

New York Times

Holding Mr. Bashir Accountable

After the International Criminal Court this week ordered his arrest on war crimes, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Sudan's ever-ruthless leader, ordered the expulsion of 13 international aid groups that keep millions of impoverished Sudanese alive with food and medical care. If Mr. Bashir does not reverse the expulsion, it should be considered added proof of his guilt.

Fresh Start in the Middle East

Hillary Rodham Clinton put down the right markers on her first Middle East trip as secretary of state. Whatever the eventual composition of a new, and presumably more hawkish, government after Israel's last election, Mrs. Clinton made clear that America's compelling interest lies in a two-state solution anchored by a broad regional peace. She advanced that interest by announcing diplomatic re-engagement with Syria and strong American support for the Palestinian Authority president, Mahmoud Abbas.

Washington Post

Foreign Policy Sequels

President Obama's foreign policy team has been working hard to present its policies to the world as constituting a radical break from the Bush years. In the broadest sense, this has been absurdly easy: Obama had the world at hello. When it comes to actual policies, however, selling the pretence of radical change has required some sleight of hand -- and a helpful press corps. Thus the New York Times reports a dramatic "shift" in China policy to "rigorous and persistent engagement," as if the previous two administrations had been doing something else for the past decade and a half.

No Deal - Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev offer welcome clarity on Iran and missile defence.

Proponents of a diplomatic "grand bargain" between the Obama administration and Russia -- by which the United States would obtain Russian cooperation in stopping Iran's nuclear program in exchange for concessions to what Moscow sees as its security interests in Europe -- got a double drenching of cold water yesterday. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told a news conference that "any swaps" between action on Iran and a planned U.S. missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic "would not be productive." For his part, President Obama made clear that his administration's decisions on missile defence would be guided not by Russian behaviour but by the threat from Iran.

The Guardian

If this becomes Obama's war, it will poison his presidency

Pakistan is being ripped apart by the fallout from the Afghan occupation. If the US escalates, the impact will be devastating. The armed assault on Sri Lanka's cricket team in Lahore has been a brutal demonstration, if any more were needed, that the war on terror is devouring itself and the states that have been sucked into its slipstream. Pakistan is both victim and protagonist of the conflict in Afghanistan, its western and northern fringes devastated by a US-driven counter-insurgency campaign, its heartlands wracked by growing violence and deepening poverty. The country now shows every sign of slipping out of the control of its dysfunctional civilian government - and even the military that has held it together for 60 years.

Peace under attack

It is commonplace to observe that Northern Ireland has changed since the end of the Troubles, but that does not make the transformation any less extraordinary. The murderous attack on a British army base in County Antrim on Saturday night will bring fears of a return to the bad times. The horror of the shootings was made greater by the banality of the circumstances in which they took place and the fact that the two young soldiers who died were not on active duty, but waiting in barracks before being sent to Afghanistan. But the peace process is strong enough to resist even this grotesque attempt to destroy it.

The Economist

Take them home responsibly

President Obama is right to be flexible about the pace of America's departure from Iraq. It is six years ago this month since American forces invaded Iraq and toppled Saddam Hussein, only to see their victory sour as the country descended into a hell of sectarian killing. Barack Obama, who opposed the war from the start and campaigned for the presidency on a promise to end it, has begun to fulfil his promise. In a speech last week he said the bulk of American troops would withdraw by September next year. But because that is a trifle later than his original promise of getting them out within 16 months of taking office, and because he says he may keep up to 50,000 soldiers in Iraq (for training but also for "counter-terrorism") even longer, he is being accused by some of slithering away from his campaign pledge.

Foreign Policy

The Axis of Upheaval

Forget Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—Bush's "Axis of Evil." As economic calamity meets political and social turmoil, the world's worst problems may come from countries like Somalia, Russia, and Mexico. And they're just the beginning.

Wall Street Journal

Pakistan Is Steadfast Against Terror

Last week's trilateral meeting in Washington between U.S. leaders and the foreign ministers, military and intelligence leaders of my country and Afghanistan was a crucial step forward in the war on terrorism and fanaticism in South and Central Asia. For the first time, Pakistan, the U.S. and Afghanistan agreed on a coherent military and political strategy to isolate and deal with those intent on destabilizing our region and terrorizing the world.