

STRATEGIKA

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Conflicts Of The Past As Lessons For The Present

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PAKISTAN'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES

IN THIS ISSUE

PETER R. MANSOOR • RALPH PETERS • BING WEST

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ABOUT THE POSTERS IN THIS ISSUE

Documenting the wartime viewpoints and diverse political sentiments of the twentieth century, the Hoover Institution Library & Archives Poster Collection has more than one hundred thousand posters from around the world and continues to grow. Thirty-three thousand are available online. Posters from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia/Soviet Union, and France predominate, though posters from more than eighty countries are included.

The United States and Pakistan: Frenemies on the Brink

By Peter Mansoor

For much of its short seventy-year history, Pakistan has managed to thoroughly mismanage its strategic relationships with great power patrons, regional competitors, and non-state clients. It has waged and lost four wars with a larger and more powerful India, supported terrorist organizations that have destabilized Afghanistan and conducted deadly attacks in neighboring India, and alienated its longtime American ally. Only Pakistan's geopolitical position as a land bridge between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia has kept US-Pakistani relations from severing completely, due to the need to ship military supplies and equipment through Pakistani territory to land-locked Afghanistan. Otherwise, there is little love lost between Pakistanis and Americans; polling indicates three-quarters of Pakistanis view the United States as an enemy, while only 10 percent of Americans trust Pakistan. Never have supposed allies hated each other so much.

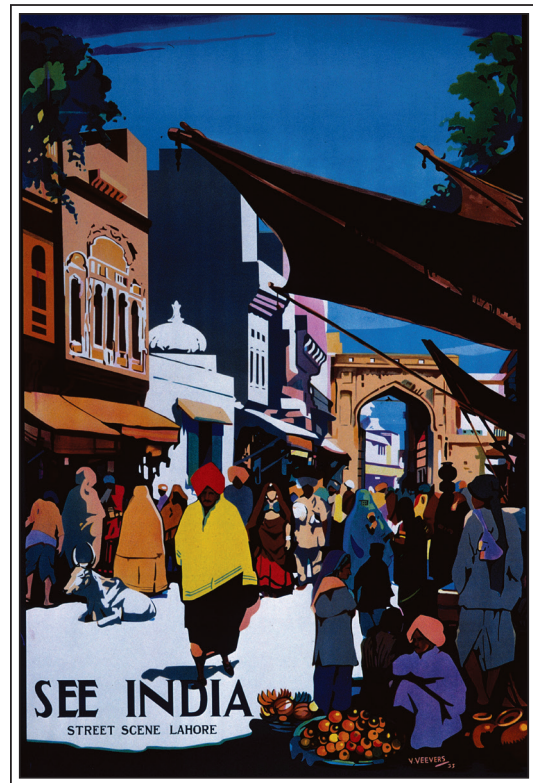


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For the first twenty-five years of the Cold War, Pakistan was an important and valued American ally. The two nations signed a mutual defense treaty in 1954, Pakistani officers trained in US military schools, and the United States built an air base in Peshawar for use by U-2 spy planes—including the one used in Gary Francis Powers's ill-fated mission on May 1, 1960, which ended with his capture when a Soviet surface-to-air missile destroyed his aircraft. US leaders viewed the Pakistani military as an important anticommunist bulwark in South Asia. This close relationship chilled considerably with the election of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who as president and prime minister led Pakistan into the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in the 1970s.

Not to be denied power, Chief of the Army Staff General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq took control of the government in a coup in July 1977. Zia launched a thorough Islamization of Pakistan, turning the country into a center for Islamic jurisprudence. If US policy makers were alarmed about these developments, their concerns went unnoticed amidst the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution in 1979. The former event in particular led to massive US support for Zia's regime and its role as a conduit for military aid to Mujahedeen guerrillas fighting the Red Army in Afghanistan—a period encapsulated by the book and popular movie "Charlie Wilson's War." Provided Pakistan proved useful as a Cold War ally, US political and military decision makers seemed unconcerned with the country's tilt towards political Islam.

Pakistan's short-lived golden age of strategic triumph came with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the fall of Mohammad Najibullah's communist government in Kabul in 1992, and the triumph of the Taliban in the ensuing Afghan civil war. With a friendly regime ensconced in Kabul, Pakistani leaders no longer feared strategic encirclement by India. The detonation of a nuclear device in 1998 announced the arrival of Pakistan into the elite club of nuclear-armed states, creating a deterrent against an attack by India. Another bloodless military coup a year later brought into power Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan was secure.

The success lasted less than half a decade.

The terror attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001, impelled the United States to invade Afghanistan in an effort to bring al-Qaeda leaders to justice. Osama bin Laden escaped the net in the near term, but the Taliban rapidly fell from power, its remnants retreating into Pakistan. With US President George W. Bush telling foreign leaders “either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists,” Musharraf decided he was with the United States—at least for the time being. He allowed US logistics to transit Pakistan and a limited number of US drone strikes to target terrorists inside his country. His cooperation earned for Pakistan the coveted designation of major non-NATO ally in 2004. US humanitarian support in the wake of a deadly earthquake in 2005 also earned a great deal of goodwill among the Pakistani people. It would not last.

But the Pakistani intelligence services, or ISI, were playing a duplicitous game. While cooperating with the United States to target terrorists bent on overturning the regime in Islamabad, the ISI covertly supported the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other groups that conducted attacks in Afghanistan, Kashmir, and India. US officials were suspicious enough of Pakistani trustworthiness that they refrained from informing Islamabad of the SEAL team raid (Operation Neptune Spear) on May 2, 2011, to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, who after nearly a decade of intensive intelligence work had been located in a large compound near Abbottabad, just a mile away from the Pakistan Military Academy. Although the raid was successful, the political fallout lingers.

Incensed by the US intrusion on its sovereignty, the Pakistani government closed the logistics routes across the country in the wake of Operation Neptune Spear. The Pakistani public, already angered by a large increase in drone strikes in Pakistan by the Obama administration, quickly turned their ire against the United States. By 2012 three-quarters of Pakistanis viewed the United States as an enemy. Americans were just as angry, seeing the location of public enemy #1 in Abbottabad as proof of Pakistani collusion with al-Qaeda. Overt or tacit Pakistani cooperation with the Taliban prolonged the Afghanistan conflict, now the longest war in US history. The relationship between the United States and Pakistan deteriorated.

President Trump played on Pakistani fears in his 2017 speech on his administration’s Afghan policy. “We can no longer be silent about Pakistan’s safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond,” the president stated, calling out Islamabad for its bad behavior. He continued, “We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change, and that will change immediately. No partnership can survive a country’s harboring of militants and terrorists who target U.S. service members and officials. It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order, and to peace.” Trump then laid the hammer down: “Another critical part of the South Asia strategy for America is to further develop its strategic partnership with India—the world’s largest democracy and a key security and economic partner of the United States. We appreciate India’s important contributions to stability in Afghanistan, but India makes billions of dollars in trade with the United States, and we want them to help us more with Afghanistan, especially in the area of economic assistance and development. We are committed to pursuing our shared objectives for peace and security in South Asia and the broader Indo-Pacific region.”

If any statement would get Islamabad’s attention, it was one that called on India to have a greater role in contributing to stability in Afghanistan. Trump was following his predecessor Teddy Roosevelt’s advice—he spoke softly and wielded a very big stick. But in his first tweet of 2018, the president decided to unleash the equivalent of a diplomatic scream: “The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools. They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!” In response to the president’s angry tweet, the Pakistani Ministry of Defence launched one of its own: “Pak as anti-terror ally has given free to US: land & air communication, military bases & intel cooperation that decimated Al-Qaeda over last 16yrs, but they have given us nothing but invective & mistrust. They overlook cross-border safe havens of terrorists who murder Pakistanis.” The US-Pakistani relationship had reached a new low.

The Bush and Obama administrations both used carrots in the form of \$33 billion in military and economic aid to attempt to convince the Pakistani government to cooperate with the United States and end its assistance to the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network. As those carrots have not worked, the Trump administration has resorted to sticks, suspending military aid in an attempt to make Pakistan cease its support for insurgent and terror groups bent on overturning the U.S.-backed regime in Kabul. That attempt will also likely fail. Pakistan's goal is to return to the golden age of the late-1990s, when it had attained strategic depth in Afghanistan by keeping India out, the Taliban in, and the Northern Alliance down. This policy is unchanged even after the resumption of civilian rule in 2008. Islamabad is uncomfortable with the current situation, in which the Afghan government refuses to do its bidding, India has an embassy and four consulates in country, and the Taliban is locked out of power.

US pressure has its limits, as the United States requires Pakistani cooperation to use the lines of communication running through the country. (The Northern Distribution Route through Central Asia has lessened, but not eliminated, US dependence on Pakistani ground and airspace.) Pakistani leaders will not jettison the Taliban, the one ally they have remaining in the Afghan conflict. Whether Pakistan and the Taliban would settle for a power-sharing agreement to end hostilities remains to be seen. In the meantime, Islamabad has responded to US coercion and threats by reaching out to America's strategic competitors, Russia and China. But Pakistan's relations with them also has limits. Pakistan would be unwise to jettison its long-term relationship with the United States, which is still the strongest global power and maintains enormous capacity to influence security matters in South Asia.

In the meantime, the United States and Pakistan are locked in an acrimonious strategic relationship that neither party can afford to completely sever. If an urban dictionary is looking for an example to define the word "frenemies," the relationship between the United States and Pakistan fits to a tee.



PETER R. MANSOOR, colonel, US Army (retired), is the General Raymond E. Mason, Jr. Chair of Military History at Ohio State University. A distinguished graduate of West Point, he earned his doctorate from Ohio State University. He assumed his current position after a twenty-six-year career in the US Army that included two combat tours, culminating in his service as executive officer to General David Petraeus in Iraq. His latest book, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War*, a history of the surge in Iraq in 2007–8, was published by Yale University Press in 2013.

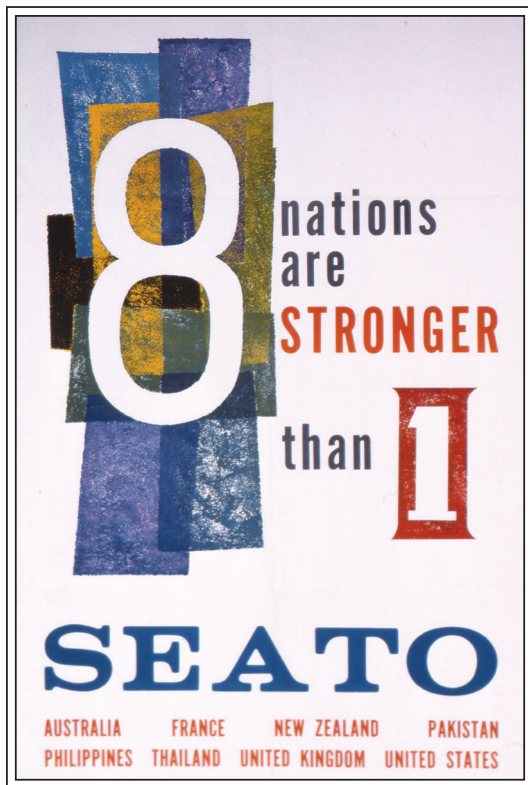


Image credit: Poster Collection, INT 00051, Hoover Institution Archives.

Pakistan: Murderous Ally, Patient Enemy

By Ralph Peters

Pakistan's military and intelligence leadership—the country's decisive elements—view the United States as a danger to be managed and a resource to be exploited. Its approach to bilateral relations is predicated on three things: The (correct) belief that US interlocutors do not understand the region; the conviction that, eventually, the United States will leave Afghanistan; and Pakistan's need for hegemony over Afghanistan—not only to check India's strategic moves but, more important, to guarantee Pakistan's internal cohesion.

While Pakistan has been given a pass on its active support for Pashtun terrorists in Afghanistan who have killed and maimed US troops, and has been let off the hook for hiding Osama bin Laden near a military academy, Islamabad does have historical grievances against Washington: Pakistan cooperated with the

United States during the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, only to watch the Americans walk away once the Russians were gone, leaving ruins, bloody rivalries, and rogue organizations behind on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Then in 1990 the United States froze the delivery of F-16s for which Pakistan already had paid, aircraft Pakistan's generals saw as essential to keep pace with India's might. Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons had alienated Washington and the US Congress.

By the time the chief of staff of the US Army sent me to Pakistan in the mid-1990s on a temporary mission, ideological stratification already had gripped Islamabad's military. The generals, with their Anglo-Indian accents and taste for wretched whiskey, wanted to rebuild bridges, viewing the United States as, ultimately, a guarantor against India and an important resource that still could be tapped. But below that generation, a transitional stratum of field-grade officers spoke English less fluently and had no memory of close cooperation during the depths of the Cold War. A third military generation of junior officers spoke English poorly, if at all, often sported Islamist beards, and were far less worldly than their superiors. That last layer of officers provided today's generals.

Atop all this, the United States fundamentally misunderstands Pakistan and its internal challenges. We note the borders on the map and imagine a unified state where none exists. Pakistan is, in fact, a small-scale empire. Core Pakistan consists of the provinces lying largely east of the Indus River, which neatly bisects not only the country north to south, but historically has marked the divide between the civilizations of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. That division endures even today.

The east-of-the-Indus provinces, Punjab, Sindh, and Jammu-and-Kashmir, have the population and the power. Nearly everything west of the Indus is, in essence, occupied territory, from Baluchistan through the Northwest Frontier and on to Gilgit. This is the essential fact that we fail to grasp, and it blinds us to Pakistan's perceived needs and deep agenda. At best, we acknowledge Pakistan's desire for influence over

Afghanistan for strategic depth in a conflict with India, but that's a secondary factor. From Islamabad's perspective, control over eastern Afghanistan is crucial to Pakistan's territorial integrity.

The British-drawn Durand line, which became the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was drawn through major tribal populations. Its location was determined by the depth British officers and administrators felt they needed as a buffer west of the Indus to protect the northwestern carats of the "Jewel in the Crown," India (which, we tend to forget, once stretched from Baluchistan through Bangladesh to Burma).

Today, that Pakistan-Afghanistan border still divides major tribal and ethnic groups, from Pashtuns to Baluchis, who desire to govern themselves—which the colonizing power, Pakistan, cannot permit without suffering dissolution.

Add in explosive Islamist fundamentalism, and one begins to see why Pakistan's leaders made their choice of tigers to ride, backing terrorist groups in Afghanistan while struggling to suppress ethnically identical groups within Pakistan's borders.

Anyone who visits, say, Quetta in the west and Lahore in the east of the country will still, today, encounter clashing cultures, from varying foods and spices to contending social norms and rival ethnicities. The unifying factor—beyond military force—is solely Islam; indeed, Pakistan was created at Partition in 1947 specifically to be a state for Muslims (thereby fatefully diluting the political power of the many millions of Muslims who remained in India). The national primacy of Islam has repeatedly damaged Pakistan, from wrecking its education system in the 1970s and 1980s, to its susceptibility to Islamist bullying even in its most progressive (a relative term) cities. Socially, Pakistan has been slipping backward since 1947.

This, then, is the threadbare imperial state that claims American aid while supporting anti-American terrorists to preserve itself and its regional authority. For the immediate future, Islamabad will continue to seek benefits from its complex relationship with Washington, but cannot be trusted or depended upon. Emotionally, Pakistan aligns with preeminent Islamist governments. Strategically, it views its future as lying in its burgeoning relationship with China. Meanwhile, its leaders wait for the United States to leave.



RALPH PETERS is the author of many books, including works on strategy and military affairs. As a US Army enlisted man and officer, he served in infantry and military Intelligence units before becoming a foreign area officer and global scout. Since retiring in 1998, he concentrates on writing books but remains Fox News's strategic analyst. His latest novel, *Hell or Richmond*, a gritty portrayal of Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign, follows his recent *New York Times* best seller, *Cain at Gettysburg*, for which he received the 2013 Boyd Award for Literary Excellence in Military Fiction from the American Library Association.



Image credit: Poster Collection, INT 00052, Hoover Institution Archives.

Pakistan: Murderous Ally, Patient Enemy

By Bing West

Last April, Ambassador Robert D. Blackwill, a distinguished diplomat, summarized American policy toward Pakistan. “Every time a new administration in Washington comes to office,” he said, “they get worried about Pakistan, which has a stockpile of nuclear weapons. The US Secretary of State then visits Pakistan and meets the top leadership. He is systematically lied to by Pakistan’s leadership, and this goes on for about two years. In the third year, he tells his colleagues at the (US) State Department that Pakistan’s leaders have been lying to him. Then they think about how to deal with the situation, and the elections come in and a new administration takes charge. The same thing is (then) repeated.”

Ambassador Blackwill neatly encapsulated the Pakistan-American relationship. Pakistan employs deceit as a fundamental tool of diplomacy. Pakistan is even-handed in lying to itself, its enemies, and its allies (if

there are any). Upon first meeting an American diplomat, politician, or general, senior Pakistani officials launch into an hour-long litany of how the United States has mistreated and misled them for decades. Once the American is sufficiently chastised and presumably humbled, the Pakistanis launch into geopolitical fantasies about amicable cooperation—provided sufficient aid (reparations perhaps?) is forthcoming. Pakistan has perfected the art of posing as the aggrieved to extract concessions, while having no intention of living up to any agreement. Inherently unstable and untrustworthy, Pakistan trusts no one else. So no country can be its ally, only a temporary convenience.

Most nations have armies; in Pakistan, the army has a nation. During the reign (1978–88) of the military dictator General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Pakistan embraced sharia law as the basis of “Islamization,”¹ to include the state sponsorship of the radical madrassas.² He also initiated the development of nuclear weapons.³

“The basis of Pakistan was Islam,” Zia declared. “The basis of Pakistan was that the Muslims of the sub-continent are a separate culture. It was on the two-nation theory that this part was carved out of the sub-continent as Pakistan.”⁴

Three decades later, the Pakistani army is struggling to stamp out an internal Islamist insurgency, while continuing to plot against India.

The army also supports the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan. By providing the Afghan Taliban a sanctuary along its entire 2,000-kilometer border, Pakistan appears confident that it controls the future direction of any government in Kabul, thus checkmating any effort by India to gain influence. Pakistan is also the logistics conduit into landlocked Afghanistan. So its leverage is considerable.

The army also possesses more than one hundred nuclear weapons. It skillfully plays the card of instability, subtly threatening that if external aid and support are withheld from Pakistan, the Islamist crazies (a movement fostered by General Zia) may seize some nuclear weapons. Then we’d all be in the soup.

Governance is both irresponsible and corrupt. Nearly 70 percent of Pakistan's lawmakers do not file tax returns. Less than 1 percent—about one million out of a population of 190 million—pay income tax. According to *The Journal of South Asian Studies*, “low savings and investment rates, budget deficits, institutional shortcomings, lack of human development and bad governance are the major cause of unsustainable development.”

Pakistan is a nation without a healthy self-image and with no coherent vision about how to improve. It considers itself a victim. It is not an ally and not an enemy. While not trusting Pakistan, the United States must deal realistically on a transactional basis; you do this for me and I will do this for you.

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- 1 Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm* (Yale University Press, 2002), 16–17.
 - 2 Zahid Hussain, ed, *Frontline Pakistan: The Struggle with Militant Islam* (Columbia University Press, 2006), 81.
 - 3 Shahid-Ur Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai* (Print Wise Publication, 1999), 102–106.
 - 4 Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), 135.



BING WEST is an author and former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs during the Reagan administration. He is a graduate of Georgetown and Princeton Universities where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and served in the marine infantry in Vietnam. He is the best-selling author of nine books on military history and travels frequently to war zones. His latest books are entitled *One Million Steps: A Marine Platoon at War* (2014) and *Into the Fire: A Firsthand Account of the Most Extraordinary Battle in the Afghan War* (2013).

Discussion Questions

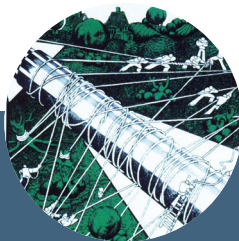
1. How does Pakistan's radical Islamism differ from similar extremism in the Middle East and Arab world?
2. Should we tilt far more to India, a more natural English-speaking and democratic ally?
3. If we left Afghanistan, would relations with Pakistan worsen or improve?
4. Was our help to Pakistan a Cold War artifact that is now outdated?

POLL: Does Pakistan consider itself a US ally, enemy, or neutral?

- ☐ Pakistan is an abject enemy, thwarting the United States in Afghanistan and promoting terrorism.
- ☐ Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and strategic location mean its hostility must be ignored.
- ☐ Pakistan is Pakistan, a neutral that watches only its own, not our quite different, interests.
- ☐ Pakistan has helped more than hurt the United States in the region.
- ☐ Pakistan is a longtime US ally that is invaluable to our strategic calculations.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Nuclear Proliferation



Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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Hoover Institution, Stanford University
434 Galvez Mall
Stanford, CA 94305-6003
650-723-1754

Hoover Institution in Washington
The Johnson Center
1399 New York Avenue NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-760-3200

