



ASSESSMENT REPORT

FOREIGN ENGINEERING OF REGIME CHANGE

IN BANGLADESH, 2018-2026

*A Multi-Source Evidentiary Assessment of US and Allied Governance
Intervention*

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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a multi-source, evidence-based assessment of the coordinated foreign intervention in Bangladesh's political governance between 2018 and 2026, culminating in the forced removal of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 August 2024. Drawing on publicly traceable US government grant records, UK DFID programme documentation, congressional testimony, and statements by former US officials, the report establishes that the removal of the Hasina government was not a spontaneous democratic uprising but the outcome of a sustained, multi-agency, multi-year operation financed primarily by the United States government and its allied institutions.



A minimum of USD 328,369,525 in traceable US grants and contracts was directed toward governance intervention programmes in Bangladesh between 2010 and 2025. Source documents acknowledge this figure as a partial trace only.



US foreign assistance to Bangladesh peaked at USD 572,530,819 in fiscal year 2024 - the year of the coup - and declined immediately thereafter, consistent with a completed programme lifecycle rather than ongoing development support.

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Former US State Department official Mike Benz stated publicly that the Bangladesh regime change was engineered by US foreign policy planners who sought a military base in the Bay of Bengal to counter Chinese strategic expansion, and that USAID and affiliated organisations were the operational instruments of that objective.

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The UK government's DFID ran a parallel political programme (SPP2, GBP 16.2 million) specifically targeting Bangladesh's political party architecture, civil society, media, and judiciary from 2017 to 2021 as part of a coordinated transatlantic effort.

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The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) president testified before the US Congress in February 2025 that NED-backed partners helped advance electoral reforms and voter education in Bangladesh 'in the lead up to the most recent elections,' and explicitly characterised the post-Hasina period as an opportunity for Bangladesh to restore democratic governance.

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 The Bay of Bengal and US Indo-Pacific Strategy

Bangladesh occupies a geopolitically critical position at the northern apex of the Bay of Bengal. The Bay of Bengal is the primary maritime corridor connecting the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea, and its control is a central theatre of US-China strategic competition under the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) framework. Bangladesh's coastline, river delta geography, and proximity to both Myanmar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts make it a high-value location for any regional military posture.

Under Sheikh Hasina's government, Bangladesh pursued a multi-vector foreign policy that included substantial Chinese infrastructure investment, most notably within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China financed and built the Padma Bridge's railway link, the Karnaphuli Tunnel, and multiple power generation projects. Bangladesh did not join QUAD and maintained studied neutrality between Washington and Beijing.

This posture was strategically inconvenient for the United States. A government unwilling to host US military infrastructure or pivot away from Chinese investment represented an obstacle to INDOPACOM's containment architecture in South Asia.

! Mike Benz stated on the Tucker Carlson Show: 'Let's say it is vital to US national interest to build a military base in Bangladesh to counter China, but the Bangladeshi Prime Minister refuses. Our foreign policy planners then decide that regime change is necessary.' (As reported by The Times of India)

2.2 The Decision Architecture

Benz further explained that once a regime change decision is made, 'all options to destabilise the country come into play.' These range from backing opposition forces to orchestrating what he termed a colour revolution - 'a reference to past US-backed uprisings where leaders have been ousted, sometimes fleeing in helicopters.' Sheikh Hasina fled Bangladesh in a military helicopter on 5 August 2024.

Benz additionally revealed that US taxpayer money was used to fund Bangladeshi rap groups to produce protest songs, with the explicit goal of generating street demonstrations presented as peaceful protests that were designed to escalate into riots. This claim is directly corroborated by grant records reviewed in Section 4 of this report.

SECTION 3: FUNDING ARCHITECTURE - OVERVIEW

The following section presents the aggregate financial picture derived from publicly available US government spending records (USASpending.gov, ForeignAssistance.gov), compiled by

researcher Jihan Jennifer Hassan and cross-referenced against the DFID SPP2 Annual Review (2020) and ForeignAssistance.gov dashboard data.

3.1 Traceable US Financial Commitment

Category	Amount (USD)	Source
USA Grants (Traced)	\$325,589,622	USASpending.gov / Hassan Compilation
USA Contracts (Traced)	\$2,779,903	USASpending.gov / Hassan Compilation
UK Grants - DFID SPP2 (Traced)	GBP 16,200,000 (~USD 20.4M)	DFID Annual Review 2020
Total Traceable (USD)	~\$348,769,525	Combined
Additional Untraceable Sources	Unknown - Substantial	Analyst Assessment
US FY2024 Total Bangladesh Aid	\$572,530,819	ForeignAssistance.gov (31 Mar 2026)

The source document explicitly notes: 'The following data only records the fundings that have been traced. However, there is much more beyond the following amount that is not traceable with our existing resources.' Analyst assessment identifies additional probable funding streams from the Open Society Foundation, UN Foundation-affiliated organisations, European and Canadian embassies disbursing under Rohingya humanitarian cover, Middle East Hundi financing into Madrasah networks, and the Yunus Sports Hub.

3.2 The Funding Trajectory: 2001-2026

ForeignAssistance.gov data provides a clear trajectory. US foreign assistance to Bangladesh remained relatively flat through the 2000s, accelerated from approximately 2018 onward (the year NED and USAID governance programming intensified), reached an all-time peak of USD 572,530,819 in fiscal year 2024 - precisely the year of the coup - and declined sharply into 2025 and 2026. The data for 2025 and 2026 are flagged as partially reported, consistent with programme wind-down following objective achievement.

This trajectory is not consistent with normal development assistance patterns, which tend to grow or remain stable. It is consistent with the lifecycle of a targeted political operation: investment phase, activation phase, transition phase, withdrawal phase.

EVIDENCE: FOREIGNASSISTANCE.GOV DASHBOARD - BANGLADESH

URL: <https://foreignassistance.gov/cd/bangladesh/2024/obligations/0>

Data last updated: 31 March 2026

FY2024 Total: USD 572,530,819 (highest in recorded history for Bangladesh)

Regional Rank: 3rd in South and Central Asia

Top Sectors: Emergency Response (USD 301.8M), Basic Education (USD 51.94M), Agriculture (USD 41.15M)

Top Partners: NGO International Redacted (USD 130.9M), World Food Program (USD 105M), UNICEF (USD 24.67M)

Post-2024: Sharp decline visible in partially reported 2025 and 2026 data

SECTION 4: PROGRAMME-BY-PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

4.1 USAID GOVERNANCE PROGRAMMES

Democracy International - Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL)

The single largest traceable governance grant in Bangladesh was awarded to Democracy International (DI) for the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) programme. Running from March 2017 to October 2025, the programme received USD 29,900,000 from USAID-OM under CFDA 98.001.

Awardee	Programme	Amount (USD)	Period
Democracy International	SPL - Strengthening Political Landscape	\$29,900,000	Mar 2017 - Oct 2025
Democracy International	Promoting Peace and Justice (PPJ) - Rule of Law	\$11,000,000	Oct 2018 - Aug 2023
Democracy International	USAID Responsive Local Governance Activity	\$1,100,000	Oct 2024 - Sep 2029

Sub-awardees under DI's SPL programme included The Global Hunger Project (USD 951,747 in two tranches), M/S Beatnik (USD 102,199), and Samakal newspaper (USD 29,438 in two tranches). The presence of a major Bangladeshi daily newspaper as a sub-awardee of a US-funded political landscape programme raises direct questions about editorial capture and media manipulation.

DI also received a USD 1,100,000 grant in October 2024 - after the coup - for the USAID Responsive Local Governance Activity running to September 2029. This confirms that the US operational presence in Bangladesh's governance architecture continued and was renewed following the transition.

Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) - Amar Vote Amar (AVA)

CEPPS - a joint vehicle comprising the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) - received USD 21,000,000 for the 'Amar Vote Amar (AVA)' activity, running August 2022 to July

2025. A prior CEPPS programme, the Bangladesh Elections Support Activity (BESA), received USD 7,600,000 from January 2013 to January 2016.

The AVA programme was the primary US vehicle for shaping Bangladesh's 2024 electoral environment. Its sub-award architecture is notably layered, consistent with the source document's observation that 'much of these grants were broken down and awarded to sub-grantees in order to hide transaction traces.'

Sub-Awardee	Programme	Amount (USD)
International Republican Institute (IRI)	AVA - multiple tranches	\$18,124,110
International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)	AVA - multiple tranches	\$17,444,170
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	AVA - multiple tranches	\$3,153,395
IRI	Bangladesh Elections Support Activity	(prior programme)

EVIDENCE: CEPPS / AVA PROGRAMME - KEY OBSERVATION

IRI, NDI, and IFES are the three 'core institutes' of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). NED President Damon Wilson testified before the US Congress (Feb 2025) that NED-supported partners 'helped advance electoral reforms, monitor the integrity of the process, and promote voter education' in the lead-up to Bangladesh's most recent elections.

Source: IANS / The Hawk, 24 Feb 2025

URL: <https://www.thehawk.in/news/world/us-funded-ned-backed-bangladesh-actors-before-sheikh-hasinah-collapse>

Counterpart International - Promoting Advocacy and Rights (PAR)

Counterpart International (CI) received USD 10,500,000 from USAID for the Promoting Advocacy and Rights programme, running April 2018 to October 2024. CI was a downstream implementing partner of both USAID's SPL programme and the UK DFID's SPP2 programme, making it one of the key nodes connecting the US and UK intervention architectures.

CARE Bangladesh - Integrated Youth Activity

The Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) received USD 9,655,000 from USAID-OM for the Bangladesh Integrated Youth Activity, running June 2023 to June 2028.

Stated purpose: to 'increase the meaningful participation of Bangladeshi youth within their communities and in the economy.' Sub-awardees included Jaago Foundation (USD 932,669) and Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (USD 1,067,715) - organisations with documented histories of receiving US public diplomacy funding.

BRAC - Bangladesh America Maitree Activity (BAMA)

BRAC, Bangladesh's largest and most institutionally embedded domestic NGO, received USD 14,700,000 from USAID under the BAMA programme, running from June 2023 on an ongoing basis. Stated objectives included: strengthening democracy for an inclusive society, fostering sustainable economic growth, advancing human capital development, and strengthening resilience to shocks. BRAC's institutional reach across Bangladesh's rural and urban civil society made it an exceptionally high-leverage conduit for political messaging and mobilisation.

4.2 EDUCATION SECTOR AS POLITICAL COVER

The most significant dollar volumes in the US assistance portfolio are concentrated not in governance grants but in education programmes. This is structurally significant: large education contracts provide financial cover, maintain institutional presence, and build youth networks that can be activated for political purposes.

Awardee	Programme	Amount (USD)	Period
Chemonics International	Higher Secondary Education Activity	\$55,200,000	Aug 2023 - Aug 2028
Winrock International	Esho Shikhi (Come and Learn) - Cox's Bazar	\$38,500,000	Nov 2021 - Nov 2026
Chemonics International	FtF Horticulture, Fruits and Non-food Crops	Unspecified	Jul 2020 - Feb 2026
Chemonics International	Advancing Universal Health Coverage (AUHC)	Unspecified	Oct 2017 - Dec 2023
Devworks International	FtF Sustainable Aquaculture Activity	Unspecified	Nov 2024 onward
CHS Inc. (USDA)	Bulk Agricultural Commodities - Food Aid	\$14,995,960	Sep 2016

Winrock International's Esho Shikhi programme operates in Cox's Bazar - one of the most politically sensitive districts in Bangladesh, hosting the Rohingya refugee camps and serving as a critical node in the US humanitarian-political complex. A USD 38.5 million education programme in this district constitutes a significant institutional foothold.

4.3 US DEPARTMENT OF NAVY (DoD) CONTRACTS

The most operationally striking component of the US intervention architecture is the involvement of the US Department of the Navy through the Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP), Singapore office. Over a decade, NAVSUP channelled contracts into Bangladesh for programmes that have no plausible relationship to naval supply logistics.

Awardee	Purpose	Amount (USD)	Period
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Student Leadership Development Workshops (x3)	\$476,189	2017-2023
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Bangladesh Anti-Violence Programme Expansion	\$478,865	2012-2013
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Promoting Equality in Madrasas (PEMS)	\$220,744	2017-2018
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Bangladesh Uni Student Counter-Rad Programme	\$167,039	2013-2014
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Anti-Violence Programme II (AVPII)	\$266,303	2011-2012
Bangladesh Ctr for Communication Programs	Student Workshops in Bangladesh	\$251,574	2015-2016
Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center	Promoting Equality in Madrasa Students (x2)	\$280,800	2018-2022
Anandadhara Consultant	Advisory Support / Cultural Advisor Bangladesh (x4)	\$140,964	2013-2017
Expressions Ltd.	Bangladesh University Student Development Media Series III	\$269,953	2015-2016
M/S Beatnik	Social Media Analytics for Bangladesh	\$99,400	May 2021 - Jul 2022
Magnito Digital	Youth and Media Outreach Support Services	\$89,000	Mar 2024 - Feb 2025
Khelbei Bangladesh	Production of Print and Promotional Materials	\$39,072	Apr 2024 - Apr 2025

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M/S Beatnik's DoD contract for 'Social Media Analytics for Bangladesh' (USD 99,400, May 2021 - July 2022) is an intelligence-adjacent social listening contracted by the US Navy inside Bangladesh. M/S Beatnik also appears as a sub-awardee of USAID's Democracy International SPL programme (USD 102,199), establishing a dual civilian-military nexus through the same local actor.

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Mike Benz identified US-funded Bangladeshi rap groups producing protest songs as a documented tactic. The Association of American Voices grant (USD 66,600 from DOS Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs) for 'Youth Excellence on Stage (YES) Academy - engage and train Bangladeshi youth in American hip-hop music' directly corroborates this claim.

4.4 PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND MEDIA MANIPULATION

Assessment

Awardee	Purpose	Amount (USD)	Period
BBC Media Action	YouthRISE Activity - Youth Reconciliation Fund	\$4,000,000	Sep 2021 - Sep 2025
Association of American Voices	YES Academy - Hip-hop music training for youth	\$66,600	Sep 2020 - Sep 2022
Miscellaneous Foreign Awardees (DOS)	Media literacy and counter-disinformation workshops	\$24,200	Sep 2022 - Sep 2024
Global Youth Leadership Center	Amplify youth voices in Bangladesh policymaking	\$99,930	Sep 2024 - Feb 2025
Global Youth Leadership Center	TechCamp - countering disinformation	\$133,493	Oct 2023 - Feb 2025
Undisclosed Domestic Awardees (USAID)	Social Movements and Collective Action Expertise	\$923,400	Aug 2023 - Dec 2024
Samakal (via Democracy International)	Sub-grant under SPL programme	\$58,876 (x2)	Unspecified

The USD 923,400 contract awarded to undisclosed domestic awardees by USAID for 'Social Movements and Collective Action Expertise' running from August 2023 to December 2024 is particularly significant. The description explicitly names the programme purpose as providing expertise in social movements. This is a contract for protest organising infrastructure, disbursed less than one year before the August 2024 uprising.

The Global Youth Leadership Center grant dated 30 September 2024 - weeks after the coup - stated its purpose as amplifying youth voices 'ultimately influencing the interim government's reform agenda and future political priorities.' This demonstrates that the same funding pipeline that built the mobilisation capacity was immediately redirected to consolidating the post-Hasina order.

SECTION 5: UK DFID - STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION 2 (SPP2)

5.1 Programme Overview

Field	Detail
Programme Title	Strengthening Political Participation in Bangladesh, Phase 2 (SPP2)
Programme Code	203487
Programme Value (Full Life)	GBP 16.2 million
Start Date	April 2017
End Date	March 2021
Annual Review Score (2018/19/20)	A / A / A (Major Risk Rating throughout)
Source	DFID Annual Review 2020 (OFFICIAL)

5.2 Programme Architecture

SPP2 is described in its own official documentation as 'DFID Bangladesh's primary political governance programme.' It operated through four coordinated implementing partnerships:

- USAID with downstream partners Democracy International (DI) implementing the Strengthening Political Landscape (SPL) project and Counterpart International (CI) implementing the Political Advocacy and Rights (PAR) project
- FCO with implementing partners Management Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) and Dhaka University Micro-Governance Research Centre (DUMGR)
- The Asia Foundation (TAF) with implementing partners Rupantor and Noakhali Rural Development Society (NRDS)
- International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) with implementing partners The Hunger Project (THP), Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), and DUMGR

This architecture merits emphasis: the UK government's primary political governance programme in Bangladesh was co-implemented with USAID, creating a formally coordinated transatlantic intervention structure. The same organisations - DI, CI, IFES - appear in both the UK SPP2 architecture and the independently documented US grant tables.

5.3 Stated Programme Objectives

SPP2's four stated outputs were: (1) promoting more inclusive, peaceful, and representative political governance; (2) making political parties more policy-oriented and inclusive; (3) supporting political parties for cross-party collaboration and coalition formation with CSOs; (4) supporting media and youth to promote peace, tolerance, and freedom of speech. The programme explicitly targeted political party architecture, inter-party dynamics, civil society linkages, and media - the full spectrum of Bangladesh's domestic political ecosystem.

EVIDENCE: SPP2 ANNUAL REVIEW 2020 - INTERNAL QUOTE

A senior Awami League leader stated (March 2020): 'I have talked with many of them [young leaders who received training] and they have been enormously benefited. There is a wall that has been broken down (between AL and BNP leaders). That is their biggest achievement of this programme.'

A senior BNP Leader stated (March 2020): 'Most useful is the programme's ability to act as a conduit linking junior and senior leaders.'

Source: DFID SPP2 Annual Review 2020, Programme Code 203487 (OFFICIAL)

The dismantling of the political wall between AL and BNP - facilitated by a UK government programme - is precisely what enabled the BNP to participate in the coalition of forces that brought down the Hasina government. The SPP2 programme, by its own internal review, achieved its objective of creating cross-party linkages that would later serve as the political framework for transition.

SECTION 6: NED CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY - FEBRUARY 2025

On 24 February 2025, Damon Wilson, President and CEO of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), testified before the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs of the House Committee on Appropriations. His testimony constitutes an official self-admission of NED's operational role in Bangladesh's political transition.

EVIDENCE: NED PRESIDENT DAMON WILSON - CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY, 24 FEB 2025

On Bangladesh: 'NED's support is helping the country emerge from more than 10 years of authoritarian rule, violence, and instability.'

On the pre-election period: 'In the lead up to the most recent elections, NED-supported partners and the core institutes helped advance electoral reforms, monitor the integrity of the process, and promote voter education, contributing to this critical step toward the reestablishment of multiparty democracy.'

On the post-Hasina period: 'The country now has an opportunity to restore peace and advance democratic governance and reform.'

On NED's scope: In FY2025, NED provided USD 271 million in grants supporting more than 1,550 projects across over 90 countries.

Source: IANS / The Hawk, 24 Feb 2025

URL: <https://www.thehawk.in/news/world/us-funded-ned-backed-bangladesh-actors-before-sheikh-hasinas-collapse>

Several aspects of this testimony require analytical emphasis:

- The NED president characterised Sheikh Hasina's government as 'authoritarian' - a designation that has direct foreign policy and funding implications, as it legitimises the pre-existing governance intervention as a response to democratic backsliding rather than as its cause.
- The 'core institutes' referenced by Wilson are IRI, NDI, and IFES - the three organisations that are direct sub-awardees of the CEPPS-AVA programme documented in Section 4. NED's characterisation of their work as successful electoral monitoring directly contradicts their role as actors with a declared political objective.
- The framing of post-Hasina Bangladesh as 'an opportunity' constitutes an admission that the prior political situation was treated as an obstacle to be overcome - not a stable democratic order to be respected.
- Wilson's testimony was delivered before the US Congress in February 2025, six months after the coup. The characterisation of NED's work as having 'contributed to this critical step' is effectively a declaration of operational success.

SECTION 7: FUND FLOW ARCHITECTURE - ANALYTICAL RECONSTRUCTION

The compiled source documents include a fund-flow diagram reconstructing the full layered architecture through which US and UK funds reached operative ground-level organisations in Bangladesh. The following table reconstructs the key nodes analytically.

7.1 Primary Funding Layer

Funder	Primary Channel	Amount	Notes
US Government	USAID (via SPL)	\$29.9M	Managed by Lubain Masum at USAID Bangladesh
US Government	USAID (via CEPPS/AVA)	\$21M	Nagorik Project branding
DFID / FCDO (UK)	Direct to SPP2 consortium	GBP 16.9M / \$10M component	Coordinated with USAID architecture

7.2 Intermediate Implementation Layer

Organisation	Role	Key Sub-Awardees
Democracy International (DI)	SPL Prime Awardee	TAF, THP Bangladesh, 10 PPGs, Shujan, DUMGR
Counterpart International (CI)	PAR Prime Awardee	Various advocacy CSOs
CEPPS (IRI + NDI + IFES)	AVA Prime Consortium	CIPE, BIPSS, BEI, many others
The Asia Foundation (TAF)	SPP2 / SPL Sub-Awardee	Rupantor, NRDS

7.3 Ground-Level Operative Nodes

The fund-flow diagram identifies the following as terminal nodes where funding reaches operational political actors. The diagram notes explicitly that 'the points where Terror financing gets cloaked through audit-resistant layering to finance the operatives' is represented by the transition from intermediate to ground level:

- Shujan (Mr. Bodiul Alam Majumdar) - a purportedly non-partisan civil society election monitoring organisation with documented US funding exposure

- DUMGR / Aynul Islam and Prof Md Azam - Dhaka University institutional node
- Karon Bangladesh / Amar Amio Jitte Chai - electoral campaign organisations
- YES Programme / Bodiol Aom Majumdar - youth mobilisation
- MGRI / Aynul Islam and Md Azam - further institutional node
- SAVE Youth / Aynul Islam - direct youth activation programme
- Dangerous and Hate Speech Project / Aynul Islam and Md Azam - narrative control operation

The diagram's annotation that many organisations 'come down to select few in link, in order to obscure the fund flow' is consistent with the source document's observation that grants were 'broken down and awarded to sub-grantees in order to hide transaction traces.' This is layered financial architecture designed specifically to prevent audit trail reconstruction.

SECTION 8: ADDITIONAL GRANTS OF OPERATIONAL CONCERN

8.1 Legal and Judicial Penetration

Awardee	Purpose	Amount	Period
National Center for State Courts (DOS)	Access to justice and legal aid quality - Bangladesh	\$536,900	Jul 2019 - Jun 2023
Legal Aid and Services Trust (USAID)	Gender diverse community organisations - visibility programme	\$1,000,000	Sep 2022 - Dec 2025
International Organisation for Migration (DOS)	Integrated border control and migration management	\$1,900,000	Sep 2022 - Sep 2024

8.2 Security and Counter-Terrorism Infrastructure

Awardee	Purpose	Amount	Period
Global Center on Cooperative Security (DOS)	Prevent violent extremism - prison/post-release	\$493,339	Sep 2024 - Feb 2025
International Republican Institute (USAID)	Predictive Analysis for Extremism (PAE) activity	\$550,000	May 2019 - Apr 2022

Awardee	Purpose	Amount	Period
US Civilian R&D Foundation (DOS)	WMD terrorism investigations capability - Bangladesh ATU	\$500,000	Sep 2022 - Mar 2024
Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (USIP)	Peacebuilding through counter-radicalisation of youth	\$50,000	Nov 2018 - Jul 2019
Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (DOS)	Sub-grant via Global Center on Cooperative Security (x2)	\$299,750	Unspecified

The Global Center on Cooperative Security grant dated 30 September 2024 - issued after the coup - for preventing violent extremism in prisons and among released prisoners is analytically significant. This is a counter-radicalisation programme focused on detained individuals. In the post-August 2024 context, Bangladesh's prisons contained large numbers of detained Awami League activists and officials. A US-funded prison intervention programme, initiated immediately after the coup, constitutes a potential instrument for managing the political prisoner population.

8.3 The Atlantic Council Assessment

The Atlantic Council of the United States received USD 65,000 from USAID for an 'Assessment and Conference 15-18 April 2024, Bangladesh.' The timing - four months before the August 2024 coup - and the venue suggest this was a pre-transition assessment exercise. The Atlantic Council is a Washington DC-based think tank with documented ties to the US national security and foreign policy establishment. Its presence in Dhaka in April 2024 as a USAID-funded assessor is consistent with a pre-operation readiness evaluation.

8.4 Undisclosed and Masked Awardees

Multiple entries in the grant records carry descriptions 'masked for PII purposes' and are listed as undisclosed awardees. These include five separate grants of USD 1,200 each from the US Embassy Dhaka in November-December 2022, and two educational/cultural exchange grants of USD 5,700 and USD 4,700 in 2022-2023. While individually small, the pattern of PII masking across multiple entries suggests a deliberate practice of operational concealment within the grant-making process. The USD 923,400 contract for 'Social Movements and Collective Action Expertise' is also awarded to undisclosed domestic awardees.

SECTION 9: CHRONOLOGICAL TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

Date	Event	Significance
2010	Jaago Foundation first US DOS grant (\$138K)	Initial activation of youth volunteer network
Jan 2013	CEPPS Bangladesh Elections Support Activity (\$7.6M)	First major US electoral intervention
Mar 2017	Democracy International SPL programme begins (\$29.9M)	Core political landscape operation launches
Apr 2017	UK DFID SPP2 begins (GBP 16.2M)	Transatlantic coordination formalised
2018	US assistance to Bangladesh begins accelerating	Operational intensification phase
Oct 2018	DI Promoting Peace and Justice Rule of Law (\$11M)	Judicial intervention begins
Apr 2018	Jaago Foundation election campaign grant (\$59.5K)	Youth political activation
Aug 2022	CEPPS Amar Vote Amar (AVA) begins (\$21M)	Primary 2024 election intervention vehicle
Sep 2022	Counterpart International PAR ongoing (\$10.5M)	Advocacy and rights infrastructure active
Jun 2023	BRAC BAMA begins (\$14.7M)	Largest NGO mobilised as US conduit
Aug 2023	Chemonics Higher Secondary Education (\$55.2M)	Largest single programme covers youth demographic
Aug 2023	USAID Social Movements Expertise contract (\$923.4K)	Direct protest organising infrastructure funded
Apr 2024	Atlantic Council Assessment Conference in Bangladesh	Pre-transition readiness evaluation (USAID-funded)
5 Aug 2024	Sheikh Hasina removed, flees by helicopter	Regime change achieved

Date	Event	Significance
Sep 2024	Global Youth Leadership Center grants (\$99.9K + \$133.5K)	Post-coup youth political consolidation
Oct 2024	DI Responsive Local Governance Activity (\$1.1M, to 2029)	Post-coup governance architecture funded
Nov 2024	International Development Group advisory (\$19M)	Post-coup economic policy influence
24 Feb 2025	NED President testifies before US Congress on Bangladesh	Explicit acknowledgment of NED's role
Apr 2026	ForeignAssistance.gov shows funding decline 2025-2026	Programme wind-down consistent with achieved objective

SECTION 10: PROBABLE UNTRACEABLE FUNDING STREAMS

The compiled source document explicitly acknowledges that traceable funding represents only a portion of the total financial intervention. Analyst assessment identifies the following probable additional channels:

Source	Mechanism	Analyst Assessment
Middle East Hundi networks	Cash transfers into Madrasah infrastructure, avoiding formal banking channels	Plausible - consistent with documented pattern of Madrasah-based political financing in South Asia
Open Society Foundation	Grants to Bangladeshi civil society organisations via regional offices	Likely - OSF has documented history of governance programming in Bangladesh
UN Foundation / UN Organisations	Humanitarian and governance grants with political conditionality	Confirmed in part - UNICEF and UNHCR entries visible in ForeignAssistance.gov data
European and Canadian embassies (Rohingya cover)	Humanitarian assistance to Cox's Bazar used as cover for political programming	Plausible - consistent with SPP2 co-funding structure

Source	Mechanism	Analyst Assessment
European Union	Governance and democracy support programmes parallel to DFID/USAID	Likely - EU has active Bangladesh governance programme history
Yunus Sports Hub	Muhammad Yunus's personal philanthropic infrastructure as funding conduit	Unverified but identified by source document

The total financial commitment to Bangladesh's political transformation, when untraceable sources are included in analyst estimates, likely exceeds USD 500 million across the full 2010-2026 operational period.

SECTION 11: ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS

11.1 On the Nature of the Intervention

The evidence assembled in this report supports the following analytical finding: the removal of Sheikh Hasina on 5 August 2024 was not a spontaneous democratic uprising. It was the culmination of a sustained, multi-year, multi-agency foreign intervention financed predominantly by the United States government and coordinated with the United Kingdom, operating through a layered architecture of NGOs, civil society organisations, media institutions, university bodies, and youth networks, all receiving traceable US and UK government funding.

11.2 On the Strategic Rationale

The strategic rationale, as stated publicly by former US State Department official Mike Benz, was to facilitate the establishment of a US military presence in the Bay of Bengal to counter Chinese strategic expansion in South Asia. Bangladesh's multi-vector foreign policy under Hasina, and her government's resistance to US pressure on military basing, made her government an obstacle to this objective. Regime change was the instrument chosen to remove that obstacle.

11.3 On the Operational Method

The operational method combined: (a) long-term political party penetration and cross-party coalition building via SPP2 and SPL; (b) electoral infrastructure manipulation via CEPPS-AVA and NED core institutes; (c) civil society capture via BRAC, Jaago Foundation, Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center, and dozens of sub-awardees; (d) media penetration via Samakal sub-grants, BBC Media Action, and disinformation training programmes; (e) youth mobilisation

via hip-hop and music programmes, TechCamps, and leadership bootcamps; (f) social media analytics and narrative management via US Navy contracts to M/S Beatnik and Magnito Digital; (g) social movements expertise contracted directly for protest organising infrastructure.

11.4 On Continuity

The evidence indicates that US and allied engagement in Bangladesh's governance did not end with the transition. Multiple programmes were renewed or initiated after August 2024, including the Global Youth Leadership Center grants, the Democracy International Responsive Local Governance Activity, the International Development Group advisory services contract, and the Global Center on Cooperative Security prison programme. This is consistent with a post-transition consolidation phase rather than a withdrawal.

11.5 On Accountability

The individuals and institutions identified in this report as having received or channelled US funding for governance intervention in Bangladesh are on public record. The grant records are publicly accessible on USASpending.gov. The SPP2 annual review is an official DFID document. The NED testimony is a matter of congressional record. The Mike Benz statements were made in a broadcast interview reported by The Times of India. There is sufficient public evidence to support formal accountability proceedings, including parliamentary inquiries, international human rights complaints, and submissions to relevant UN treaty bodies.

SECTION 12: RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Immediate Actions

- Submit this report and supporting evidence to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, given the use of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation programming as political instruments.
- Submit to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, given the documented funding of social movement infrastructure.
- File a formal complaint with the UN Human Rights Council citing the documented foreign interference in Bangladesh's democratic processes as a violation of the right to self-determination under Article 1 of both International Covenants.
- Prepare a formal note verbale to all UN Permanent Representatives documenting the financial evidence of foreign interference in Bangladesh's 2024 political transition.

12.2 Documentation and Archiving

- Archive all ForeignAssistance.gov and USASpending.gov records cited in this report before potential modification or deletion under the current US administration's DOGE-driven data management practices. Note: one BRAC University grant is already listed as 'Terminated by DOGE' in the source records.

- Commission independent financial forensic analysis of the sub-award layering identified in the CEPPS-AVA programme and the Democracy International SPL programme.
- File formal Freedom of Information requests with USAID, the Department of State, and the US Embassy Dhaka for all Bangladesh-related grant and contract records from 2018 to 2026.

12.3 Political and Diplomatic Actions

- Advocate for the inclusion of Bangladesh's political transition on the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review cycle.
- Engage with parliamentary and legislative bodies in the UK to demand an inquiry into DFID/FCDO's SPP2 programme and its coordination with USAID governance operations in Bangladesh.
- Engage with sympathetic member state missions at the UN General Assembly to raise the Bangladesh case in the context of General Assembly Resolution 2625 (Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States).

SECTION 13: SOURCE REFERENCES AND VERIFICATION

Reference	Type	URL / Location
ForeignAssistance.gov Bangladesh Dashboard (FY2024)	Primary - US Government	https://foreignassistance.gov/cd/bangladesh/2024/obligations/0
USASpending.gov Bangladesh Grants and Contracts	Primary - US Government	https://www.usaspending.gov
Jihan Jennifer Hassan - Funding in Bangladesh for Governance Intervention (2026)	Compiled Research Document	Provided to BHRW Research Division
DFID SPP2 Annual Review 2020 (Official)	Primary - UK Government	Programme Code 203487 / iati.dfid.gov.uk
NED President Damon Wilson Congressional Testimony (24 Feb 2025)	Primary - US Congressional Record	https://www.thehawk.in/news/world/us-funded-ned-backed-bangladesh-actors-before-sheikh-hasinah-collapse
Mike Benz - Tucker Carlson Show Interview	Primary - Broadcast Statement	As reported by Times of India
ForeignAssistance.gov Dashboard Screenshot (10 Apr 2026)	Primary - Visual Record	Provided to BHRW Research Division