New York Times

War Games
The country is fighting two very difficult wars. It needs a secretary of the Army, and President Obama has chosen Representative John McHugh, a Republican, for the job. Yet Senators Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts have selfishly put a hold on his nomination along with nine other appointments to the Pentagon and the Justice Department.

Iraq's Sunnis
Sunni Arabs are a minority in Iraq, but for many years they enjoyed a privileged status. This was especially so during the cruel and paranoid rule of Saddam Hussein, who reserved an outsize share of lucrative government jobs, powerful army commands and professional positions for Sunni kinsmen. The Shiite majority, along with the Kurdish minority, were subjected to relentless deprivation and violent, systematic terror.

Afghanistan's Tyranny of the Minority

AS the debate intensifies within the Obama administration over how to stabilize Afghanistan, one major problem is conspicuously missing from the discussion: the growing alienation of the country's largest ethnic group, the Pashtun tribes, who make up an estimated 42 percent of the population of 33 million. One of the basic reasons many Pashtuns support the Taliban insurgency is that their historic rivals, ethnic Tajiks, hold most of the key levers of power in the government.

The Land of 10,000 Wars

As General Stanley McChrystal's 60-day strategic assessment is wrapping up, he poised to recommend a new approach for Afghanistan, one grounded in counterinsurgency's strategy of protecting the population.

New Statesman

The fog of war

In 2001, British troops marched into Afghanistan on a mission to combat al-Qaeda and topple the Taliban. Eight years and thousands of ruined lives later, they remain mired in conflict, with no sign of a way out. What are our soldiers fighting and dying for? How long will they stay?

The Guardian

Afghanistan: Mission impossible

The defence secretary, Bob Ainsworth, may believe he is doing his best for the troops in Afghanistan. But it is one thing to say, as he did yesterday, that Britons at home must hold fast – as the UK death toll passed the 200 mark this weekend. It is quite another to define what granite-like object we should all be holding fast to. Is the mission to clear the Taliban out of Afghanistan? There is no reliable evidence to support the claim he made yesterday that Operation Panther's Claw has brought 80,000 Afghans out from under the tyranny of insurgents – quite the contrary.

The Times

Sacrifice of troops resonates in tales of war

It's hard for those of us who're sequestered in suburban comfort to appreciate the scale of the sacrifice being made on our behalf by the men who're serving in Afghanistan. But we can try, by engaging with the writing of those who have been witnesses to this war at its rawest.

The Telegraph

Afghanistan: Our fight is against terror and tyranny - not just the Taliban

The greater the sacrifice our forces make in Afghanistan, the worse the security situation becomes in that benighted country. At least, that seems the only logical conclusion to be drawn as millions of Afghans prepare to vote later this week in the second presidential election since the overthrow of the Taliban eight years ago.

The Independent

Only time can heal some Iraqi wounds

Life in Iraq is getting better. Take one example: two or three years ago, tattoo artists in Baghdad were working overtime giving distinctive tattoos to men who feared they would be killed in the Sunni-Shia sectarian slaughter.

Bosnia needs to sort itself out without our help

What to do about Bosnia? William Hague was right when told The Independent yesterday that it is unravelling in front of our eyes, as the assertive Serbs pull ever further from the weak centre in the direction of outright independence.

Why these deaths hit home as hard as the Somme

More than 200 soldiers dead in Afghanistan, and now Gordon Brown advises us that "the best way to honour their memory is to see the course through". I don't know which particular "course" Gordon has in mind – protecting democracy, training the Afghan army, defeating the Taliban, talking to the Taliban, or just fighting them so they don't turn up on British shores – but this is straight out of the George W Bush tear bucket.

Wall Street Journal

Mideast Peace Starts With Respect

More than one American president has tried to bring peace to the Middle East, and more than one has failed. So as the Obama administration outlines its own prospectus for a comprehensive settlement to Israel's conflict with the Palestinians and the wider Arab world, it would do well to take note of some potential pitfalls.