

The New York Times

More Iranian Injustice

The journalist Maziar Bahari joined his pregnant wife in London this week after being freed from an Iranian prison where he had been held for five months. That is welcome news, but it would be a mistake to think that the mullahs who run the government had been seized with humanitarian spirit. If anything, they seem more determined to shift the blame for the unrest that followed the fraudulent June 12 election to America and other "foreigners."

There's No Substitute for Troops on the Ground

"I hope people who say this war is unwinnable see stories like this. This is what winning in a counterinsurgency looks like." Lt. Col. William F. McCollough, commander of the First Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, is walking me around the center of Nawa, a poor, rural district in southern Afghanistan's strategically vital Helmand River Valley.

New Statesman

Why Britain must abort mission in Afghanistan

On his first visit to Afghanistan in March 2006, George W Bush spoke of his hope that its people understood that, as "democracy takes hold, you're inspiring others. And that inspiration will cause others to demand their freedom." More than three years later, the neoconservative vision of setting up a western-style, democratic state in Afghanistan - endorsed by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, among others - lies in ruins, discredited by widespread and state-engineered fraud in August's presidential election.

TheWashington Post

History's road to Waziristan

Talking with a Pakistani intelligence officer here last week about the army's invasion of South Waziristan, a visitor noted that troops have been marching down these same rough roads, toward the same tribal strongholds, for more than 150 years -- never with much success.

Mr. Kim's scam

Suppose that North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il decided last January to try luring the Obama administration into the same lucrative and fraudulent transaction his regime pulled off with the

two previous U.S. presidents. In that case, Mr. Kim may feel he's getting close to executing another sting.

Bring the troops home

Barack Obama didn't set out to be a "war president," but that's what history compels him to be. The nation and the world are fortunate that he doesn't have the reckless, ready-fire-aim mentality of George W. Bush. But Afghanistan doesn't present the kind of "false choices" that Obama, by nature, habitually rejects. The choices are real and awful, and no amount of reframing and rephrasing will make them go away.

The Atlantic

Obama's Inner Kissinger

For more than 200 years, America's policy makers have wrestled with the complexities of dealing with the world. George Washington, for example, thought America's best interests were served by keeping the rest of the world at arm's length (a view later amended more than slightly by James Monroe, who reversed the emphasis by insisting that other countries butt out of our business, the definition of "our business" being extended both north and south to include the entirety of "our" hemisphere.

The Times

Our last chance to do right by Afghanistan

I remember interviewing two young Helmand farmers in early 2006. They had travelled to the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah, from the remote north of the province looking for work. I wanted to ask them about the impending arrival of British Forces. As I ran through my questions their faces were blank. They had not heard of British soldiers coming to Helmand, nor had they heard of a country called Britain, its capital London or its famous export, the BBC.

The Independent

Paddy Ashdown: Afghanistan's future lies in strengthening its tribal structures, not in its corrupt government

After all the political manoeuvrings in Kabul over the last few months, what do we say to those in Britain who wonder why our young men should be dying for an Afghan President whose support is plummeting – and taking ours with it – because of corruption? For a man whose attempt to get re-elected has been, to say the least, questionable?