

## **Letters**

### **Weighing the Options in Afghanistan**

Published: October 16, 2009

*The New York Times*

To the Editor:

Re "Views on Afghanistan Buildup Bring Clinton and Gates Together in an Alliance"  
(news article, Oct. 13):

I want to offer the secretaries of state and defense a warning that I came across in the papers of the late Senator Richard B. Russell, a Democrat from Georgia.

After Senator Russell's onetime protégé, President Lyndon B. Johnson, had moved the United States into a major war in Vietnam, something Senator Russell had warned against, he lamented in 1966 to a constituent in Georgia that opponents of the United States had "outwitted us in getting us pinned down in the most unfavorable place in Asia to fight a war, unless it be Afghanistan."

I found this letter in 1989, 14 years after the United States pulled out ignominiously from Vietnam, and just as the Soviet Union had withdrawn from its long, drawn-out venture in Afghanistan. David M. Barrett

Villanova, Pa., Oct. 13, 2009

*The writer is a professor of political science at Villanova University.*