

Editorial

Terrorism as a political issue has overshadowed terrorism as a criminal activity in both the academic literature of criminology as well as in the popular press.

There has been a tremendous growth of interest in the topic of terrorism over the past decade, in both the academic literature as well as in the popular press. Unfortunately, the empirical has been somewhat overlooked. There are many anecdotes and sweeping generalizations, but there has been a paucity of solid empirical research in this arena, particularly with respect to cause and effect. Such an understanding would, of course, be of immense value to the law-enforcement community as well as national-level strategic planners.

I would further add that the global debate on this issue has generally focused around the intricacies of international relations, military operations, intelligence and surveillance, and the humanitarian and operational costs of the “war” on terror. The dynamics of these contexts are continually shifting, and as a result, the strategies and approaches implemented to combat terrorism are continuously changed, which subsequently gives rise to inconsistent and uneven responses, and significant levels of confusion.

The situation is similar with respect to Pakistan's response to organized crimes in Pakistan. While there are two specialized agencies tasked to focus on organized crime, there is still no national data bank on organizational crimes. This greatly hampers law enforcement efforts to effectively and efficiently respond to this threat.

While Pakistan has an un-wavering commitment to combat terrorism and organized crime, it lacks the capacity at present to have much of a sustained, affirmative impact. The fact that we lack a comprehensive counter terrorism policy at a national level is also somewhat disconcerting. This is all the more troublesome considering the fact that Pakistan is the frontline state in the global war on terror, and a source and transit country of much organized crime activity. There is an enormous need for both academics and practitioners to address the many unattended issues in these arenas.

The Pakistan Society of Criminology seeks to contribute to and learn from, the international body of knowledge that is now beginning to coalesce around the general topics of terrorism and organized crime. We seek to uncover and share, the best policies and practices, and to further develop an indigenous body of criminological knowledge with respect to these and other relevant topics in the field, and to engage in meaningful dialogue in this era of the interactive learning environment. The current issue is an attempt on our part to achieve these aims. We are thankful to all contributors, both from abroad and our local experts. The topics of terrorism and organized crime will likely, and unfortunately, be issues of concern for many decades to come, and will continue to be explored in upcoming issues of the *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*. Our special thanks go to the Honourable Mr. Habibullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary FATA and Mr. Paul Petzschmann,

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Finally, we wish to dedicate this special issue to the memory of the late Surgeon General of Pakistan, Lieutenant General Mushtaq Ahmad Baig, who regretfully and tragically lost his life in a suicide attack in Pakistan in February of 2008.

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