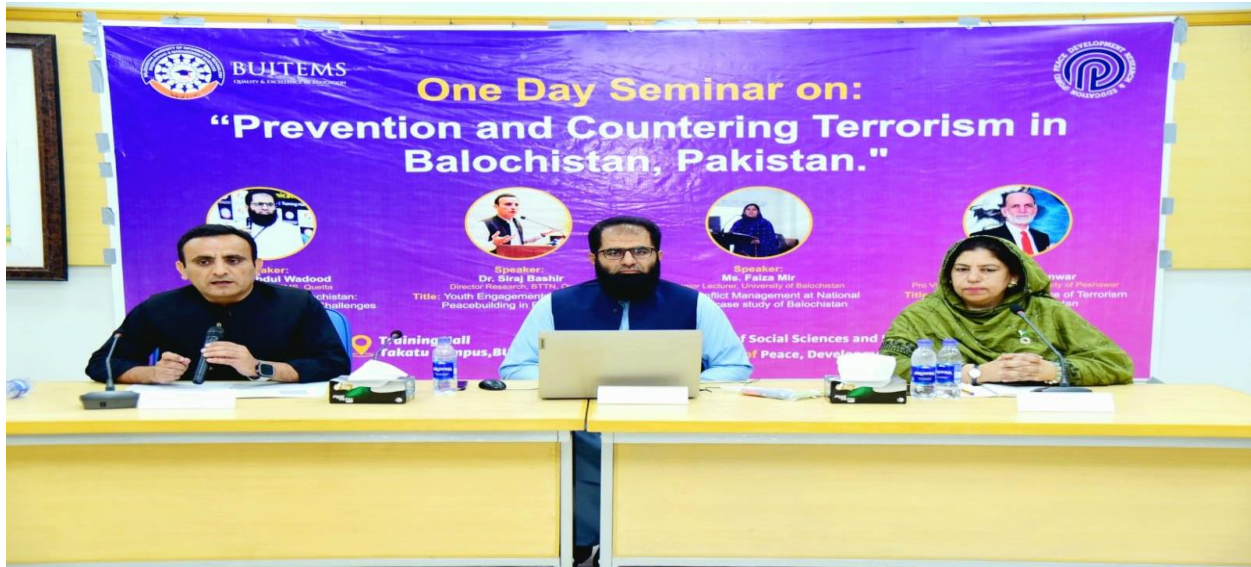


Prof Abdul Wadood is receiving the shield in the seminar

Prof Dr Abdul Wadood, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, BUIITEMS, Quetta, Balochistan delivered his thought-provoking presentation on, "Terrorism trends in Balochistan: Changing dynamics and new challenges.". The learned speaker explained the devastations of terrorism in Balochistan since the start of the 21st century and highlighted different aspects of terrorism in the context of terrorist

attacks in Balochistan. The speaker elaborated on how it impacted the daily lives of people and how it caused disruptions in the human resource development and facilitation of people's living. Furthermore, he provided an insight into the historical context of terrorism and explored the past waves of violence in Balochistan. Moreover, he expressed his views on the ethnic dimension of the violence and also used statistical data to augment his arguments. He critically analyzed the current dimension of terrorism in Balochistan and highlighted opportunities for the people of Balochistan in the CPEC mega project which Pakistan has started in collaboration with China. By wrapping up his views, he provided several solutions to address the preexisting tensions of violence and terrorism in Balochistan.

Dr Siraj Bashir, Director, Research Balochistan Think Tank Network, Balochistan. Spoke on peacebuilding in Balochistan in the context of terrorist attacks and explained youth engagement will help in countering terrorism in Balochistan. There is dire to address the genuine socio-economic issues of the people of Balochistan.



Dr Siraj Bashir is delivering his speech at the seminar

The government should provide opportunities to young people which will reduce their reliance on sardars / feudalism. Young people in a democratic government have freedom of expression, which enables them to express themselves without much ado.

Regarding teaching at a higher-level Dr Siraj Aziz said that instead of teaching students to memorize information and learn by rote, the curriculum should emphasize the development of logical and critical thinking.



Dr Siraj Bashir is receiving the shield at the seminar

If we develop the right strategies and policies today to meaningfully engage the youth in the province, provide quality education, and secure future socio-economic development, the youth will not be at risk of becoming marginalized, intolerant, vulnerable to social ills, and they will play their due role in local, provincial and national development.



A view of participants

Ms. Faiza Mir, a faculty member in the International Relations Department at the University of Balochistan, Quetta discussed countering terrorism in the context of conflict management. She particularly explained Conflict Management at the National Level: A Case Study of Balochistan. In her speech, Ms. Faiza Mir discussed International, regional, and national aspects of the conflict in Balochistan. Ms. Faiza Mir began her thoughtful presentation with an explanation of conflict management and its importance in the context of countering terrorism in Balochistan. Furthermore, she delved into the various strategies that can be used to tackle the conflicts peacefully and without using violence.



Madam Faiza Mir is Receiving a shield at the seminar

As her topic of discussion ranged to the national level, she provided insight into the case study of Balochistan to resolve the issues and conflicts. She presented several case studies throughout history to support her arguments and gave an overview of strategies that have already been used to resolve the preexisting conflict in Balochistan. She presented several solutions that can be used to resolve the conflict in Balochistan. Prof Dr Zahid Anwar, Pro Vice-Chancellor ®, University of

Peshawar & Director, PDRE (Peace, Development, Research, and Education) in his speech thanked Prof Khalid Hafeez, the worthy Vice Chancellor, BUIITEMS, and Prof Abdul Wadood, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences for jointly organizing the seminar. He discussed the prevention and countering of terrorism in Balochistan and stated that a paradigm shift took place in the South Asian Region when NATO occupied Afghanistan in 2001.



Prof Zahid Anwar is delivering his presentation at the seminar

The proxy war intensified due to the nature of the asymmetrical war in Afghanistan. Slowly and gradually the world has become multipolar. China emerged as a global economic power due to the pragmatic economic reforms of Deng Xiaoping. The NATO withdrawal was again a big event that ended the longest US War. For the last 24 years, our region remained the center of the war against global terrorism. Unfortunately, internationally and at the regional level India always has left no stone unturned to block any project /attempt or move for the development of Pakistan.



New International Airport in Gwadar

There are many separatist movements in India including that of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian experts are of the view that since Pakistan is supporting the struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a quid pro quo India is taking revenge in Balochistan. India is opposing CPEC and its development projects, especially in Balochistan. The regional economic connectivity projects which are in different stages of construction in our region including CASA 1000, TAP, BRI, and CPEC will provide a sigh of relief for people who suffered a lot due to terrorism.



Gwadar Deep Seaport

There are many CPEC projects in Balochistan, that will benefit local people. I shall mention a few such projects here. The 132KV grid station in Bostan, the HUBCO Coal Power Project, the Upgradation of D I Khan – Zhob N-50 road, Nok Kundi-Mashkel-Panjgur road project, Khuzdar-Basima Road N-30 (110 km), N85 Highway, Quetta water supply project, the establishment of Five new berths at Gwadar Port, Quetta Mass Transit Train project, Construction of Eastbay Expressway, transfer of Knowledge in the Education sector through Consortium of CPEC Universities, Industrial Zone Khuzdar, Establishment of Bao Steel Park in Gwadar, Construction of Breakwaters, Dredging of berthing areas and channels, Development of Free Zone, Pak-China Friendship Hospital, Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar, Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan and New Gwadar International Airport.



Gwadar business community hopes for a better Future

Terrorism is a menace that harms the development of a country and blocks people's access to facilities. It has become a big hurdle in regional connectivity. Regional connectivity is a straight way to development and employment opportunities. There are global regional and national factors that are causing terrorism. We, the educated people of Pakistan should be aware of these global and regional factors to counter

terrorism properly. Inside the country, we should oppose injustice, corruption, violence, and ignorance.



Gwadar Expressway

He ended with a note that instead of criticizing others for not playing their due role in countering terrorism, we should play our part in strengthening counter-terrorism efforts.

Dr Manzoor Ahmed Khan, Chairman, Department of International Relations in his concluding remarks stated that terrorism is casting a shadow over the development of Balochistan province and brought the attention of the youth to their responsibility and constructive role in countering the menace of terrorism.

A lengthy question/answer session was held in which students actively participated and the speakers answered their questions about terrorism.

The constructive and illuminating thoughts and ideas of the experts on prevention and countering terrorism in Balochistan were disseminated through social media, print media, and electronic media including the BUIITEMS website. It helped increase awareness about the menace of terrorism through the learned talk, scholarly discussion, and interaction in an academic environment, and the counter-terrorism capability of the people was also galvanized.

After the seminar, the students in their feedback stated that they learned much about the nature and features of terrorism in Balochistan. They thanked BUIITEMS and PDRE for organizing this seminar on the important topic of terrorism in Balochistan and they hoped that in future more seminars will be organized on this important issue of terrorism so that they know more about the reality of this issue which is affecting their lives. The seminar engaged youth on this important national issue which equipped them to play their due role in countering terrorism in Balochistan, Pakistan. A large number of participants including students, scholars, faculty, researchers, civil society, and journalists participated in this important seminar on countering terrorism in Balochistan, Pakistan. The feedback underscores that this seminar will go a long way to enhance tolerant religious, cultural, and ethnic ethos, strengthen counter-terrorism efforts, and augment regional security.

