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1. Wars, Political Battles Complicate Obama Effort to Prevent Spread of Nuclear Weapons, James Kitfield, Global Security Newswire, 2009-10-09

Because arms control treaties require a two-thirds majority vote in the Senate for ratification, Obama has no choice but to win significant Republican support. Influential Democrats in Congress are already mobilizing to oppose a surge. Such an expansion of the war effort there would likely force the administration to seek Republican support for a supplemental war-funding bill.

- Taking the shape of Vietnam, Anne Davies, SMH, 2009-10-10

2. Deadly side of aid dilemma, Matt Wade, Age, 2009-10-10

The US Congress approved the Kerry-Lugar bill to triple US aid to Pakistan. It was hoped the bill - which allocates $US7.5 billion ($A8.3 billion) to Pakistan over five years - would also strengthen Pakistan's fragile democracy and combat the deep anti-American sentiment of many Pakistanis.

Instead, the army has publicly objected to conditions attached to the bill.

- Pakistan's military rejects US aid bill, Nahal Toosi, Associated Press, ABC News, 2009-10-07
- Australia doubles aid package for Pakistan, Matt Wade, SMH, 2009-10-10

3. Afghanistan blames Pakistan for embassy bombing; India holds fire, Myra MacDonald, Reuters Blogs, 2009-10-10

Afghanistan has wasted little time in accusing Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) spy agency of being behind a bomb attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul on Thursday. But what has been more striking is how careful India has been not to assign blame too quickly.

- Qureshi queries India's engagement in Afghanistan, Pahkwok Afghanistan News, 2009-10-04
- Pakistan and India: looking beyond the rhetoric (redux), Myra MacDonald, Reuters Blogs, 2009-1--05

4. British troops fight Taliban 'seven times a day', Brian Brady, Jonathan Owen and Nina Lakhani, Independent, 2009-10-11

The number of confrontations with opposition forces has soared more than twenty-fold from the 10 experienced every month only three years ago. New details of the number of "contact events" undergone by British forces in Helmand province emerged as a new study, compiled from official Ministry of Defence figures, revealed that British forces are suffering death rates as bad as those endured by the Soviets.

- Recent military fatalities in Afghanistan and Iraq by cause and nationality: Period 9, Sheila M. Bird and Clive B. Fairweather, Cambridge University MRC Biostatistics Unit, 2009-10-07 [PDF, 124 Kb]
- Casualties - coalition military, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

5. Many in DPJ want Japan to cut link to U.S. nukes, Kyodo News, 2009-10-11

A survey of the Democratic Party of Japan's Lower House members has found that about 61 percent of respondents want Japan to leave the U.S. nuclear umbrella. While 58.3 percent said Japan should try to end its reliance on the United States' nuclear arsenal in the future, 2.8 percent said they wanted Tokyo to do so immediately. The survey also revealed that 87.2 percent of the respondents want the United States to ditch the first-strike option.

6. Dozens of groups want peace talks with Jakarta, Nethy Dharma Somba, The Jakarta Post, 2009-10-10

The West Papua National Coalition for Liberation (WPNLC) said dozens of organizations in the restive province of Papua demanded talks with the central government to find peaceful solutions for separatist and human rights' violation issues. "Papua wants to communicate with the government to resolve challenges in Papua," West Papua Military Council spokesman and WPNLC member Jonah Wenda said in Jayapura, Papua.

7. SKorea researching longer-range missiles: official, AFP, SpaceWar 200910-08

South Korea's top arms procurement official said Thursday his agency has begun research into developing longer-range ballistic missiles capable of putting all of North Korea in striking range. Under an agreement with the United States, which stations 28,500 troops in South Korea, Seoul restricts its missiles to a maximum range of 300 kilometres.

8. Envoys 'interfered' in Zimbabwe deaths probe, Ginny Stein, Brisbane Times, 2009-10-10

Australia has been accused of using diplomatic pressure to try to prevent action against Zimbabwe over allegations of a massacre at one of its diamond mines. Ian Smillie, a founding member of the Kimberley Process, the international group governing the global diamond industry, said Australian diplomats paid quiet visits to the governments of a review team, members of which recommend no action be taken against Zimbabwe. The miner Rio Tinto has a 78 per cent stake in one of Zimbabwe's three diamond mines.

- Australia in murky diamond deals with Mugabe regime, King Shango, ZimNet Radio, 2009-09-25
- Ian Smillie Addresses Human Rights, Diamonds and the Kimberley Process, Rapaport International Diamond Conference, 2009 [video also available]
- Deadly Diamonds, Ginny Stein, Dateline, SBS, 2009-10-11
- Why Zimbabwe will not be suspended from the Kimberley Process, The Insider, September 2009
- Zimbabwe, Diamonds and the Wrong Side of History, Diamonds and Human Security Project, Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), March 2009 [PDF, 708 Kb]
- The Murowa diamond mine, Rio Tinto Diamonds

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Richard Tanter,
Project Co-ordinator

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org