long-term plans to keep advancing the building of the Corridor.'

The escalation of these domestic political disputes to the halls of power in Beijing highlights how complicated negotiations around the CPEC have become. While Pakistani officials at every level seek to distance themselves from negative comments about China, it is nonetheless the case that Chinese activity in the country has been the immediate source of these problems. And these are not the only problems that China faces in Pakistan. Apart from militancy, either from violent Islamists or separatists, China has to confront the problems of its workers being kidnapped and its nationals becoming embroiled in local criminal networks.

Whilst unsurprising to most observers of Pakistan, these problems nonetheless illustrate a larger problem that China will increasingly face as it pushes its 'Belt and Road' vision out across the Eurasian continent. Making considerable financial investments and importing large numbers of Chinese nationals into a region does not eliminate tensions on the ground. In fact, large investments can exacerbate tensions. They can increase inequality, or, as appears to be the case in Pakistan, they can cause local political tensions. This undermines the argument that appears to underpin Chinese investment policy in both the third world and at home – that development will bring with it political stability.

In Pakistan in particular, China is increasingly going to find itself in difficult situations. China is investing in security in Pakistan at a number of different levels. Not only is it helping the country build its big ticket weapons systems such as aircraft and submarines, but it is also helping police forces to improve security on the ground. It is unclear whether these expenditures are included in the approximately $46 billion associated with the CPEC project, but China will find that the expenses on Pakistani police and army will be constant, and China may find itself having to foot the bill for as long as Pakistan continues to face instability at home.

The CPEC has the potential to be game-changing for Pakistan, but it is unlikely to solve all of the country's ills or to be completed any time soon. For observers of the 'Belt and Road' vision, China's experiences in Pakistan may offer a taster of what it will encounter elsewhere in the world as it seeks to implement President Xi's ambitious foreign policy vision, a vision that he hopes will be his legacy.

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Minding the Gap: A Multi-Layered Approach to Tackling Violent Extremism

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The creation of the Global Counterterrorism Forum was a success for the international community's counterterrorism efforts, but was it enough?

Over the decade and a half since the 9/11 attacks, calls for more international counterterrorism co-operation have become a stock element of political leaders' speeches. Following each successive terrorist attack, leaders have underscored the need for greater collaboration among military, intelligence, law enforcement and criminal justice officials to counter increasingly transnational threats. These calls have been echoed at the multilateral level, with the UN and regional organisations adopting resolutions reiterating the need for intensified inter-state co-operation and outlining steps that national governments should take to address the threats facing them.

There has also been a corresponding effort to strengthen multilateral mechanisms, particularly since 2010, to allow for more practical co-operation among countries. In fact, one of the under-reported counterterrorism advances over the past decade has been the extent to which the international counterterrorism architecture has been updated to allow for more dynamic collaboration. Today, there are now mechanisms to allow an array of national practitioners – for example, criminal justice officials and parliamentarians from around the world – to share expertise and build trust.

The terrorist threat, however, has continued to evolve, and there is increasing recognition that many of the

drivers of violent radicalisation and the corresponding interventions required to prevent its spread are intensely local. With growing recognition of the need for sub-national, community-led responses to address the problem, the international counterterrorism architecture, which has been designed around building interstate co-operation, will require further adaptation if it hopes to maintain its relevance.

By the end of the decade following 9/11 it had become clear that relying on the existing multilateral system to fight terrorism was not working; a dedicated, built-for-purpose global counterterrorism body was needed to fill the existing gap within international counterterrorism efforts. This was despite modest attempts to update the system through the creation of counterterrorism committees by the UN Security Council and regional bodies such as the Organization of American States.

The UN, despite some modest post-9/11 advances, was discounted as being the site for a new action-oriented counterterrorism body that could convene counterterrorism policy-makers and practitioners on a regular basis for practical discussions. This was because it was dominated by diplomats and it was too political – discussions too often focused not on what brought member states together but on what divided them (such as the lack of a common definition of terrorism, with many UN member states clinging to the distinction between a terrorist and a 'freedom fighter', and debates over the 'root causes' of terrorism). The UN was also viewed as being weighed down by too much bureaucracy that often emphasises process over action. Regional bodies were too parochial and the (then) G8, for its part, was too limited in membership and geographical reach to fulfil the remit adequately.

In the decades following the end of the Second World War, the international community successfully established a diverse range of specialised organisations for building inter-state co-operation to address global issues such as atomic energy, chemical weapons, refugees, aviation security, intellectual property and trade. Yet, despite the global nature of terrorism and the need for practical cross-border and regional co-operation in addition to discrete strategies and capacities to address it at the time President Barack Obama entered office in 2009, no such body existed for dealing with terrorism effectively.

In 2010, the US began to marshal an effort to fill this gap in the multilateral system. The Obama administration's decision to focus on building up multilateral counterterrorism institutions was also in part an effort to signal a break with the earlier excesses of the so-called 'Global War on Terror' and the Iraq War, but it also served to underscore its commitment to international co-operation, the rule of law, and working with partners, particularly Muslim-majority ones, to develop the capacities of those governments to address the threats within their borders.

Although largely operating beneath the radar and costing less than $1.5 million a year to sustain, the GCTF's impact has been significant

The lack of a *sui generis* international platform to enable the sharing of expertise and to build bridges among national-level policy-makers and practitioners in order to address civilian counterterrorism requirements was seen as an obstacle to the pursuit of these objectives.

As a result of the trust and shared commitment to practical outcomes which the GCTF helped generate, it has a significant record of accomplishments.

To fill this gap, in September 2011, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hosted the launch of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), an informal, action-oriented space made up of 30 founding members. This provided a forum where G7 and Muslim-majority countries could speak frankly about counterterrorism challenges and build the trust necessary for the development of innovative solutions.

Although largely operating beneath the radar and costing less than $1.5 million a year to sustain, the GCTF's impact has been significant. Drawing on expertise from government and non-government practitioners alike, it has developed a library's worth of practical guidance to help national practitioners and policy-makers do their jobs more effectively. For example, the GCTF's 2012 Rabat Memorandum offers investigators and prosecutors modern tools to handle terrorism cases, while adhering to international human rights standards; the Rome Memorandum, produced in the same year, provides a road map for the development of programmes to rehabilitate and reintegrate terrorist offenders into society. This guidance is now being tailored to fit national and regional level implementation efforts and for the development of programmes for terrorist fighters who have returned home.

There are now at least ten such tools. Nearly all have been endorsed by the UN, and they are increasingly being used as the basis for training and other capacity-building assistance – focused primarily on national government practitioners. This work is taking place in Africa, the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia and is sponsored by a diversity of donors, including the US.

However, it was soon recognised that in certain contexts projects carrying the 'US' hallmark, or that of any other Western nation would, by definition, have limited impact. Instead there was a need for durable multilateral platforms to support training on the different GCTF guidance documents. GCTF members subsequently joined together to create two such platforms: an international Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) training centre, Hedayah, in Abu Dhabi, and a complementary counterterrorism centre in Malta, The International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, for training criminal justice officials, particularly from countries in the MENA region. These new centres are governed and funded by a mix of countries (including those with Muslim-majority populations) and have attracted strong political and financial support from a broad range of countries. Although still works in progress, both platforms will lead to better-trained and networked practitioners over time, thus producing security dividends for everyone.

As a result of the trust and shared commitment to practical outcomes which the GCTF helped generate, it has a significant record of accomplishments. It has led to a fundamental alteration

The the launch of the GCTF in New York, 2011. The GCTF provides a forum where G7 and Muslim-majority countries can speak frankly about counterterrorism challenges. *Image courtesy of the US State Department.*

in the architecture of multilateral counterterrorism by creating opportunities for other countries to share the financial and leadership burden with the US on a range of issues. This strengthened architecture, which now includes a more dynamic UN component, is focused first and foremost on building co-operation among – and the capacities of – *national* governments, reflecting the political and counterterrorism priorities of the time when the GCTF was launched.

Since then, terrorist threats have become more localised and a new gap has arisen: in sub-national multilateral co-operation. As highlighted in the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, the response to this type of terrorist threat has changed, expanding beyond traditional national-level actors to include local government and civil society stakeholders, and moving further upstream to include more emphasis on prevention at grassroots level.

Although these sub-national stakeholders are occasionally involved in the work of the GCTF or the traditional multilateral forums, they are not given a voice in determining priorities or shaping agendas. More fundamentally, these forums are not suited to facilitate and sustain co-operation among local actors – such as mayors, researchers, teachers, social and healthcare workers, psychologists, and religious, youth and other community leaders – because these spaces are appropriated by the interests and needs of national governments. Despite increasing recognition that local actors are critical to preventing violent extremism, this problem remains.

As a result, while representing a significant improvement over what was in place in 2009, and having succeeded on so many levels, existing structures are unlikely to be sufficient to meet the requirements of preventing and countering violent extremism over the long term. Ultimately, sub-national and non-governmental actors working on discrete pieces of the agenda cannot just be included in state-driven multilateral bodies when it is convenient for national governments.

Instead, the GCTF and other elements of the international counterterrorism community can and should do more to reach out to local actors. This can be achieved by highlighting the need to involve local actors in a meaningful way in national counterterrorism discussions that have generally been limited to national-level officials. In addition, resources should be mobilised to support the strengthening of sub-national capacities.

Sub-national stakeholders need their own platforms to facilitate networking at the local, national, regional and global levels. This would enable them to learn from each other and collaborate without giving national governments or intergovernmental bodies control over a co-operation agenda that is no longer limited to national security actors. These platforms can also help press national governments to create the necessary legal and policy space to enable greater involvement of sub-national actors in addressing increasingly localised threats.

In fact, new platforms are being developed to facilitate the sharing of challenges, best practices, and information among sub-national stakeholders. Since June 2015, new global and regional CVE networks have been launched which focus on bringing cities and local researchers together. New regional platforms to connect youth, women, and other civil society players have also been launched.

The challenge, however, is in scaling up and ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives in the future. Governments and intergovernmental bodies, including the GCTF, need to address the problem of how to energise such initiatives and mobilise funding for them without micromanaging or undermining their credibility. Governments also need to continue to create space within national counterterrorism strategies and the traditional state-driven multilateral system for sub-national actors and other non-traditional stakeholders. If these stakeholders can have their voice heard at the national and international level and they are provided the opportunity to showcase the unique contributions they can make in preventing violent extremism from taking root in their communities, then they may be able to persuade many countries that the issues of national security do not belong exclusively to national security officials.

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