

All hat and no cattle

Neither the tears and trepidations of the US President nor the mass killings at Blacksburg, Santa Barbara and Columbine are grave enough events for the US to change its gun laws. Nearer to home, neither the massacre of its 141 school children nor the scores of attacks on its minorities are important enough for Pakistan to change its stance towards curbing weaponisation, militancy or extremism. While startling and significant gains have been made by the Zarb-e Azb, its civilian counterpart, the National Action Plan can best be described by the Texan saying, "all hat and no cattle".

The militant occupants of the Lal Masjid and Jamea e Hifsa, the hate volcanoes emitting weekly lava from their pulpits, Mumtaz Qadri still enjoying the tax payers' hospitality and the mushrooming growth of Da'esh facilitators are the exclusive domain of the Interior Ministry. Why is the Interior ministry evasive and pussy footing on these issues. It needed to formulate and announce a comprehensive plan for complete deweaponisation. It failed to do so. It failed to take any step to demand surrender of 12 million illegal weapons and 8 million weapons with fake licenses. On the contrary, gun licenses continue to be issued to those in positions of power and influence. One would like to question if the Interior ministry is batting for Pakistan or for the other team?

In US, a parliament controlled by the National Rifles Association (NRA) is the principal obstacle to changing the gun laws. Regretfully, in Pakistan, the parliament is itself a promoter and proliferator of weapons. Obama concluded his teary speech on gun control by telling his parliament, "we can't wait any more". Can the people of Pakistan too give the same message to their reluctant and well-armed parliament.