

## Letters to the Editor

Article published February 1, 2010.

### **Afghanistan war is not winnable**

As the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Robert Gates' job is to help lower the fright index and exacerbate the quest for faith among governments we call our allies. Regrettably he appears to be giving the fear-mongering tactics of the previous administration a new dimension.

During his recent visit to India, Mr. Gates made comments that could be deemed irresponsible and at times inflammatory. Saying that any conflict between India and Pakistan would only further the militants' agenda makes great sense. But then referring to the attacks by the militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba in November 2008 in Mumbai, he said, it is not unreasonable to assume that Indian patience would be limited were there another attack. It is almost like saying to India, go ahead, attack Pakistan and we will send some cheerleaders.

While India's restraint then was praiseworthy, it does not behoove Mr. Gates to make remarks which are not only disparaging but are also bound to touch raw nerves in Islamabad. What happened to subtle diplomacy?

Unfortunately, this ill-timed placating of India will only add turbulence to the precariously balanced South Asian calm. For some reason, it is reminiscent of our fouled-up peace-brokering maneuvers in the Middle East.

When it comes to Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan, our foreign policy is already in a state of irreparable disarray. So exactly what Mr. Gates is trying to accomplish now: pulling out the control rod between two nuclear neighbors, perhaps?

Shouldn't he be more focused on minimizing the civilian casualties in Afghanistan and Pakistan by the so-called 'targeted' bombing under the canopy of 'reliable' intelligence?

Despite our military might and superiority, he cannot possibly believe that we are going to win this war by simply having 100,000+ warriors on the ground! History shows no military has ever won a battle in Afghanistan in 2000 years.

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