

The New York Times

More Than Missiles

With the apparent killing of the Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud by an American drone, President Obama seems to be having some success with his military policy for Pakistan. He is having less luck in Washington.

The Two-State Solution Doesn't Solve Anything

The two-state solution has welcomed two converts. In recent weeks, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, and Khaled Meshal, the head of Hamas's political bureau, have indicated they now accept what they had long rejected. This nearly unanimous consensus is the surest sign to date that the two-state solution has become void of meaning, a catchphrase divorced from the contentious issues it is supposed to resolve. Everyone can say yes because saying yes no longer says much, and saying no has become too costly. Acceptance of the two-state solution signals continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle by other means.

The Guardian

Pakistan: Premature claims

One certainty emerges from the fog of war enveloping Waziristan, in Pakistan's remote tribal areas. Whether or not Baitullah Mehsud was killed in the drone attack on his house last week, or is, as his supporters claim, severely ill, Tehrik I Taliban is in some crisis. The group was last night under pressure to prove their leader had risen from the rubble of his home by issuing a video of him. But even that would be unlikely to quell the violent power struggle between deputies vowing for his place. There have been heated denials that a shoot-out took place between Hakeemullah Mehsud, a fiery young commander, and Wali ur Rehman, a militant cleric, at a shura meeting to decide Mehsud's succession.

The Times

When a fistful of dollars is not enough

On Thursday nights the "Duck and Cover", the improvised bar in the grounds of Maude House (home of the British military presence in the city), used to host Baghdad's finest, and perhaps only, "pub quiz". Those of us not on duty would slip into something more comfortable (PT kit) and, assuming no stray mortars disturbed the proceedings, would spend a jolly couple of hours pretending that we were at home in the local, not mid-tour in the most dangerous city in the world.

New Scientist

Winning the ultimate battle: How humans could end war

Optimists called the first world war "the war to end all wars". Philosopher George Santayana demurred. In its aftermath he declared: "Only the dead have seen the end of war". History has proved him right, of course. What's more, today virtually nobody believes that humankind will ever transcend the violence and bloodshed of warfare. I know this because for years I have conducted numerous surveys asking people if they think war is inevitable. Whether male or female, liberal or conservative, old or young, most people believe it is. For example, when I asked students at my university "Will humans ever stop fighting wars?" more than 90 per cent answered "No". Many justified their assertion by adding that war is "part of human nature" or "in our genes". But is it really?

The Wall Street Journal

The Hiroshima Rorschach Test

On this day 64 years ago, an American B-29 named the Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb over the city of Hiroshima. We know that as many as 80,000 Japanese died instantly. We know the city was pulverized, and we know that an estimated 100,000 additional people died later from radiation poisoning. We also are aware that the Hiroshima bomb, and the Nagasaki bomb dropped three days later, ushered in the atomic era.