I. Requirements

ORF America relies on the Chicago Manual of Style for general stylistic references and grammar. ORF America bases all publications on American-English spelling and usage, with Merriam-Webster as the primary reference dictionary.

Format

For Background Paper submissions, authors will submit drafts between 2,000-3,000 words in the body (this does not include citations) in a Microsoft Word document. Submissions with body word count over 3,000 will not be considered. Times New Roman size 12 is the required font, with Times New Roman size 10 for footnotes.

Structure

Papers should either be structured as descriptive or prescriptive and focused on a relevant policy challenge or issue for the United States and/or India. In both structures, the key idea and argument need to be stated clearly as a thesis no later than the conclusion of the second paragraph. In either case, keep the mindset of “show, do not tell,” at the forefront. If descriptive, then the intent of the paper is to tackle a new policy problem, or reframe a well-known challenge from a fresh perspective so that policy makers can make better informed decisions. If prescriptive, the argument should present clear and specific recommendations to resolve a policy challenge. All papers should try to address and engage counter-arguments proactively.

II. Style Guidelines

Tone

- Write the analysis impartially.
- Avoid passive voice. For example, “The moon was jumped over by the cow.”
- Use impersonal language. Do not use “we” or “us” or “them” or slang.
- Do not add technical jargon without explanation.
- Do not use contractions or split infinitives.

Layout

The author may have to revise elements to meet style, editorial, or layout requirements, for example, if utilizing external tools like Zotero or ArcGis to compile citations or images or graphics or data,
**Titles**

Ensure correct usage for titles. If using an adjectival phrase to modify the noun, the noun should be lowercase.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India
- Indian prime minister Narendra Modi
- Prime Minister Modi
- U.S. president Joseph Biden
- former secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon of the United Nations
- former prime minister Abe

**Abbreviations and Acronyms**

On first use, spell out all abbreviations and acronyms for proper nouns in full. If the subject is to be referenced multiple times, include the short form enclosed in parentheses after first use.

- Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)
- Department of Energy (DOE)
- gross domestic product (GDP)
- Observer Research Foundation America (ORF America)
- Senate Committee on Armed Services (SASC)
- United Nations (UN)
- Virginia (VA)

**III. Copyright and Attribution - Graphics/Images/Tables/Illustrations**

If the author is repurposing a graphic or image or table or illustration, the author must demonstrate that it is available to use under copyright law within requirements. **By default, assume that such works are protected by full copyright, unless the author can prove otherwise.** Acceptable frameworks include works licensed under Creative Commons or GNU General Public License. Make certain to abide by the parameters included in the license. If written permission is obtained to use a particular item, it should be submitted to the editor. Attribute the source of the information under any figure, including those the author designed.

**IV. Citations**

When submitted, draft papers should include full citations via footnotes, based on the citation examples provided below. Reference number(s) should only appear at the end of the respective sentence where the fact or idea is referenced, following the period. Citations should include author, title, name of publisher, and date, along with URL if applicable, offset by commas throughout and concluding with a period. Incomplete citations or incorrect citations will result in the paper being returned to the author. URLs should be the most concise form possible.
**Book:**


**Report:**


**Report with two authors:**


**Report with three authors:**

Andreas Kuehn, Debra Decker, and Kathryn Rauhut, “WhoDunit in Cyberspace: The Rocky Road from Attribution to Accountability,” ORF America, December 2023, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ca0ec9b809d8e4c67e27b3a/t/657796e1de13a61fe096c3ca/1702336225633/Whodunit_CyberSpace_RockyRoad_Attribution_Accountability_BP_18_ORF_America_Kuehn_120823.pdf.

**Four or more Authors:**


**Government Document:**


**News article:**

Recurring citation on second use:
Gritten, “Albania severs diplomatic ties with Iran over cyber-attack.”

Database (make sure to list the date accessed):

YouTube Video:

Compound citation (multiple sources in the same footnote are offset by a semi-colon):