



SPECIAL REPORT

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report is based on a series of roundtable discussions held in January 2014 in Islamabad and Lahore with Pakistani police officers from all parts of the country, attorneys, civil society representatives, journalists, and media personalities. The interviews and the report are part of a U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) project begun in 2010 to increase Pakistan's capacity to counter terrorism by highlighting initiatives undertaken by Pakistani police officers.

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Robert Perito and Tariq Parvez

A Counterterrorism Role for Pakistan's Police Stations

Summary

- Terrorism, secessionist insurgency, sectarian conflict, and ethnic turf wars have convulsed both Pakistan's major cities and tribal areas along the Afghanistan border. The escalation in mega-urban centers in particular has increased the importance of the police in controlling the endemic violence.
- The police station retains both its historic role as the symbol of government authority and its position as the basic law enforcement institution responsible for public order, law enforcement, and police services. Yet police stations and personnel are ill prepared and poorly equipped to meet the challenges of the country's complex, urbanized, and increasingly violent society.
- Pakistani police have found themselves on the front lines, and a growing number have given their lives to protect others in the struggle against terrorist and criminal groups. The need is now urgent to empower the police through a program of positive reform that would begin with modernizing police stations and reorienting and retraining their personnel.
- An effective program for police station reform would begin with assigning primacy to the police for controlling terrorism. It would include developing new organizational structures, positions, and standard operating procedures to ensure that local police understand their enhanced role and mission. It would also include improving police-public relations and networking police stations into a national information-sharing network with anti-terrorist agencies.
- Creating high-profile specialized units appears to offer a quick fix to a complex and increasingly pervasive problem. The real solution, however, lies in empowering Pakistan's police stations to protect their communities from criminal and extremist violence through modernization and reform.

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Introduction

In Pakistan, terrorism, secessionist insurgency, sectarian conflict, and ethnic turf wars have convulsed the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) along the Afghanistan border and had considerable impact on Karachi and other major cities. During the first six months of 2014, eighty-seven Karachi police officers were killed in the line of duty, and 166 in all of 2013.¹ Their deaths made Karachi a microcosm of the problems the entire country faces. At least three thousand people died from terrorist violence in Pakistan in 2013.² The escalation of such violence in mega-urban centers has highlighted the critical role of Pakistan's police in law enforcement and maintaining public order. Despite the remarkable courage of individual officers who have given their lives to save others, Pakistan's police have proven ill prepared and poorly equipped to deal with the challenge of rapidly escalating urban violence.

This report is the second in a series on improving the capacity of the police to counter the rapid increase in terrorist violence in Pakistan. The first, "Empowering the Pakistan Police,"³ dealt with the use of improved police-public relations as a tool in the battle against terrorism. This report extends the discussion of the role of the police in the community by focusing on the police station, the core institution in the organizational structure of policing in Pakistan.

Colonial Past

The problems confronting the police in Pakistan relate to the country's relatively recent colonial past. Under colonial-era regulations that largely remain in force, the FATA—the current base of terrorist operations—lies outside the authority of Pakistan's provincial-level police forces.⁴ Under British rule, the FATA was administered through a system of indirect control that granted autonomy to local authorities. Maintenance of public order was left to tribal and paramilitary forces. Under the 1901 Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCR), Pakistan's police had no jurisdiction in the FATA. In 2011, the federal government adopted major amendments to the FCR that limited the arbitrary and coercive powers of the territorial administration. This vast area, which remains beyond the authority of provincially based police, is the responsibility of federal and local paramilitary forces.

In the rest of Pakistan, policing is the purview of the country's four provincial governments and the federal government in Islamabad, the nation's capital. The underlying philosophy and the legal framework for these areas relates to the British colonial Police Act of 1861. Under the act, the police was the enforcement arm of the state's bureaucracy, controlling the population through repression and fear. Despite efforts for reform, most notably the promulgation of the Police Order of 2002 during a period of military rule, the spirit of policing in Pakistan today reflects the authoritarian philosophy of the 1861 act.

This approach is reflected in *thana* (police station) culture, a term used in Pakistan to describe a policing mindset that accepts such common abuses as demanding bribes for performing police services, illegal detention, and the use of force to obtain confessions.⁵ Police constables affect a military manner and answer to military-style discipline. Rank-and-file police officers have a reputation for being crude, abusive, and high-handed in their treatment of citizens. The police are generally feared but not respected. For the average citizen, seeking police assistance is considered potentially dangerous and often a last resort. Instead, thana culture serves the interests of the political elite, the wealthy, and those who can demand special treatment. Political interference with the police often results in transfers and the demand for bribes for promotions and attractive assignments. Politicians use the police to intimidate their opponents and to perform services, most

importantly providing personal protection. In high-threat areas, a majority of the police may be deployed at any time on private security details for political officials, their families, and chief supporters.

Providing Pakistan with the type of policing it requires, including against terrorism, requires the end of political interference in police administration and operations and the extension of greater authority to professional police leaders. The interference at the station house level has resulted in a situation where station house officers are transferred from their posts on average of every sixty to ninety days. Failure to provide security of tenure negates any possibility of effective leadership or fair accountability.⁶ Intervention by political elites to cancel investigations and obtain the release of prisoners undermines the functioning of the criminal justice system, lowers police morale, and damages the public image. Political interference in police matters is so common that it is spoken about openly and decried in the press.⁷

Historic Role

As the British extended their control across Pakistan, they established police stations as symbols of their authority and a means of controlling the population. Police stations were large, fortress-like structures designed to impress and intimidate members of a rural, agrarian, and tribal society. Today Pakistan's four provinces are home to 1,479 police stations and 410,000 police.⁸ The police station retains its role as the symbol of government authority and its position as the basic institutional policing unit responsible for public order, law enforcement, and police services.⁹ It also retains responsibility for all aspects of police management and administrative functions. Pakistan has stayed with a model that provided a full range of police services to an individual agrarian community even though the environment surrounding the police station has changed. Pakistan has experienced rapid population growth and urbanization with the rise of megacities like Karachi and Lahore.¹⁰

Police stations built in the middle of farm land now are surrounded by crowded neighborhoods and squalid slums. The need to police a rapidly growing urban population has required establishing new police stations to provide a broader police presence. Many of the original imposing police stations remain, but time and a lack of maintenance have taken their toll. Most of the new stations have been opened in buildings built for other purposes, sometimes in commandeered private homes, or in makeshift structures.¹¹ Working conditions for police are generally substandard. Many police stations lack electricity, water, and humane detention facilities. Inadequate facilities both have a negative impact on citizen perceptions of the police and lower police morale.

Pakistan's police stations are staffed by a police force normally recruited at two levels of service. At the senior ranks, the British police officers have been replaced by the national Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), an elite cadre recruited—along with other senior government employees—through a merit-based civil service examination. Appointments to the PSP are prestigious and sought after. PSP officers undergo common introductory training with their fellow civil servants followed by a course at the National Police Academy in Islamabad. In the enlisted ranks, assistant sub-inspectors are recruited in all provinces by provincial public service commissions, and constables by local police leadership boards. Direct hiring of constables creates opportunities for political patronage and corruption. Constables must have completed high school (ten years), but the quality of education is low, and constables may have difficulty reading and writing reports. Training for the lower ranks is largely a matter of drilling and other means of instilling discipline. Constables have limited opportunities for either promotion or transfer to more attractive locations. On duty fourteen hours a day, they are often outdoors manning roadblocks and guarding facilities. They live at

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the police station, often going months without a day off. Low pay and lack of opportunity for advancement create conditions for petty corruption and recruitment by political parties, criminal elements, and extremist groups.

Shackled by this legacy, Pakistan's provincial police organizations are ill prepared to play their current role in the battle to control the country's spiraling levels of violence. Inadequate physical structures leave police officers vulnerable to attack. Police stations have neither blast resistant walls nor barriers to intercept car bombs. A significant percentage of police personnel are assigned in small groups to roadside check points, where they stand in the open and search vehicles with no protection. Police travel to duty stations on foot or in thin-skinned vans and open trucks that are easy targets for roadside explosives and drive-by attacks. Police stations have a limited collection of old, mismatched, and poorly maintained automatic weapons and side arms. Ammunition is inadequate to defend against a sustained attack. Helmets and body armor are in short supply.

More important than shortfalls in facilities and equipment is that police stations remain focused on their traditional roles of controlling crime and maintaining order and have not accepted countering terrorism as part of their mission. In part, this is due to the prevailing view at the police station level that counterterrorism is the responsibility of specialized antiterrorist units. It is also due to the overwhelming increase in the demand for police services as a result of rapid urbanization and a related spike in burglaries and street crime. In Pakistan, first information reports (FIRs) are the forms used to record every crime reported to a police station and are the basis for crime statistics, case investigations, and record-keeping. In Lahore, an average police station may receive eighty FIRs a month, all requiring investigation and follow-up. Pakistan's faltering judicial system and the breakdown in public services has left the police station as the place where citizens go to resolve commercial and domestic disputes. Officially described as "nuncognizable offenses," such complaints should be referred to the courts for action. In practice, however, police officers spend hours of their day mediating local disputes and resolving local problems to prevent them from escalating into violent conflicts.¹²

Notably, Pakistan has not followed the lead of Britain in restructuring its police organization to respond to the demands of policing urban environments. Pakistan has not adopted the Metropolitan Police Model,¹³ which elevates responsibility for local command, management, and administrative functions from the police station to the subdivision level, where a more senior assistant or deputy superintendent of police is responsible for coordinating the activities of a group of stations. This subdivision officer reports to one of several division commanders, superintendents, or senior superintendents, who in turn report to the senior police official in the city. In Britain, this model has improved police services, reduced duplication, and concentrated policy and management functions. This has allowed unnecessary stations to be closed and more personnel to be used more efficiently. Despite the urging of senior serving and retired police officials,¹⁴ Pakistan's political leaders have shown no indication that they are prepared to reorganize the country's police given its inherent disruptions at a time of national crisis. It is important, therefore, that reform programs concentrate on upgrading the existing system, which is based on the police station, as a more certain avenue to improving the capacity of the police to combat terrorist and criminal violence.

Countering Terrorism

That provincial governments have not sought to formally involve station house police has deprived Pakistan of potentially its most valuable instrument in controlling terrorism. International experience in countering terrorism has shown that the key to preventing violence against the state and its citizens is policing that establishes government legitimacy and

wins public support. In societies threatened by endemic violence, the responsibility for security should be entrusted to police deployed among the population. Police are the public face of the government. By performing their duties in a professional manner, police build support for the government they represent. Acts committed by terrorists are crimes, which are the responsibility of the police and the criminal justice system.¹⁵

Killing or capturing terrorists when they are engaged in terrorist acts is not an effective solution to insecurity. The solution is to identify would-be terrorists before they commit acts of violence using information provided by citizens to the police. To make this approach work effectively, the police must realize the importance of working with citizens. They must also adopt a citizen-oriented approach to policing. Police establish effective relations with the public by being available and easily accessible, by being responsive and acting promptly to requests for assistance from individuals, and by being fair and impartial, treating everyone professionally, respectfully, and empathetically. This approach is based on relationships, attitudes, and values. It requires neither advanced technical skills nor heavy weaponry. It does require that officers at all ranks understand that their role is to enlist the cooperation of the public in the struggle against insurgency, terrorism, and violent crime. Police cannot deal with these threats alone. They can succeed only when the public provides information on the location and the activities of criminals and insurgents. The goal is for police to arrest the terrorists in their sleep rather than to fight them in the streets.¹⁶

In its January 2014 report “Policing Urban Violence in Pakistan,” the International Crisis Group concluded that the provincial police should be given primacy in controlling terrorist, sectarian, and insurgent violence but that this would be impossible without fundamental police reform. The report noted that Pakistan’s megacities required sophisticated personnel and technical resources to track violent offenders and urged that provincial governments make modernization the focus of a law enforcement reform program. It also urged that governments ensure that the police are not hampered by political interference, inadequate resources, or a lack of institutional and operational autonomy.¹⁷

To undertake such a reform program, provincial authorities should build on the advantages that accrue to the police station because of its position as the basic unit of law enforcement. Police stations enjoy a pervasive presence in all parts of the country, are integrated into the local community, and are the repository of historical information about local conditions, personalities, and criminal networks. Station house police conduct neighborhood patrols, man check points, conduct investigations that require interaction with the local population, and provide opportunities for the collection of information on the activities of suspect groups. Terrorists often commit crimes, such as kidnapping or burglary, to obtain money and materials for future attacks. Effective basic law enforcement by local police can remove would-be terrorists from the streets for ordinary crimes before they commit more serious offenses. As first responders to terrorist incidents, the local police are responsible for securing the crime scene and collecting evidence that is critical to determining responsibility for the attack. A comprehensive approach to countering terrorist, insurgent, separatist, and sectarian groups would begin by tapping the existing resources of the police station and its personnel.

Priorities for Reform

Reform by empowerment would require strategic antiterrorist plans that assigned primacy to the police and included the police station as a core component. Preparing such a plan would be a first step toward changing the currently isolated and stovepiped police culture in which counterterrorism is regarded as the responsibility of specialized units. Preparation would ensure that all policing units understand their responsibility to collect and analyze

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information on suspect groups and individuals and to provide that information through established channels to higher authorities who collate the information and produce finished intelligence. At the same time, all policing units would be sensitized to be aware of activities that might indicate an individual's membership in a terrorist group. Finally, preparation would require police at all levels to review the physical security of police facilities and to develop standard operating procedures for police response to terrorist incidents. This entire effort would be supported by an information campaign and in-service training courses to inform police personnel of their new roles and responsibilities.

Physical Security

At the station level, this reform process would begin with security assessments, hardened structures, and reconfigured public access to make police facilities of all types less vulnerable to terrorist attacks. This would be accompanied by providing adequate numbers of personal radios, sets of body armor, armored vehicles, and weapons to protect police officers and convince them that the reform was not another attempt, at their expense, to shift responsibility for dealing with the current crisis. Initial success for the reform effort would depend in part on overcoming the understandable reaction of police officers that they have heard this all before. In January 2014, the head of a police station in Sindh province was suspended for failing to follow orders after the terrorist death of a motorcycle patrolman. Provincial authorities had decreed that police were to be equipped with mobile phones, patrol in pairs, and wear body armor. The station house officer protested that his seventy personnel had only three mobile phones, one motorcycle, and six bulletproof jackets and that he could follow the new security procedures only if his station were properly equipped.¹⁸

Standard Operating Procedures

Concern for officer welfare and for improving police professionalism at the station level would require preparing, distributing, and training on a series of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for responding to terrorist incidents and defending against terrorist attacks. In an interview, a PSP officer described how he overcame his immediate fear after a car bomb blast and rushed to the scene only to realize he had no idea what he should do.¹⁹ Currently, few formal SOPs exist to guide station house police in assisting victims, ensuring access for emergency medical personnel, securing the blast scene, interviewing witnesses, and filing reports on terrorist incidents, nor are local police trained in first aid and life-saving techniques. Similarly, no station house SOPs have been established on police station security procedures or on responding to a direct terrorist attack. Such procedures would save lives and enable police station personnel to defend themselves until special rapid reaction units arrived. To be effective, new SOPs would have to be introduced through an information campaign that ensured that all police officers were familiar with the new procedures. Police personnel would also have to be trained, preferably through role play scenarios, on how to react according to the procedures in crisis situations. Such training is not currently provided. Indeed, rank-and-file police receive little or no in-service training to update their policing skills after they graduate from the basic training course.

Improved Police-Public Relations

Improving the police station's effectiveness in countering terrorism depends on improving police-community relations at the local level. New SOPs and training programs must replace the current authoritarian ethos of policing in Pakistan with an approach that engages the police and the community in a common effort to control terrorist and criminal violence. This approach is consistent with the one taken by police forces in the United States and western

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Europe that emphasizes basic law enforcement and community outreach. It should be based on SOPs and training programs to ensure that the police are responsive and treat community members with respect. Improved police-public relations results in greater public willingness to provide information on illegal activities and potential security threats.

Programs to improve police-public relations start with improving public access to police stations, including special access for women. Such efforts involve engaging the community in police work through programs like community watches and creating peace committees to mediate local disputes and to review and evaluate police performance. Improved public access, special treatment for women using female police officers, and community outreach programs are features of a few newly established model police stations in major cities. Many of these stations were modified based on technical advice and financial assistance from international (including U.S.) donors. The creation of these stations indicates a willingness on the part of provincial authorities to experiment with reforms. Absent a determination to invest provincial funding to replicate these innovations across the entire force, however, these model stations will remain isolated examples of future possibilities.

Intelligence Collection

Despite the increased demand for police services, station house reporting procedures—which are largely done by hand in large, leather-bound ledgers—have remained unchanged for decades. Computerized record-keeping and Internet communication between stations and headquarters remain limited to a handful of model stations in urban centers. Although peace committees that involve community members in resolving local disputes can be a mechanism for reporting suspicious activity to the police, only limited efforts have been made to sensitize police at the station house level to look for indications that terrorist groups might be present and preparing for local operations. There is also no effective means for higher police authorities to routinely provide terrorist-related information to police stations in a timely manner, let alone as actionable intelligence for the conduct of counterterrorist operations.

Police stations need a new system for information collection and analysis and new personnel trained to perform these functions. Historically, police stations had a dedicated cell that conducted liaison with the village headman and watchman to collect information on local conditions, personalities, and activities that might pose a security threat. As Pakistan has become more urbanized, these roles have disappeared. The Police Rules of 1934 created a system of police station record-keeping with inspections by senior officers that continued until the 1970s. Given the proliferation of demands on the police and the frequent transfer of key personnel, this system fell into disuse. The 1997 National Counterterrorism Act provided procedures and authorities for police surveillance of suspected terrorists.²⁰ The Fair Trial Act of February 2013 broadened those authorities to include wire taps and other types of electronic eavesdropping.²¹ These procedures generally are not followed and the authorities not used, however.²² Police at the station house level are often unaware of the details of the law, and countering terrorism has not yet been specifically prescribed as part of their duties.

For the already overburdened officer in charge of a police station, counterterrorism would be an unwelcome addition to an already overwhelming set of responsibilities. Currently, station house police are responsible for controlling crime and maintaining public order, as well as for providing a growing list of police services. A PSP officer explained that recently he had been instructed by various political authorities to have his constables engage in a number of extraneous activities. These activities involved helping the electric company disconnect city residents who illegally tapped into power lines, dispensing the polio vaccine to children at police roadblocks, preventing overpricing in vegetable markets, and monitoring

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kite flying to prevent fights over intentionally cut kite strings.²³ Yet countering terrorism is an important national priority and should be one of the principal duties assigned to the station house officer and his subordinates. Counterterrorism awareness, the collection of information on terrorist groups, and the arrest and detention of terrorist suspects should be integrated into normal police work. This could be done by developing and institutionalizing new SOPs that reorder priorities and sensitize officers to be aware of terrorist-related behavior they encounter in conducting their regular duties.

In Pakistan, organized criminal involvement in kidnapping for ransom, extortion, and narcotics trafficking are directly related to funding the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and other terrorist groups.²⁴ Police station detectives who investigate these crimes should be instructed to follow the money trail to the terrorists who benefit. New SOPs and related training of station house personnel would be required, but a relative small investment could pay real dividends. A PSP officer interviewed for this report described the positive response and immediate payoff of a one-week training course in terrorism awareness that he developed and delivered to constables in his district. The training boosted morale and energized trainees, who felt that they were taken seriously, were given new skills, and were assigned roles in dealing with the current national crisis. After the course, one of the trainees was told by a restaurant owner that every day a man purchased ten meals and took them to a house where it appeared no one lived. The constable investigated, police raided the house, and members of a terrorist cell were arrested.²⁵

Formally integrating local police in the collection of terrorist-related intelligence would begin with systems used to record and track information. Current regulations require police stations to maintain twenty-five registers and make daily entries, usually by hand. This system is outdated and often ignored in busy urban stations. Efforts in some provinces to computerize police station record-keeping were abandoned short of completion. A new effort is needed to introduce a computer-based system of automated record-keeping that emphasizes collecting terrorism-relevant information. Databases created by this system should be linked electronically to all stations in the district, to higher headquarters, and to counterterrorism agencies. Record-keeping and information input needs to be standardized by incorporating templates to ensure that reports include all relevant information. This system could best be installed at police stations using small, dedicated units of computer literate personnel, including civilians who are not sworn police officers. Current efforts to recruit more assistant sub-inspectors with higher education could support this program. Model police stations in Islamabad and Lahore have computerized record-keeping and station administration, but the model stations are not linked to a larger network, so the utility of their database and other information is limited.

A new effort is needed to introduce a computer-based system of automated record-keeping that emphasizes collecting terrorism-relevant information. Databases created by this system should be linked electronically to all stations in the district, to higher headquarters, and to counterterrorism agencies.

Linking to Counterterrorism Efforts

In Pakistan, provincial counterterrorism departments (CTDs) coordinate the collection, collation, and dissemination of terrorist-related intelligence and information from all sources, including the police. They also maintain watch lists of terrorist groups and carry out de-radicalization programs. Intelligence and information sharing between police stations and CTDs is done by printed communications that are distributed manually save at a few model stations that use fax machines. The system is slow and often results in the late arrival or loss of time-sensitive information in the glut of daily traffic between police stations and headquarters. This situation persists despite federal attempts to introduce new technologies designed to improve police performance and establish electronic connectivity between local police stations and provincial and national counterterrorism departments.

At the national level, the Police Records and Office Management Information System was created to computerize police station record-keeping and create databases accessible to all levels of the police hierarchy. The Pakistan Automated Finger Printing Identification

System, located in the Federal Investigation Agency in Islamabad, was envisioned as a national computerized database for fingerprints accessible from police stations, enabling quick identification of criminals, including terrorists. Unfortunately, these initiatives were not fully implemented because financial resources were inadequate and the police and political leadership inattentive.

In Punjab, the provincial government is in the process of building the Punjab Police Integrated Command Control and Communications Center in Lahore. Once completed, the center should create connectivity between provincial police units, enhancing their capacity to exchange crime and terrorism-related information. The center and efforts like the computerization of interrogation reports produced by the new Punjab Counterterrorism Force could be emulated by other provinces to improve police ability to share information. Most critical, however, will be efforts to ensure that plans on paper are implemented in fact.

Misdirection of Alternative Approaches

The government has responded to the current crisis with proposals for the creation of specialized counterterrorism forces in parallel to the existing police services. In Punjab, the country's largest province and home base of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's ruling Pakistan Muslim League, the chief minister plans to establish a new counterterrorism force (CTF) that will be part of the provincial police CTD but staffed by military personnel on loan or on contract who will receive higher salaries than their police counterparts. The new CTF will have a budget six times larger than the current provincial police CTD, and its personnel will receive better training and equipment. The CTF will take at least two and a half years to become fully operational. PSP members protested an initial move to establish the CTF outside the police, prompting an eventual reconsideration of that part of the plan.²⁶

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the government of opposition leader Imran Khan announced the creation of a new CTD that will employ 2,400 policemen, including 650 senior officers. The new force will operate separately from the regular police but will maintain seven of its own police stations in the capital and six stations throughout the province. CTD stations and the residence of its officers will be hardened against terrorist attacks. The CTD will have authority to collect intelligence, conduct investigations, and carry out counterterrorism operations. Members of the new force will receive higher salaries than their regular police counterparts. The provincial chief minister was reported to have ordered the removal of all bureaucratic obstacles so the new force could rapidly acquire proper facilities, armored vehicles, and equipment, presumably treatment different from that accorded to the regular police.²⁷

Provincial police CTDs play an important role in centralizing expertise; collecting, analyzing, and disseminating CT information; and investigating and arresting terrorist suspects. Specialized rapid response units have a critical role in responding in hostage situations and in neutralizing armed groups. Specialized CT units, such as the Punjab Elite Police Force, have been trained by army commandos and already exist in every province. There is a downside, however, to concentrating on militarized special units that draw already scarce financial, material, and personnel resources away from the regular police, thus weakening the institution responsible for general law enforcement and creating invidious comparisons between the regular police and their more favored counterparts.

Rather than sidelining the regular police, enhancing their capacity beginning at the station level offers an immediate and cost-effective means of countering terrorism and other types of violent crime. The idea that the current force can be bypassed in favor of specialized units and left in its current state runs real risks, particularly in maintaining the quality of the force. The demands of policing Pakistan's increasingly sophisticated and complex society

requires greater across-the-board investment in the police rather than concentrating the expenditure of resources on special units with an important but limited role.

Conclusion and Recommendations

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “Pakistan requires effective policing institutions, without which the path to stability, sustainable development and good governance will be impossible to achieve.”²⁸ This is particularly true in Pakistan’s megacities of Karachi and Lahore and throughout the country’s increasingly urbanized environment. Policing in urban areas requires a more modern, sophisticated, and community-oriented approach and greater technical resources than policing in rural areas. Unfortunately, the basic unit of policing and law enforcement in Pakistan—the police station—remains largely unchanged from the country’s colonial and agrarian past. This has left the country’s local police ill prepared for and largely divorced from playing an effective role in countering Pakistan’s high levels of terrorist and criminal violence.

Expanding the involvement of the police station will not be easy. Pakistan’s police station (thana) culture has proven resistant to change. Political elites have vested interests in preventing reforms that would reduce their authority and obviate opportunities to exert influence and achieve illicit financial gains. The ideas discussed in this report, especially those related to improving police-public relations would begin to remove the most odious aspects of the thana culture. Involving the local police in the national struggle against terrorism by providing new procedures, training, and equipment would improve morale and upgrade the quality of policing overall. Improving the capacity of local police stations, including the assignment of better educated and more capable personnel, would positively impact police culture. A comprehensive reform of the police station is required to achieve stability, prosperity, and effective governance.

This conclusion leads to the following recommendations:

- *The provincial civilian police should have primacy for countering terrorism, especially in Pakistan’s urban areas.* Pakistan’s army has taken the lead in battling terrorist groups in the FATA, a sparsely populated mountainous area with ample space in which to conduct military operations. It would be inappropriate to deploy the army in Pakistan’s teeming cities. Urban security is normally the responsibility of the police. In Karachi, however, primacy for counterterrorism has been assigned to the Pakistan Rangers, a federal paramilitary force composed of military personnel. In 2013, the federal government gave the Rangers authority to shoot-to-kill terrorist suspects. The result has been a number of extrajudicial killings. Assigning the urban counterterrorism mission to military forces contributes to an escalation of violence, which would be mitigated by giving this responsibility to the police.²⁹
- *The police station, which is the basic institution of law enforcement in Pakistan, should be given the mission and the resources to combat terrorism starting at the local level.* Providing a key role to the police station in controlling terrorism begins with developing a series of SOPs that define the role of local police and equip them with the authorities and the direction to perform that task. New ways of doing the business of policing must be introduced through internal information campaigns and in-service training programs to ensure that the police understand their roles and possess the skills they will need going forward. New procedures and training must sensitize police officers to be aware of indications of terrorist activities and equip them to conduct effective surveillance and to perform their duties as first responders. It is critical that this training include

Improving the capacity of local police stations, including the assignment of better educated and more capable personnel, would positively impact police culture.

an emphasis on the role of police-community relations in combating terrorism. These internal actions must be accompanied by an outreach campaign to inform the public about this effort and to seek its cooperation.

- *Police station record-keeping must be computerized and networked by introducing new requirements, procedures, equipment, and trained personnel.* The creation of a national data collection effort on terrorist-related individuals and groups begins at the level of the police station with its responsibility for the collection of information on local conditions, events, and personalities. This is now done using an antiquated system of police registers incapable of efficiently storing and retrieving information related to combating terrorism and organized crime. Modernizing this system by introducing computers and employing computer-literate personnel is long overdue and would be required even if there were no terrorist threat. Once computerized reporting units are in place, they must be networked with other stations, with higher police headquarters, and with provincial and national antiterrorism agencies. This system also must be used to pass terrorist alerts and other information from the center to the periphery so that local police are informed in a timely manner about information they can use to conduct operations and build cases against local terrorists and criminal groups.
- *Provincial counterterrorism departments should be given an enhanced role in coordinating counterterrorism reporting and activities.* Provincial CTDs already play an important role in providing expertise, collating, analyzing, and disseminating CT information and in investigating and arresting subjects. Expanding the CT authorities of police stations and enhancing their capacities would require comparable upgrades in authorities and capacities at the provincial level to the CTDs to play their role effectively. This would require strengthening the ability of the CTDs to develop and approve CT-related policies, procedures, and directives to coordinate CT-related information collection and direct CT operations.

Achieving the goal of integrating the police station into Pakistan's counterterrorism effort would use an existing resource that has been sidelined and ignored in favor of creating militarized special units that have failed to control the country's escalating violence. Creating parallel high-profile specialized units appears to offer a quick-fix solution to a complex and increasingly pervasive problem. The real solution, however, lies in empowering Pakistan's police stations to protect their communities from criminal and extremist violence through modernization and reform.

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