

The New York Times  
North Korea's Threats  
North Korea is developing a frightening track record of making good on its threats. True to its word, in recent weeks it has conducted a second nuclear test and several missile tests. It also may have resumed making fuel for nuclear weapons. And the threats keep coming. Over the weekend, the North vowed to make more nuclear weapons and to take "resolute military actions" against efforts to isolate it.

The Ban on Gays in the Military  
The Supreme Court's refusal this week to hear a challenge to the ban on homosexuals serving openly in the military is not much of a legal setback. The court did not address the merits of the case, and another lawsuit still moving through the courts may be a better vehicle for challenging the benighted policy.

The Washington Post  
Welcome, Dear Leader! - Ike hosted Khrushchev. Let's bring Kim Jong Il for a visit.  
Kim Jong Il, the eccentric and unpredictable North Korean dictator, has been misbehaving lately -- firing his missiles, testing his nukes, jailing American journalists and scaring the hell out of everyone by suggesting that he will appoint his 26-year-old son, Kim Jong Un, to succeed him. So what should President Obama do?

Pakistan's Next Fight? Don't Go There.  
Two years ago, my wife and I vacationed in Pakistan's Swat Valley. We spent an afternoon sightseeing in the hills, visiting stupas in the dense pine forests and carvings of the Buddha etched into sheer granite cliffs, remnants of the Buddhist civilization that had thrived in the valley for centuries. Later, we played badminton back at our hotel.

The Guardian  
Obama's bulldozer risks turning the Taliban into Pakistan's Khmer Rouge  
Last month Richard Holbrooke, the US state department's special representative, met students from Pakistan's north-west tribal areas. They were enraged by drone attacks, which according to David Kilcullen, counterinsurgency adviser to General Petraeus have eliminated only about 14 terrorist leaders while killing 700 civilians. One young man told Holbrooke that he knew someone killed in a Predator drone strike. "You killed 10 members of his family," he said. Another claimed that the strikes had unleashed a fresh wave of refugees. "Are many of them Taliban?" Holbrooke asked. "We are all Taliban," he replied.

This Iraq inquiry is barmy. At least it will be held in private  
Wrong chairman, wrong inquiry, above all, wrong war. In only one respect is Gordon Brown right in setting up the Chilcot inquiry into Iraq. He is right to make its investigations private. This should not be a show trial or an exercise in political revenge, but a search for relevant material to present for public debate. It is no substitute for parliament.

Seismic events in Iran and Israel have set a critical test of Obama's resolve  
So there are limits to the magician's powers. For a moment there, when the footage from Tehran showed young women wearing Victoria Beckham sunglasses, peroxide hair poking from their hijabs, lining up to cast their votes in a record turnout election, it looked as if Iran was about to end the sullen estrangement of the last four years, turf out Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and present a new, more open face to the world. If that had been the outcome of Iran's election, it would have been notched up, in part, as an early triumph for Barack Obama: his allies would have declared that the hand the president stretched out to the Muslim world in Cairo less than a fortnight ago had unclenched the Iranian fist.

The Telegraph  
Russia shuts out the international community  
On Monday, Russia vetoed the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia. The move served to kill the last remaining international organization with a presence in Georgia's conflict zones, which Moscow invaded and occupied last August. This will enable Russia to continue to stage provocations against its small neighbor with impunity. Moscow clearly feels it did not finish what it started last August; only continued Western resolve can deter it from trying to do so.

The

Independent  
Johann Hari: Will the looming war between Iran and Israel now be averted?  
Are we witnessing an anti-1979 ♦ a democratic uprising against the Ayatollahs by the grandchildren of the revolution? On the streets of Tehran, many of the massed millions are chanting: "We will die, but count our votes." The religious police are trying to tear-gas and truncheon this cry into submission, with the possibility of a Tehran Tiananmen hanging in the city's smog. But for today, the secret policemen are in panic and the Ayatollahs are in retreat.