Gates to Afghanistan

Gates going to Afghanistan as first administrative figure to visit since the president's speech. And The Washington Post thought this was breaking news.

News Alert
11:29 PM EST Monday, December 7, 2009

Pentagon chief Gates makes unannounced trip to Afghanistan

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates landed Tuesday in Kabul, becoming the first senior U.S. official to travel to Afghanistan since President Obama announced a buildup of troops there. He said a "big piece" of his mission is to tell U.S. troops, “We are in this thing to win.”

For more information, visit washingtonpost.com -

"gates afghanistan" pretty obviously would not do as a search phrase; there are too many times that combination would have appeared in addition to for this trip. So I experimented with connectors, and by looking at the messages and searching with Archivist I came up with "gates (to OR visit OR arrive OR land) afghanistan" That may be a bit more elaborate than was necessary, but it produced the best results referring specifically to the trip.

The first search was 11:30 p.m. Central December 7, 2009, which is one hour later than The Post breaking news report.

At that point 505 messages were found.

At 14:20 p.m. January 1, 2009 939 messages had been found. The Archivist trendline is

There is one spike with a couple of preliminary spikes. Then next to nothing.

The .txt file ready for Excel is gates-to-afghanistan.txt