

The New York Times Battle's Latent Scars

During World War I, Siegfried Sassoon, the poet of trench warfare, wrote of what were then called shell-shocked comrades: "They'll soon forget their haunted nights; their cowed subjection to the ghosts of friends who died." That dark irony is finally being acknowledged at the Pentagon, where the Army has announced an ambitious program to train soldiers in the risks of stress, depression and suicide. On the modern battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, one out of five active or returning soldiers is suffering from these ailments.

Afghanistan Votes

Millions of Afghans, determined to shape their own future, defied Taliban threats and voted Thursday in the country's second-ever presidential elections. That courage deserves to be rewarded with far better governance than Afghans have experienced in the four years since the last presidential vote.

A Nuremberg for Guantanamo

At the end of World War II, the Allied powers found themselves in charge of thousands of captured enemies, many of whom had committed unspeakable crimes. Some among the victors thought that the prisoners should simply be shot. Others, including many in the American government, steadfastly insisted that these men should be subjected to criminal proceedings. Thus the Nuremberg trials were born, tribunals that meted out justice for some of the 20th century's worst atrocities while demonstrating the return of the rule of law on the European continent and the superiority of democratic values over Fascist lunacies.

New Statesman

How "winnable" is Afghanistan?

The government has failed to define "victory". Ministers should set a date for withdrawal of British troops. In the week since our special issue on Afghanistan, Rifleman Daniel Wild, Lance Bombardier Matthew Hatton, Captain Mark Hale, Private Richard Hunt, Sergeant Simon Valentine, Fusilier Louis Carter, Fusilier Simon Annis and Lance Corporal James Fullarton have lost their lives in Helmand, taking the death toll for British service personnel there to 204.

Washington Post

Why Afghans Need a Vote

It minced no words, the Taliban, in the leaflets that it scattered across southern Afghanistan last weekend. In one of the missives, the Taliban threatened to cut off the noses and ears of anyone who dared to vote in Thursday's presidential election. Another leaflet said that anyone whose fingers were stained with ink -- a sign that someone has voted -- risked losing those, too.

The Guardian

We insult Afghans by calling their election a real success

In the excitement of Afghanistan's elections last Thursday, there was a moment of clarity for me. At lunchtime, the news came that the UN was declaring the day a success. "I am pleased," said Kai Eide, the UN's secretary-general's special representative here. "In general, it seems to be working well." This was despite the fact that in Kabul alone there had been seven bomb attacks, two gun battles, the first allegations of fraud and a city-wide scandal about the so-called indelible ink used to ensure no one could double vote. And there were still four hours of voting to go.

Megrahi's release: Justice and geopolitics

The revolution which brought Muammar Gaddafi to power in Libya 40 years ago and the devolution which gave Scotland its own government 10 years ago intersected this week in a way that has shown neither of the governments concerned in a good light. The posturing in Edinburgh, Tripoli, Washington and London which has accompanied the release of Abdelbaset al-Megrahi would seem comical if it did not touch so closely on the tragedies of the families who lost loved ones in the bombing of Pan Am 103.

The Economist

Losing Afghanistan?

This is the just war, the "war of necessity", as Barack Obama likes to put it, in contrast to the bad war, the war of misguided choices in Iraq. But as a deeply flawed election went ahead in Afghanistan this week, there were echoes, in the mission by America and its allies, of the darkest days of the Iraq campaign: muddled aims, mounting

casualties and the gnawing fear of strategic defeat. Gloomy commentators evoke the spectre of the humiliations inflicted by Afghanistan on Britain in the 19th century and the Soviet Union in the 20th.

Foreign Affairs

An agenda for NATO

NATO's 60th anniversary, celebrated in April with pomp and circumstance by the leaders of nearly 30 allied states, generated little public interest. NATO's historical role was treated as a bore. In the opinion-shaping media, there were frequent derisive dismissals and even calls for the termination of the alliance as a dysfunctional geostrategic irrelevance. Russian spokespeople mocked it as a Cold War relic.

Wall Street Journal

Why Should We Underwrite Russian Rearmament?

It was Clare Boothe Luce who came up with the aphorism "No good deed goes unpunished." This maxim accurately sums up U.S. efforts to help Russia dismantle its aging nuclear arsenal. When the Soviet Union dissolved two decades ago, its component pieces were saddled with the formidable task of picking up the fragments of a huge nuclear-weapons stockpile. Fears arose across the world that nuclear warheads and/or radioactive material might get lost or stolen.

The Times

Kick out Karzai. We deserve a second chance

The success of the Nato-led intervention in Afghanistan hangs in the balance in the elections that begin today. Without a new government committed to restoring the State's sovereignty and working with the international community to stabilise the country, the insurgency will spiral further out of control. Afghanistan needs a new leader who has a clear strategy to achieve our mutual goal of sending foreign troops home.