



Avoiding Armageddon: America, India, and Pakistan to the Brink and Back (Brookings FOCUS Book)

By Bruce Riedel

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India and Pakistan will be among the most important countries in the twenty-first century. In *Avoiding Armageddon*, Bruce Riedel clearly explains the challenge and the importance of successfully managing America's affairs with these two emerging powers and their toxic relationship.

Born from the British Raj, the two nations share a common heritage, but they are different in many important ways. India is already the world's largest democracy and will soon become the planet's most populous nation. Pakistan, soon to be the fifth most populous country, has a troubled history of military coups, dictators, and harboring terrorists such as Osama bin Laden.

The longtime rivals are nuclear powers, with tested weapons. They have fought four wars with each other and have gone to the brink of war several times. Meanwhile, U.S. presidents since Franklin Roosevelt have been increasingly involved in the region's affairs. In the past two decades alone, the White House has intervened several times to prevent nuclear confrontation on the subcontinent. South Asia clearly is critical to American national security, and the volatile relationship between India and Pakistan is the crucial factor determining whether the region can ever be safe and stable.

Based on extensive research and Riedel's role in advising four U.S. presidents on the region, *Avoiding Armageddon* reviews the history of American diplomacy in South Asia, the crises that have flared in recent years, and the prospects for future crisis. Riedel provides an in-depth look at the Mumbai terrorist attack in 2008, the worst terrorist outrage since 9/11, and he concludes with authoritative analysis on what the future is likely to hold for America and the South Asia puzzle as well as recommendations on how Washington should proceed.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Bruce Riedel is expert, honest, rational, and humane. The leaders and peoples of the West and South Asia need these qualities and need this book."?David Miliband, Member of Parliament and former British foreign secretary

"India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed neighbors with a history of armed conflict. In *Avoiding Armageddon*, Bruce Riedel draws on his masterful knowledge of the region and its past interaction with the United States to outline the contours of a more comprehensive American approach to South Asia. Even those who disagree with Riedel's conclusions will not be able to refute his dispassionate analysis of the major issues. This book is a valuable addition to literature on the subject and will contribute to much-needed discussion and debate."?Husain Haqqani, former Pakistani ambassador to the United States

"Bruce Riedel, one of the country's leading experts on South Asia, has written an engrossing account of the efforts of six American presidents to manage our complicated relations with India and Pakistan?two rival powers with conflicting ambitions and fears that confront each other every day across a long, disputed border. South Asia is the place in the world where a nuclear exchange is most conceivable. *Avoiding Armageddon*, quite literally, has fallen repeatedly to U.S. presidents over the past thirty years. That danger persists. Based on his personal experience as adviser to the last four U.S. presidents, Riedel unravels the legacies of history that endure and suggests a better way forward. It is a fascinating and readable portrait of the promise and challenges of the region."?Samuel "Sandy" Berger, former U.S. national security adviser

"An incisive and candid review of the limited results of nearly seven decades of U.S. diplomacy in South Asia and a sobering reminder of the high risks posed by tensions that continue to simmer in the region."?Devesh Kapur, Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania

"CIA veteran and former presidential advisor Riedel presents two possible scenarios in South Asia, arguing that India and Pakistan will either anchor a prosperous, peaceful nexus or wage nuclear war. He urges the U.S. to get involved, as stakes are high: in seventeen years, India and Pakistan will create "40 percent of the world's GNP" and India will be the world's most populous nation. American failure to build lasting cooperation with or forge peace between the two results from approaching these giants as bit players, confusing local quarrels with our own regional maneuvers. During the Cold War, the U.S. created Pakistan's spy service, the ISI, whose resources now support terrorist network Lashkar-e-Tayyiba; the ISI's

encouragement motivated by Pakistan's longstanding feud with India over control of Kashmir. Meanwhile, the ISI, LeT, and Al-Qaeda engineered the 2009 Mumbai bombing, hoping to ignite a nuclear war.

Numerous U.S. efforts toward settling the question of Kashmir's status have fizzled or exploded; to ignore the problem, Riedel tells us, is to tip the game in Armageddon's favor. Mumbai has altered the landscape dramatically, possibly towards resolution, Riedel claims, by uniting India and the U.S. with a common enemy defined by the practical damage it wants to unleash. (Mar.)"Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Bruce Riedel is director of the Brookings Intelligence Project. He is the author of *The Search for al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* and *Deadly Embrace: Pakistan, America, and the Future of the Global Jihad*, both published by Brookings. He is a frequent media commentator on security and terrorism and is also a regular contributor to *The Daily Beast*.

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