During conflicts with France in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the play inspired English nationalism – and animosity toward the French. An 1879 production influenced by the Franco-Prussian War portrayed the French as victims. Early twentieth-century performances stoked British patriotism during the Boer War and at the outset of the First World War. By the end of that conflict, however, war weariness and the status of the French as allies rendered *Henry V* less popular. As the age of film gathered pace during the Second World War, Lawrence Olivier's 1944 *Henry V* popularised Agincourt to a wide audience and bolstered British resilience. Kenneth Branagh's 1989 portrayal reflected the experience of the Vietnam War.

Agincourt may even hold lessons beyond those that the author intended to convey. Through the great trials of the twentieth century, the memory of Agincourt helped bind Britain together and give meaning to the present. In contemporary Western societies, interpretations of the past often appear fragmented along ethnic, gender and other lines. Moreover, these interpretations normally panegyrise victims rather than celebrate victors. Perhaps the memory of Agincourt and its equivalent in other Western societies can reverse trends toward increasingly exclusive sub-identities and victimhood, which threaten to shatter polities and foster despondency. Recovering this memory – and others like it – may require a revival of military history and a shift in historiography and education curricula toward an exploration of what binds Western societies together and helps them prevail in times of strife. Resources like Curry's *Agincourt* could make a valuable contribution to this effort.

South Asia

Teresita C. Schaffer

Afghan Modern: The History of a Global Nation
Robert D. Crews. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2015. $29.95. 381 pp.

Conventional wisdom holds that Afghanistan is a remote, inwardly focused country shaped by its deeply traditional social structure. Robert Crews, a historian from Stanford University who has written extensively on Afghanistan, Central Asia and the former Soviet Union, disputes this vision. He argues instead that the area we now know as Afghanistan has for millennia been deeply involved in the imperial competitions that criss-crossed Central Asia, and that this global character has continued since the formation of a more modern state in the late

nineteenth century. *Afghan Modern* tells this story, documenting in particular the way Afghans – especially the country's elites, but also people from more modest backgrounds – moved around the world, 'from China to Africa and Australia … gaining exposure to intellectual and cultural resources that then circulated throughout the diaspora and back …. [to] what is now Afghanistan' (p. 307).

His account draws on a wide range of sources from different countries and in different languages. It is a useful corrective to a narrative that has shaped Western interventions going back at least to the Afghan Wars undertaken by Great Britain in the late nineteenth century.

Crews makes a good case for Afghanistan as a country with extensive global engagement. However, I believe his account short-changes important aspects of Afghan society. Even if one rejects the caricatures found in many familiar works on Afghan social structures, family and clan loyalty has surely been critical to the dynamic through which Afghan power figures have created their power base. But this receives little serious discussion in Crews's book.

A second omission is the impact of the country's tradition of engagement with empires near and far on the negotiating style of Afghan leaders, whether national or local. Located next door to the Mughal and Russian empires and the British Raj, and more recently caught up in the Cold War and the 'war on terror' that brought intense involvement from the United States, Afghanistan has lived by its (or its rulers') wits – and by manipulating as many as possible of these imperial and quasi-imperial actors. This is still true, both in the interactions among political rivals within the fractious Afghan state and in their dealings with more powerful neighbours. Afghan leaders' tactics approximate the kind of tribal tactics that Crews argues have been misunderstood by generations of outsiders. I wonder: those outsiders may have over-interpreted the tribal nature of Afghan society, but 'tribal' tactics persist, and may well have become tools for Afghanistan to manage its relations with the current crop of unwelcome 'empires'.

A third dimension that Crews underplays is the role of Afghanistan's immediate neighbours, in particular Pakistan. (He does discuss the Durand Line, the British attempt to draw a boundary between Afghanistan and what is now Pakistan that has never been accepted by any Afghan government.) Afghanistan continues to have a difficult relationship with Pakistan, tainted by a toxic blend of Pakistani interference, Afghan designs on what Pakistan regards as its sovereign territory, conflicting loyalties among Pashtun tribes, Pakistani fears of Indian subversion through a friendly Afghanistan and much more. This is arguably the most important element in today's Afghan 'globalism', and would have been worth acknowledging more fully.

We will, I fear, have ample opportunity to discuss these issues in the future, for Afghanistan is likely to remain caught up in the clashes between Islamic extremist movements and the West. This book does not have all the answers, but it will certainly help the reader to understand a frequently overlooked element of the Afghan story.

Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years
A.S. Dulat with Aditya Sinha. New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2015.
Rp599.00. 368 pp.

A.S. Dulat joined the Indian Police Service in 1965. His fast-track career included senior positions in the Intelligence Bureau, a stint as the bureau's representative in Kashmir, and another as the head of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW, India's external intelligence agency). Between 2001 and 2004 he served as special adviser on Kashmir in the office of then-prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. *Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years* focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on his long-running involvement in the Indian government's vexed relationship with Kashmir and the Kashmiris.

Memoirs, which both reveal and conceal, are a tricky genre. Critics in India complain that Dulat's account of the hijacking of an Indian aircraft in 1999 omits any mention of the presence on board of a RAW official, a fact that the author subsequently confirmed. The book itself notes that some things do not get discussed.

What it does reveal is fascinating. Dulat highlights two vital convictions throughout the book: that dialogue – 'talking, talking, talking' to anyone willing to do so – is the prerequisite to making any headway in detoxifying the Kashmir problem; and that the most important unfinished business in Kashmir is fixing the relationship between the Kashmiris and India.

Dulat provides sensitively drawn descriptions of the many Kashmiri personalities he engaged with. His favourite was Farooq Abdullah, son of the legendary Sheikh Abdullah who dominated the region from before India's independence until his death in 1982. Dulat regarded Farooq as both a Kashmiri nationalist and an Indian loyalist. He presents a surprisingly sympathetic view of some of the separatist politicians, and argues that they could well have become the instrument of a workable reconciliation between New Delhi and Kashmir had the Indian government, especially leaders who succeeded Vajpayee, been willing to give them a bit more respect and political space. This may, however, have been more difficult than Dulat lets on. Reading his account, it is easy to see how Kashmiris might feel that the author had not just been talking to his interlocutors, but also, and perhaps especially, using them.

As for Pakistan, Dulat argues for something no government of India has been willing to do thus far: holding separate but parallel talks with Pakistan and the Kashmiris. He found Pakistan's president Pervez Musharraf astonishingly willing to depart from the position that had imprisoned his country's government for decades. Here too, Dulat faults India for not taking advantage of the opportunity this offered. In another sidelight, Dulat claims to have gotten along famously with Pakistan's General Asad Durrani, the former director-general of Inter-Services Intelligence, Pakistan's intelligence agency. The two old spooks understood each other when they met post-retirement, and apparently enjoyed sparring. Having known both men, I'm not surprised.

This is a book for readers who are already familiar with the broad outlines of India–Pakistan relations and the situation in Kashmir. Dulat's habit of reproducing snippets of conversation in the original 'Hinglish' (Hindi laced with English) will be somewhat annoying to the uninitiated, though the editor supplies enough translation to convey the gist of these passages. To those who have lived in the region, such passages will evoke memories of conversations held over a cup of chai. The book is an engaging read, with tantalising insights on the bureaucratic relationships among the different parts of India's senior officialdom.

Most importantly, Dulat's major themes are correct. If the Kashmir problem is ever to be fixed, this will require a great deal of talking, both with Kashmiris and with Pakistan. Moreover, Delhi will have to fix its relations with the Kashmiris, and the Indian government will have to be willing to give Kashmiri politicians enough space to be their own people. After another violent, bitter summer in the Kashmir Valley, these are lessons worth remembering.

To End a Civil War: Norway's Peace Engagement in Sri Lanka

Mark Salter. London: C. Hurst & Co., 2015. £25.00/$35.00. 512 pp.

Mark Salter's account of Norwegian peace diplomacy in Sri Lanka is the most comprehensive published account of the last decade of Sri Lanka's long and agonising civil war. It draws on extensive interviews with those involved, backed up by published materials. The most comprehensive interviews are with Norwegian diplomats. Salter also interviewed sources in Sri Lanka, both in and out of government, as well as in India, the United States and Europe. By the time he wrote the book, the leaders of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were dead, but Norwegian diplomats and others spoke extensively of the LTTE perspective as it had been conveyed to them. The result of all this

research is an important book, which any student of peacemaking or Sri Lanka needs to read.

Salter conveys skilfully the ambiguity that dogs any complex diplomatic undertaking, such as the inevitable questions about whether the Sri Lankans and the LTTE had a common interpretation of the Oslo accord that started the negotiating process. No member of Sri Lanka's dramatis personae emerges as a hero. The diplomatic campaign achieved some important interim goals, such as a ceasefire agreement, but in the end the civil war continued. If it has now ended – and that is still in doubt – it was ended by war.

And yet – this was a frustrating book to read. It contains numerous small inaccuracies: people's names are misspelled and senior officials' titles are reported incorrectly. It was bound to be difficult to keep track of the different arcs of this complex story – the multiple hostile parties in Sri Lankan politics, the legacy of decades of built-up mistrust, the differing equities of relevant third parties, including India and the United States.

Salter opted to tell his story primarily through the words of his interviewees, which appear in text boxes throughout the book. While this serves to highlight the differing perspectives of those most intimately engaged in the peacemaking effort, this approach also means that the threads of the story are never really pulled together.

In the final chapters, Salter quotes extensively from a hard-hitting Norwegian government report drawing lessons for future peacemaking from this campaign. This is the closest Salter comes to giving the reader his judgement of what went right, what went wrong, and what alternative approaches might have been better. The Norwegian report concluded correctly that Norway had both advantages and disadvantages as an outside power wielding persuasion and diplomatic talent but not much 'hard power'. It criticised Norway's meagre ability to influence Sri Lankan opinion beyond elite circles. Most interestingly, it came close to concluding that Norway should probably have pulled out, at least temporarily, when it became clear, in about 2006, that the parties were no longer serious about finding a diplomatic solution. I recall discussing this in Washington with one of the principal Norwegian diplomats involved, commenting that this would be a rather un-Norwegian thing to do. The look on his face suggested that he had been thinking the same thing.

In an interview early in the book, Erik Solheim, Norway's principal negotiator, tells Salter that his principal task was to build relationships with the parties. Knowing the history of the conflict was secondary; a negotiator can find advisers to fill that gap. Solheim has his priorities right: diplomacy is about relationships. But what ultimately doomed his effort was in part the history of

the problem, and the mindset that resulted – I would say especially within the LTTE, but also in the Sri Lankan body politic. Sri Lanka and the LTTE were at war. For Norway – indeed, for all outsiders – it was self-evident that a negotiated settlement would be better than the carnage of war. But for the parties involved, a negotiated settlement was preferable only if it achieved their war aims. The task of the peacemaker, in other words, was to persuade both parties to change their war aims enough to make them negotiable. With this in mind, I think the Norwegian report was too hard on the negotiators. Recognising the enormity of their task, I conclude that the Norwegian effort, with all its limitations, was remarkably effective.

The End of Karma: Hope and Fury Among India's Young
Somini Sengupta. New York: W.W. Norton, 2016. $26.95.
244 pp.

Somini Sengupta had already given us a taste of her skill as a writer through her reporting for the *New York Times*, first from India, and then from the United Nations. *The End of Karma* stands out, even amid the rich literature on the society of a dizzily changing India. She focuses here on the hopes, aspirations and anger of India's youth, which will ultimately determine where India – and Asia – are headed.

Sengupta profiles seven people, presenting details of their families and life stories, along with some discussion about which aspect of India's changing society these stories illustrate. Anupam is a striver from a 'backward caste' family. His path through the wild byways of the Indian educational system, grippingly sketched out, leads him into the Indian Institute of Technology, where he struggles to cope. He ultimately finds his upward path through the Indian School of Mines.

Mani, whose story is perhaps the most wrenching of the book, travels from her village to be a maid in the go-go Delhi business suburb of Gurgaon, all green glass and gleaming steel – only to have her niece abducted by traffickers connected with the Maoist insurgency that plagues India's eastern half. The juxtaposition of Mani and her boss, Supriya, both depicted with sympathy, shows at once the human side and the cruelty of the social system, as well as the dark side of the Gurgaons of this world, which Sengupta sees as a kind of Xanadu of the new India. Rakhi, the commander of a Maoist group, takes the insurgency theme further. Shashi, an operative in the political machine Narendra Modi made famous in Gujarat, gives an inside view of the manipulative side of political organisation. A group of so-called 'Facebook Girls' finds itself at the junction between India's techie aspirations and its collective fear of uncontrolled

popular passions: the girls' posting on Facebook about the death of Mumbai's most famous political boss, Bal Thackeray, earns them a jail sentence. Inevitably, Sengupta ends up with two stories of young people wishing to defy their parents' plans for them. One ends tragically, in an 'honour killing' by the girl's brother; the other more hopefully.

The theme that runs through Sengupta's book – one which is difficult for a Westerner to internalise – is captured by her title, *The End of Karma*, which, loosely translated, means the end of predestination. Her narrative underscores the many ways in which predetermined ideas of how one should spend one's life have created a box that young Indians struggle to get out of – even as they also strive to remain close to their parents and other relatives who define their world.

The growing ability among Indians to control their own lives is the most revolutionary aspect of the social change convulsing India. The story of Anupam underlines this point, noting that he had embraced the view that his destiny was now in his own hands and not some deity's.

No one should read this book looking for 'the answer' to India's youth. There are as many answers as there are twenty-somethings navigating their way between tradition and modernity, between family ties and the unlimited vistas of the internet, between the straitjacket of village society and the unprotected expanse of emerging India. The book *should* be read as a gripping human drama, one that will play itself out millions of times as India continues to astonish itself, both breaking and preserving age-old traditions.

Iran and Pakistan: Security, Diplomacy and American Influence

Alex Vatanka. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015. £62.00/$110.00.
307 pp.

There has been surprisingly little serious scholarship on the Iran–Pakistan relationship. Alex Vatanka's study is a welcome step toward filling this gap. *Iran and Pakistan: Security, Diplomacy and American Influence* traces this complex relationship from the time of Pakistan's independence through to the present. For both countries, it was always part of a quest for 'something strategically larger' (p. 3). But Iran and Pakistan also had discordant ideas about their strategic goals and their respective roles in the region. In the early years, Pakistan considered itself the major partner. Once Iran and Pakistan joined the US-led Cold War alliance system, both sought to reap advantages from their ties with the United States, a process that was in part competitive. After Pakistan's eastern wing broke away and became Bangladesh, Iran under Shah Mohammad Pahlavi gave greater priority to ties with India, to Pakistan's great unhappi-

ness. The complexity of the strategic relationship during this time was rivalled by the competition between the personalities of Pahlavi and Pakistani prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. These two men embodied what was emerging as a relationship of mutual contempt between the two countries: Pakistan viewed the Iranians as 'soft' and non-martial; Iran viewed the Pakistanis as unsophisticated peasants.

Iran's Islamic Revolution ushered in a new phase in Pakistan–Iran ties. Tehran's now toxic relationship with the United States served as a speed bump in its relationship with Pakistan, which, for all its difficulties with Washington, was unwilling to risk its security connection with the Americans. Worse, both countries meddled in each other's most painful internal conflicts – the Sunni–Shia divide in Pakistan, and dissension and discontent in the Balochistan provinces of both countries. Bilateral ties became a roller-coaster ride, aggravated by disconnects in foreign policy and strategic priorities that had been apparent earlier.

Vatanka brings to light some fascinating and little-known vignettes: the apparent fascination in some quarters of 1950s Washington for a 'federation' of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, an idea that went nowhere; Pahlavi's efforts to persuade Pakistan to crack down on the Baloch people – an effort that continues to plague the Pakistani state; the contradictory views of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) within both Pakistan and Iran. The book is strongest in discussing Iranian goals and attitudes, somewhat weaker on Pakistan, and occasionally off base on the United States. The author understates the importance that Pakistan attaches to retaining a dominant position in Afghanistan, for example. He gets some details wrong: Henry Kissinger's big, splashy summit in Pakistan took place in October 1974, not 1976 (I was there). And, astonishingly, in discussing the US response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he omits Pakistani foreign minister Agha Shahi's January 1980 visit to Washington, which was the starting point for both the successes and the great frustrations of the second big US–Pakistan engagement.

Seen from the Pakistani perspective, what is striking about Vatanka's account is the way Pakistan dealt with Iran as if the former occupied a position of dominance. Another country that Pakistan handled in this way was the United States. In both cases, Pakistan had hoped for steadfast support against India, but this hope crashed on the rocks of divergent strategic priorities.

Despite some problems, Vatanka's is clearly the most comprehensive and best-reasoned work on Iran–Pakistan ties currently available. This relationship is likely to remain problematic – and important.