APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, February 11, 2010

Recommended Citation

"APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, February 11, 2010", APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, February 11, 2010, https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-11-february-2010/

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1. Defence chief upbeat on war, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2010-02-11

The eight-year war in Afghanistan is showing the first signs of turning in favour of the NATO-led coalition which is likely to break the back of the bloody insurgency within a year, according to the Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston.

2. War games with Burma row, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2010-02-11

Senate Estimates told that military contacts with the Rangoon junta including joint naval exercises involving Australian and Burmese warships did not compromise the government's strong diplomatic stand against Burma's thuggish military regime.

- Ministerial Statement on Burma, Stephen Smith, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2010-02-08
- Is Australia in breach of its arms embargo against Burma? Burma Campaign Australia, Media Release, 2010-02-09 [PDF, 82KB]

3. Reputation of Collins class subs takes a further dive, Dan Oakes, SMH, 2010-02-11

Two of Australia's six trouble-wracked Collins class submarines will not return to sea until they have been [out] of action for a total of at least nine years. The revelation is another blow to the reputation of Australia's multi-billion dollar submarine fleet.

- Siemens looks to join $100bn sub plan, John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-02-09
  * [Subscription required]

4. Dutch mull longer Afghanistan stay at NATO request, Gilbert Kreijger and Charles Dick, Reuters India, 2010-02-09

The Dutch government will look at options to extend its military presence in Afghanistan beyond 2010, the Dutch Defence Ministry said, as NATO increases efforts to contain the Taliban insurgency.

- The Dutch should stick around in Afghanistan, Editorial, nrc handelsblad, 2010-02-10

5. Special Operations Task Group discuss future with Afghan elders, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2010-02-09

The Australian Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) with their Afghan partner force have facilitated a major gathering (shura) of village elders and religious leaders in Chenartu, north-east of Tarin Kowt, as part of their current focus on reaching out to Afghan communities across Oruzgan province.

- Extracting counterinsurgency lessons: the Malayan emergency and Afghanistan, Karl Hack, Royal United Services Institute,

6. Politics go sour in Indonesia, Asian Sentinel, 2010-02-11

It appears that Vice President Boediono, who was elected in a decisive vote along with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, may be in more trouble than initially thought, not because of the Bank Century scandal but because of internal politicking and the hardball tactics of one of the country's richest men.

- Ical [Aburizal Bakri] blasts ‘threatening’ by Democrats, Febriamy Hutapea, Muninggar Sri Saraswati and Camelia Pasandaran, Jakarta Globe, 2010-02-11

7. Amnesty slams Fiji's 'dishonest' UN report, Peter Wilson, Australian, 2010-02-11

Fiji’s government has lied to the UN in an official report aimed at whitewashing its human rights performance, says Amnesty International. The military junta has submitted the report to the UN Human Rights Council denying that its abrogation of the constitution had undermined freedom of speech and religion and the independence of the judiciary.

- Fiji Government misrepresents human rights record to UN, Amnesty International, 2010-02-10

8. Afghanistan Opium Winter Rapid Assessment 2010, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010-02-10, [PDF, 3.5MB]

Opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has decreased by one third (36 per cent) over the past two years, from a record high of 193,000 ha in 2007 to 123,000 ha in 2009. Stabilization of the crop in 2010 is likely; if eventually confirmed, it would reinforce the progress made in the recent past. Most importantly in 2010 production may decrease.

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