The Politics of Extremism in South Asia

South Asia is home to a range of extremist groups from the jihadists of Pakistan to the Tamil Tigers of Sri Lanka. In the popular mind, extremism and terrorism are invariably linked to ethnic and religious factors. Yet the dominant history of South Asia is notable for tolerance and co-existence, despite highly plural societies. Deepa Ollapally examines extremist groups in Kashmir, Afghanistan, Northeast India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to offer a fresh perspective on the causes of extremism. What accounts for its rise in societies not historically predisposed to extremism? What determines the winners and losers in the identity struggles in South Asia? What tips the balance between more moderate versus extremist outcomes? The book argues that politics, inter-state and international relations often play a more important role in the rise of extremism in South Asia than religious identity, poverty and state repression.

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George Washington University
To Anand
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At the end of the day, one of the best things about writing a book is being able to thank all those who have been a part of this enterprise, in print. This has been a three-year project, written over two continents, and many have made it possible.

On the personal side, I thank my daughter Kavi and son Siddharth, for not only putting up with an absentee and absent-minded mother, but for being so understanding about it. My husband Anand has gone way beyond the call of spousal duty in making this book a reality. I dedicate this book to him, with love and gratitude for graciously adjusting and re-adjusting his life to fit mine, despite the huge demands of his own work.

My sister Beena, my brother Phil, and my mother Thresiamma Ollapally, offered constant support. As always, my biggest cheerleader was my father Abraham Ollapally; I only wish he could have seen the final product. I want to thank my father-in-law, S. Gnanalingam, for his lively discussions with me on South Asian politics and his deep insights. My extended family in Bangalore, especially my aunt Thankamma Ollapally, was a source of strength, and early believer in my endeavor. I want to thank my friends in Bethesda, especially Supriya and Sanjay Dhar, Ruth and Mark Morrel, for stepping in and helping in so many ways given our inter-continental family circumstances while I was writing.

Informal discussions with colleagues and acquaintances have helped me much more than they know: special mention should be made of Samina Ahmed, Kanti Bajpai, Dipankar Banerjee, Jonah Blank, Rekha Chaudhary, Wajahat Habibullah, Rick Inderfurth, Tariq Karim, Amitabh Mattoo, C. Raja Mohan, Surender Singh Oberoi, Narendar Pani, Varun Sahni and Siddharth Varadarajan. Mizanur Rahman Shelley needs to be singled out for the tremendous professional courtesy and hospitality he showed me when I visited Dhaka. Over the years, I have gained much from interacting with students in my graduate courses on South Asia at George Washington University and Georgetown.

Institutionally, I would like to thank the US Institute of Peace, in particular, Paul Stares for supporting this project at the initial stage. The
Sigur Center for Asian Studies at George Washington University has continuously provided excellent facilities and company. I also want to thank my editor at Cambridge, Marigold Acland, for her keen eye and patience.

Finally, I need to answer a question – why another book on extremism? Post September 11, I found many colleagues rushing to write because they felt they had to “say something.” I resisted that temptation until I felt that I had “something to say.” I hope the readers agree.
The boundaries shown on this map do not necessarily indicate endorsement by the author.

Note: Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan.