

# APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, September 11, 2008

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### **1. [Special Forces May Get Infantry Combat Support in Afghanistan](#), Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-09-09**

Australian infantry could be sent to fight in Afghanistan to ease the combat burden borne by a 300-strong special forces task group. Mr Fitzgibbon yesterday did not rule out stiffening the 1100-strong deployment in Afghanistan with more infantry at the expense of non-combat troops. But he said any decision on committing infantry to a combat role would depend on a request from the Chief of the Defence Force and none had been made so far.

### **2. [Australia PM Rudd Flags Arms Build-Up](#), Rob Taylor, Reuters, 2008-09-09**

Australia will rapidly beef up its naval strength and extend a A\$60 billion (\$48 billion) weapons build up to counter an emerging "arms race" across the Asia-Pacific region, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said. Rudd did not spell out which countries in Asia could pose a threat to Canberra, but Australian military planners are wary of China's rapid arms build-up and the expanding reach of India's military. Both Indonesia and Malaysia are also building more powerful air forces.

- [Address to the RSL National Congress](#), Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, 2008-09-09
- [Defence on Shaky Ground in New-Order World](#), Geoffrey Barker, AFR\*, 2008-09-11  
\* Subscription Required.

### **3. [Heat on Russian Uranium Deal](#), Daniel Flitton and Matt Wade, Age, 2008-09-10**

Pressure is mounting on the Rudd Government to dump a uranium export treaty with Moscow after the White House yesterday set aside a US-Russia deal to share nuclear technology. Australia risks falling out of step with its major alliance partner if it goes ahead and approves yellowcake sales.

- [Australia-Russia Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, Frequently Asked Questions](#), DFAT, August 2008

### **4. [Nuclear Security: What Else Can Australia Do?](#) Rory Medcalf, Lowy, 2008-09-08 [PDF, 400Kb]**

While nuclear dangers have persisted or worsened, progress has diminished in international efforts to reduce them through multilateral treaties. Australia should support the new 'realistic idealist' push for nuclear disarmament, and not only through its co-sponsorship with Japan of a high-level Commission to generate ideas for action.

- [Don't Call It Blackmail](#), Rory Medcalf, Indian Express, 2008-09-10

### **5. [Bush Sends More Troops to Afghanistan](#), James Gerstenzang, Age, 2008-0-10**

Amid rising anger over civilian deaths in Afghanistan, President George Bush said he would bring home 8000 of the more than 140,000 US troops in Iraq in the next few months - about half out by the time the White House changes hands - and send roughly 4500 more soldiers to Afghanistan.

- [Troops in Contact: Airstrikes and Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan](#), Human Rights Watch, September 2008
- [US Can't Kill its Way to Afghan Victory: Pentagon Boss](#), John Shovelan, ABC, 2008-09-11

### **6. [Norwegian Govt Fund Blacklists Rio Tinto](#), Emma Alberici, ABC, 2008-0-11**

Rio Tinto has been blacklisted by Europe's biggest investor for "grossly unethical conduct" through its involvement in the world's biggest gold mine in Indonesia. The Norwegian Government's sovereign wealth fund, the equivalent of Australia's Future Fund, was one of Rio's biggest investors before deciding to withdraw its \$1 billion investment.

- [The Government Pension Fund divests its holdings in mining company](#), Ministry of Finance, Norway, 2008-09-09
- [The recommendation from the Council on Ethics](#), Ministry of Finance, Norway [PDF, 143 KB]
- [Companies Excluded from the Investment Universe](#), Ministry of Finance, Norway
- [Grasberg Minerals District](#), Freeport-McMoran Copper and Gold

- [Norwegian Pension Fund](#), Statement by Rio Tinto, 10 September 2008
- [Indonesia: Resources and Conflict in Papua](#), ICG, 2002-09-13

## 7. Policy Forum 08-10A: [Pakistan, the Taliban and Australia](#) - Christopher Snedden

Christopher Snedden of Deakin University writes that on the basis of his record, Pakistan's new president, Asif Zardari, has neither the skills nor the aspiration to effectively address Pakistan's deep-rooted and threatening problems. With more than a thousand Australian troops in neighbouring Afghanistan, Snedden argues that "there also appears to be little that Australia can do to encourage or help Pakistan to confront the Taliban with greater effectiveness." "One serious option, therefore," he concludes, "is for foreign governments and their forces to engage the Afghan Taliban in dialogue in order to try to understand its point of view, to attempt to influence and moderate it, and to engage it in a political process. While this may be unpalatable, it is practical and not harmful to non-combatants. It also could also assist Pakistan, and it would be playing to one of the West's strengths."

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