

The New York Times

The Next Guantánamo

The Obama administration is basking in praise for its welcome commitment to shut down the American detention center at Guantánamo Bay. But it is acting far less nobly when it comes to prisoners held at a larger, more secretive military detention facility at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan.

End of the Clash of Civilizations

On his visit to Turkey last week, President Obama made important progress toward recalibrating America's relations with the Islamic world. The president steered away from the poisonous post-9/11 clash of civilizations mythology that drove so much of President George W. Bush's rhetoric and disastrous policy.

Mr. Gates's Budget

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has made a credible effort to bring new discipline and focus to military spending after the unrestrained, inchoate years of the Bush administration. He has made tougher choices than his predecessor, Donald Rumsfeld, and shifted billions of dollars from complex systems of little use in places like Iraq and Afghanistan to weapons needed right now by troops fighting today's wars.

The Washington Post

Mr. Medvedev's Test

It's been nearly a year since Dmitry Medvedev took office as Russia's president following a much-publicized vow to attack what he called the "legal nihilism" of his country. His record so far is not looking good: Murders of Kremlin opponents have continued, both at home and abroad, without any action against the perpetrators -- even though two of the suspects named by foreign police agencies sit in the Russian parliament. Mr. Medvedev raised some eyebrows when he met privately this year with the editors of the newspaper Novaya Gazeta following the broad-daylight murder of a reporter just blocks from the Kremlin. He told President Obama that he was concerned about the beating of human rights activist Lev Ponomarev on the night before last week's summit meeting. But Mr. Medvedev's words have yet to be followed by any tangible actions.

Weapons Wars

The Obama administration was already being accused of overloading Congress with ambitious and politically taxing initiatives when Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates unveiled his sweeping

reform of military spending on Monday. The Pentagon chief proposes to slaughter a veritable herd of sacred cows in weapons procurement: the F-22 fighter and C-17 cargo planes, the Navy's stealth destroyer, the Army's futuristic combat vehicle, several pieces of the Bush administration's cherished missile defense -- even the new presidential helicopter fleet. He plans a major bureaucratic reform that would eliminate thousands of private contracting jobs, including many in the Washington area.

Moving Beyond the F-22

The debate over whether to continue production of the F-22 Raptor has been one of the most politically charged and controversial budget issues in recent memory, spawning lobbying efforts that include contractor-sponsored newspaper ads and letter-writing campaigns.

A War Fighter's Budget

Budgets are the coldest of documents -- flat, gray realms of numbers and projections. But when referring to the origins of the recently proposed defense budget, Secretary Robert Gates, normally precise and analytical, speaks with an intensity that comes close to emotion. "What started me down this road was Walter Reed," the Army medical center where wounded soldiers were treated in squalid conditions. "There was a set of assumptions through the first several years of the war that it would be over very soon. So don't spend on a facility that would be closed."

The Guardian

A quagmire of indecision

It is "the most dangerous place in the world", according to Barack Obama. It's also where 90% of our own home-front terrorist threat comes from, according to Gordon Brown. Forget scratched heads and reddening faces over Manchester's missing weapons of destruction. No anxious leader can forget Pakistan - or fail to remember one lethally complex thing. Pakistan's crisis is political as well as religious, economic as well as tribal, personal as well as endemic. Call Jinnah's pure state a failed state now and expect ritual resentment. But ask in return what equals "success", and hear silence descend. The misty, murky road from Operation Pathway is not so long after all.

Britain and Iraq: fortunes of war

They swept in from the Fao peninsula on 20 March 2003 with their commanders proudly explaining how their troops could fight, feed and emote with their foes all at the same time. This was the army that had been through Malaysia and Northern Ireland. It could do counter-insurgency. It knew about hearts and minds. It will finally leave Basra this month a humbler force. What happened in the intervening six years was traumatic. Historians will be harsh in their judgment.

The Telegraph

The best way to beat the Taliban

The dark, misty eyes of the village elder in Garmsir said it all: the disappointment, cumulative fatigue and the worry that you only see in civilians caught up in a long-term combat zone. His gnarled fingers spun his worn beads relentlessly; the dry rivulets engrained on his weatherbeaten face belied his relative youth.

The Wall Street Journal

Obama's Iraq Surprise

President Obama surprised the world yesterday with an unannounced visit to Baghdad, where he met Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and praised the courage and perseverance of America's troops. But the most pleasant surprise has been Mr. Obama's near-about face on Iraq since becoming President.