The India–Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry

The India–Pakistan rivalry remains one of the most enduring and unresolved conflicts of our times. It began with the birth of the two states in 1947, and it has continued ever since, with the periodic resumption of wars and crises. The conflict has affected every dimension of interstate and societal relations between the two countries and, despite occasional peace initiatives, shows no signs of abating. This volume brings together leading experts in international relations theory and comparative politics to explain the persistence of this rivalry. Together they examine a range of topics including regional power distribution, great power politics, territorial divisions, the nuclear weapons factor, and incompatible national identities. Based on their analyses, they offer possible conditions under which the rivalry could be terminated. The book will be of interest to scholars of politics and international relations, as well as those concerned about stability and peace in South Asia.

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An Enduring Rivalry

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This volume emerges out of the need for a comprehensive analysis of the enduring conflict between India and Pakistan. A deeper understanding of the root causes of the India–Pakistan rivalry has become all the more important in the context of nuclear acquisitions by the rival states, and the emergence of South Asia as a fulcrum of international security challenges in both the domains of transnational terrorism and nuclear proliferation, especially in the post-September 11, 2001 international environment.

While there exists a substantial literature on enduring inter-state rivalries and protracted conflicts, none of the international relations theorists in this vein has focused specifically on the South Asian conflict, which has remained an enduring rivalry par excellence for over half a century, with no endpoint in sight. Comparative politics scholars of South Asia, on the other hand, have made some strides in understanding the particular national identity and domestic variables that perpetuate the India–Pakistan conflict. Yet, previous works have made little effort to integrate the findings of both these two strands of literature by exploring the multiple causes and consequences of the India–Pakistan conflict in a broad yet rigorous theoretical and analytical manner. This volume represents a pioneering effort to bring together the theoretical and empirical frameworks developed in international relations and comparative politics in order to offer a comprehensive, yet in-depth, understanding of the conflict. The effort is to link the works of scholars who have made major advances in understanding the patterns and processes of enduring rivalries with those of regional specialists.

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