Asia Society Report: Police Reform is Key to Stabilizing Pakistan

New York, July 23, 2012 – The Asia Society report Stabilizing Pakistan through Police Reform, released today, finds that Pakistan’s efforts to combat crime and to counter terrorist activities are being outpaced by the innovation and agility of criminal networks and terrorist organizations. Without comprehensive reform of the legal framework governing police action, the police force as an institution, Pakistan’s law enforcement strategy, and interagency and international coordination, Pakistan’s progress toward political stability and economic security will be limited.

The report was written by the Asia Society Independent Commission on Pakistan Police Reform, an unprecedented convening of law enforcement experts in Pakistan and the U.S. led by Asia Society Senior Advisor Hassan Abbas. “There is a widely held notion in foreign policy circles that military action can resolve the terrorism problem in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region, and help efforts to thwart violent radicalism throughout the region,” said Dr. Abbas. “This idea, while sensible when peering at Pakistan from the outside, misses an important reality on the ground: it is the domestic police force that can best root out terror networks, find and disable their financial support, and even manage de-radicalization programs in association with local communities.”

Asia Society will host panel discussions featuring Dr. Abbas and other key contributors to the report on Tuesday, July 24, in New York, and Wednesday, July 25, in Washington D.C. For event details, go to AsiaSociety.org/PakistanPoliceReform.

The report recommends:

1. **An assertive approach to Pakistan’s legal framework for law enforcement**, including by:
   - Establishing a clear and uniform set of rules nationwide through the implementation of Police Order 2002 and its extension to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA);
   - Revising the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 to clarify its scope;
   - Authorizing the Federal Investigation Agency to pursue complaints made against federal employees, regardless of their rank or status;
   - Establishing a legal framework to make the National Counter Terrorism Authority fully functional; and
   - Instituting a strong witness protection system.

2. **Significant institutional reform within the police force**, including by:
   - Establishing an independent police complaint authority;
   - Improving working conditions and salaries and changing organizational culture, following the model of the successful National Highways and Motorway Police;
Revamping training and curriculum in police academies to address the needs of vulnerable groups and to present course material in a user-friendly style;

Providing police with independent facilities for the interception of terrorists’ communications, mobile tracking systems, and telephone call data analysis;

Investing in national databases on vehicles and weapons;

Overhauling the system of promoting and hiring police to eliminate political interference; and

Utilizing police officers (in training jobs and managing challenging tasks) who return after serving in UN Peacekeeping operations.

3. A refreshed counterterrorism strategy, including by:

- Creating within the police a special cadre of terrorism investigators;
- Establishing special units to rapidly coordinate with private cellular companies in cases of suspected terrorism;
- Expanding and strengthening the country’s de-radicalization program with police in a lead role; and
- Funding quantitative and statistical research on the causes of terrorism.

4. Enhanced coordination among Pakistani agencies and the international community, by including:

- Strengthening cooperation between the military and police, so that Pakistan’s civilian law enforcement can better take responsibility for internal security;
- Empowering the civilian Intelligence Bureau and bolstering its cooperation with the police investigators, and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI);
- Constructing mechanisms for intelligence sharing between Pakistan and neighboring countries; and
- Improving coordination among the United Nations (Police Division), international donors, the private sector and local law enforcement stakeholders, increasing international support in the spheres of technical assistance, training, and modern equipment.

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For the full report, please visit AsiaSociety.org/PakistanPoliceReform.

For questions or to receive a copy of the report, please contact pr@asiasociety.org or 212-327-9271.

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