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7. German lawmakers approve troop increase for Afghanistan

1. Defence's new choppers are duds: report, Lindsay Murdoch, Age, 2010-0--28

An internal German army report has revealed serious deficiencies in the European-designed helicopter that will replace Australia's military helicopter fleet in a $4.2 billion deal.

- NHIndustries NH90, Wikipedia
- Defence to upgrade Hercules aircraft, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2010-02-25
- Faulkner splurges on sub-par fighters, Brian Toohey, AFR*, 2010-02-27, *[subscription required]

2. Faulkner stands up for record, John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-03-01

Defence Minister John Faulkner has defended the Rudd cabinet’s record on approving defence projects warning it will take the “appropriate time” to make decisions when billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money is at stake.
*[subscription required]

3. Fallout over NT nuclear dump site, Lindsay Murdoch and Tom Arup, Age, 2010-02-27

Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson revealed that the government plans to pursue Muckaty, Northern Territory as its nuclear dump site, saying it is the only place in Australia that had been "volunteered".

4. US wants NATO to step up in Oruzgan, John Kerin and Tony Walker, AFR*, 2010-03-01

Washington did not expect Canberra to deploy extra troops to Afghanistan's strifetorn Oruzgan province to fill the void left by the departure of 1600 Dutch troops, US ambassador to Australia Jeffery Bleich said.
*[subscription required]

5. Here to help: strengthening the Defence role in Australian disaster management, Athol Yates and Anthony Bergin, ASPI, 2010-02-26, [PDF, 302KB]

Defence is likely to be used more frequently in the future to assist in domestic disaster management. The report discusses three actions that should be taken to prepare for the increased demand on, and expectations for the use of, Defence in disaster management.

6. In Afghanistan, U.S. plans major push into Kandahar, Anne E. Kornblut and Greg Jaffe, Washington Post, 2010-02-27

Even as Marines in Afghanistan continued to fight for control of the Taliban stronghold of Marja, senior Obama administration officials said that the United States has begun initial planning for a bigger, more complex offensive in Kandahar later this year.

- As fighting eases, Afghans plant flag and their hopes in Marja, Taimoor Shah, NYT, 2010-02-25

7. German lawmakers approve troop increase for Afghanistan, Deutsche Welle, 2010-02-26

The lower house of the German parliament, the Bundestag, voted to approve a plan to raise the number of Bundeswehr soldiers in Afghanistan. Chancellor Angela Merkel's cabinet had approved the plan two weeks ago, in which an additional 850 troops would be sent to Afghanistan, boosting the number of soldiers on the ground to around 5,350.

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