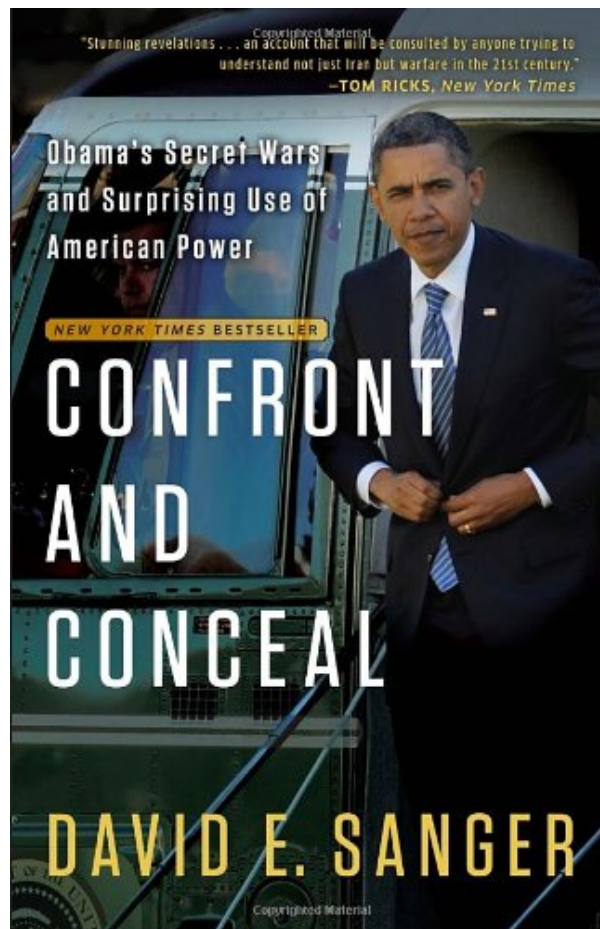
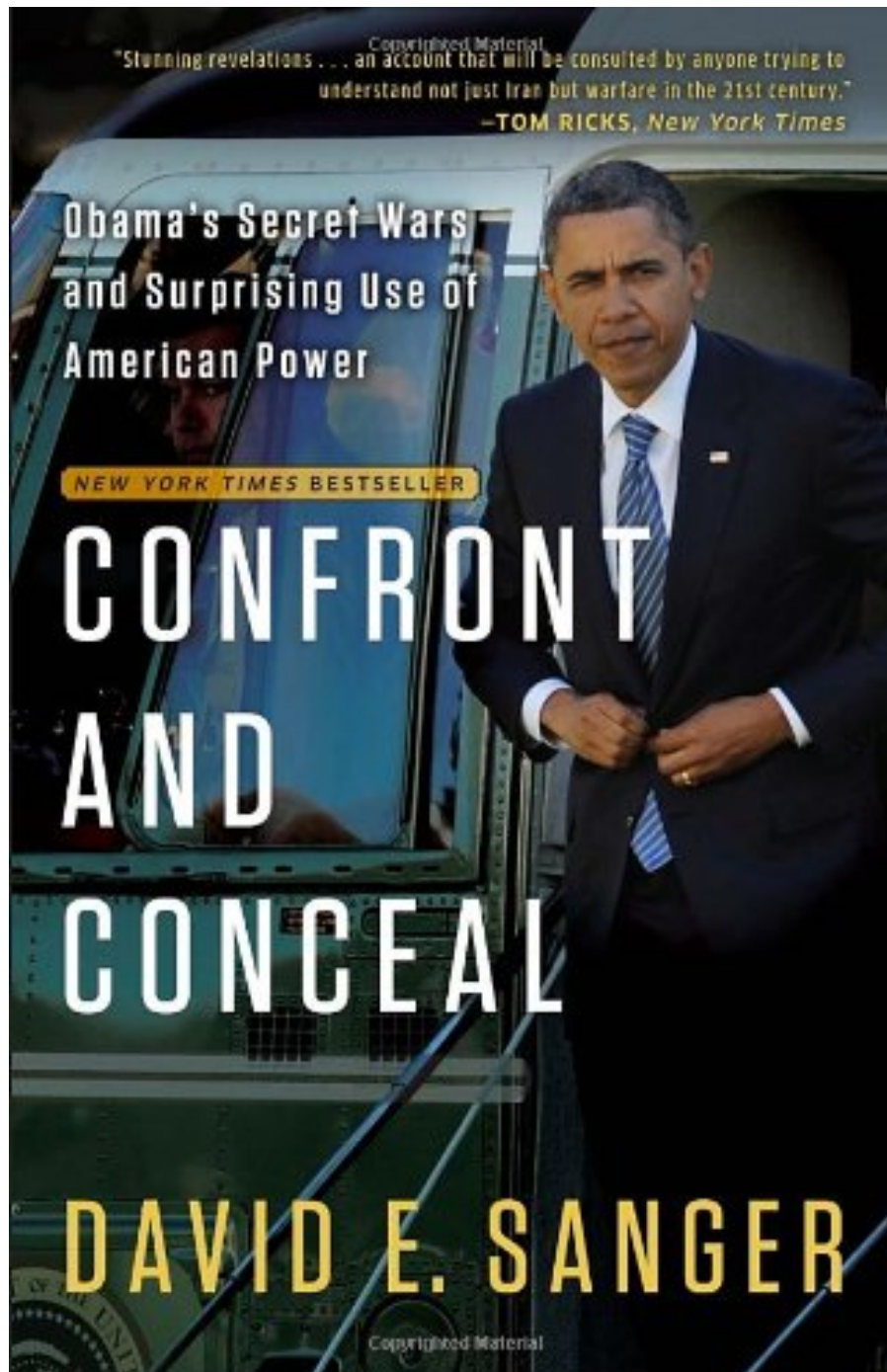


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Chapter 1

Blowing Smoke

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Donilon opened the meeting where Mullen had left off. "The ultimate responsibility of the president of the United States is to protect Americans," Donilon said in his clipped Rhode Island accent, reiterating something Obama had said to Kayani one day in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Either Pakistan was going to deal with the Haqqani network or the Americans would. The message just sat there for a moment. Donilon went on. Why, he asked, would a man like Kayani, who grew up in the disciplined world of the Pakistani military, let a group of thugs hijack Pakistan's national security policy by waging war on America from inside its borders?

Then came the bottom line: "I know you want a guarantee from us that we won't undertake unilateral operations in your country again," a reference to the bin Laden raid. "I can't give you that." If seventy Americans had died in the bomb attack in Wardak the previous month, rather than just suffered injuries, "we wouldn't be having this conversation," Donilon said. It was a not-so-veiled threat that Obama would have been forced to send Special Operations Forces into Pakistan to attack the Haqqani network—national pride and sovereignty be damned.

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Should Afghanistan collapse someday in the near future—not an unlikely scenario—it would leave an armed, angry force just across the Pakistani border, Kayani said, many of them enemies of Pashtuns. And that would be a recipe for disaster. The Pashtuns are Sunnis, and they are also Afghanistan’s largest ethnic group, about 40 percent of the population. But they live on both sides of the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a line of demarcation drawn from—and named after—Henry Mortimer Durand, the British foreign secretary in the 1890s. The Durand line is a completely arbitrary boundary, an artifact of the British colonial era, that cuts straight through Pashtun tribal areas. The world may see the Durand line as a border between two nations, but the Pashtuns sure don’t—particularly the Taliban. Today their leadership is living on the Pakistani side. But Kayani recalled that in the ’90s, when they ruled Afghanistan, the Taliban systematically massacred non-Pashtun ethnic groups—specifically the Hazara, a Shi’a minority that has close ties with Iran.

If things fell apart, Kayani insisted, the Pashtuns in both Afghanistan and Pakistan could find themselves pitted against a force armed and trained by the United States. Had the Americans thought about that? Or the possibility that as the US forces pull out of Afghanistan, India—which had already invested billions in the Afghan government—would continue to extend its prowess in an effort to encircle Pakistan?

Having laid their cards on the table, the group of men went on to talk about their visions for Afghanistan’s future and their troubled effort to negotiate with the Taliban. Donilon had sent ahead a document laying out the long-term American strategy, including a plan to keep somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 American counterterrorism troops in Afghanistan, mostly at Bagram Airfield, a large base just outside Kabul, “to protect the interests of the US in the region.” His meaning was clear: the United States would remain, and its troops would be ready to go over the Pakistani border if they needed to.

It was a conversation tinged with wariness on all sides, reflecting the distrust that permeated a relationship fractured by decades of betrayals. To Kayani, the three men in front of him represented a United States that had abandoned Pakistan before—during its wars with India, after the Soviets left Afghanistan, after Pakistan’s nuclear tests. And to the Americans, the fact that Kayani spent five and a half hours blowing the refined smoke of his Dunhills into their faces said it all. The smoke cloud lingered, enveloping the men in a fog.

If Kayani wielded secondhand smoke as a negotiating tool, it was one of the less lethal weapons at his disposal in his treacherous climb to power. From 2004 to 2007, when he ran the ISI, he excelled at managing what two successive American presidents came to deride as Pakistan’s “double game.” The phrase referred to Islamabad’s habit of preserving its options by fighting on both sides of the Afghan war. But the phrase was misleading. It understated the complexity of Pakistan’s position. Kayani’s task was to maintain Pakistan’s tenuous, yet crucial, influence in Afghanistan and convince his own people (and fellow generals) that he was not letting the far more powerful India encircle Pakistan by expanding its presence in Afghanistan unchallenged.

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Washington and the world were rocked by Confront and Conceal, which goes deep into the Situation Room as Obama questions whether this new weapon can slow Iran and avoid a war—or whether it will create blowback, as the Iranians and others retaliate with cyberattacks on the United States. It describes how the bin Laden raid worsened the dysfunctional relationship with Pakistan, and how Obama's early idealism about fighting a "war of necessity" in Afghanistan quickly turned to fatigue, frustration, and now withdrawal. As the world seeks to understand how Obama will cope with nationalistic leaders in Beijing, a North Korea bent on developing a nuclear weapon that can reach American shores, and an Arab world where promising revolutions turned to chaos, Confront and Conceal—with an updated epilogue for this paperback edition—provides an unflinching account of these complex years of presidential struggle, in which America's ability to exert control grows ever more elusive.

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Chapter 1

#### Blowing Smoke

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If things fell apart, Kayani insisted, the Pashtuns in both Afghanistan and Pakistan could find themselves pitted against a force armed and trained by the United States. Had the Americans thought about that? Or the possibility that as the US forces pull out of Afghanistan, India—which had already invested billions in the Afghan government—would continue to extend its prowess in an effort to encircle Pakistan?

Having laid their cards on the table, the group of men went on to talk about their visions for Afghanistan’s future and their troubled effort to negotiate with the Taliban. Donilon had sent ahead a document laying out the long-term American strategy, including a plan to keep somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 American counterterrorism troops in Afghanistan, mostly at Bagram Airfield, a large base just outside Kabul, “to protect the interests of the US in the region.” His meaning was clear: the United States would remain, and its troops would be ready to go over the Pakistani border if they needed to.

It was a conversation tinged with wariness on all sides, reflecting the distrust that permeated a relationship fractured by decades of betrayals. To Kayani, the three men in front of him represented a United States that had abandoned Pakistan before—during its wars with India, after the Soviets left Afghanistan, after Pakistan’s nuclear tests. And to the Americans, the fact that Kayani spent five and a half hours blowing the refined smoke of his Dunhills into their faces said it all. The smoke cloud lingered, enveloping the men in a fog.

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disposal in his treacherous climb to power. From 2004 to 2007, when he ran the ISI, he excelled at managing what two successive American presidents came to deride as Pakistan's "double game." The phrase referred to Islamabad's habit of preserving its options by fighting on both sides of the Afghan war. But the phrase was misleading. It understated the complexity of Pakistan's position. Kayani's task was to maintain Pakistan's tenuous, yet crucial, influence in Afghanistan and convince his own people (and fellow generals) that he was not letting the far more powerful India encircle Pakistan by expanding its presence in Afghanistan unchallenged.

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Welcome to the Wars of the 21st Century

By Herbert L Calhoun

Piggybacking on GW Bush's earlier forays into cyber warfare, President Obama, in lieu of having to launch (or having to prevent Israel from launching) a full-scaled air attack, elected to launch instead, a joint cyber attack with Israel on the centrifuges at Iran's Natanz nuclear plant. In retrospect, it can be seen that Obama's motive for pulling Israel into a highly secret cyber project was designed primarily to dissuade our closest Middle East Ally, from launching its own unilateral (but what would have probably been a highly destabilizing) military attack against Iran's nuclear facilities. This well-written book goes into such scary detail about the whole enterprise, that like John McCain in his recent call for a Special Prosecutor to investigate the matter, I too wondered how a New York Times Reporter could get access to so many intricate details of such a closely held national security secret?

Here is a rough summary of the most interesting part of the book in my view: the author's description of how a Bush initiated project called "Olympic Games," unfolded and got played out under Obama's direction:

Following up on previous efforts to surreptitiously install faulty parts into Iran's German made computer systems and power supplies, General James Cartwright, of the U.S. strategic command, convinced President GW Bush that launching a cyber penetration effort could be at least as effective as the stratagem of trying to introduce faulty parts. Bush bought into Cartwright's idea, which outlined a way of gaining access to the Natanz plant's industrial computer controls by the innocent introduction via a thumb drive of a small bit of "sleeper" code called a "beacon." Once the "beacon" entered the system, its job was then to surreptitiously map the complete operation of the facility's master control system and report the results back to the NSA.

This scenario was played out exactly as General Cartwright had planned it to be; and once the beacon did its job, NSA (by now under the Obama administration's direction), engaged in a joint effort with the Israeli version of our own NSA cyber experts. Together they developed a "worm" called Stuxnet, that, without making itself known to the target, infiltrated and fouled up the operational controls of the Iranian centrifuges. In effect, and without tipping off its own presence, Stuxnet instructed the centrifuges to self-destruct, leaving control panel gauges with readings that would be perfectly normal for an uneventful operational state.

The exercise worked to perfection with two exceptions. First, although the worm did indeed knock out about a thousand or so Iranian centrifuges, they were back up and running in little over a year. Second, an Iranian Scientist accidentally downloaded the worm onto his private laptop, and unwittingly disseminated it across the Internet. This boomerang effect, for obvious reasons, set off alarm bells in Washington and Tel Aviv.

The moral of this exercise is a non-political one, but is nevertheless a profound one, and can only stand as a cautionary tale about playing with "cyber weapons" that we neither fully understand nor can fully control: The cautionary tale is that these weapons can have profound far-reaching unintended consequences. In a world where cyber technology, and thus cyber weapons, are available to anyone, whether they be nations,

innocent or mercenary computer hackers, or terrorists, all nations, including the largest and most sophisticated ones, are equally vulnerable. And once attacked, it is next to impossible for those attacked, to know the identity of the attacker. Unless that is, the country happens to be the U.S., who sooner rather than later will spill its guts and spill the beans on itself, and admit that it was the attacker: A devastatingly clear and alarming read that does not pander to the Obama administration, but reveals the risk Obama will take to get on the good side of our national security and Israeli hawks. Five stars

52 of 59 people found the following review helpful.

Get it and think for yourself

By Park Ave

This book and a few related articles have riled political Washington for the past week. Sanger obviously had very high access, has sourced his open facts very well and wrote an excellent book. Here's a great inside look at the past three years of diplomacy, covert action and internal Administration deliberations.

I won't give another summary here; others already have. I will echo another reviewer's irritation at Sanger's introduction of Obama as "typical dovish Democrat" and transition to "Hawk." Sanger needed to tell a story here; like many in the Washington press corps, he is shocked (SHOCKED!) to find the President would act like either a "Hawk" or a politician. Sanger has difficulty moving away from that bit of conventional wisdom, an understandable problem given his own position as a New York Times reporter.

The only other point the book seems to lack is a deeper discussion of the legal and geo-political ramifications of nation-states' use of cyberwarfare in peacetime. Sanger brings up the point of nations using military-designed computer programs to weaken or spy upon other nations. Is this an act of war? Where is that line to be drawn? Sanger asks the question but doesn't search very far for his own position, nor does he look to any other outside voices on the subject.

So, we have an extended news article here, focusing on several challenges to the United States around the world and how this Administration has met them, for good or ill. Sanger doesn't take much of a position of his own, but this won't stop reviewers, talking heads, the left-wing blogosphere or right-wing shriek radio from spinning this book to their own ends. I believe this book is worth the money to read and decide for yourself.

38 of 44 people found the following review helpful.

Confronting the Obama Doctrine

By H. P.

Confront and Conceal is, in many ways, the sequel to The Inheritance. The Inheritance was about the foreign policy challenges Obama inherited from Bush. In Confront and Conceal, Sanger examines how Obama has faced those changes and attempts to pin down an "Obama Doctrine." In Inheritance, Sanger presented America's foreign policy challenges as almost siloed. Here, he makes clear that our continued presence in Afghanistan is largely driven by our strategic interests in Pakistan, and those strategic interests are amplified by our interest in not leaving Pakistan with the alternative of China as their major ally and benefactor. And the money to pay for it all comes from the same place. Everything is linked.

Confront and Conceal is organized into five parts, covering: Afghanistan & Pakistan, Iran, drones & cyber warfare, the Arab Spring, and China & North Korea. The section on Afghanistan & Pakistan is the longest by a fair margin, taking up almost one third of the book. China & North Korea, by comparison, is given short shrift. In my mind, it's hard to argue that the Arab Spring deserves twice the space as China & North Korea.

A renewed exuberance for the Afghan war (reflecting Obama's campaign rhetoric) soon faded under sober inspection. Transforming Afghanistan into a modern nation was not and never had been feasible. There is

simply no way to replace the development aid and military spending that accounted for the vast majority of Afghanistan's GDP. So our focus shifted to warily watching Pakistan and (rightly) putting our pursuit of al-Qaeda first, even if it means jeopardizing our relationship with Pakistan, as the mission to kill Osama bin Laden did. In the end, we will likely leave Afghanistan little better off than it was (although we lasted longer there than the Soviets), our relationship with Pakistan will remain fraught (but we can never end it lest China fill our void), and al-Qaeda may eventually be able to rebuild, but there is no doubt that we have dealt al-Qaeda a mighty blow. It is the one true success of the last three years.

Iran is one of two instances where Obama's policy of more open engagement backfired on us. It soured our relationship with Israel (with settlements already a sore spot), and we wound up reacting to them instead of being proactive. We launched America's first major cyber attack, dubbed Olympic Games, in conjunction with the Israelis in part to prevent them from preemptively bombing Iran. It was enormously successful on one level. We set Iran's nuclear program back years. But we also inadvertently released a virus into the "wild," and we have merely delayed, not stopped, Iran's progress. Perhaps most disconcerting about this section is an apparent acquiescence to an eventual nuclear Iran on the part of members of the Obama administration (Israel understandably feels different; this is their Cuban Missile Crisis).

Drones and cyber warfare of course get ample attention in the first two parts, but Sanger devotes a (short) section entirely to them as well. They have become integral to American strategy. They were the two covert programs Bush urged Obama to preserve. Obama has not only preserved, but greatly expanded, our efforts on both fronts. And he has been deeply involved; "[p]erhaps not since Lyndon Johnson had sat in the same room, more than four decades before, picking bombing targets in North Vietnam, had a president of the United States been so intimately involved in the step-by-step escalation of an attack on a foreign nation's infrastructure." With cyber warfare, for now all the advantages lay with the attacker: they can wait for just the right moment to strike, the victim won't know who hit him for far too long, and there is no effective deterrence. These are more disconcerting when we consider our own vulnerabilities. The attacks on Iran also showed that cyber attacks can cause physical damage.

The Arab Spring caught the administration flat-footed. But who could have ever predicted something like that? The better measure is how we reacted. Obama bumbled with Egypt, hit all the right notes in Lebanon (where Sanger sees American interests as small), and has been helpless to prevent the slaughter Syria (which Sanger sees as much more important to American interests). But for all its greater strategic importance, Syria is challenging in all the ways Lebanon was not, as Sanger takes pains to show.

The label 'China and North Korea' is a bit of a misnomer. It's really a section on China with a few mentions of North Korea. But only because there isn't much to say. How could we have learned so little in the past three years about a country that we once called part of an axis of evil? Sanger has little to nothing new to say about new North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un. Open engagement hurt us in China too--many Chinese leaders saw it as weakness. Americans often view China as monolithic and under the utter control of Hu Jintao, but Sanger explains that efforts to decentralize eroded the power of the central government, and American intelligence officers now recognize three factions: isolationists, those who see us as a friendly rival, and those who see us as a less-than-friendly rival.

Sanger's primary goal is to pin down an Obama Doctrine (words the administration adamantly refuses to utter). He ultimately boils it down to a strategy of confrontation and concealment. Obama is no less likely than Bush to order a preemptive strike. He is far more likely to do it with drones, cyber weapons, or special forces. Ground wars are to be avoided at all costs. It's too early to judge Obama's presidency, though. Early on, Sanger points out that at this point in their presidencies, Bush's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan didn't look like debacles, Nixon hadn't gone to China, and Truman's policy of containment was still an experiment.



Where I think Sanger (and Obama) get it wrong is in the idea of a "new" military. A smaller, more flexible military that can strike but isn't built to wage wars of occupation. But we thought much the same in the 90s. We will, at some point, feel we need to go into a country and wage war on the ground, and we will need ground troops to do it. And that ability gives us no small measure of "soft power."

This review is of the Kindle edition. Photos are in the middle, as is most common in a traditional book, instead of at the end as is most common in Kindle books in my experience. Reference material begins at the 86% mark. It consists of Acknowledgements, A Note on Sources, and Endnotes (linked both ways).

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# **CONFRONT AND CONCEAL: OBAMA'S SECRET WARS AND SURPRISING USE OF AMERICAN POWER BY DAVID E. SANGER PDF**

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## Review

"A must-read for policy wonks and a good primer on how American power works beyond our borders."

—Kirkus

"Penetrating history of the presiden'ts effort to grapple with a world in flux..."

—New York Times

"Sanger is one of the leading national security reporters in the United States, and this astonishingly revealing insider's account of the Obama administration's foreign policy process is a triumph of the genre."

—Foreign Affairs

"Meticulously reported, immensely readable..."

—The Washington Post

## About the Author

DAVID E. SANGER is the chief Washington correspondent for the New York Times and bestselling author of *The Inheritance*. He has been a member of two teams that won the Pulitzer Prize and has received numerous awards for coverage of the presidency and national security policy.

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Chapter 1

Blowing Smoke

secret islamabad 002295

Money alone will not solve the problem of al-Qaeda or the Taliban operating in Pakistan. A grand bargain

that promises development or military assistance in exchange for severing ties will be insufficient to wean Pakistan from policies that reflect accurately its most deep-seated fears. The Pakistani establishment, as we saw in 1998 with the nuclear test, does not view assistance—even sizable assistance to their own entities—as a trade-off for national security.

—Anne Patterson, then US ambassador to Pakistan, in a secret cable to the National Security Council, September 23, 2009, disclosed by WikiLeaks

On a Sunday morning in early October 2011, President Obama’s national security adviser, Tom Donilon, was driven through a wealthy suburb of Abu Dhabi. It was the kind of backdoor, no-photos diplomatic mission he enjoyed most: the quiet delivery of an urgent message directly from the president of the United States. A decade after 9/11, Donilon was overseeing the Obama administration’s effort to end what he called the messiest “unfinished business” of the Bush years: Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq was in its final chapter: in just a few months, the last American troops would drive out of the country on the same road they had driven in on, eight years before. Extracting Washington from Afghanistan—the “war of necessity” as Obama used to put it, before he reconsidered the phrase—was far more difficult. A promising-sounding game plan, to train the Afghan troops to defend their own country, was sputtering along. But precious few of the gains American troops had fought for seemed permanent. Obama’s aides feared that the American withdrawal could lead to economic crisis and a Taliban resurgence.

Meanwhile, the relationship with the truly vital player in the region, Pakistan, had entered into such a death spiral there was a real possibility that American troops would be sent into the territory of an ostensible ally to hunt down insurgents targeting Americans.

At fifty-six, his hair thinning a bit, Donilon looked like a slightly disheveled version of the consummate Washington lawyer that he was. He had risen through the ranks of the Democratic party as a superb political operator. In his early twenties, he managed the convention floor for Jimmy Carter; later he gained a reputation for getting presidential candidates through their debates.

Most of Washington knew Donilon as a canny political strategist, and political combat certainly made him tick. But the political world and the foreign-policy world in Washington often operate in different orbits, and what many missed about Donilon was his determination to live in both simultaneously. He dates that decision back to one day when he was in his third year of law school and had lunch with Warren Christopher, the deputy secretary of state, whom he had gotten to know in the Carter administration.

“He came to lunch with this book, and he pushed it across the table to me,” Donilon recalled. “He said, ‘Politics is the easiest and most lucrative path for you. But you might consider another path.’” The book was an old copy of *Present at the Creation*, an account of the remaking of American national security after World War II, by Harry Truman’s secretary of state, Dean Acheson. Donilon took it home and read it several times. (That copy is still on his bookshelf.)

He was hooked. For years, he could be seen carrying a battered L.L. Bean tote bag home, overflowing with ponderous articles on foreign policy and national security. When Christopher became Bill Clinton’s first secretary of state, he installed Donilon down the hall as his chief of staff. And while Donilon returned to politics and law practice during the Bush years, he was clearly itching to get back into the game, constantly peppering old State Department colleagues, journalists, and academics with questions about how America’s actions were perceived around the world.

Now he was present at a different creation—the effort to sustain and extend American power in a world of

many more diverse threats, and new competitors, than Acheson ever could have imagined. As national security adviser, Donilon was the first person to brief the president of the United States on national security challenges every morning—he kept a precise count of how many such briefings he had done, a habit endlessly provided by his staff—and relished special missions to deal with the hardest cases. This was one of them.

In Abu Dhabi, Donilon was accompanied by two of the most central players in the effort to find an exit from Afghanistan. One was the special assistant to the president for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Douglas Lute, the wry retired general who had served in the last two years of the Bush White House and stayed on, quickly becoming Donilon's guide to the wily ways of Afghan presidents, Pakistani generals, and the Pentagon bureaucracy. (Apart from Bob Gates, the secretary of defense, Lute was the only source of institutional memory in the White House for what had been tried, and what had failed, during the Bush years.) The other man in the car was Marc Grossman, Obama's recently appointed special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan. A soft-spoken career diplomat, he agreed, after the death of Richard Holbrooke, to take on one of the hardest jobs in Washington: finding out whether there was a way to reach a political accommodation with Mullah Mohammed Omar's Taliban, after ten years of war.

For a delegation of presidential envoys, it was a pretty unassuming motorcade: a couple of unmarked vans, rumbling past homes that looked like they belonged in Laguna Beach, one of the men later said. They were headed to a town house that belonged to a local intelligence agency friendly to the Pakistani government. It was the perfect place for a discreet meeting with the embattled, oftentimes embittered, commander of the Pakistani military forces: Gen. Ashraf Kayani.

Kayani is the most powerful man in Pakistan. When formal meetings with the Pakistanis were held for the cameras, Americans would sit down with the Pakistani president or prime minister and laud the arrival of a democratically elected civilian government. That was almost entirely for show. When they wanted to get something done, they ignored the civilians and called Kayani, who had risen through the ranks to become chief of the country's elite spy service, the ISI, or Inter-Services Intelligence, before becoming the head of the military. Kayani had clearly picked this venue so photographers and reporters would not know that he had slipped into town—Abu Dhabi, a favorite place for Pakistanis and Saudis making licit and illicit deals.

The meeting was Donilon's idea. After a year of crises—a trigger-happy CIA agent gone wild, the bin Laden raid, and a virulent rise of anti-Americanism—Donilon feared more trouble brewing. Just weeks before, a car-bomb attack on an American base in Wardak Province in Afghanistan had left seventy-seven Americans injured. A few days later, an all-day attack on the American embassy in downtown Kabul, with rocket-propelled grenades, forced Ambassador Ryan Crocker to seek refuge in a basement safe room. Both attacks were quickly traced to the Haqqani network, a group that existed in the netherworld between an insurgent group and a criminal cartel, and lived unmolested in Pakistani territory.

After the attack, the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, stood in front of the US Senate and delivered remarks that would have likely gotten him fired if he were not already halfway out the door. Mullen had been Obama's main interlocutor with the Pakistani military, but now, frustrated that more than twenty visits to the country had brought little change, he called the Haqqani network a "veritable arm" of the ISI.

When Obama heard that his top military officer had made that charge in public, he was outraged—Mullen, he thought, was trying to save his reputation, to go out of office in a blaze of anger at the Pakistani military officers he had negotiated with for years. Obama didn't contend that Mullen was wrong, although the evidence that the ISI was directly involved in the attacks on Americans was circumstantial at best. But he

knew that the accusation, in such a public setting, would trigger another round of recriminations with the country that had become the ally from hell.

When Donilon's team arrived, Kayani was already in the house, chain-smoking his Dunhill cigarettes. The out-of-the-way secrecy was pure Kayani, and the fact that Obama decided to send a high-ranking delegation to see him, not Pakistan's elected leadership, stroked his ego by reaffirming his primacy. Only a few short months before, Kayani had refused to deal seriously with the ambassadors and envoys from Washington—including Grossman—making clear he thought he deserved someone of higher rank. That would be Donilon, who played the role of secret interlocutor for Obama with the leadership of China and Saudi Arabia. (In fact, he had just come from a lengthy meeting in Riyadh with the Saudi king, trying to tamp down Saudi outrage at the American stance during the protests that ousted President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.) But Pakistan was his toughest account.

Kayani was nothing if not unpredictable. To him, managing Americans meant following through with just enough promises to keep the brittle US-Pakistani alliance from fracturing. Polite and careful most of the time, he knew how to charm by offering up memories from his years in officer training in the United States. At other times, he was angry and bitter, lecturing the Americans about how often they had promised the world to Pakistan and promptly abandoned the country out of pique, anger, or a short attention span.

Though the Americans could have settled into a comfortable living room, Kayani insisted they sit more formally at a table. The general was clearly not in the mood for casual chitchat.

Donilon opened the meeting where Mullen had left off. "The ultimate responsibility of the president of the United States is to protect Americans," Donilon said in his clipped Rhode Island accent, reiterating something Obama had said to Kayani one day in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Either Pakistan was going to deal with the Haqqani network or the Americans would. The message just sat there for a moment. Donilon went on. Why, he asked, would a man like Kayani, who grew up in the disciplined world of the Pakistani military, let a group of thugs hijack Pakistan's national security policy by waging war on America from inside its borders?

Then came the bottom line: "I know you want a guarantee from us that we won't undertake unilateral operations in your country again," a reference to the bin Laden raid. "I can't give you that." If seventy Americans had died in the bomb attack in Wardak the previous month, rather than just suffered injuries, "we wouldn't be having this conversation," Donilon said. It was a not-so-veiled threat that Obama would have been forced to send Special Operations Forces into Pakistan to attack the Haqqani network—national pride and sovereignty be damned.

"We're at a crossroads," Donilon concluded. "If this continues, you've really turned your fate over" to the Haqqani network.

When Donilon was finished, Kayani laid out his demands—and the chasm between them was obvious. The United States, he said, could never, ever again violate Pakistani sovereignty with an attack like the one they launched on Osama bin Laden's compound. That attack, he said, had been a personal humiliation. The Americans responded with silence.

"That was the tensest moment," one of the participants in the meeting noted, because it was an issue on which the two countries were never going to agree. Kayani moved on to his other concerns. The Americans were spending billions—approximately \$12 billion in 2011—training the Afghan military and police.

Should Afghanistan collapse someday in the near future—not an unlikely scenario—it would leave an armed, angry force just across the Pakistani border, Kayani said, many of them enemies of Pashtuns. And that would be a recipe for disaster. The Pashtuns are Sunnis, and they are also Afghanistan's largest ethnic group, about 40 percent of the population. But they live on both sides of the porous border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, a line of demarcation drawn from—and named after—Henry Mortimer Durand, the British foreign secretary in the 1890s. The Durand line is a completely arbitrary boundary, an artifact of the British colonial era, that cuts straight through Pashtun tribal areas. The world may see the Durand line as a border between two nations, but the Pashtuns sure don't—particularly the Taliban. Today their leadership is living on the Pakistani side. But Kayani recalled that in the '90s, when they ruled Afghanistan, the Taliban systematically massacred non-Pashtun ethnic groups—specifically the Hazara, a Shi'a minority that has close ties with Iran.

If things fell apart, Kayani insisted, the Pashtuns in both Afghanistan and Pakistan could find themselves pitted against a force armed and trained by the United States. Had the Americans thought about that? Or the possibility that as the US forces pull out of Afghanistan, India—which had already invested billions in the Afghan government—would continue to extend its prowess in an effort to encircle Pakistan?

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If Kayani wielded secondhand smoke as a negotiating tool, it was one of the less lethal weapons at his disposal in his treacherous climb to power. From 2004 to 2007, when he ran the ISI, he excelled at managing what two successive American presidents came to deride as Pakistan's “double game.” The phrase referred to Islamabad's habit of preserving its options by fighting on both sides of the Afghan war. But the phrase was misleading. It understated the complexity of Pakistan's position. Kayani's task was to maintain Pakistan's tenuous, yet crucial, influence in Afghanistan and convince his own people (and fellow generals) that he was not letting the far more powerful India encircle Pakistan by expanding its presence in Afghanistan unchallenged.

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