

Wall Street Journal  
A Dialogue With Lebanon's Ayatollah  
I have not found in the whole long history of the Arab-Israeli conflict even one neutral American position. We used to love America in the region in the '40s. [President Woodrow] Wilson's principles [of national self-determination] represent freedom facing a Europe that was colonizing us. But America now is living a policy worse than that of British and French colonialism." So said Muhammad Hussein Fadhlullah early one morning last week, and I suppose I should not have been surprised.

Washington Post  
America's Imperial Foreign Policy  
As George W. Bush's term ended, he had few defenders left in the world of foreign policy. Mainstream commentators almost unanimously agreed the Bush years had been marked by arrogance and incompetence. "Mr. Bush's characteristic failing was to apply a black-and-white mind-set to too many gray areas of national security and foreign affairs," The Post editorialized. Even Richard Perle, the neoconservative guru, acknowledged recently that "Bush mostly failed to implement an effective foreign and defense policy." There was hope that President Obama would abandon some of his predecessor's rigid ideological stances. What We Don't Know About Iraq  
What do Iraqis call the war that is now entering its seventh year? If you can't answer that question, it's not because you haven't been paying attention. In this country, the Iraq war has been an American story. It was born inside the Beltway. Its costs in suffering have been most visible to us at gravesides across the United States, or in the wards of Walter Reed. A growing library of histories of the war chronicles battle after bitter battle between factions of official Washington, skirmishing over ideas, strategy, about how we got in and how to get out. Moralism on the Shelf  
The 19th century ended, as we all know, not in 1900 but 14 years later, when Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo -- and the world promptly went mad. In a similar way, the 20th century did not end until this very year, when, among other things, President Barack Obama implied that he would not rule out talking with more moderate elements of the Taliban. What Henry Luce called "the American Century" is over. The Guardian  
Our skewed world view won't let us see the real Pakistan  
First for the good news: Pakistan is not about to explode. The Islamic militants are not going to take power tomorrow; the nuclear weapons are not about to be trafficked to al-Qaida; the army is not about to send the Afghan Taliban to invade India; a civil war is unlikely. The Economist  
Compounding the crime  
Given the history of the Sudanese government's brutal treatment of the population of Darfur, some adverse reaction to last week's indictment of President Omar al-Bashir by the International Criminal Court (ICC) was expected but nothing quite as bad as what happened. A dozen major international aid agencies and a couple of local ones were immediately expelled from Darfur, and many from the country altogether; staff were unceremoniously escorted to waiting planes while their computers, files and much else were confiscated by the authorities. The remaining aid agencies have been put on notice, and could be next. Just when you thought it was safe  
It looked like a scene from the bad old days. Two British soldiers at a base in Antrim took delivery of a last pizza before deploying to Afghanistan and were mown down in the street. A Northern Ireland police officer answered a call in Armagh and was shot in the back of the head. The killings were claimed by dissident IRA groups who believe, or pretend to, that the mainstream movement sold out its republican heritage in doing a deal with the unionists, to say nothing of the British. A shudder ran round the province at the thought that the Troubles might not, after all, be over.