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[Article 1.](#)

Voice of America

US Needs to Put Its Mideast Plan on the Table

Barbara Slavin

March 22, 2014 -- If, as Woody Allen says, 80 percent of life is just showing up, there ought to be a U.S.-brokered Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement before President Barack Obama leaves office.

Secretary of State John Kerry has already met 47 times with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and 27 times with senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat over the past year, Erekat [told a Washington audience](#) earlier this week. Kerry and Obama, Erekat said, have shown a “relentless, unwavering commitment” to achieving an agreement which they recognize

would resolve a core issue in an otherwise unpredictably changing Middle East.

Yet there is much uncertainty about the talks, whose current iteration is due to end in April – or perhaps sooner if Israel reneges on a pledge to release another tranche of Palestinian prisoners on March 29. The Israelis are demanding that Abbas first agree to extend the talks, which resumed last July, while the Palestinian leader is looking for Israel to curb its unrelenting construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Abbas dramatized his position during a meeting in the Oval Office Monday by presenting Obama with what Erekat called “a very ugly map.” It showed that Israel began work on more than 10,000 new units in Jewish settlements since last July – four times the “natural growth” of New York City during the same time period, according to the veteran Palestinian negotiator.

The kidney-shaped West Bank is now so thoroughly penetrated by settlements that it resembles that organ crisscrossed by arteries and veins. Indeed, the number of settlers on the West Bank and in East Jerusalem has more than doubled since 1995 from 230,000 to more than 560,000.

The U.S. position on settlements has always been that they are obstacles to peace. But Obama, stung by his administration’s failure to make progress on the peace front in his first term – when Israel did agree to a heavily conditioned moratorium on new settlement construction – has focused instead in his second term on negotiating borders for a Palestinian state that would clarify where Israelis and Palestinians would be allowed to build. At his meeting on Monday with Abbas, however, Obama did not present a U.S. framework for a settlement, as some had anticipated. Indeed the conversation was “candid, difficult and long,” Erekat said, suggesting wide gaps remain between the Israeli and Palestinian positions that the U.S. is not yet ready to try to bridge.

The Israelis have further complicated negotiations – which are supposed to focus on the core issues of borders, settlements, security, refugees and Jerusalem – by adding a demand that the Palestinian Authority explicitly recognize Israel as a Jewish state.

Erekat noted that the Palestine Liberation Organization recognized the state of Israel under the 1993 Oslo accords and said this additional demand was meant to denigrate the Palestinian narrative of dispossession from what

both sides claim as their ancestral land.

Instead of adding conditions, the Israelis should focus on an agreement that results in the “end of conflict and the end of claims,” he said.

Kerry, meanwhile, [said last week](#) that the issue was resolved by the United Nations in 1947 when it passed Resolution 181 which sought to partition the then British mandate of Palestine between Arabs and Jews. There are “more than 40-30 mentions of 'Jewish state,' “in that resolution, Kerry told a Senate committee. The Palestinians affirmed their endorsement of the resolution in 1988 when the Palestine National Council, a proto-parliament, gave up claims to all of Palestine. Then PLO chairman Yasir Arafat agreed again that Israel would be a Jewish state in 2004, Kerry said. Indeed, Netanyahu’s demand that the Palestinians explicitly recognize Israel as a Jewish state seems just another in a long line of delaying tactics while Israel establishes new facts on the ground. While it is understandable that Israel is wary of making new agreements requiring territorial withdrawal with the region in so much flux, a collapse of the peace talks is not in Israel’s interests either. Efforts have escalated over the past few years in Europe and on U.S. college campuses to boycott products made in West Bank settlements. The attachment of [younger American Jews to Israel is waning](#) and even the vaunted American Israel Public Affairs Committee is losing some of its clout on Capitol Hill when it comes to pushing for Iran sanctions or U.S. military intervention in Syria. Plus Obama, in his second and final term, does not have to worry about re-election.

U.S. officials, led by Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel in the 1990s, have studied and restudied the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ad infinitum and are well placed to put their own ideas on the table. One of the advisers to the U.S. delegation is journalist David Makovksy who three years ago [put out three options](#) for Israeli-Palestinian borders. Declaring borders would end the “legal limbo status” of most Jewish settlers, Makovsky told me at the time, while the Palestinians “would see the contours of a state and not just hear more speeches.”

The U.S. also should be prepared to call for a return of refugees only to a Palestinian state apart from a small number allowed back to Israel proper for family reunification. On Jerusalem, assorted peace plans have urged that the city not be re-divided – something Israel has repeatedly rejected – but that the Palestinians get to put their capital in the predominantly Arab

eastern half and that an international commission supervise sites holy to the world's three great monotheistic faiths.

It is possible, of course, that neither side would accept these parameters but they would at least become an established basis for further negotiations and prevent both sides from taking dangerous unilateral steps.

After more than a century of conflict, it is clear that Israelis and Palestinians will never be able to resolve their differences by themselves and only the United States is in a position to fill the gap. As Erekat said, "I hope that once the end product is put on the table, it will reflect American ideas because that's the key to success."

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[Article 2.](#)

NYT

Palestinians Criticize Abbas for Public Fatah Feud at Delicate Time Diplomatically

Isabel Kershne

March 22, 2014 -- RAMALLAH, West Bank — When Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, returned to his headquarters here late last week after a quick trip for talks in Washington, the welcome-home reception featuring waving flags, a marching band and posters with his portrait seemed like a forced attempt to boost the spirits of an embattled leader. Supporters say Mr. Abbas is facing intense Israeli and American pressure to compromise on some core Palestinian principles and to agree to extend peace talks beyond next month. That pressure, they say, comes even as he contends with his Palestinian rivals in the militant group Hamas, which controls Gaza, and deals with cracks in the Arab world's support for the Palestinians.

But some of Mr. Abbas's current difficulties are of his own making. Palestinians say they are baffled by Mr. Abbas's decision to open up another front within his own Fatah movement by beginning a nasty, public campaign against a onetime ally who Mr. Abbas now sees as a rival, Muhammad Dahlan, a former Gaza strongman and Fatah security chief. In the two weeks since Mr. Abbas's opening salvo against Mr. Dahlan, who is living abroad, the Arabic media has been filled with unproved accusations by Mr. Abbas about the long-ago killings of prominent Palestinians, and by both men about collaboration with Israel and financial corruption. Mr. Abbas even implied that Mr. Dahlan might have had a hand in the mysterious death of Yasir Arafat, the father of the Palestinian cause, in 2004. For the most part, the two camps have not offered detailed responses to all the accusations.

Many Palestinians have characterized the dispute as a shameful airing of dirty laundry that shines an unflattering spotlight on the state of the Palestinian leadership at a critical period in the diplomatic battle for the Palestinians' future.

"It is ugly," said Mahdi Abdul Hadi, the director of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, an independent research institute in East Jerusalem. "People are saying: 'Is this the history of Fatah? Collaborators, corruption and killers — is this us?'"

Underlying the feud is the knowledge that Mr. Abbas, at almost 79, has no deputy or obvious successor. His presidential term technically ran out in early 2010, but because of the internal Palestinian schism, no new elections have been held. In any case, Mr. Abbas has repeatedly stated that he does not intend to run again.

A committee that was appointed to nominate a deputy recently said it was incapable of doing so and did not see the need, according to Mr. Abdul Hadi, who said there was not only a crisis of leadership in Fatah, but also a crisis of vision with the peace talks apparently at an impasse.

Mr. Dahlan, 52, rose from humble beginnings in a Gaza refugee camp to become a powerful figure in the Palestinian Authority who earned the trust of Israel and the United States. Some saw him as a potential successor to Mr. Abbas.

Mr. Dahlan initially fell out of favor when Hamas routed the Fatah forces from Gaza in 2007 after a brief factional war. Mr. Dahlan was abroad,

recovering from knee surgery, at the time.

Then in 2011, amid accusations that Mr. Dahlan was working to undermine Mr. Abbas, he was expelled from Fatah and effectively banished. He is currently based in the United Arab Emirates and is raising funds there and elsewhere to aid Gaza — and, some say, to buy back influence there.

Mr. Abbas took up the fight against Mr. Dahlan at a meeting of the Revolutionary Council, Fatah's Parliament, in Ramallah on March 10. In a speech that was later broadcast on the official Palestinian television channel, he accused Mr. Dahlan of, among other things, having ordered the murder of six well-known Palestinians. He offered no evidence, and some relatives of the victims and others named as involved parties or sources of information have since denied Mr. Abbas's assertions in the Arabic news. Mr. Dahlan's response came a week later in a three-hour interview on a private Egyptian channel. He described Mr. Abbas's speech as "a farce" and "a disgrace to Abbas and the history of Fatah." Among other things, he called Mr. Abbas's sons "thieves" and said that everybody knew that Mr. Abbas had ridden to power on the Israeli tanks that had surrounded Mr. Arafat when he was confined to his Ramallah compound.

Mr. Dahlan declined a request to be interviewed for this article. A spokeswoman cited the delicate timing. Mr. Abbas's aides have also been reticent on the subject.

Disputes within Fatah are nothing new. But a former Palestinian Authority official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the delicacy of the matter, said that this public exchange was "bad for the image of the Palestinians and for the cause." He added that the platform granted to Mr. Dahlan by Egypt was significant, reflecting Mr. Abbas's waning influence with Arab governments. (An Egyptian official later sent a letter to the Palestinian representative in Cairo saying the broadcast did not reflect the views of the Egyptian government or people.)

For the Dahlan camp, the dispute is about Mr. Abbas's strong-arm tactics against a political opponent. Months ago, through an Arab-Israeli law firm, Mr. Dahlan filed a complaint against the Palestinian Authority leadership in the International Criminal Court, accusing it of corruption, violations of human rights and political and personal persecution, though it is unclear whether anything will come of it other than angering the Palestinian leader.

Mr. Abbas, for his part, may also have been stung by Mr. Dahlan's apparently successful effort to make inroads in Gaza, where he still has some supporters. In January, Hamas allowed two pro-Dahlan lawmakers from Gaza to return to their homes from the West Bank. It also allowed Feta, a nongovernmental organization run by Mr. Dahlan's wife, Jalila, to distribute aid to Gazan families hit by a severe winter storm.

Alaa Yaghi, one of the lawmakers allowed back to Gaza, said donations from the United Arab Emirates, with Mr. Dahlan's encouragement, had paid for group weddings, Ramadan meals, expenses for university students and food for the needy.

In a telephone interview with The Associated Press from London last month, Mr. Dahlan said he was collecting money for desalination projects in Gaza. He called for new elections and an overhaul of Fatah.

Nasser Jumaa, a Fatah legislator from Nablus in the West Bank, said the dispute affected the unity of Fatah "horizontally and vertically," increasing fragmentation at the leadership level and among the rank and file.

Dimitri Diliani, a member of Fatah's Revolutionary Council, said in an interview that many Palestinians were asking why it had taken Mr. Abbas until 2014 to accuse Mr. Dahlan of being involved in events that took place more than a decade ago and, if there was any evidence, why no charges were filed against him in a Palestinian court.

Mr. Diliani said he passed a note to Mr. Abbas at the meeting asking, "Why now?"

"I did not get a direct answer," Mr. Diliani said. "He said everything has its time, he is a patient person and he had to do this for the sake of national interests." Mr. Abbas did not elaborate.

Isabel Kershner is a journalist and author who began reporting from Jerusalem for The New York Times in 2007. Previously, Kershner was Senior Editor, Middle East, The Jerusalem Report magazine.

[Article 3.](#)

Defining Ideas

The Hitler Model

[Victor D. Hanson](#)

March 22, 2014 -- An ascendant Vladimir Putin is dismantling the Ukraine and absorbing its eastern territory in the Crimea. President Obama is fighting back against critics that his administration serially projected weakness, and thereby lost the ability to deter rogue regimes. Obama, of course, rejects the notion that his own mixed signals have emboldened Putin to try something stupid that he might otherwise not have. After all, in terms of planes, ships, soldiers, nuclear strength, and economic clout, Putin must concede that he has only a fraction of the strength of what is at the disposal of the United States.

In the recriminations that have followed Putin's daring intervention, Team Obama has also assured the international community that Putin is committing strategic suicide, given the gap between his ambitions of expanding the Russian Federation by threats of force and intimidation, and the rather limited means to do so at his disposal. Perhaps Putin is pandering to Russian public opinion or simply delusional in his wildly wrong calculations of all the bad things that may befall him.

Do any of those rationalizations matter-given that Putin, in fact, did intervene, plans to stay in the eastern Ukraine, and has put other former member states of the former Soviet Union on implicit notice that their future behavior may determine whether they too are similarly absorbed? History is replete with examples of demonstrably weaker states invading or intervening in other countries that could in theory or in time bring to their defense far greater resources. On September 1, 1939, Hitler was both militarily and economically weaker than France and Britain combined. So what? That fact certainly did not stop the Wehrmacht over the next eight months from invading, defeating, and occupying seven countries in a row. Hitler was far weaker than the Soviet Union. Still, he foolishly destroyed his non-aggression pact with Stalin to invade Russia on June 22, 1941. Next, Nazi Germany, when bogged down outside Moscow and having suffered almost a million casualties in the first six months of Operation Barbarossa, certainly was weaker than the United States, when Hitler idiotically declared war on America on December 11, 1941.

Yet all those demonstrably stupid moves did not prove that Hitler himself agreed that that he was weaker than his targets. Much less did Nazi Germany have any good reason from recent experiences to accept the fact

that it was weaker than were its enemies. Even Neville Chamberlain did not claim that Hitler had invaded Poland because he was weaker than France and Britain-though again he probably was.

From Benito Mussolini's invasions in 1940-41 of France, the Balkans, and Greece to Argentine Gen. Galtieri's attack on the Falklands in 1982 and Saddam Hussein's entry into Kuwait in the summer of 1990, there are plenty of examples of weak states attacking countries who have alliances or friends far stronger than the attacker. Why then do the Putins of the past and present try something so shortsighted-as the Obama administration has characterized the Ukraine gambit?

Answer? Strength is in the eye of the attacker.

What might prove to be demonstrably stupid in the future, or even seems foolish in the present, may not necessarily be so clear to the attacker. The perception, not the reality, of relative strength and weakness is what guides aggressive states.

Obama looks to logic, reason, and morality in his confusion over why Putin did something that cannot be squared away on any rational or ethical calculators.

Putin, however, has a logic of his own. American intervention or non-intervention in particular crises is not just the issue for Putin. Instead he sees fickleness and confusion in American foreign policy. He has manipulated and translated this into American impotence and thus reigns freely on his borders.

Red lines in Syria proved pink. Putin's easily peddled his pseudo-WMD removal plan for Syria. America is flipping and flopping and flipping in Egypt. Missile defense begat no missile defense with the Poles and Czechs. Lead from behind led to Benghazi and chaos. Deadlines and sanctions spawned no deadlines and no sanctions with Iran. Then there was the reset with Russia. Obama's predecessors, not his enemies were blamed. Iraq was cut loose. We surged only with deadlines to stop surging in Afghanistan. Loud civilian trials were announced for terrorists and as quietly dropped. Silly new rubrics appeared like overseas contingency operations, workplace violence, man-caused disasters, a secular Muslim Brotherhood, jihad as a personal journey, and a chief NASA mission being outreach to Muslims.

Putin added all that up. He saw a pattern of words without consequences, of actions that are ephemeral and not sustained, and so he concluded that a weaker power like Russia most certainly can bully a neighbor with access to stronger powers like the United States. For Putin and his ilk, willpower and his mythologies about Russian moral superiority are worth more than the hardware and data points of the West.

To return to our previous topic: Hitler finally went into Poland and Western Europe because he believed that even if his opponents collectively were stronger, there was no evidence in the immediate past-in the Rhineland, during the Anschluss, or amid the Czechoslovakia annexations-that they would either act individually or in concert to stop his aggression. The Nazis' cynical pact with the Soviet Union secured his eastern front, and cemented the impression that he could beat all of Western Europe-whose aggregate planes, tanks, artillery, and armies were nevertheless greater than Germany's.

Hitler invaded a far stronger Soviet Union because he was convinced that its purges of high-ranking officers, that its recent lackluster military performance in Finland and Poland in 1939, that the unstoppable record theretofore of Blitzkrieg in 1930-40, and that the collapse of Russia in 1917, all suggested Russia's greater relative strength was now a chimera. Similar reasoning led Hitler to declare war on the United States. In the abstract, Hitler knew that during World War I, in just over a year, an earlier, weaker America had sent well over 1 million soldiers to Europe to stop the Kaiser's spring offensive of 1918, and eventually overwhelmed Imperial Germany with its industrial output. But Hitler also figured that a different U.S. had stood idly by in 1940 while Britain, its closet ally, burned, that it would have its hands full with a two-front war against the Japanese navy, and that prior U.S. isolationism meant that it would not rally to war as it had in 1917. Above all, Hitler did not just rely on relative material strength, but believed the iron will of Nazi ideology could make up the divisions he lacked on the Eastern front or in the war with America. And so he did something fundamentally stupid in declaring war on a much stronger U.S. The Argentines in 1982 dared the naval successors to Lord Nelson to fight by sea, on the silly idea that Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female Prime Minister, lacked the machismo to protect some far off windswept rocks in the south Atlantic. The junta in Argentina remembered that some

prominent British politicians had parroted the Argentine name "Malvinas" for the Falkland's, and that the reset faction in Britain had earlier withdrawn a few unimpressive warships from the Falkland's. In the junta's view, a far stronger Britain was too smug and too sophisticated to worry about loud noise emanating from a caricatured two-bit dictatorship in Buenos Aires, pandering to the public to hide its own domestic incompetency. Once again, a dictator counted on supposed willpower and superior morale to substitute for the material strength he lacked.

Ditto Saddam Hussein in August 1990. He did not need Kuwait's oil. Taking it might likely ensure a coalition of far stronger and wealthier powers arrayed against him. But such a short-sighted move did not appear so short-sighted to Saddam as he ordered his tanks into Kuwait City. Saddam figured that the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, had casually assured him that border disputes among Arab states were not of much interest to Washington. Saddam assumed that the eroding Soviet Union might still have enough clout to back his gamble. He reasoned that no one had cared when he had invaded Iran or gassed the Kurds, so why would they care now? He thought the opulent Persian Gulf States were softies compared to his Republican Guard who had died in droves in Iran. And George H.W. Bush was an unknown quantity.

Deterrence is an art, not a science. And it is transitory, often psychological, and as easily lost as it is hard to regain. Weak states invade others with strong backers because they are not deterred and feel they can get away with it-and thereby become stronger by their sheer success. If they fail, it is usually because they or their intended targets had originally misjudged relative power. Some sort of hostilities then ensue to correct those inaccurate initial appraisals. Peace follows when everybody again knows who was truly weak and who was strong in the first place.

When Putin clearly learns that the United States was all long the stronger power, and remains the far stronger power, and that Russia, for all its blather about the greater will and spirit, was and remains the weaker party, he will be deterred and recede. Then calm will return.

In contrast, if Putin continues to meddle in Ukraine and meets no consequences, then he was probably correct that for all the impressive military force of the United States, for all its economic power, for all its

global influence and array of international allies, it really is retreating from the international stage.

In some sense, Putin defines power not by tanks or GDP, but by a state's willingness to gamble to use whatever power it has. He assumes that others less reckless than he would rather rationalize their unwillingness to use their superior economic and military assets than run the risks of employing them. For an aggressive but weaker belligerent, its sheer audacity, indeed its recklessness is seen as a force multiplier-an unfathomable asset that sometimes makes up the difference in what is lacking in bombers or cash. By that standard, a weak Putin believes that he's strong and assumes anyone more powerful who disagrees will not prove it. It is up to others to disabuse him of that folly.

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(Originally published by the [Hoover Institution](#).)

[Article 4.](#)

NYT [Magazine](#)

What Pakistan Knew About Bin Laden

[Carlotta Gall](#)

March 19, 2014 -- Shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, I went to live and report for The New York Times in Afghanistan. I would spend most of the next 12 years there, following the overthrow of the Taliban, feeling the excitement of the freedom and prosperity that was promised in its wake and then watching the gradual dissolution of that hope. A new Constitution and two rounds of elections did not improve the lives of ordinary Afghans; the Taliban regrouped and found increasing numbers of supporters for their guerrilla actions; by 2006, as they mounted an ambitious offensive to retake southern Afghanistan and unleashed more than a hundred suicide bombers, it was clear that a deadly and determined opponent was growing in strength, not losing it. As I toured the bomb sites and battlegrounds of the Taliban resurgence, Afghans kept telling me the same thing: The

organizers of the insurgency were in Pakistan, specifically in the western district of Quetta. Police investigators were finding that many of the bombers, too, were coming from Pakistan.

In December 2006, I flew to Quetta, where I met with several Pakistani reporters and a photographer. Together we found families who were grappling with the realization that their sons had blown themselves up in Afghanistan. Some were not even sure whether to believe the news, relayed in anonymous phone calls or secondhand through someone in the community. All of them were scared to say how their sons died and who recruited them, fearing trouble from members of the ISI, Pakistan's main intelligence service.

After our first day of reporting in Quetta, we noticed that an intelligence agent on a motorbike was following us, and everyone we interviewed was visited afterward by ISI agents. We visited a neighborhood called Pashtunabad, "town of the Pashtuns," a close-knit community of narrow alleys inhabited largely by Afghan refugees who over the years spread up the hillside, building one-story houses from mud and straw. The people are working class: laborers, bus drivers and shopkeepers. The neighborhood is also home to several members of the Taliban, who live in larger houses behind high walls, often next to the mosques and madrasas they run. The small, untidy entrance on the street to one of those madrasas, the Jamiya Islamiya, conceals the size of the establishment. Inside, a brick-and-concrete building three stories high surrounds a courtyard, and classrooms can accommodate 280 students. At least three of the suicide bombers we were tracing had been students here, and there were reports of more. Senior figures from Pakistani religious parties and provincial-government officials were frequent visitors, and Taliban members would often visit under the cover of darkness in fleets of S.U.V.s.

We requested an interview and were told that a female journalist would not be permitted inside, so I passed some questions to the Pakistani reporter with me, and he and the photographer went in. The deputy head of the madrasa denied that there was any militant training there or any forced recruitment for jihad. "We are educating the students in the Quran, and in the Quran it is written that it is every Muslim's obligation to wage jihad," he said. "All we are telling them is what is in the Quran. Then it is up to them to go to jihad." He ended the conversation. Classes were breaking up,

and I could hear a clamor rising as students burst out of their classrooms. Boys poured out of the gates onto the street. They looked spindly, in flapping clothes and prayer caps, as they darted off on their bikes and on foot, chasing one another down the street.

The reporter and the photographer joined me outside. They told me that words of praise were painted across the wall of the inner courtyard for the madrasa's political patron, a Pakistani religious-party leader, and the Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar. This madrasa, like so many in Pakistan, was a source of the Taliban resurgence that President Hamid Karzai and other Afghan leaders had long been warning about. In this nondescript madrasa in a poor neighborhood of Quetta, one of hundreds throughout the border region, the Taliban and Pakistan's religious parties were working together to raise an army of militants.

“The madrasas are a cover, a camouflage,” a Pashtun legislator from the area told me. Behind the curtain, hidden in the shadows, lurked the ISI. The Pakistani government, under President Pervez Musharraf and his intelligence chief, Lt. Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, was maintaining and protecting the Taliban, both to control the many groups of militants now lodged in the country and to use them as a proxy force to gain leverage over and eventually dominate Afghanistan. The dynamic has played out in ways that can be hard to grasp from the outside, but the strategy that has evolved in Pakistan has been to make a show of cooperation with the American fight against terrorism while covertly abetting and even coordinating Taliban, Kashmiri and foreign Qaeda-linked militants. The linchpin in this two-pronged and at times apparently oppositional strategy is the ISI. It's through that agency that Pakistan's true relationship to militant extremism can be discerned — a fact that the United States was slow to appreciate, and later refused to face directly, for fear of setting off a greater confrontation with a powerful Muslim nation.

On our fifth and last day in Quetta, four plainclothes agents detained my photographer colleague at his hotel. They seized his computer and photo equipment and brought him to the parking lot of the hotel where I was staying. There they made him call and ask me to come down to talk to them. “██████ in trouble here,” he told me. It was after dark. I did not want to go down to the parking lot, but I told my colleague I would get help. I alerted my editor in New York and then tried to call Pakistani officials.

Before I could reach them, the agents broke through the door of my hotel room. The lintel splintered, and they burst in in a rush, snatching my laptop from my hands. There was an English-speaking officer wearing a smart new khaki-colored fleece. The other three, one of whom had the photographer in tow, were the muscle.

They went through my clothes and seized my notebooks and a cellphone. When one of the men grabbed my handbag, I protested. He punched me twice, hard, in the face and temple, and I fell back onto the coffee table, grabbing at the officer's fleece to break my fall and smashing some cups when I landed. For a moment it was funny. I remember thinking it was just like a hotel-room bust-up in the movies.

Then I flew into a rage, berating them for barging into a woman's bedroom and using physical violence. The officer told me that I was not permitted to visit the neighborhood of Pashtunabad and that it was forbidden to interview members of the Taliban. As they were leaving, I said the photographer had to stay with me. "He is Pakistani," the officer said. "We can do with him whatever we want." I knew they were capable of torture and murder, especially in Quetta, where the security services were a law unto themselves. The story they didn't want out in the open was the government's covert support for the militant groups that were propagating terrorism in Afghanistan and beyond.

Six months later, Pakistan blew up. In the spring of 2007 in Islamabad, female students from a madrasa attached to the Red Mosque were staging a sit-in to protest the demolition of several illegal mosques in the city. The Red Mosque stood at the center of Pakistan's support for jihad in Afghanistan and throughout the Muslim world. It was founded by a famed jihadi preacher, Maulana Muhammad Abdullah, who was assassinated in 1998, not long after he visited Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda blamed the killing on the Pakistani government at the time.

Abdullah's sons inherited the mosque and continued its extremist teachings. The eldest, Maulana Abdul Aziz, delivered fiery Friday sermons excoriating Musharraf for his public stance on the fight against terrorism and his dealings with the American government. Despite an earlier reputation as a nonreligious bureaucrat, the younger brother, Abdul Rashid Ghazi, spoke of undergoing a conversion after his father's death and a meeting with Bin Laden, and by 2007 he would not leave the Red Mosque

compound for fear of arrest. He warned that ranks of suicide bombers would retaliate if the government moved against the student protesters. With such leaders behind them, the students began staging vigilante actions in the streets. They were radical and obsessive, vowing to die rather than give up their protest. The government's inaction only encouraged them. Several months after the protest began, a group of students made a midnight raid on a massage parlor and abducted several Chinese women. Remonstrations from China, Pakistan's most important regional ally, pushed Musharraf to take action. Pakistani Army rangers occupied a school across the street, and police officers and soldiers moved in to surround the mosque on July 3. Armed fighters appeared from the mosque, carrying rockets and assault rifles and taking up sandbagged positions on the mosque walls. Loudspeakers told the students that this was the time for bravery. A female student took over the microphone. "Allah, where is your help?" she asked in a quavering voice. "Destroy the enemies. Tear their hearts apart. Throw fireballs on them."

Islamabad is a green, tranquil home for civil servants and diplomats, but for several days it resounded with gunfire and explosions. Crowds of worried parents arrived from all over the country to try to retrieve their children. The Red Mosque leaders tried to make the students stay. "They said if the women and others die, the people will take their side," one father told me, and I realized then how premeditated this all was, how the girls were pawns in their plan to spark a revolution.

A week after the siege began, there was a ferocious battle. Elite Pakistani commandos rappelled from helicopters into the mosque and were raked with machine-gun fire. Perched in the mosque's minarets and throughout its 75 rooms, the militants fought for 10 hours. They hurled grenades from bunkers and basements, and suicide bombers threw themselves at their attackers. The commandos found female students hiding in a bricked-up space beneath the stairs and led 50 women and girls to safety. Ghazi retreated to a basement in the compound. He died there as the last surviving fighters battled around him.

More than 100 people were killed in the siege, including 10 commandos. The ISI — despite having a long relationship with the mosque and its leaders, as well as two informers inside providing intelligence — played a strangely ineffective role. In a cabinet meeting after the siege, ministers

questioned a senior ISI official about the intelligence service's failure to prevent the militant action. "Who I meet in the evening and what I discuss is on your desk the next morning," one minister told the official. "How come you did not know what was happening a hundred meters from the ISI headquarters?" The official sat in silence as ministers thumped their desks in a gesture of agreement.

"One hundred percent they knew what was happening," a former cabinet minister who attended the meeting told me. The ISI allowed the militants to do what they wanted out of sympathy, he said. "The state is not as incompetent as people believe."

The Pakistani military faced an immediate and vicious backlash. In the months that followed, there were strikes against convoys of soldiers in the northwest and a wave of suicide bombings against government, military and civilian targets throughout the country, including the army's headquarters and the main ISI compound in Rawalpindi. After years of nurturing jihadists to fight its proxy wars, Pakistan was now experiencing the repercussions. "We could not control them," a former senior intelligence official told a colleague and me six months after the Red Mosque siege.

Yet even as the militants were turning against their masters, Pakistan's generals still sought to use them for their own purpose, most notoriously targeting Pakistan's first female prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, who was preparing to fly home from nearly a decade in exile in the fall of 2007. Bhutto had forged a deal with Musharraf that would allow him to resign as army chief but run for another term as president, while clearing the way for her to serve as prime minister. Elections were scheduled for early 2008. Bhutto had spoken out more than any other Pakistani politician about the dangers of militant extremism. She blamed foreign militants for annexing part of Pakistan's territory and called for military operations into Waziristan. She declared suicide bombing un-Islamic and seemed to be challenging those who might target her. "I do not believe that any true Muslim will make an attack on me because Islam forbids attacks on women, and Muslims know that if they attack a woman, they will burn in hell," she said on the eve of her return.

She also promised greater cooperation with Afghanistan and the United States in combating terrorism and even suggested in an interview that she

would give Western officials access to the man behind Pakistan's program of nuclear proliferation, A. Q. Khan.

President Karzai of Afghanistan warned Bhutto that his intelligence service had learned of threats against her life. Informers had told the Afghans of a meeting of army commanders — Musharraf and his 10 most-powerful generals — in which they discussed a militant plot to have Bhutto killed. On Oct. 18, 2007, Bhutto flew into Karachi. I was one of a crowd of journalists traveling with her. She wore religious amulets and offered prayers as she stepped onto Pakistani soil. Hours later, as she rode in an open-top bus through streets of chanting supporters, two huge bombs exploded, tearing police vans, bodyguards and party followers into shreds. Bhutto survived the blast, but some 150 people died, and 400 were injured. Bhutto claimed that Musharraf had threatened her directly, and Karzai again urged her to take more precautions, asking his intelligence service to arrange an armored vehicle for her equipped with jammers to block the signals of cellphones, which are often used to detonate bombs. In the meantime, Bhutto pressed on with her campaign, insisting on greeting crowds of supporters from the open top of her vehicle.

In late December, a group of militants, including two teenage boys trained and primed to commit suicide bombings, arrived at the Haqqania madrasa in the northwestern town of Akora Khattak. The madrasa is a notorious establishment, housing 3,000 students in large, whitewashed residence blocks. Ninety-five percent of the Taliban fighting in Afghanistan have passed through its classrooms, a spokesman for the madrasa proudly told me. Its most famous graduate is Jalaluddin Haqqani, a veteran Afghan mujahedeen commander whose network has become the main instrument for ISI-directed attacks in Kabul and eastern Afghanistan.

The two young visitors who stopped for a night at the madrasa were escorted the next day to Rawalpindi, where Bhutto would be speaking at a rally on Dec. 27. As her motorcade left the rally, it slowed so she could greet supporters in the street. One of the two teenagers fired a pistol at her and then detonated his vest of explosives. Bhutto was standing in the roof opening of an armored S.U.V. She ducked into the vehicle at the sound of the gunfire, but the explosion threw the S.U.V. forward, slamming the edge of the roof hatch into the back of her head with lethal force. Bhutto

slumped down into the vehicle, mortally wounded, and fell into the lap of her confidante and constant chaperone, Naheed Khan.

As Bhutto had long warned, a conglomeration of opponents wanted her dead and were all linked in some way. They were the same forces behind the insurgency in Afghanistan: Taliban and Pakistani militant groups and Al Qaeda, as well as the Pakistani military establishment, which included the top generals, Musharraf and Kayani. A United Nations Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances of Bhutto's death found that each group had a motive and merited investigation.

Pakistani prosecutors later indicted Musharraf on charges of being part of a wider conspiracy to remove Bhutto from the political scene. There was "overwhelming circumstantial evidence" that he did not provide her with adequate security because he wanted to ensure her death in an inevitable assassination attempt, the chief state prosecutor in her murder trial, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali, told me. (Musharraf denied the accusations.) A hard-working, hard-charging man, Ali succeeded in having Musharraf arrested and was pushing to speed up the trial when he was shot to death on his way to work in May 2013.

Ali had no doubts that the mastermind of the plot to kill Bhutto was Al Qaeda. "It was because she was pro-American, because she was a strong leader and a nationalist," he told me. A Pakistani security official who interviewed some of the suspects in the Bhutto case and other militants detained in Pakistan's prisons came to the same conclusion. The decision to assassinate Bhutto was made at a meeting of the top council of Al Qaeda, the official said.

It took more than three years before the depth of Pakistan's relationship with Al Qaeda was thrust into the open and the world learned where Bin Laden had been hiding, just a few hundred yards from Pakistan's top military academy. In May 2011, I drove with a Pakistani colleague down a road in Abbottabad until we were stopped by the Pakistani military. We left our car and walked down a side street, past several walled houses and then along a dirt path until there it was: Osama bin Laden's house, a three-story concrete building, mostly concealed behind concrete walls as high as 18 feet, topped with rusting strands of barbed wire. This was where Bin Laden hid for nearly six years, and where, 30 hours earlier, Navy SEAL commandos shot him dead in a top-floor bedroom.

After a decade of reporting in Afghanistan and Pakistan and tracking Bin Laden, I was fascinated to see where and how he hid. He had dispensed with the large entourage that surrounded him in Afghanistan. For nearly eight years, he relied on just two trusted Pakistanis, whom American investigators described as a courier and his brother.

People knew that the house was strange, and one local rumor had it that it was a place where wounded Taliban from Waziristan recuperated. I was told this by Musharraf's former civilian intelligence chief, who had himself been accused of having a hand in hiding Bin Laden in Abbottabad. He denied any involvement, but he did not absolve local intelligence agents, who would have checked the house. All over the country, Pakistan's various intelligence agencies — the ISI, the Intelligence Bureau and Military Intelligence — keep safe houses for undercover operations. They use residential houses, often in quiet, secure neighborhoods, where they lodge people for interrogation or simply enforced seclusion. Detainees have been questioned by American interrogators in such places and sometimes held for months. Leaders of banned militant groups are often placed in protective custody in this way. Others, including Taliban leaders who took refuge in Pakistan after their fall in Afghanistan in 2001, lived under a looser arrangement, with their own guards but also known to their Pakistani handlers, former Pakistani officials told me. Because of Pakistan's long practice of covertly supporting militant groups, police officers — who have been warned off or even demoted for getting in the way of ISI operations — have learned to leave such safe houses alone. The split over how to handle militants is not just between the ISI and the local police; the intelligence service itself is compartmentalized. In 2007, a former senior intelligence official who worked on tracking members of Al Qaeda after Sept. 11 told me that while one part of the ISI was engaged in hunting down militants, another part continued to work with them. Soon after the Navy SEAL raid on Bin Laden's house, a Pakistani official told me that the United States had direct evidence that the ISI chief, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, knew of Bin Laden's presence in Abbottabad. The information came from a senior United States official, and I guessed that the Americans had intercepted a phone call of Pasha's or one about him in the days after the raid. "He knew of Osama's whereabouts, yes," the Pakistani official told me. The official was surprised to learn this and said

the Americans were even more so. Pasha had been an energetic opponent of the Taliban and an open and cooperative counterpart for the Americans at the ISI. “Pasha was always their blue-eyed boy,” the official said. But in the weeks and months after the raid, Pasha and the ISI press office strenuously denied that they had any knowledge of Bin Laden’s presence in Abbottabad.

Colleagues at The Times began questioning officials in Washington about which high-ranking officials in Pakistan might also have been aware of Bin Laden’s whereabouts, but everyone suddenly clammed up. It was as if a decision had been made to contain the damage to the relationship between the two governments. “There’s no smoking gun,” officials in the Obama administration began to say.

The haul of handwritten notes, letters, computer files and other information collected from Bin Laden’s house during the raid suggested otherwise, however. It revealed regular correspondence between Bin Laden and a string of militant leaders who must have known he was living in Pakistan, including Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a pro-Kashmiri group that has also been active in Afghanistan, and Mullah Omar of the Taliban. Saeed and Omar are two of the ISI’s most important and loyal militant leaders. Both are protected by the agency. Both cooperate closely with it, restraining their followers from attacking the Pakistani state and coordinating with Pakistan’s greater strategic plans. Any correspondence the two men had with Bin Laden would probably have been known to their ISI handlers.

Bin Laden did not rely only on correspondence. He occasionally traveled to meet aides and fellow militants, one Pakistani security official told me. “Osama was moving around,” he said, adding that he heard so from jihadi sources. “You cannot run a movement without contact with people.” Bin Laden traveled in plain sight, his convoys always knowingly waved through any security checkpoints.

In 2009, Bin Laden reportedly traveled to Pakistan’s tribal areas to meet with the militant leader Qari Saifullah Akhtar. Informally referred to as the “father of jihad,” Akhtar is considered one of the ISI’s most valuable assets. According to a Pakistani intelligence source, he was the commander accused of trying to kill Bhutto on her return in 2007, and he is credited with driving Mullah Omar out of Afghanistan on the back of a motorbike

in 2001 and moving Bin Laden out of harm's way just minutes before American missile strikes on his camp in 1998. After the Sept. 11 attacks, he was detained several times in Pakistan. Yet he was never prosecuted and was quietly released each time by the ISI.

At his meeting with Bin Laden in August 2009, Akhtar is reported to have requested Al Qaeda's help in mounting an attack on the Pakistani army headquarters in Rawalpindi. Intelligence officials learned about the meeting later that year from interrogations of men involved in the attack. Information on the meeting was compiled in a report seen by all of the civilian and military intelligence agencies, security officials at the Interior Ministry and American counterterrorism officials.

At the meeting, Bin Laden rejected Akhtar's request for help and urged him and other militant groups not to fight Pakistan but to serve the greater cause — the jihad against America. He warned against fighting inside Pakistan because it would destroy their home base: "If you make a hole in the ship, the whole ship will go down," he said.

He wanted Akhtar and the Taliban to accelerate the recruitment and training of fighters so they could trap United States forces in Afghanistan with a well-organized guerrilla war. Bin Laden said that Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and the Indian Ocean region would be Al Qaeda's main battlefields in the coming years, and that he needed more fighters from those areas. He even offered naval training for militants, saying that the United States would soon exit Afghanistan and that the next war would be waged on the seas.

Akhtar, in his mid-50s, remains at large in Pakistan. He is still active in jihadi circles and in running madrasas — an example of a militant commander whom the ISI has struggled to control yet is too valuable for them to lock up or eliminate.

In trying to prove that the ISI knew of Bin Laden's whereabouts and protected him, I struggled for more than two years to piece together something other than circumstantial evidence and suppositions from sources with no direct knowledge. Only one man, a former ISI chief and retired general, Ziauddin Butt, told me that he thought Musharraf had arranged to hide Bin Laden in Abbottabad. But he had no proof and, under pressure, claimed in the Pakistani press that he'd been misunderstood. Finally, on a winter evening in 2012, I got the confirmation I was looking

for. According to one inside source, the ISI actually ran a special desk assigned to handle Bin Laden. It was operated independently, led by an officer who made his own decisions and did not report to a superior. He handled only one person: Bin Laden. I was sitting at an outdoor cafe when I learned this, and I remember gasping, though quietly so as not to draw attention. (Two former senior American officials later told me that the information was consistent with their own conclusions.) This was what Afghans knew, and Taliban fighters had told me, but finally someone on the inside was admitting it. The desk was wholly deniable by virtually everyone at the ISI — such is how supersecret intelligence units operate — but the top military bosses knew about it, I was told.

America's failure to fully understand and actively confront Pakistan on its support and export of terrorism is one of the primary reasons President Karzai has become so disillusioned with the United States. As American and NATO troops prepare to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of this year, the Pakistani military and its Taliban proxy forces lie in wait, as much a threat as any that existed in 2001.

In January 2013, I visited the Haqqania madrasa to speak with senior clerics about the graduates they were dispatching to Afghanistan. They agreed to let me interview them and gave the usual patter about it being each person's individual choice to wage jihad. But there was also continuing fanatical support for the Taliban. "Those who are against the Taliban, they are the liberals, and they only represent 5 percent of Afghans," the spokesman for the madrasa told me. He and his fellow clerics were set on a military victory for the Taliban in Afghanistan. Moreover, he said, "it is a political fact that one day the Taliban will take power. The white flag of the Taliban will fly again over Kabul, inshallah." Pakistani security officials, political analysts, journalists and legislators warned of the same thing. The Pakistani military was still set on dominating Afghanistan and was still determined to use the Taliban to exert influence now that the United States was pulling out.

Kathy Gannon of The Associated Press reported in September that militants from Punjab, Pakistan's most populous province, were massing in the tribal areas to join the Taliban and train for an anticipated offensive into Afghanistan this year. In Punjab, mainstream religious parties and banned militant groups were openly recruiting hundreds of students for jihad, and

groups of young men were being dispatched to Syria to wage jihad there. “They are the same jihadi groups; they are not 100 percent under control,” a former Pakistani legislator told me. “But still the military protects them.” The United States was neither speaking out against Pakistan nor changing its policy toward a government that was exporting terrorism, the legislator lamented. “How many people have to die before they get it? They are standing by a military that protects, aids and abets people who are going against the U.S. and Western mission in Afghanistan, in Syria, everywhere.”

When I remember the beleaguered state of Afghanistan in 2001, I marvel at the changes the American intervention has fostered: the rebuilding, the modernity, the bright graduates in every office. Yet after 13 years, more than a trillion dollars spent, 120,000 foreign troops deployed at the height of the war and tens of thousands of lives lost, Afghanistan’s predicament has not changed: It remains a weak state, prey to the ambitions of its neighbors and extremist Islamists. This is perhaps an unpopular opinion, but to pull out now is, undeniably, to leave with the job only half-done. Meanwhile, the real enemy remains at large.

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