



AFGHANISTAN GOING FORWARD

A POLICY ASSESSMENT TO INFORM
THE NEXT U.S. ADMINISTRATION



The Asia Foundation

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RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT



The Asia Foundation

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THIS RAPPOREUR'S REPORT IS BASED ON A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION.
THE INDIVIDUALS WHO ATTENDED THE AFGHANISTAN GOING FORWARD
CONFERENCE AND CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT DID SO IN THEIR PERSONAL
CAPACITIES. THE CONTENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS
OF THE PARTICIPANTS' INSTITUTIONS NOR OF THE ASIA FOUNDATION.

COVER IMAGE: MAZAR-I-SHARIF, AFGHANISTAN, BY GULBUDDIN ELHAM

PREFACE

The Asia Foundation has had a longstanding interest and commitment in Afghanistan, dating back to our founding. The Foundation conducted a robust set of program activities from 1954 through 1979, and continued our engagement even from Peshawar for an interim period, prior to returning to the country and reestablishing a resident presence in 2002. Following this period, the Foundation was particularly active early in the country's emergence from conflict, beginning with the Emergency Loya Jirga, and followed by a range of efforts to address critical issues facing Afghanistan, including constitutional development, elections, local governance, and women's empowerment.

As the United States prepares for a new administration in early 2017 and as Afghanistan likewise faces a crucial period of political and economic transition, this is an important moment to consider how U.S. policy can constructively support Afghanistan's continued journey to a prosperous and stable democracy. Given the challenges and opportunities presented by the complex political, economic, and security conditions on the ground, the next U.S. president and incoming administration leaders will need to undertake a full assessment to determine the appropriate next steps for U.S. policy in the region, to bolster our relationships there, serve U.S. national security interests, and to make a positive contribution to Afghanistan's future.

On July 12, 2016, The Asia Foundation convened a roundtable discussion among a select group of American experts on Afghanistan. Representing decades of experience working in and on issues facing the country, the group engaged in a day of closed-door discussions focused on future U.S. policy toward Afghanistan, how to build on past successes and learn from past set-backs. The agenda broadly covered the key topics of security, governance and reconciliation, economic development and regional cooperation. This report describes the discussions that took place, and identifies points of consensus and key items for consideration by the next U.S. administration.

SUMMARY

Participants in the July 12 Afghanistan Going Forward conference agreed that Afghanistan remains significant to U.S. national security and its interests in Asia, and that the next administration must recognize this and devote resources to a thorough and strategic assessment of U.S. policy going forward, which:

- sets specific and clearly defined and communicated goals;
- maintains a long-term perspective rather than focusing narrowly on set deadlines regarding the U.S. military presence;
- signals a steadfast partnership with the Afghan National Unity Government (NUG) and respects its authority and priorities, remaining neutral on domestic political decisions such as election dates while making clear U.S. values and standards, including government transparency, accountability, and the rights of women;
- remains mindful that a stable security environment underpins any progress on vitally important economic development initiatives;
- reexamines U.S. policy towards engaging and influencing Pakistan; and
- places renewed emphasis on regional partnerships and engagement, recognizing the importance of a realistic assessment of and strategic efforts to influence and collaborate with Afghanistan's neighbors and regional players, including China, India, and Iran.

The Obama administration inherited a difficult situation in Afghanistan and is handing off to the next what can perhaps be categorized as a fragile, uncertain success, still in need of clear policy and significant support and attention. The new administration will need to make the case for continued commitment, troop deployment at responsible, effective levels, and spending to a U.S. public fatigued by war and distracted by other domestic and global issues. It will be important for the next administration, amid many competing foreign policy priorities, to continue prioritizing engagement with Afghan leaders and to seek more and different avenues for building on international engagement and effectively delivering assistance. Longer-term U.S. government economic assistance and initiatives for increasing NUG revenue generation will be key to meaningful improvements in governance in Afghanistan.

In this context, participants agreed that continued domestic support for U.S. engagement is critical. The administration must be clear in communicating its goals to maintain Congressional foreign policy and budgetary support, which is key to future U.S. policy commitments to Afghanistan. A credible long-term rationale must do more than merely describe another five-year plan. To maintain legislators' support for

development assistance funding, rigorous transparency and accountability measures must be in place and must demonstrate that American investments are having an impact. Afghan partners similarly must be committed to their own development future. The recent national campaign rhetoric of neo-isolationism should be confronted and leaders in the public political dialogue will need to explain more clearly how America's interests are advanced by remaining engaged in Afghanistan. Despite persistent challenges in Afghanistan, a new U.S. administration will have the opportunity to build on significant past progress, ongoing multilateral international commitments, and the partnership of a reformist National Unity Government (NUG) in Afghanistan to develop, articulate, and implement new diplomatic and military strategies towards a stable and democratic future for Afghanistan.

KEY POINTS OF CONSENSUS

Specifically, the incoming U.S. administration should:

- Affirm that Afghanistan matters and remains high on the list of priorities.
- Clarify America's fundamental goals and strategy for Afghanistan; the region is confused by mixed U.S. signals as to whether the U.S. is trying to bring an end to the violence or is pursuing an exit strategy regardless of the situation on the ground.
- Become more effective at conveying the positive story that can be told—about improvements made in the last few years in Afghanistan and the reform efforts of the Afghan government—which too often gets obscured by security issues and media reporting on violence; over the past decade tremendous progress has been made.
- Maintain a long-term perspective and revisit the troop levels actually needed to achieve goals that have been set out; setting fixed numbers and dates regarding the U.S. military presence is counterproductive and only undermines U.S. goals and strategies.
- Place continued priority on women's status and roles, so that they remain high on the agenda for U.S. policy and with the Afghan National Unity Government (NUG).
- Recognize the importance of Pakistan's role and the necessity for Pakistan to play a constructive part in the peace process, and develop a U.S. strategy towards Pakistan that considers new ways of influencing Pakistani decision-making, including possibilities for incentivizing Pakistan to place increased pressure on the Taliban through the influence of China and others.
- Continue engagement with the NUG and identify ways to support the NUG's reform agenda and its efforts to address corruption and improve economic governance.

- Encourage the NUG to resolve questions of electoral reform timing and other policies through the Afghan political process, and identify ways to help increase the confidence of the Afghan public in the NUG, while remaining neutral on the policy choices it faces.
- Incentivize improvements in service delivery by continuing to clearly link NUG performance in this area to increased levels of on-budget aid once key performance indicators are met; the international community must maintain a common approach and consistent pressure in this area.
- Determine ways that the U.S. and the European Union (EU) can help the NUG prioritize and pursue key reforms by helping to provide a stable security environment, including protection of civilians, so that reforms have a chance to take effect.
- Recognize that security underpins economic growth; U.S. government contributions to security will reduce barriers to job creation and service delivery, and serve to reassure foreign investors.
- Assist the NUG to carry out its economic strategy and resist banking on extractive industries to solve Afghanistan's immediate economic woes; near-term job creation and revenue creation are important to building Afghan public confidence in the NUG, creating the space for the NUG to put in place longer-term economic policies.
- Consider the implications of water resource management as an aspect of regional relations that could be a barrier or an opportunity for collective actions, particularly as to relevance in Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan and Iran.
- Devote greater diplomatic efforts to an expanded regional approach involving Pakistan, China, India, Iran, and others; it will be challenging for Afghanistan to achieve lasting peace and prosperity without buy-in from the regional players.

I. SECURITY

U.S. military presence. The Afghanistan Going Forward conference began with an analysis of the security situation. Participants agreed that the security environment in the country is of fundamental importance. Without progress on security, there will be little to no sustained development or foreign investment. The capacity for governance also is inextricably linked to a stable security environment. Thus, what the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) can achieve will profoundly shape Afghanistan's prospects for the future.

While the ANSF is and must remain in the lead, they are not yet at the point where they can assume the country's security on their own. The next U.S. administration will need to closely monitor the effectiveness

of the ANSF and calibrate U.S. support accordingly, including an on-the-ground presence. The U.S. also must maintain its leadership role in assuring the robust participation of NATO and other allies in Afghanistan. International and NATO commitment continues, but going forward the U.S. will need to communicate clear priorities and enlist allies in greater coordination of resources.

Participants noted a few guiding principles for the next administration as it undertakes a full review of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. First, the perception of a steady physical U.S. presence is important both in terms of fighting the enemy and in reassuring the Afghan public, as well as European allies. The political and economic significance of Afghan public confidence should not be underestimated. Second, the shape and role of a future U.S. troop presence should be guided by troop functions and overall security objectives rather than by numbers. The focus should be on “end states, not end dates.” Setting fixed withdrawal dates creates unnecessary pressures that often do not correlate with ground realities and can have unintended and counterproductive consequences.

Additional troop functions that the next administration should consider to strengthen the ANSF include: (1) A U.S. presence as partners with Afghan headquarters, with seconded personnel on hand to provide support; (2) Partnering in the field to provide support, including air support, to active troops; and (3) A national training center to guide preparation, execution and recovery from ANSF missions in order to increase professionalization and address human rights violations. The international community, including the U.S., has a role to play in setting ANSF standards; tracking civilian harm and reported human rights abuses; and providing essential support in building the capacity of Afghan civilian casualty reporting and analysis, as well as appropriate operational policy and practice in protection of civilians. The U.S. administration also should prepare for the contingency of a recurrence of insurgents overrunning provincial centers, which could lead to an existential crisis for Afghanistan and require a strong and coordinated international response.

Pakistan. It is clear from the past years of interaction that U.S. and Pakistani interests in Afghanistan are not often aligned. President Ghani’s bold overtures to Pakistan at the start of his tenure did not produce the desired result, as Pakistan continues to allow safe havens for the Taliban insurgency to operate in Pakistan. Afghan security would benefit from a commitment from Pakistan to alter its policies. The next administration should continue outreach efforts to Pakistan but be clear-eyed about what can realistically be expected absent a change in Pakistan’s own strategic calculations. Most importantly, the administration must be clear in communicating an enduring U.S. commitment to Afghan security.

As participants remarked during the regional context discussion later in the day (see Section IV below), the strategic calculations of regional players are a major driver of instability in Afghanistan. The next administration must develop a clear answer to the question of “what is our goal in Afghanistan?” and then be prepared to operationalize this and communicate it clearly in the context of a realistic and concrete broader regional policy. It will be important for a variety of resources from across the U.S. government to be allocated accordingly.

Corruption. The security situation in Afghanistan is partly driven by rampant corruption.¹ Corruption erodes confidence in government institutions, hinders economic development, motivates support for the Taliban, and is a primary driver of conflict at the local level in many parts of the country. The next administration must undertake a thorough review of U.S. and international efforts to tackle corruption in Afghanistan, with a strong focus on the nexus of corruption and insecurity. Such a review would extend to, among other issues, the drug trade as a source of criminality and financing for anti-government forces. Corruption within the ANSF and other local and national government institutions also must be addressed, particularly where it creates perverse incentives for continued instability. Finally, the U.S. must frame a consistent position as to how the international community and the Afghan government should deal with local strongmen, be they supporters or opponents of NUG reforms. This is an important aspect in determining how local Afghan communities view the performance of the NUG and one of the primary obstacles to its reform agenda.

Nature of the threat. There is some concern that the nature of the threat in Afghanistan may be changing. While the Taliban, in all its various guises and strains, remains the primary threat in Afghanistan, it is essential to collect good data and intelligence on the extent of the threats posed by the Haqqani Network, Daesh, armed opposition groups, organized crime, and other illegitimate actors. Accurate intelligence and data will help ensure that regional players not be tempted to develop interventionist strategies based on any inaccurately inflated perceptions of Daesh and the various threats.

II. GOVERNANCE & RECONCILIATION

National Unity Government. The status of the NUG is a key governance issue. The incoming administration can view the current Afghan president as a partner to the U.S. who shares America's desire for development and stability in the country, including the commitment to an equal role for women. A unity government is difficult by definition and President Ghani and CEO Abdullah deserve credit for persevering in challenging roles. Going forward, U.S. should help maintain the legitimacy of that government while respecting that it is for Afghans to decide what actions the government should take and what structures should be put in place. Afghans must broker their own political future.

With a cabinet finally in place, the NUG has set out an ambitious reform agenda in "Realizing Self Reliance." The NUG is making progress, but political negotiations on government appointments have been protracted and reform results are emerging slowly against strong headwinds, which is undermining public confidence in the NUG. The public initially had very high expectations when the NUG took office and is understandably impatient to see concrete results of reform in their own lives. The NUG will need

¹ Afghanistan continues to be evaluated as having the highest corruption in the world, ranked as 166 out of 168 countries according to the 2015 *Transparency International Index*. <https://www.transparency.org/country/#AFG>.

to ensure that its reform agenda bears fruit in a time period that has a stabilizing effect, in particular as Afghanistan looks to elections in 2019. The next U.S. administration, for its part, will need to demonstrate support for Afghanistan in a way that enhances Afghan public confidence in the NUG and in its ability to deliver security and services. The NUG has identified a range of financial and economic revitalization initiatives, which the international community supports. These include a commitment to meritocracy, electoral and judicial reforms, anti-corruption efforts, and finance and economic growth initiatives. Better communication with stakeholders is required, however, to manage expectations and ensure that everyone understands the agenda and the intention of the government.

National dialogue. The Afghans will need to decide the sensitive political issue of whether or not to convene a constitutional Loya Jirga, or whether a national dialogue process could be designed and instituted instead to serve the same purpose, bolstering reconciliation efforts while progress on a peace process remains elusive. While the initial NUG agreement included mention of a Loya Jirga, given the political risks and realities of convening such a group, other mechanisms such as a national dialogue or other forms of consultation may more effectively address current political dynamics. While these are decisions for Afghans to make, the next U.S. administration must be aware of the risks of political instability and prepare contingency responses.

Elections. The next U.S. administration will need to decide what stance to take with regard to overdue Afghan parliamentary elections. Since 2005, U.S. policy has seemed to favor holding flawed elections over not holding elections at all. Participants agreed that it was important for the U.S. to refrain from being prescriptive when it comes to elections, given the perceived history of U.S. “interference” in a matter that is for Afghans to decide. Clarity is particularly urgent with regard to a NUG announcement of a date for elections and a raft of crucial electoral reforms. Announcing a date could earn the government some legitimacy and time to enact electoral reforms, particularly involving the Independent Election Commission (IEC). Conference participants suggested that rather than focusing on timing, one option for the next U.S. administration would be to examine which elements of these elections will enhance the government’s legitimacy in the short term, and which elements of electoral reform will help strengthen the 2019 election process. Yet at the same time, the U.S. must consider its position and coordinate with the European Union (E.U.), as, for the election process to be successful, budgetary support and observers from the U.S. and the E.U. will be needed. These elections will not be perfect, and therefore the administration must consider and anticipate how it can effectively respond and assist.

Reconciliation. A key question is whether the Taliban can be brought into the political fold, given uncertainty about the position of the new Taliban leadership towards talks, as well as the limitations of Pakistan’s commitment. The next U.S. administration will need to undertake a fundamental reassessment of U.S. goals in Afghanistan and consider what it would take for the Taliban determine that they have a political future without violence. President Ghani was willing to take risks to engage the Taliban on peace talks, but he paid a political price with the public, which favored efforts at reconciliation but perceived the concessions made to Pakistan as unprecedented and unacceptable. Participants stressed the need for

continued efforts by the U.S. at the regional level as well as supporting civil society engagement on conflict resolution at the local level.

The Taliban should not be treated as monolithic, and possibilities exist for either top-down or bottom-up reconciliation processes engaging various entities of the Taliban. In addition, progress on reconciliation will require a reconsidered and specific Pakistan strategy. Although the efforts of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG)—a grouping of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, and the United States which convened on the sidelines of the Heart of Asia Conference in Islamabad in December 2015 and again in January 2016 and has so far been unsuccessful in encouraging reconciliation, it may be worthwhile to maintain the grouping, so long as the interests of other important regional players (including the Central Asian states and India) are taken into account. However, it remains to be seen how effective this diplomatic mechanism can be and whether sufficient diplomatic effort and political will be devoted to enable it to accomplish its intended purpose.

Engagement of the Taliban needs to be incentivized. In this context, U.S. policy should reiterate clearly to the Taliban that the U.S. will not be abandoning Afghanistan and that the only option open to the Taliban to succeed in gaining a role in Afghan government is at the peace table. Even as the U.S. and the Afghan government remain open to facilitating a negotiated, political solution, the U.S. should not cede conditions on the ground that let the Taliban set the terms of the country's security situation. Maintaining a capable U.S. military presence is essential to retaining a strong position in any potential negotiations and the capacity to enforce any diplomatic solution reached. Reforms by the Afghan government also will be key to achieving reconciliation, particularly in terms of addressing local drivers of conflict.

Role of women. No country can transition to post-conflict prosperity while excluding women from mainstream political and economic roles in civil society. The U.S. should continue to clearly represent its values and principles on women's rights, and continue to support incremental organic societal change, rather than sweeping mandates that could provoke counterproductive social backlash. In the context of efforts at reconciliation, the U.S. will need to probe whether the Taliban can accept a more inclusive role for women in Afghan society.

III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Insufficient focus on the economy in past U.S. policy on Afghanistan has contributed to the current lack of government revenue, lack of jobs, aid dependence, and growth of the illegitimate economy. The drawdown of international troops and provincial reconstruction teams contributed to an economic downturn, arrested growth, and a significant loss of jobs. While the Afghan government has instituted National

Priority Programs, a National Health Program, and a Citizen's Charter, certain areas of the country still have not been reached due to insecurity, and there are marginalized communities where the perception remains that services and job opportunities have failed to reach them. Meanwhile, there is no credible alternative to the NUG offering any economic alternative or platform of ideas.

National policy agenda. The NUG has put forward a credible, ambitious economic agenda but must set clear priorities. Given the need to maintain popular confidence in the NUG, some shorter term deliverables should be identified along with longer term investments such as infrastructure. The NUG will need international support in order to achieve resource mobilization and management. The international donor community should work with the NUG on implementation within the context of Afghan ownership, respecting which priorities the NUG ultimately sets and what support and coordination are requested.

Corruption remains a significant barrier to economic progress. Overall the NUG has promoted a commitment to an anti-corruption agenda and transparent service delivery. However, for the NUG to succeed, confidence-building measures are necessary. Another challenge is the economic reality of local strongmen who are profiting from the current state of affairs in the country, often fueling local instability, and preventing competition and new businesses. This is a source of grievance in local communities, particular where these strongmen are seen to be representing or a part of the current government.

Job creation. Human capital exists in Afghanistan but the ongoing "brain drain" and exodus of young people will continue if stable jobs are not perceived to be on the horizon; practical interventions are needed to retain educated young people and provide livelihoods. Job creation also is important to reduce the draw of extremist groups which can offer financial incentives. Clearly, the number of Afghan migrants and refugees seeking work outside of Afghanistan has escalated.² There is a significant population of internally displaced people who also need to be reached and served by economic policies and job opportunities.

Extractive industry. Although the mining sector in Afghanistan is often raised as a solution to Afghanistan's economic woes, with some estimating about \$3 trillion in natural resource deposits, the challenges are daunting and suggest that mining is not a near-term solution. Given that mining is not a job-intensive industry, other sectors of the economy deserve more immediate NUG focus. Illegal extraction also poses a daunting challenge, and would need to be addressed by the NUG by implementing sufficient regulations before significant investments in the sector could move forward. One aspect that deserves attention, and has political importance, is the possibility of Afghanistan serving as a hub for regional countries through pipeline connections, although the potential for this may be affected by the opening of Iran as a transit route for Central Asia through Chabahar. Petroleum and particularly natural gas are sectors with great potential to generate electricity and create revenue for the NUG. If the NUG began with small-scale

² According to United Nations and European estimates, more than 20 percent of the roughly 500,000 people who arrived in 2015 via the Mediterranean have been Afghans http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/22/opinion/the-next-refugee-crisis-afghanistan.html?_r=0. Since 2011, The Asia Foundation's *A Survey of the Afghan People* has asked respondents if they would leave Afghanistan if given the opportunity; in 2015, 39.9% of Afghans responded yes, increased from 33.8% in 2011 <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/Afghanistanin2015.pdf>.

investments—such as the long-discussed Jawzian natural gas power plant—resulting revenues could be invested in security forces and other economic programs. However, this must remain only one component of a larger economic policy agenda, as these sectors cannot be expected to deliver the necessary immediate gains to the public in terms of providing livelihoods and growth.

Role for the international community. It is important for the international community to make investments in development through the NUG, rather than using outside contractors or parallel systems for aid delivery. They should insist on milestones and transparency from the NUG in return for continued investment as an incentive to receive additional budget support. China has the potential to make significant investments in infrastructure. An effective role for the U.S. is as a convener, particularly to bring Central Asian leadership together, and in providing technical assistance. It goes without saying that for the New Silk Road initiatives to move forward and benefit Afghanistan, security improvements will be essential, and new analysis required to determine the most effective avenues for aid delivery in the current landscape.

IV. REGIONAL CONTEXT

It will be challenging for Afghanistan to achieve lasting peace and prosperity as long as regional players favor instability and violence over a stable, economically viable Afghanistan. For this reason, the U.S. must promote a regional policy even as it focuses on assisting Afghanistan to stabilize from within. Moreover, Afghanistan's regional neighbors can be expected to ramp up interference if they perceive the Afghan government to be faltering, or a weakening of international community commitment.

A regional approach. Afghanistan's neighbors and other key states must respect Afghanistan's sovereignty, which means agreeing not to play out rivalries within its borders. In this regard, the 2002 Kabul Declaration of Neighborly Relations, which pledges noninterference, and the 2011 Istanbul Heart of Asia effort, which aspires to connect the region economically, are both welcome initiatives. Unfortunately, to date they both have proved to be mainly aspirational, producing little in the way of concrete results. There appears to be renewed interest in a regional approach among NATO allies and the E.U., and the next administration should build on this welcome trend.

China. China's interests in Pakistan, including the planned \$47 billion in investments into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, are such that China has a stake in preventing deterioration in Pakistan. That said, the administration must be realistic about China's potential influence, and interest in influencing Pakistan. As with North Korea, it would be naïve to expect China to deliver Pakistan; China may be in a position to help the process, but cannot alone solve the problem. Engaging with China to influence Pakistan could be effective and deserves careful consideration but, ultimately, the U.S. must identify a

viable, pragmatic way to engage Pakistan in effective bilateral relations.

Pakistan and India. Excluding India from the earlier UN 6+2 process was a significant flaw, and the next administration should seek to include India. The regional sticking point remains India-Pakistan relations, and these affect each country's engagement with Afghanistan. Pakistan will not join initiatives until their security concerns with India have been met; Pakistan views Indian actions in Afghanistan as encirclement. The U.S. should encourage India-Pakistan dialogue and support efforts to allay mutual suspicions and resolve Pakistan-India bilateral security concerns. Pakistan has much to gain economically from expanding trade relations with Afghanistan and India, which is only possible in a stable, peaceful neighborhood.

While the importance of Pakistan is clear, there remain disagreements among experts and scholars as to how best to approach Pakistan. Pakistan does have "asks" of the U.S. government, involving issues from military hardware to U.S. drone activity. The next U.S. administration should explore the possibility of leveraging these Pakistani interests to achieve U.S. objectives.

Other regional players. There are a number of problems that can be better tackled within a regional, as well as international, context. These include the Afghan refugee issue, internally displaced persons, and water issues. Given the changed state of relations with Iran over the past few years, the new administration should reexamine areas for potential engagement with Iran with regard to Afghanistan. The U.S. should consider how to engage other regional players in an expanded Quad, including Iran, India, and Russia. The U.S. also should consider Saudi Arabia, particularly in the equation of influencing Pakistan. Saudi Arabia is concerned about the consequences of instability in South Asia, although it has not yet demonstrated a willingness to engage in a significant way. Some opportunity also may exist to engage with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, and Turkey to influence the Taliban's calculations in Afghanistan.

Finally, the administration must keep in mind that no other country has Afghanistan as its first priority aside from Afghanistan. This is true not only of the regional players, but of the U.S. as well. Despite a continuing U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, and the tremendous sacrifices over the last 15 years in blood and treasure, Afghanistan is low on the foreign policy totem pole and in the attention of the American public. However, as the U.S. continues to have a significant national security interest in maintaining stable democratic allies in South Asia, including Afghanistan, the new administration will need to clearly communicate this interest and accordingly develop a realistic and whole-of-government approach to shaping its bilateral relations, multilateral engagements, and a regional consensus for action. This report is intended as a resource for the new administration in that important effort.

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