

## 3Ps: A Community Oriented Strategy against Terrorism

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### ABSTRACT

*The concept of community oriented defense against terrorism though enhancing their resilience is becoming popular among the counterterrorism experts while designing counterterrorism strategies to combat terrorism. Communities pose all the resources that could be best utilized against fighting terrorism. However, there are certain issue pertaining to community involvement in security planning and their level of resilience against terrorism. This article conceptualizes and provides an insight of community defense strategy (CDS) that focused on improving community defense against terrorism through enhancing community's resilience. Based on literature and key informants' views, three key thematic areas of community defense strategy were identified namely 3Ps: Prevent, Prepare and Protect to improve community resilience against terrorism at grassroots level in Pakistan. On top of it, the article specifies critical roles belong to communities and the state in order to achieve the target of diminishing terrorism.*

**Key words:** Community defense strategy, terrorism, community resilience, trust

### INTRODUCTION

Terrorism is with us since centuries and it has served as a critical course to attain goals by generating an atmosphere of panic and fear and remained as adoptive threat to society (Jenkins 1974; Cutter et al. 2003). In the recent past, terrorism has become a solemn threat to the population around the world. Not only the frequency of terrorist attacks have increased significantly but these attacks have become far more lethal affecting millions of people (Bogen and Jones 2006). Mounting terrorism has increased the socioeconomic and physical vulnerabilities of the human life such as destruction of urban landscape and physical infrastructure, suppressed economic activities, human casualties, and terrifying the civilian's victims (Khripunov 2006; Khaled 2005). Large scale human casualties, depression, loss of livelihood, fear and grief are few of the many aftermath of terrorism (Ewald 2006; Freyd 2002; Waheed and Ahmad 2012). Besides loss of lives, injuries and trauma sufferings, the sabotage of critical infrastructure and assets are other common consequences of a terrorist attack (Enders and Sandler 2008; Sloboda 2003).

Study of counterterrorism strategies around world revealed that majority of such strategies rely on military actions against the terrorists and terrorist outfits using guns and bullets to safeguard the population and critical public infrastructure putting no or least efforts to enhance community resilience against terrorism through involving and utilizing their potentials. Mainly, as a reaction to this military operation, numbers of suicide attacks and terrorist incidents have been increased significantly. The critics of this approach argue that best way of encountering terrorism is to strengthen the community at gross root level through capacity building , public awareness , strengthening the inter-community ties rather focusing heavily on military adventures using tanks, air force, missiles etc.(Citizens and Resilience 2008). Unfortunately, their arguments have been put aside and use of military force is going

on killing innocent civilian as well. Such situation leads to develop an environment of mistrust between the state agencies and communities affected by terrorism.

### COMMUNITY DEFENSE STRATEGY (CDS)

The core aim of the community defense strategy is to enhance community defense through enhancing resilience in order to reduce risk, i.e. risk of future threats of terrorism through promoting community resilience against terrorism. As it has been learnt that if dealt with properly, communities can play the role of an early warning system for police and other law enforcement agencies. Moreover, to combat terrorism, communities must be prepared for all types of terrorist attacks and an environment of faith between communities and state operations could help identify people involved in suspicious activities – regardless of the class, race or group of the offender – to protect themselves from future threats. Eventually, developing such a strategy could not only deconstruct the environment of fear and tackle the grievance but also reduce the likelihood of terrorist attacks in future.

Resilience is a dynamic quality of a community; it varies over space and time, and dependent on many factors like physical conditions of the area, access to social justice, individual capacities, and social and economic conditions of population (Ungar 2003). As it is variable in nature, thus everyone has different degree of resilience, i.e. someone is more resilient and others are not (Kindt 2006). It is therefore inevitable to define this concept before finding the ways to promote community resilience. To do this, after reviewing the literature on resilience, the relevant definitions of the term have been presented in Table 1.

It can be learnt from Table 1 that definition of community resilience is context specific and could be categorized into two types i) definitions that mainly focused on capacity building and ii) definitions that focused on capability enhancement of a community. Focusing on the capacity building perspective Gilbert (2008) suggested that resilience is the capacity to act against disastrous situation, restoration, coping with the situation through learning new skills and survive. Moreover, before defining the concept, it is also important to address the question that for what we need a community to be resilient? In present scenario, it is the negative impacts of terrorism and future threat of terrorist attacks.

Based on review of relevant literature and for the purpose of conceptualizing community defense strategy, the working definition of the term resilience is as follow,

*“The ability of communities to prevent, to mitigate the impacts of terrorism, and to protect from future threats of terrorism”*

### COMMUNITY DEFENSE STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

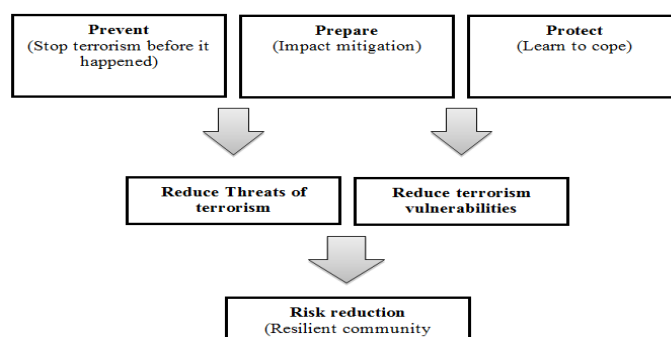


Figure 1. Framework for community defense strategy

Following the work “Preventing Violent Extremism- A community based approach” by Azhar Ali- a senior advisor, communities and Local government Department, UK; the above framework has been designed.

Table 1. Definitions of “Community Resilience”

Source	Definition	Type/context
Collins English Dictionary	<i>“The ability that a person or institution has to recover quickly from a setback or misfortune.” “Something that is resilient is strong and not damaged easily by being hit, stretched or squeezed”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
Unit Nation International Strategy for Disaster Reduction	<i>“The capacity of a system, community or society to resist or to change in order that it may obtain an acceptable level in functioning and structure”</i>	Capacity-based Global
The Community and Regional Resilience Institute	<i>“When a community is truly resilient, it should be able to avoid the cascading system failures to help minimize any disaster’s disruption to everyday life and the local economy. A resilient community is not only prepared to help prevent or minimize the loss or damage to life, property and the environment, but also it has the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and swift economic recovery”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
American Psychological Association	<i>“Is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, or even significant sources of stress”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
Twigg 2009	<i>“A community’s state of resiliency can be expressed as its level of competency in governance, risk assessment, knowledge and education, risk management and vulnerability reduction, and disaster preparedness and response.”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
Ahmad et al. 2004	<i>“The development of material, physical, sociopolitical, socio-cultural, and psychological resources that promote safety of residents and buffer adversity”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
Colussi, Lewis, and Rowcliffe 2000	<i>“A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Global
Geis 2000	<i>“The disaster- resilient community is the safest possible community that we have the knowledge to design and build in a natural hazard context”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Specific
Reissman et al. 2005	<i>“Resilience refers to the ability of a community to withstand adversity and maintain cohesion and healthy functioning”</i>	Capacity-based Capability-based Specific

The term “Prevent” refers to combat terrorism activities before it happened. The term “Prepare” intends that if terrorist attacks become inevitable, then how people could mitigate the impacts of terrorism? On the other hand, the main focus of the term “Protect” is to build the capacity of the communities to minimize the risk of future terrorism.

At this point, the fundamental questions related to community defense strategy are: how terrorism can be countered? How to stop people to become a terrorist, or in case, if a terrorist attacks occurred, how to mitigate the impacts of terrorism? How communities can be strengthening against the future threats for terrorism? More importantly, who is responsible for what? To answer these questions, a brief summary of key areas that could help achieve the goal of community defense strategy have been presented in next section based on the views of the key informants during the interviews and review of relevant literature.

### **Surveillance and Information Sharing**

The concept of surveillance is of great value to prevent the terrorism (Bloss 2007). Surveillance has many forms and in the context of community defense strategy, it refers to the police or other security agency activity to gather information. Adoption of modern equipment in surveillance could help to protect the civilian from threat of terrorism. Terrorists are not super human; they are among us, living around us, people know them. However, due to shortcomings in the surveillance system and poor information sharing of people with concern authorities help the terrorist to escape. One of the main issues with counterterrorism strategies is the absence of effective or poor communication and feedback among local communities and law enforcement agencies. The goal of 3P’s can be achieved through improving surveillance and intelligence sharing between communities and law enforcement agencies. By bridging the communication gap between law enforcement agencies and communities, we cannot only enhance the community resilience but we can also improve the surveillance network against terrorism (Moodie 2008). Moreover, quick sharing of the information after a terrorist attack could mitigate the psychological stress and anxiety among the public about their family members (Pollack and Wood 2010).

### **Community Emergency Preparedness**

Community emergency preparedness has great role in achieving the aims set out in all 3Ps’ of community defense strategy. Well-prepared communities are less likely to be affected from incident of terrorism. It is an effective tool to enhance the community resilience against disaster particularly terrorism (National Security Strategy 2010). It is presupposed that trained community could act as the first responder to terrorism and through emergency preparedness the communities could be used as watchdogs to improve the surveillance at local level. Moreover, emergency preparedness at community level could effectively mitigate the consequences of terrorist attacks through provision of social supports, first aid, supporting victims of terrorism etc. Similarly, it could enhance the capacity of the communities to effectively protect themselves from the future threats of terrorism through readiness and awareness means.

### **Public Awareness**

Knowledge has been a powerful tool in enhancing community reliance against crime and disaster and therefore improving knowledge can enhance community resilience against terrorism in the long run. Moreover, scholars believe that the degree of knowledge could moderate one’s individual attitude and risk perception, which is very important in the fight against terrorism (Siegrist and Cvetkovich 2000). From a counter-terrorism perspective, awareness can also provide opportunities to disrupt terrorist organizations, along with other pieces of intelligence. Community experts believe that knowledgeable communities are more

resilient to different disasters. In the same way, through enhanced community awareness of terrorism, its consequences and preparedness measures, the ideology of terrorism is “de-branded” and human and physical damages are also minimized. Public awareness serves the underlying principle that once the communities become aware of the means of terrorism, its characteristics, and possible consequences, community members are put in better position to cope the situation. Moreover, awareness could also help them to overcome the fear and anxiety caused by the terrorists (US Department of State 2007).

### **Trust and Public Participation**

Trust is the fundamental factor in successful functioning of any system or mechanism. Similarly, it has significant importance in community defense strategy at all levels. According to Putnam (2002), trust is an important basic element in any system and the absence of trust affects the credibility of a system. Trust between communities and institutions aims to develop interfaith relationships between them, promoting a high level of confidence – especially with the police (Longstaff 2005). Strong and trustworthy relationships between police authorities and local communities are essential in the context of formulating participatory counter-terrorist measures and to ensure public safety. In contrast, a lack of a trustworthy environment can diminish public confidence in law enforcement agencies and it could also made people reluctant to cooperate with security agencies which will hurt even the sincerest efforts of security agencies to curb the terrorism.

### **Role and Responsibilities of State**

The responsibility of responding and preparing to the terrorist attacks rests with state and its law enforcement agencies. The onus of defending civilians against acts of terrorism rests with the state government due the fact that terrorist outfits often have a political goal to achieve and they target the general public to pressure the government to achieve their goals. Consequently, it becomes indispensable for the state to adopt concrete measure not only to combat terrorist activities but also safeguard and assist the victims of terrorism. Terrorists spread fear among the general public by exploiting and targeting victims as their means. It is therefore important to assist victims and involve communities to improve security and to prevent the future risk of terrorism (United Nations 2008).

Scholars have argued that the role of state in assisting terrorist-affected communities is very vital. It is believed that an appropriate assistance mechanism for victims of terrorism could not only alleviate the victims’ suffering but could also help lower the chance for the extremists to exploit the affected population in order to pressurize the government. It has been generally noted that different communities, in the name of victims of terrorism, often react negatively to terrorist acts, make use of the sentiments of the victims against the government and cause dissatisfaction among general public. In the case of poor countries with a lack of resources, dreadful acts of terrorism could force affected family members, particularly youth, to become involved in criminal or terrorist activities and thereby generate a new generation of terrorists (Turkovic 2006). It has therefore become necessary for both the government and communities to work together to preclude youth from joining in criminal activities. Moreover, the more economically sound that communities and groups are, the lesser the impact of terrorism will be – particularly in case of asset or physical loss (USIP 2009). The effective government and good governance intends to strengthen the localities economically through safeguarding them through insurance, financial assistance and loans for improving security measure at their places. Further, social assistance will help the community in capacity building, achieving skill trainings and developing strong social networks (Tierney 2007).

## **Role and Responsibilities of Communities**

As mentioned earlier, preventing terrorism is the responsibility of the state; however, at the same time, it is becoming popular idea to engage communities in anti-terrorism initiatives to share the responsibilities with the state (Tett 2006). Particularity after 9/11 attacks, the role of communities in emergency management were revisited and number of steps were taken to use community resources to fight against terrorism and crime.

It is obvious that we cannot leave everything upon the communities, so the immediate question that struck the minds is that what is the role a community can play in terrorism prevention? The experts believe that communities could be best at surveillance; hence, they should have well-define role and engagement in surveillance and intelligence sharing mechanism. For example, in Victoria, the concept of community policing is one example that shows that how communities can work shoulder to shoulder with law enforcement agencies to prevent crime and terrorism (Pickering et al. 2007). Community is also best at providing social support to its members, so if effectively dealt and educated, the communities could help the victims to ease their psychological suffering through extending social interaction and support system to them (Barrera 1986). Communities could act as frontline player to prevent their certain community member to involve in criminal of terrorist activities though discouraging the phenomenon at grass-root level. In this way, communities can share state responsibility to stop new breed of terrorist. Similarly, communities could be used to enhance community awareness and inter-community trust and social cohesion through sense of belonging (Longstaff 2005).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Communities can act as frontline defender of acts of terrorism and community involvement in anti-terrorism initiatives could increases the effectiveness of programmes and measures aimed at preventing future threats of terrorism. However, how communities can be prepared to get such results remains under debate. The present study had taken the proactive approach and argued that enhancing community resilience could help a great deal to reduce the vulnerabilities and future risk of terrorism. One way to manage this is to improve the state response towards the victims of terrorism. The absence of effective state response could help the cause of extremist elements to exploit the affected population, particularly in remote areas where the state is less functioning as compared to the extremist organizations. Other crucial factor in preparing the community to be upfront against terrorism is to enhance their subject knowledge and awareness. The main rational in selecting the knowledge/awareness as component of community defense strategy was that the level of subject knowledge is directly related to the level of resilience – more knowledgeable communities are more resilient to disastrous situations. Likewise, improvement in terrorism-related knowledge could significantly make communities proactive not only against future threats of terrorism but also would allow such communities to handle the consequences of the terrorism more effectively. It is suggested that communities should be supported through targeted awareness and training activities to enhance their capability to better mitigate the impacts of terrorist attacks and to tackle the growing issue of militancy and violence. As a first step, it is recommended to initiate youth awareness programmes in educational institutions. To make people more involved and resilient, it is recommended that training programmes or workshops should be designed at community level to enhance people awareness about impacts of terrorism and its prevention techniques.

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