

The New York Times

That September Deadline

The United States and the other major powers have given Iran until late September to begin substantive negotiations on restraining its nuclear program. And Tehran has now announced that it is ready to resume talks, and the Obama administration says it is ready, too.

Unfortunately, there is no sign that Iran is serious about doing much more than buying more time.

Terms of Engagement

President Obama will have a hard time achieving his foreign policy goals until he masters some key terms and better manages the expectations they convey. Given the furor that will surround the news of America's readiness to hold talks with Iran, he could start with "engagement" — one of the trickiest terms in the policy lexicon.

The Washington Post

Time to Deal in Afghanistan

It is time to get real about Afghanistan. Withdrawal is not a serious option. The United States, NATO, the European Union and others have invested massively in stabilizing that country over the past eight years, and they should not abandon it because the Taliban is proving a tougher foe than anticipated. But there is still a large gap between the goals the Obama administration is outlining and the means available to achieve them. This gap is best closed not by sending in tens of thousands of more troops but, rather, by understanding the limits of what we can reasonably achieve in Afghanistan.

Will Obama Fight For Afghanistan?

Perhaps this summer's record bloodshed did it, or perhaps it was the disappointment of the election, with its low turnout, accompanying violence and allegations of fraud. Whatever the reason, the Afghan war is suddenly at the center of political debate in several Western countries. At stake are not merely tactics and strategy but a far more fundamental question: Should we still be in Afghanistan at all?

The 'Forgotten War'

Five years ago, Sen. John F. Kerry argued during his presidential campaign that the United States had dangerously neglected the war in Afghanistan. On Thursday, when he convened a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hear a status report on Iraq from U.S. Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, only five of the panel's 19 members showed up long enough to

ask a question. "Iraq today . . . has become the now-forgotten war," Mr. Kerry rather ruefully concluded.

A Friend to Iran

Debates in Washington about Hugo Chávez often end with the dismissive conclusion that the Venezuelan strongman poses no threat to the United States. If that's right, it's not because he isn't trying. For years he has been traveling the world in an effort to build alliances with present or former U.S. enemies, from Cuba to Vietnam. He dreams of standing at the head of a global anti-American military alliance.

The Guardian

Vladimir Putin's future: A tale of two Russias

When Vladimir Putin became prime minister in 1999, few thought he would last long. In those days in Russia, premiers were in and out of office like people coming through a revolving door. But Mr Putin went on to the presidency, prevailing with apparent ease over those who sought to discard him, to use him, or to challenge him. Ten years later he is still effectively in power, now as prime minister again.

Obama's impossible ambition

President Obama's efforts to revive the Middle East peace process are bound to fail because of the unbridgeable divide separating Israel's and Palestine's political goals. The minor problems are Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu's unwillingness to partition Jerusalem and enable the Palestinians to constitute the eastern half of the city as their capital, and his reluctance to freeze the settlement enterprise in the West Bank.

Terrorism: Al-Qaida under pressure

The picture of disarray and inefficiency painted by disillusioned jihadists returning from the al-Qaida "havens" in the Pakistani frontier zone reminds us that consciousness of one's own mistakes often obscures those made by the other side.

Time

Eight Years After 9/11: Why Osama bin Laden Failed

He may have eluded justice and the long reach of the world's most powerful military force; his followers may (and probably will) strike again at some point in the future, near or distant; but history's verdict on Osama bin Laden has been in for some time now: al-Qaeda failed.