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1. [AFP team to help train Afghans](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2009-03-12

An Australian Federal Police training team is due to leave for Afghanistan within days to help the stricken country build a new national police force. The 10-man "police mentoring team" from the AFP's Operational Deployment Group will be based at Tarin Kowt in Oruzgan province, where most of Australia's 1090 military personnel are based.

- [Japan: Afghanistan cops to be paid in ODA](#), Kyodo, 2009-03-08

2. [As U.S. weighs Taliban negotiations, Afghans are already talking](#), Carlotta Gall, NYT, 2009-03-11

Even as President Obama floated the idea of negotiating with moderate elements of the Taliban,

Afghan and foreign officials said that preliminary discussions with the Taliban leadership were already under way and could be developed into more formal talks with the support of the United States.

- [Obama's interview aboard Air Force One](#), NYT, 2009-03-07
- [A futile search for 'moderate' Taliban](#), Walid Phares, Asia Times, 2009-03-11
- [Australian forces back US strategy to engage 'moderate' elements](#), Jonathan Pearlman, SMH, 2009-03-10

3. [Damning report on intelligence co-operation](#), Peter Beaumont, SMH, 2009-03-07

A highly critical analysis of the coalition's counter-insurgency in Afghanistan has raised serious questions about combat operations there - and the intelligence underpinning them. Based on interviews with British, US, Canadian and Dutch military, intelligence and diplomatic officials - and marked for "official use only" - the report is damning of a US military often unwilling to share intelligence among its military allies.

- [Major RAND study with 300 interviews: Intelligence Operations and Metrics in Iraq and Afghanistan, Nov 2008](#), WikiLeaks, 2009-03-02

4. [The risk of terror attack is exaggerated](#), Clive Williams, Age, 2009-03-12

US Vice-President Joe Biden's speech at the European Union Headquarters, where he warned that the US, Europe and Australia were targets for a regenerating al-Qaeda, was intended to pressure NATO participants to deploy more forces to Afghanistan. The US is concerned that it will be left to do the heavy lifting in the face of a deteriorating security situation and declining NATO enthusiasm.

- [Biden asks NATO for aid in Afghanistan](#), Edward Cody, Washington Post, 2009-03-11

5. [The imperial unconscious](#), Tom Engelhardt, Tom Dispatch, 2009-03-01

U.S. goals in Afghanistan must be 'modest, realistic,' and 'above all, there must be an Afghan face on this war,' Gates said. This is Empire-speak, American-style. It's the language that is essential to Washington's vision of itself as a planet-straddling goliath. Think of that "Afghan face"/mask, in fact, as part of the flotsam and jetsam that regularly bubbles up from the American imperial unconscious. Largely uncommented upon, it helps normalize American practices in the world, comfortably shielding us from certain global realities; but it also has the potential to blind us to those realities, which, in perilous times, can be dangerous indeed.

6. [Rudd's \\$35bn folly should be torpedoed](#), Brian Toohey, AFR*, 2009-03-07

Before a cent is spent on new submarines, the nation wants to know how the navy intends to crew

them. What will the submarines do for Rudd's privately expressed desire to contain China? The White Paper's rationale for an unprecedented purchase of this type could make interesting reading in Beijing if Rudd asked China to help fund the \$200 billion borrowing program his government is embarking upon.

* [Subscription required](#).

7. [Korea, Australia forge security pact](#), Hwang Jang-jin, Korean Herald, 2009-03-06

Korea and Australia yesterday signed a landmark security pact to cooperate in fighting global terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In their leaders' summit in Canberra, the two countries also agreed to start negotiations for a free trade agreement and enhance their partnership to tackle global economic crisis and promote green growth and renewable energy development.

- [Joint statement on enhanced global and security cooperation between Australia and the Republic of Korea](#) by the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, and the President of the Republic of Korea, Lee Myung-bak, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, March 2009
- [Indonesia, South Korea vow to step up cooperation in defense, energy, trade](#), Xinhua, 2009-03-06

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