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U.S. Foreign Policy and Security and Governance in South Asia

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American foreign policy in South Asia has focused on security, economic, and governance issues. The United States has undertaken military, diplomatic, and economic initiatives toward its objectives in these areas. This chapter briefly reviews these American interests and investments in South Asia. It looks at trends in U.S. strategic interests, development aid, and democracy objectives in the region. It thereby provides the context for examining the security and governance issues that are covered in this book.

Security Issues

U.S. security interests in South Asia, which are significantly influenced by regional and world events, have varied across the decades. They include much-examined topics such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism, less prominent issues such as South Asia's role in Indian Ocean security and United Nations (UN) peacekeeping, and emerging areas such as China's involvement in the region.

In the 1990s, nuclear proliferation was arguably the foremost U.S. security concern in the subcontinent, though embedded within broader

regional objectives. Just after India's May 1998 nuclear tests, administration officials noted that, in prior years, they had worked "to broaden and deepen our ties with India and the rest of South Asia, and to pursue our non-proliferation objectives vigorously within the context of our overall relationship," but, after the nuclear tests, they "need[ed] to put much of the cooperative side of our agenda on hold and deal with the consequences of India's actions."¹ The Clinton administration engaged in diplomatic talks with, and substantially reduced economic aid to, India and Pakistan in an unsuccessful effort to get them to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and undertake other nuclear restraints. Subsequently, in 1999 and 2001–2002, the Clinton and Bush administrations, respectively, were successful in crisis management, helping prevent India-Pakistan military tensions from expanding into larger conventional battles, which American officials feared could have led to the use of nuclear weapons.

After September 11, 2001, the issues of terrorism and violent extremism, the war in Afghanistan, and the "Af-Pak" (Afghanistan-Pakistan) policy were the most pressing U.S. concerns in the region. From 2001 to 2020, U.S. military expenditures in Afghanistan were an estimated \$800–\$900 billion; U.S. troop fatalities were near 2,400; and U.S. aid to Afghanistan was about \$140 billion, one-fourth (\$35 billion) for development and three-fifths (\$86 billion) in security aid to fund the Afghan security forces; annual disbursements were typically \$4 billion in security aid and \$1 billion in economic aid.² In the same period, the United States provided \$14 billion in coalition support funds, \$11 billion in economic aid, and \$8 billion in security aid to Pakistan, toward "our primary goal of helping Pakistan reach its objective of becoming a moderate, prosperous state, and preventing terrorism—directly through security programs and also through democracy, development and outreach programs that combat extremism and instability."³ Stability in Pakistan became a major U.S. interest, especially since state failure in Pakistan would increase risks of the transfer of Pakistan's nuclear assets.

The Bush administration simultaneously advanced relations with India, influenced by the same factors that had guided prior American engagement with New Delhi—India's democratic credentials and its potential role in advancing U.S. strategic objectives.⁴ The week before September 11, 2001, in his first public remarks as ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill noted that "President Bush has a global approach to U.S.-India relations, consistent with the rise of India as a world power"; that there was much appeal in a "democratic India, a billion-strong, heterogeneous, multilingual, sec-

ular . . . [country that could be] a bridgehead of effervescent liberty on the Asian continent”; and that the United States would partner with India to promote its democratic values and advance its strategic interests.⁵ To further a partnership with India, the administration made a huge diplomatic investment in a civilian nuclear agreement. This agreement exempted India from long-standing U.S. nonproliferation policy against civilian nuclear transfers to countries without full-scope safeguards. India thereby became the sixth country in the world—alongside the five nuclear weapons states defined in the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)—that could keep nuclear weapons and still engage in civilian nuclear transactions. The Bush administration also convened meetings of the international Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to gain its acceptance of this approach.

During the first term of the Obama administration, the United States announced its support for India’s entry into the NSG and permanent membership in the UN Security Council. Still, India slid down Washington’s global priority list, and there were some disappointments in U.S.-India relations.⁶ In particular, India’s nuclear liability legislation dissuaded American firms from reactor sales, possibly worth \$50 billion, and India rejected American fighter aircraft for a potential \$15 billion arms deal. U.S.-India strategic ties regained momentum during the Obama administration’s second term. Thereafter, the Trump administration gave India an important place in its Asia policy, noting that India had a “leadership role in Indian Ocean security and throughout the broader region,” and that this helps in a situation where “a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place in the Indo-Pacific region.”⁷ The Biden foreign policy team, during the 2020 election campaign, affirmed that it “will place a high priority on continuing to strengthen the U.S.-India relationship”; it added that “as the world’s oldest and largest democracies, the United States and India are bound together by our shared democratic values.”⁸ The administration’s March 2021 national security guidance document mentioned that it “will deepen our partnership with India.”⁹

Beyond these high-profile issues, U.S. policymakers acknowledged South Asia’s role in other areas such as UN peacekeeping. For example, a 1995 congressional testimony noted that “We would not have imagined even five years ago that shared approaches to conflict resolution would have put South Asian and U.S. peacekeepers side-by-side.”¹⁰ Over the years, South Asian countries made strong contributions on this issue. In 2010, the top three peacekeeping contributors were Pakistan (10,000), Bangla-

desh (10,000), and India (9,000), with Nepal ranked sixth (5,000); these four states contributed one-third of the 100,000 peacekeepers worldwide. In 2020, four of the top six peacekeeping contributors were Bangladesh (6,500), Nepal (5,600), India (5,500), and Pakistan (4,500), accounting for one-fourth of the 82,000 peacekeepers worldwide.

U.S. policymakers also recognized that South Asian states could help in maritime security because of their location along sea lanes linking East Asia with the Middle East and Europe. Washington sought to “strengthen the capacity of emerging partners in South Asia, including the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka,” and to “establish a new initiative with South Asian partners modeled on the Maritime Security Initiative in Southeast Asia to improve maritime domain awareness, interoperability, and data sharing with the United States.”¹¹ The U.S. Navy undertook significant exchanges with India and smaller-scale initiatives with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. It made port calls to these states; participated in exercises with their navies to build cooperation on humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and maritime security; and sought to bolster their patrol, interdiction, and search and rescue abilities. In addition, India and Pakistan contributed one or two frigates each to the international antipiracy coalition in the late 2000s and early 2010s.

Security, Economics, and China in South Asia

Since the late 2010s, Washington gave more attention to an issue combining economic and security dimensions—China’s role in South Asia, especially via its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) infrastructure investments.¹² A 2019 administration testimony highlighted concerns on the issue, stating that “We cannot allow China . . . to subvert our partners through unsustainable infrastructure projects that push economies into unsustainable debt, or by contributing to an erosion of transparency and democratic norms.”¹³

Three background points on this issue should be noted. First, Washington was concerned about Chinese investments and influence across Asia and globally, rather than just in South Asia. Accordingly, the U.S. approach toward China’s investments in South Asia drew upon its general foreign policy response on the issue. Washington recognized that it could not counter Chinese financing dollar for dollar. Instead, it sought to create greater awareness about the costs and debt burdens of borrowing from China; it developed the Blue Dot Network with Japan and Aus-

tralia to certify the quality of infrastructure projects; and it highlighted that Western donors offered better and more transparent aid compared to China, especially since Western development aid was mostly through grants rather than loans. It then suggested three alternatives to Chinese financing. One was traditional U.S. bilateral aid, which was mostly not for infrastructure, though additional Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) possibilities covered some infrastructure projects in Nepal and Sri Lanka.¹⁴ A second alternative was a refurbished U.S. development finance corporation, created in 2018–2019, with an overall lending capacity of \$60 billion. Still, this institution and its predecessor did not finance many projects in South Asia beyond India—it had only a few projects in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka.¹⁵ A third was U.S. allies and partners (Japan, Australia, India, European countries, and multilateral banks) and the private sector.¹⁶ In practice, in the late 2010s and early 2020s, infrastructure investment through these avenues was much less than that disbursed by China for most South Asian states.

A second general point is that the connections between economic interdependence, debt, and political or security influence are not straightforward. For example, the magnitude of donor or lender influence does not correlate well with the size of donor or lender investments in particular countries or with the causal mechanisms enabling influence (debt traps, elite capture, socialization, or other avenues).¹⁷ Further, the notion of Chinese-induced debt traps is contested because countries borrow from multiple lenders—China, Western donors, multilateral banks, and private bond holders—and their debt and debt sustainability problems arise from the collective lending by all these sources rather than from China alone.¹⁸

A third issue is that China's political, economic, and security ties vary widely across states within a region. For example, states in Southeast Asia differ considerably in their political leaning toward or distance from China, and China's economic ties are much greater than its security links with the region.¹⁹ Similar trends are seen in the Middle East.²⁰ And, as noted above, the connection between most of these economic or security links and Chinese "influence" is ambiguous.

The above points provide the background for analyzing China's economic ties and investments in South Asian countries. On debt issues, analyses for the late 2010s indicated that overall debt distress and vulnerability to Chinese debt was relatively higher for Pakistan and Maldives, moderate for Sri Lanka, and lesser for Bangladesh and Nepal.²¹ Other data for this period are indicated below, showing cumulative infrastruc-

ture investment where the data are unclear; cumulative arms imports; and single-year goods trade (2018 data). They suggest that China's economic and security links were substantial with Pakistan, but relatively moderate or lesser with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. India also made some infrastructure investments in these states as part of its regional connectivity strategy, and a handful of these were cofinanced by Japan.²² And India had more security interaction than China with Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Maldives, often involving joint military exercises and the training of military officers.

For Bangladesh, about half of its \$40 billion exports were to European countries and one-sixth to the United States; one-third of its \$55 billion imports were from China and one-sixth from India. Further, while China was a large investor, India, Japan, and Russia also had substantial infrastructure investments in Bangladesh. China committed \$26 billion, though by 2020 its actual investment was about \$10 billion, for projects such as the Padma River road and rail bridge, an industrial park, and a deep-sea port.²³ Japan's estimated \$5–7 billion investment (some of it part of its regular development aid) included a deep-sea port near Chittagong to be completed in the early 2020s, a new terminal at Dhaka airport, modernizing the Dhaka metro rail system, and a power project.²⁴ Russia is building two nuclear plants, costing \$12 billion, scheduled to start in 2024–2025. India, in 2017, committed to investments worth about \$9 billion, including \$2 billion for the power sector and \$4.5 billion for seventeen infrastructure projects (covering the upgrade of three ports, an airport, new power transmission lines, and railway lines and equipment); it is unclear how much of this materialized by the early 2020s. Also, about three-fourths of Bangladesh's arms procurements were from China, mostly naval craft such as two submarines and four frigates, and one-sixth were from Russia, mostly armored personnel carriers and Mi-17 transport helicopters.

Sri Lanka's \$11 billion exports were mainly to the United States (one-fourth); three European countries—Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy (collectively about one-fifth); and India (one-tenth). Its \$17 billion imports were mostly from India (one-fifth), China (one-fifth), and East Asian states Singapore, Japan, and Malaysia (collectively about one-fifth). China was Sri Lanka's main infrastructure investor, with investments worth \$5.4 billion for fifteen projects in the pre-BRI period (2006–2012), and \$6.8 billion for thirteen projects in the BRI period (2013–2019).²⁵ The latter included less controversial items such as the southern and central road ex-

pressways, as well as the controversial Hambantota Port (which was leased to China when Sri Lanka could not repay the debt), and the nearby, largely unused, Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport. India committed lines of credit worth \$1.3 billion for Sri Lanka's railway sector. Other major development aid donors (though it is unclear how much of their aid covered infrastructure investment) included Japan and the World Bank. And Sri Lanka's main arms suppliers were China, the United States, and India—it received a 3,000-ton U.S. Coast Guard cutter in 2019, a 2,300-ton Chinese frigate in 2019, and bought two 2,300-ton Indian patrol vessels in 2017–2018. Further, about 500 foreign vessels made port calls to Sri Lanka in the 2010s, with half of these from India (110), Japan (80), and China (40).²⁶

For Nepal, three-fifths of its \$10 billion imports are from India, and three-fifths of its \$800 million exports are to India. India has traditionally been Nepal's dominant infrastructure investor, though in the late 2010s Chinese investments were larger than India's, involving an airport, a hydropower plant, and other projects.

In Maldives, China's investments of about \$1.7 billion (including airport modernization and a highway and bridge) gave rise to debt burdens.²⁷ India, after a new Maldivian government assumed office in late 2018, extended about \$1.4 billion to Maldives, including \$200 million for budgetary support, a \$400 million currency swap, and \$800 million for infrastructure projects such as a bridge between Maldivian islands. The timeline for disbursing these funds is unclear. Chinese security interaction with Maldives was limited to occasional "goodwill visits" by naval vessels; Maldives has more substantial security exchanges with the United States and India. U.S.-Maldives military exercises in the 2010s simulated events ranging from terrorist control over an island to emergency medical assistance; the United States and Maldives also signed a framework agreement for defense cooperation in 2020.

Democracy and Development

The issues of democracy, human rights, and development have been longstanding U.S. foreign policy objectives in South Asia (notwithstanding critiques that Washington supported military regimes and downplayed human rights in certain cases). They are routinely highlighted in U.S. policy statements. For example, in a 1995 testimony, administration officials noted that "supporting and strengthening democracy remains a fundamental [U.S.] aim in South Asia"; that, beyond India, "over 200 million

South Asians live in countries with revitalized or newly installed and still fragile democratic institutions. [W]e are working to reinforce those institutions”; that “sustainable development is a critical need for South Asia”; that the United States sought to “encourag[e] free market economies and U.S. trade and investment”; and that “advancing universally recognized human rights in South Asia is a key U.S. interest.”²⁸

These same issues were prominent in subsequent years, with nuances to reflect democratic advances or backsliding in particular countries. For example, a 2004 testimony noted that “a return to full democracy in Pakistan is central to long-term stability.”²⁹ It observed that, in Bangladesh, “political rivalries” and “corruption” could “threaten democratic stability and impede economic growth,” which could “increase . . . the attractiveness of radical alternatives.” In Sri Lanka, the United States aimed for “providing both an incentive to peace and a boost to reconstruction and reconciliation in war-torn areas.” It also noted that “a fragile democracy is at stake in Nepal, where a Maoist insurgency has unraveled the weak political and economic threads that held it together.” And it mentioned that, in Maldives, the United States was “encouraged by the proposed sweeping constitutional changes designed to strengthen democratic institutions and human rights and head off radicalism.”

Subsequently, in 2011, administration testimony noted that in Sri Lanka, “the Government’s worrisome record on human rights, weakening of democratic institutions and practices, and the way in which it conducted the final months of its conflict against the Tamil Tigers hamper our ability to fully engage.”³⁰ It added that “Nepal continues its dramatic transformation from a caste-bound constitutional monarchy, wracked by a bloody Maoist insurgency . . . to a federal republic that represents and includes all minorities and ethnicities.” It also noted that “we seek to reinforce the peaceful democratic transition that occurred in the Maldives in 2008.”

In 2016, administration officials noted that, in Bangladesh, “many of the gains that Bangladesh has made in human development and economic growth risk being undermined by the escalating extremist violence.”³¹ On Sri Lanka, they stated that “our bilateral relationship has been transformed over the past year, thanks to a unity government [that is] committed to reforms that can benefit all Sri Lankans.” On Maldives, they mentioned that “we remain greatly concerned about the narrowing of legitimate political space: too many opposition politicians still remain behind bars. . . . We are also concerned about the fertile ground for recruitment that violent extremists find in Maldives.”

A 2019 congressional testimony stated that South Asia “includes several of the world’s largest democracies, [and] offers growing opportunities for trade and investment benefitting U.S. firms.”³² Still, in a separate testimony that year, administration officials (Robert Destro, assistant secretary for human rights, and Alice Wells, acting assistant secretary for South Asia) expressed concerns that “as a whole, South Asia has experienced backsliding on democracy and human rights in recent months and years.”³³

These officials observed that, while “India’s 2019 elections were the largest single democratic exercise in human history . . . , we are compelled to underscore human rights issues of increasing concern precisely because, if left unchecked, they could undermine India’s democratic success.”³⁴ These concerns were the “detention of local political leaders and activists” in Kashmir and the religious criteria in India’s citizenship amendment act,³⁵ as well as “violence and discrimination against minorities in India, including cow vigilante attacks against members of the Dalit and Muslim communities.”³⁶

On Pakistan, the administration noted serious concerns about “restrictions on civil society, overly strict regulations on international NGOs, severe harassment of journalists, blasphemy laws . . . and overt discrimination against members of minority groups.”³⁷ It also noted “restrictions on the Ahmadiyya Muslim community,” and arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances of “Pashtun rights activists, as well as Sindhi and Baloch nationalists.”³⁸

On Sri Lanka, the administration highlighted concerns about the stalling of “constitutional reform,” “a truth and reconciliation commission,” and a “credible judicial mechanism to address accountability for atrocities [at the end of the civil war].”³⁹ It also noted concerns “about violence against members of religious minorities, such as members of the Christian and Muslim communities, particularly in the aftermath of the April 21 [terrorist] attacks.”

On Bangladesh, it stated that “the most recent elections in Bangladesh were neither free nor fair and were marred by irregularities,” and that “we retain acute concerns about security forces suppressing, intimidating and detaining civil society, members of the media, and political opposition.”⁴⁰

On other cases, the administration noted that “Nepal is making progress in its democratic journey,” and that “we are working with the government to advance its transition to federalism.”⁴¹ It added that, in Maldives, “the 2018 election of President Solih ushered in a new chapter in Maldivian history and placed the country on a clear upward trajectory on democratic governance and human rights metrics.”⁴²

In a 2021 hearing, administration officials reiterated their concerns with democratic backsliding in South Asia, noting that “constraints to freedom of expression, association, and religion” were undermining democracy in the region.⁴³

A modest amount of foreign aid has been applied in pursuit of American political and economic development objectives for South Asia. In the mid and late 2010s, annual U.S. economic aid averaged about \$400 million collectively for Bangladesh (\$190 million, focused on economic development and health); India (\$90 million, mostly for health programs); Nepal (\$90 million, two-thirds for economic development and one-third for health programs); Sri Lanka (\$40 million, mostly for economic development); and Maldives (\$3 million).⁴⁴ It was a higher \$600–700 million for Pakistan—two-thirds economic and one-third security aid—which declined to no security aid and about \$100 million economic aid in fiscal year 2018.⁴⁵ Overall, the United States accounted for one-sixth of the \$3.4 billion annual international grant aid to Bangladesh (\$1.2 billion), India (\$1.1 billion), Nepal (\$800–900 million), and Sri Lanka (\$250 million).⁴⁶ It contributed one-third to one-fourth of the more than \$2 billion annual international economic aid to Pakistan before its aid cuts in the late 2010s, resulting in annual international aid to Pakistan then dropping to about \$1.5 billion.⁴⁷ Also, while South Asia received only about 5 percent of U.S. foreign aid in the late 1990s (95 percent went to other regions of the world), its share increased to 16 percent in fiscal year 2007 and 15 percent in fiscal year 2017, largely because of aid to Afghanistan and Pakistan; these percentages declined after U.S. aid cuts to Pakistan and aid reductions to Afghanistan starting in fiscal year 2018.

The substantial international economic aid to South Asia reflects the significant development challenges in the region. The per capita GDP for the region’s almost 1.8 billion population (2019 data), measured by purchasing power, was only near \$6,500—varying across Sri Lanka (\$13,500), India (\$7,000), Pakistan (\$5,000), Bangladesh (\$5,000), Nepal (\$3,500), and Afghanistan (\$2,000). In comparison, per capita GDP for Southeast Asia’s 650 million persons (excluding high-income Singapore and Brunei) was \$12,000, while China’s was almost \$17,000. And Human Development Index scores were 0.63 for South Asia—varying across Afghanistan (0.50), Pakistan (0.56), Nepal (0.60), Bangladesh (0.61), India (0.64), and Sri Lanka (0.78)—compared to 0.67 for Southeast Asia and 0.76 for China.

Another indicator for development is the Fragile States Index (on a

scale of 1–120, where 120 is the highest fragility), which shows that fragility levels ranged from moderate to high for South Asian states. The relevant scores for 2019 varied across India (74), Sri Lanka (84), Nepal (85), Bangladesh (87), Pakistan (94), and Afghanistan (105). In comparison, fragility scores for China and many Southeast Asian states were 70–75.

On issues of democracy, scores in South Asia are slightly greater than in Southeast Asia, where the averages are depressed by some authoritarian states. Thus, for 2020, the Freedom House political freedom score on a 1–100 scale ranged from moderate levels in India (67, declining from 71 in 2019, and 76 in 2018), Sri Lanka (56), and Nepal (56) to lower scores in Bangladesh (39), Pakistan (37), and Afghanistan (27). Scores in Southeast Asia were 48–59 for the top four and 13–30 for the lowest five countries, while China's score was 10. On the Democracy Index (on a 1–10 scale), scores in 2019 varied across India (6.90, down from 7.23 in 2018), Sri Lanka (6.27), Bangladesh (5.88), Nepal (5.25), Pakistan (4.25), and Afghanistan (2.97).⁴⁸ In Southeast Asia, the top five country scores were 6.0–7.1, while the lowest four were 2.1–3.5, and China was 2.26.

As alluded to above, the United States also has an economic interest in South Asia, especially in India. It has urged South Asian states to open their economies to greater U.S. investment and exports, and called upon India to reduce the trade deficit (U.S.-India goods and services trade was \$146 billion (2019), when U.S. exports to India were \$59 billion and imports were \$87 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$28 billion). U.S.-India relations have also included discussions and initiatives in science and technology, health, energy, people-to-people relations, immigration, and climate change. These issues are not discussed in this volume.

To summarize, U.S. foreign policy toward South Asia is impacted by regional security issues—ranging from China-India and Pakistan-India relations to nuclear stability—and also has development and governance objectives. Some of these issues are examined in this book.

A Tour of the Book

Pakistan, India, and U.S. Strategic Interests

The next chapter, chapter 2, examines the fit between the expectations and reality in U.S. strategic relations with India and Pakistan. The substantial U.S. diplomatic effort to build relations with India correlated with moderate alignment between New Delhi's policies and U.S. strategic objectives. New Delhi's policies converged with U.S. interests, albeit to a

lesser magnitude than U.S. expectations, in the cases of balancing China, bilateral defense collaboration, Indian Ocean security, and oil sanctions against Iran. However, contrary to U.S. preferences, New Delhi persisted in arms deals with Russia.

The huge U.S. economic aid package to Pakistan likely had some positive impact on development but did not bring commensurate strategic rewards, instead correlating with significant divergence between Pakistan's foreign policies and U.S. security interests for much of the 2000s–2010s.⁴⁹ Thus, in Afghanistan, Pakistan's support for the Taliban strongly diverged from the U.S. strategy of fighting that group, but when the U.S. strategy changed to talking with the Taliban, Pakistan's approach converged with that of the United States. On China, there has been manageable divergence between Pakistan's policies and U.S. interests, but this could worsen. And on securing Pakistan's nuclear assets from theft and transfer, Pakistan took positive steps that converged with U.S. objectives, albeit with limitations.

Sino-Indian Security Relations

Chapter 3 examines security issues in Sino-Indian relations.⁵⁰ It notes that, from the standpoint of New Delhi, China constitutes the principal long-term security threat to India. The threat stems from China's unresolved border dispute with India, military capabilities, behavior in India's South Asian neighborhood, hostility toward India in various international forums, and the negative outlook on India's ties with the United States. Looking ahead, the chapter argues that as long as Sino-American relations remain troubled, the United States could court India as a viable strategic partner in Asia, and India's policymakers could follow a hedging strategy with the United States versus China. On the other hand, if China keeps increasing its economic, military, and diplomatic capabilities versus India, then India would end up in a situation of permanent strategic inferiority versus China in the broader Asian region, with its reach mostly confined to South Asia. Here, on some basic indicators, China widened the gap with India—between 2010 and 2019, India's GDP increased by 70 percent from \$1.7 trillion to \$2.9 trillion, while China's rose by 135 percent from \$6.0 trillion to \$14.3 trillion. China's GDP was 3.6 times as large as India's in 2010 and 5.0 times as large by 2019; to revert to the 2010 figure of 3.6, India's annual economic growth would have to be 3 percent greater than China's for a decade, which is unlikely in the 2020s.

Political Hardening in India and China

Chapter 4 looks at governance issues in China and India. In authoritarian China (political freedom score of 10), there has been political hardening under the leadership of Xi Jinping. As for democratic India, its political freedom score regressed to 67 (2020) from 76 (2018), leading to concerns that India was moving from “liberal” toward “ill” and “illiberal” democracy.⁵¹ These developments have significant implications for U.S. foreign policy and global governance. The Biden administration’s national security adviser noted (a year before he assumed this role) that political hardening in China can exert a pull toward autocracy and authoritarianism in other countries, and China’s support for autocrats and democratic backsliders would challenge American values.⁵² This administration’s first national security document repeatedly stated that “democracy is essential to meeting the challenges of our time,” and mentioned a policy objective of “standing up for our values abroad, including by uniting the world’s democracies to combat threats to free societies.”⁵³ Others note that India’s democratic backsliding could make it difficult for the United States to credibly position India as an alternative to Beijing’s authoritarian model.⁵⁴ Further, one aspect of U.S. policy in Asia emphasizes cooperation among democracies, including the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. Despite India’s democratic backsliding in 2019–2020, the Quad countries advanced their arrangement in 2021 through a national leaders’ meeting, though further such backsliding could make it harder to position the Quad as a concert of genuinely liberal democracies.

Cycles of Cooperation and Defection in India-Pakistan Relations

Chapter 5 examines India-Pakistan diplomatic talks (cooperation) and their breakdown (defection). Between 1996 and 2016, New Delhi and Islamabad were involved in three cycles of cooperation and defection, influenced by systemic and domestic factors. The main systemic forces inducing negotiations were the desire for military stability and the quest to demonstrate international responsibility after their nuclear tests, as well as U.S. diplomatic cajoling. Domestic factors, such as an economic growth agenda and the worry over chronic terrorism, also underlined the need for cooperation. Other domestic factors, primarily divisions within ruling groups in both countries, meant that national leaders could not count on

their counterparts to deliver on key objectives, and negotiations repeatedly ran aground. For India, the crucial objective was Pakistan reining in cross-border terrorism; for Pakistan, it was India seriously engaging on a Kashmir settlement. The chapter concludes with the observation that, despite its periodic interventions, the United States had neither the capacity nor willingness to bridge the India-Pakistan commitment gap. The chapter does not cover events in the early 2020s. In 2021, Pakistan and India took limited steps toward a dialogue and revived a ceasefire agreement to halt cross-border firing.

Nuclear Stability in South Asia

Chapter 6 examines two key nuclear challenges in South Asia. The first is the prospect of an India-Pakistan military crisis escalating to the use of nuclear weapons. India-Pakistan crises in the late 2010s were less severe than those in 1999–2002; thus, there was a lesser probability of nuclear use in these latter crises. Still, during these episodes, both sides ratcheted up their planned and actual military action; such action could undermine crisis stability in the future. The second issue concerns arms buildups. Here, India and Pakistan enlarged their nuclear arsenals at modest rates in the 2000s and 2010s. This did not, and future similar rates of growth would not necessarily, undermine basic deterrence stability. Over the long term, however, arms buildups could have negative consequences that could worsen crisis stability and complicate the challenge of nuclear security. Finally, the India-China dyad raises fewer nuclear stability concerns than the India-Pakistan dyad.

Indian Air Force Modernization

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has twenty-nine combat aircraft squadrons (each typically having sixteen aircraft, plus trainers and reserves), comprising thirteen Sukhoi-30, three MiG-29, six Jaguar, three Mirage-2000, two Rafale, and two Indian Light Combat Aircraft / Tejas Mark 1 squadrons. Not counted in these numbers are the last three MiG-21 squadrons to be retired around 2022–2023. Beyond these, the IAF plans to acquire four squadrons with eighty-three Tejas Mark 1As between 2024 and 2028. It would still fall short of its aspiration for forty combat squadrons, and this problem would be compounded by the early 2030s, when the MiG-29s, Mirage-2000s, and Jaguars—which all began midlife upgrades in the late

2010s—would approach retirement. To make up for its fighter deficit, the IAF plans to procure some combination of 114 medium multirole combat fighters (six squadrons), 125 or more fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft made in India (seven squadrons), and 100–125 Tejas Mark 2s (five or six squadrons). Any competition for the medium multirole aircraft could involve several contenders—a 2018 request for information on this issue generated responses from the Eurofighter Typhoon, French Rafale, Swedish Gripen, Russian MiG-35 and Sukhoi-35, and American F-18 and F-16/F-21.

Chapter 7 examines the above issues in IAF modernization. It covers Indian Air Force capabilities and limitations for conventional operations versus Pakistan and China, the pathologies in India's weapons acquisition policies, and their implications for the aircraft India would select to modernize its fleet. The chapter also discusses how the United States could assist India's air force, such as by transferring the C-17 transport aircraft production line to India, helping with the redesign of the Tejas Mark 2, and building up India's drone fleet.

Pakistan's Political Culture and Implications for Democracy

Political development is sometimes conceptualized as the development of institutions and of political culture, and political culture is one of five components determining a state's democracy score in some indexes. Chapter 8 notes that a study of Pakistan's political culture is essential for a full appreciation of the country's long and difficult struggle with governance, above all in its experiences with democracy. Certain deep-seated values in Pakistan can promote national unity and comity but also contribute to civic intolerance and violence. In the popular culture, attitudes of distrust, detachment, distortion, and denial serve as negative influences on democracy. Beyond its popular culture, Pakistan's political makeup contains distinctive political subcultures for its urban educated middle class, its bureaucracy, and the military. These can drive Pakistan's political reform agenda but also pose obstacles to change. Despite the many elements of Pakistan's political culture militating against the creation of a well-governed polity, the country's founding ideas, liberal aspirations, and resilience stand as redeeming political and social features.

*Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges and
the Insurgency in Balochistan*

From 2000 to 2020, about 65,000 persons were killed in militancy and political violence in Pakistan—over 20,000 civilians, 7,000–8,000 security forces, and 33,000 militants.⁵⁵ The civilian fatalities were mostly in Khyber province, including the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) (47 percent), followed by Sindh (24 percent), Balochistan (21 percent), and Punjab (8 percent), while security force fatalities were largely in Khyber province (64 percent), followed by Balochistan (21 percent) and Sindh (9 percent). Much of the violence in Khyber/FATA and Punjab involved groups fighting the Pakistani state under the umbrella of the Pakistani Taliban, who also undertook attacks in other provinces. Violence in Sindh centered around sectarian conflict in Karachi, and violence in Balochistan was mostly linked to Baloch insurgents. Still, 87 percent of the 65,000 fatalities occurred in 2007–2015, and terrorist incidents in Pakistan declined considerably by the late 2010s. In the two years 2019–2020, about 310 civilians and 315 security force personnel were killed in militant violence—a large number of civilian fatalities were in Balochistan (170) and Khyber province (90), and security force fatalities were also mostly in Balochistan (150) and Khyber province (130).

The above information provides the context for chapter 9, which examines the insurgency in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The chapter first traces the emergence of Baloch nationalism in relation to the broader nation- and state-building endeavors in Pakistan, endeavors that have disregarded local identities and suppressed competing claims for political legitimacy and power. Second, it examines the sources of conflict and the motivations of Baloch leaders, who have sometimes cooperated with, and on other occasions resorted to armed resistance against, the central government. It also explores the "resource curse": Balochis have long complained that the province, though resource-rich, exercises little control over the earnings from its resources. Third, the chapter analyzes the state's responses, from cooptation to coercion to counterinsurgency measures. It concludes by looking at the implications of the conflict for Pakistan's security and foreign policy.

*Internal Security Threats in Other States:
Learning from Comparative Responses*

Internal security threats have resulted in thousands of fatalities in South Asia. An estimated 160,000 persons have been killed in the war in Afghanistan since 2001—45,000 civilians, 60,000 Afghan security forces, 3,500 U.S. and coalition forces, and tens of thousands of insurgents.⁵⁶ Elsewhere in South Asia, for 2000–2020, fatalities from terrorism, political violence, and civil war were high in Pakistan (65,000); India (45,000—14,000 civilians, 7,000 security forces, and 23,000 insurgents); and Sri Lanka (41,000—12,000 civilians, 5,500 security forces, and 22,000 insurgents); and somewhat fewer in Nepal (14,000—1,200 civilians, 2,400 security forces, and 10,300 insurgents) and Bangladesh (2,300—780 civilians, 80 security forces, and 1,400 extremists).⁵⁷ In most cases, the 2000s and early 2010s were much more violent than the late 2010s and early 2020s (the exception was Afghanistan, where civilian and security force fatalities greatly increased since the mid-2010s).

In India, the 45,000 fatalities were largely in Kashmir (21,000, three-fourths of these in 2000–2005) and northeast India (11,000, four-fifths in 2000–2009), or due to Maoist violence (10,000, half in 2005–2011) or Islamist/other terrorism (1,300, two-thirds in 2005–2008). In Sri Lanka, the fatalities occurred during that country's civil war, mostly in 2000–2001 and 2006–2009, and Sri Lanka then faced virtually no domestic terrorism until the April 2019 Islamist terrorist attack, which killed 260 civilians.⁵⁸ In Nepal, the violence was largely linked to the Maoist insurgency in 2000–2006. In Bangladesh, the fatalities were equally distributed among left-wing extremism (mostly in 2004–2009) and Islamist terrorism (which heightened in 2002–2005 and 2013–2017), though terrorist-related fatalities were in the single digits in 2019–2020.⁵⁹

The above data provide the context for chapter 10, which examines two types of internal security threats in South Asia's less-examined states—insurgencies around identity and marginalization, contrasting Nepal and a nearby Southeast Asian state (Myanmar), and preventing and countering violent extremism, illustrated in Maldives and Bangladesh.

Nepal witnessed a successful nationally led peace process, with the 2006 peace agreement culminating in a new constitution ten years later, and with the main insurgent group integrated into the political system and the army. Myanmar, in contrast, has seen a stalled peace process. Such cases suggest that South Asian states and their neighbors have not applied

lessons from other peacemaking and peacebuilding cases. Additionally, many subnational conflicts in South Asia originate from accumulated grievances over perceptions of marginalization, prolonged local violence and internal displacement over land and natural resources, and environmental damage. Addressing these conflict drivers can help both peace and development.

On the issue of radicalization and violent extremism, Bangladesh and Maldives were, despite some tactical successes in the late 2010s, still searching for a long-term strategy to keep aggrieved individuals from joining extremist groups. Such a strategy could involve engaging three constituencies that have been successful in pulling alienated individuals away from extremism: youth (especially on social media), women (especially within their families and communities), and faith-based leaders.

Summing Up

The security and governance landscape in South Asia involves some complex interstate and intrastate issues, and these have significant implications for the region as well as for U.S. foreign policy in the region. In most countries, internal security threats from terrorist and militant groups appeared less severe in the late 2010s and early 2020s, compared to the 2000s and early 2010s, and such trends can help stability and development. Still, democracy in the region saw progress but also some backsliding. And U.S. security objectives in the region encountered both setbacks and advances. For example, despite a heavy economic and military investment, the United States did not accomplish its major objective of defeating the Taliban in Afghanistan. Moreover, the considerable U.S. aid package to Pakistan did not bridge U.S.-Pakistan disagreement and divergence on China and Afghanistan. On the other hand, U.S. efforts to build a partnership with India brought about moderate alignment between India's policies and U.S. strategic interests.

Overall, America's South Asia policy in the 2000s and early 2010s was significantly focused on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India-Pakistan issues. These issues continued to be important in the mid-2010s and 2020s, though Washington also focused on other issues such as maritime security (involving several of South Asia's less-examined states) and India's role in Asia and in balancing China. The following chapters examine these issues.

NOTES

1. Karl Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, May 13, 1998.

2. Congressional Research Service, *Afghanistan: Background and Policy Brief*, June 25, 2020. The \$4 billion yearly U.S. security aid funded three-fourths of the Afghan security force budget, with the balance of this budget coming from U.S. allies (\$1 billion) and the Afghan government (\$500 million). U.S. economic aid to Afghanistan averaged \$1 billion annually in the early and mid-2010s, but was about \$500 million by the late 2010s. In 2021, after the Taliban took power in Afghanistan, the United States anticipated spending \$6 billion for humanitarian and refugee assistance.

3. Christina B. Rocca, Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, Statement before the House Committee on International Relations, June 22, 2004.

4. As a historical example, the Reagan administration pursued its limited opening to India because its status as “the world’s largest democracy” appealed to “pro-democracy ideologues,” and for realpolitik considerations. Stephen P. Cohen, *The South Asia Papers* (Brookings, 2016), p. 21.

5. Robert Blackwill, “The Future of US-India Relations,” Remarks to the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce and Indo-American Society, Mumbai, September 6, 2001.

6. Nicholas Burns, “Passage to India: What Washington Can Do to Revive Relations with New Delhi,” *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 5 (September/October 2014).

7. The White House, *A New National Security Strategy for a New Era*, December 18, 2017.

8. See “Joe Biden’s Agenda for the Indian American Community,” <https://joebiden.com/indian-americans/>.

9. The White House, “Interim National Security Guidance,” March 3, 2021, www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/.

10. Statement by Robin Raphel, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, March 7, 1995.

11. See a document titled, “US Strategic Framework for the IndoPacific,” released by Robert C. O’Brien, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, January 5, 2021.

12. Jennifer Hillman and David Sacks, *China’s Belt and Road: Implications for the United States* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

13. Statement by Alice G. Wells, Senior Bureau Official for South and Central Asian Affairs, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee for Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, “U.S. Interests in South Asia and the FY 2020 Budget,” June 13, 2019.

14. The United States and Nepal signed a \$500 million five-year Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact in 2017, for power and road/highway

projects. At the time of this writing in 2021, Nepal had not formally approved the arrangement. For Sri Lanka, the MCC approved a five-year, \$480 million package in 2019 but discontinued it in December 2020. Sri Lanka stalled on accepting the package in 2019–2020 and stated in early 2021 that it would not sign the compact (these projects focused on transportation in the capital and between the capital and other regions; and private and public sector land management, related to land use for agriculture, services, and industrial investors).

15. From 2007 to mid-2021, it supported projects worth \$2.5 billion in India (including \$1.2 billion since 2019); \$636 million in Pakistan (but none since 2019); \$175 million in Afghanistan (but only \$0.5 million since 2019); \$60 million in Sri Lanka (including \$40 million since 2019); \$2 million in Nepal; and \$1 million in Bangladesh. This information is compiled from the website of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, www.dfc.gov/our-impact/all-active-projects.

16. In 2021, the United States announced an initiative whereby the G7 countries, like-minded partners, and the private sector would mobilize hundreds of billions of dollars for infrastructure projects in developing countries, with a focus on climate change, health, digital technology, and gender equity. The amount of this financing that would be directed to South Asia remains unclear.

17. See, for example, Theodor Tudoroiu, ed., *China's International Socialization of Political Elites in the Belt and Road Initiative* (London: Routledge, 2021); Jordan Calinoff and David Gordon, "Port Investments in the Belt and Road Initiative: Is Beijing Grabbing Strategic Assets?" *Survival* 62, no. 4 (July 2020), pp. 59–80; Michael Mazarr, *Understanding Influence in the Strategic Competition with China* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2021).

18. Countries rationally allocate Chinese investment for infrastructure, while relying on Western donors for the social sector and private bondholders for general short-term budget finance. This occurs because the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation offers small amounts of investment compared to China's infrastructure lending, and multilateral development banks prefer to finance social services, administration, and democracy-promotion rather than hard infrastructure. See David Dollar, "Seven Years into China's Belt and Road," *Order from Chaos* (blog), October 1, 2020, www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/01/seven-years-into-chinas-belt-and-road.

19. David Shambaugh, "U.S.-China Rivalry in Southeast Asia: Power Shift or Competitive Coexistence," *International Security* 42, no. 4 (Spring 2018). China's ties with Southeast Asia are primarily economic and diplomatic, rather than security-oriented. In contrast, the United States has a broader outreach with the region, comprising traditional and public diplomacy, civilian and military assistance and security cooperation, economic and commercial relations, and coordinated and complementary engagement from its allies. Also, countries in Southeast Asia vary in their closeness to China. They include "capitulationists," which are almost totally aligned with China; "chafers," which are significantly dependent on China but only because they have few alternatives, and wish they

were not; “aligned accommodationists,” which have good ties with both the United States and China; “balanced hedgers,” which have defense ties with the United States and commercial and diplomatic ties with China; and “outliers,” which do not seek especially close relations with either the United States or China.

20. Camille Lons, Jonathan Fulton, Degang Sun, and Naser Al-Tamimi, “China’s Great Game in the Middle East,” Policy Brief (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, October 21, 2019). In the Middle East, China’s relationships are largely political and economic, motivated by energy imports from and infrastructure construction in the region, with only a small security component; the United States is the major security provider. China has different types of partnerships with regional countries—comprehensive strategic partnerships with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran; an innovation partnership with Israel; a strategic cooperative relationship with Turkey; and strategic partnerships with some midsize and small Gulf countries.

21. John Hurley, Scott Morris, and Gailyn Portelance, “Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective,” Center for Global Development Policy Paper 121, March 2018.

22. Riya Sinha and Niara Sareen, *India’s Limited Trade Connectivity with South Asia* (New Delhi: Brookings Institution India Centre, 2020); Constantino Xavier and Riya Sinha, *When Land Comes in the Way: India’s Connectivity Infrastructure in Nepal* (New Delhi: Brookings Institution India Centre, 2020).

23. David Brewster, “Bangladesh’s Road to the BRI,” *The Interpreter*, May 30, 2019, www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/bangladesh-road-bri.

24. Jagaran Chakma, “Bangladesh: A Fertile Plain for Japanese Investment,” *Daily Star*, March 8, 2020.

25. See a study on this issue, Ganeshan Wignaraja and others, *Chinese Investment and the BRI in Sri Lanka* (London: Chatham House Asia Pacific Program, 2020).

26. See an interview with Sri Lanka’s foreign secretary, “As Far as Strategic Security Considerations Go, Sri Lanka Has an India First Approach,” *Times of India*, August 14, 2020.

27. See Simon Mundy and Kathrin Hille, “The Maldives Counts the Costs of Its Debts to China,” *Financial Times*, February 10, 2019; and Sanjeev Miglani and Mohamed Junayd, “After a Building Spree, Just How Much Does the Maldives Owe China,” Reuters, November 23, 2018.

28. Raphael, Statement before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, March 7, 1995.

29. Rocca, Statement before the House Committee on International Relations, June 22, 2004.

30. Testimony of Robert O. Blake Jr., Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, April 5, 2011.

31. Testimony of Nisha Desai Biswal, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South

and Central Asian Affairs, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, May 11, 2016.

32. Statement by Wells before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee for Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, “U.S. Interests in South Asia and the FY 2020 Budget,” June 13, 2019.

33. Testimony of Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee for Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, October 22, 2019. The parallel testimony was the Statement of Alice G. Wells, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau for South and Central Asian Affairs, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee for Asia and the Pacific, October 22, 2019.

34. Testimony of Destro, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee for Asia, the Pacific, and Nonproliferation, October 22, 2019.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Statement of Wells, October 22, 2019.

37. Testimony of Destro, October 22, 2019.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*

41. Statement of Wells, October 22, 2019.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Testimony of Dean Thompson, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation, June 9, 2021.

44. Data are the annual average for fiscal years 2014–2019. These data exclude some additional aid outside State Department and USAID budget lines for this region. They also exclude about \$200 million annually for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and Myanmar since late 2017, and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) possibilities for Sri Lanka and Nepal that were discussed earlier in this chapter.

45. Cumulative U.S. economic aid to Pakistan from 2001 to 2019 was \$11 billion—comprising \$8.7 billion for economic support funds and development, and the remainder for disaster relief, food aid, migration and refugee assistance, and health.

46. Data are for net grant aid (they exclude loan aid—for example, each year in 2017 and 2018, Bangladesh received about \$1.3 billion loan aid from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) lenders, mostly from Japan, while India received \$3 billion, largely from Japan, Germany, and the European Union [EU]). Beyond the United States, the principal annual aid donors to South Asia were Japan (\$200 million); European countries and the EU (\$1.5 billion); and the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and others (over \$1 billion). The \$3.4 billion annual figure includes Bhutan (\$74 million)

and Maldives (\$28 million); it counts American aid as \$520 million (one-sixth of the \$3.4 billion figure), which is higher than the \$400 million in U.S. State Department budget figures. These data are the annual average for 2014–2017, though averages for 2014–2019 were similar. OECD, *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries 2019. Disbursements, Commitments, Country Indicators* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019).

47. Cumulative international economic aid to Pakistan since 2001 (OECD data up to 2019) was about \$44 billion, with the main donors being the World Bank and the United States (\$10–\$11 billion each), the United Kingdom (\$5.7 billion), Japan (\$3.4 billion), EU (\$2 billion), Germany (\$1.5 billion), Canada (\$700 million), and Australia (\$700 million).

48. In the Democracy Index (from the Economist Intelligence Unit), scores are as follows: full democracy = 8–10; flawed/deficient democracy = 6–8; hybrid regime = 4–6; and authoritarian regime = below 4.

49. On development aid challenges, see Samia Altaf, *So Much Aid, So Little Development: Stories from Pakistan* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

50. For more on Sino-India relations, see Kanti Bajpai, Selina Ho, and Manjari Chatterjee Miller, *The Routledge Handbook of China-India Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

51. See Rob Jenkins, “India’s Democracy: Ill but Not Illiberal,” *Washington Post*, March 31, 2017; and Ramachandra Guha, “The Gutting of Indian Democracy by Modi-Shah,” NDTV, July 14, 2020, www.ndtv.com/opinion/.

52. Kurt Campbell and Jake Sullivan, “Competition without Catastrophe,” *Foreign Affairs* 98 (September/October 2019).

53. The White House, “Interim National Security Guidance,” March 3, 2021, www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/.

54. Alyssa Ayres, “Democratic Values No Longer Define US-India Relations,” *Foreign Affairs*, March 11, 2020, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2020-03-11/democratic-values-no-longer-define-us-indian-relations.

55. Data from South Asia Terrorist Portal, www.satp.org; other databases give slightly different figures.

56. For an estimate of 157,000 war-related fatalities in Afghanistan until late 2019, see Neta Crawford and Catherine Lutz, “Human Cost of Post-9/11 Wars,” November 13, 2019, Costs of War project, Watson Institute, Brown University, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians/afghan>.

57. Data from South Asia Terrorist Portal, www.satp.org; other databases give different figures.

58. The data for Sri Lanka include 10,000 civilian deaths in 2009, though other sources, including a UN expert panel, suggest 10,000–40,000 civilian fatalities during military operations ending the civil war that year.

59. Different constellations of factors were influential during different historical stages of Islamist terrorism in Bangladesh. These were the wider processes of Islamization: political conflict between the country’s two main political parties

and authoritarian governance; weaknesses in Bangladesh's security and justice system; and international events such as the Soviet-Afghanistan war, influences from the Gulf, and the increased interest of al Qaeda and the Islamic State in South Asia. Jasmin Lorch, "Terrorism in Bangladesh: Understanding a Complex Phenomenon," *Asian Survey* 60, no. 4 (July/August 2020), pp. 778–802.