18th Amendment and Devolution

The passing of the 18th Amendment is arguably the most significant legislative achievement in over a decade, where Pakistan’s political parties unanimously voted for a repeal of deeply centralizing laws, including the ability of the President to dissolve the Parliament. In addition to un-doing many of the vestiges of the military rule, the Amendment also abolished the concurrent list and effectively gave the provinces sole legislative authority over many of the previously “concurrent” legislative powers. The relationship between the centre and the provinces in Pakistan is a complex one, dominated by historical issues of resource allocation, power and the 64-year-long struggle between the military-bureaucratic complex and politicians, at the provincial and local level. Passing the 18th Amendment, according to many observers, was a necessary step in regaining provincial confidence and providing genuine autonomy to the provinces. Another important development is that the role of the Council of Common Interests has been expanded, and inter-provincial coordination has been given high precedence. Many of these developments continue to be debated in the media and in an official capacity. This panel will provide an opportunity for experts to weigh in on the issues and inform public and government debate.

This panel will discuss issues that cover various aspects of the 18th Amendment and devolution, including:

- Granting ‘real’ autonomy: the political implications of a parliamentary system
- The administrative mechanism for passing ministries to the provinces: where does rule-making take place, and what are the incentives on either side? And how will the bureaucracy adapt?

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