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1. [Australia to Review Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornet Purchase](#), Emma Kelly, Flight Global, 2008-01-04

Australia's newly elected Labor government is to review the country's air power capability, in a controversial move that could see the previous administration's A\$6.6 billion (\$5.8 billion) order for 24 Boeing F/A-18F Super Hornets dumped, and the planned purchase of up to 100 Lockheed Martin F-35 Joint Strike Fighters also face a fresh assessment.

- [Issues for the Australian Air Combat Review](#), Andrew Davies, ASPI, 2008-01-11
- [Shooting Down Fighter Myths](#), Mike Gilligan, Canberra Times, 2008-01-10
- [F/A-18E/F Super Hornet](#), Boeing
- [F/A-18E/F "Super Hornet" Deployment](#), Global Security

2. [Iraq Pullout Talks Under Way: General](#), Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-01-05

Final preparations are being made for the withdrawal of Australian combat soldiers from Iraq, part of a core election pledge by the Rudd Government. Chief of Army Lieutenant-General Peter Leahy said yesterday that high-level talks were under way with coalition partners on the final withdrawal plan.

3. [Deaths in Iraq: The Numbers Game, Revisited](#), Michel Thieren, Open Democracy, 2008-01-11

A third assessment of post-invasion violent deaths in Iraq published by the New England Journal of Medicine finds that 151,000 people died from violence in Iraq between March 2003 and June 2006. By 2009, the elected fifty-fifth US president may conclude - perhaps with the help of some mortality numbers - that invading Iraq was not such a great idea, and that nation-building can be accomplished and democracy exported without military intervention.

- [Violence-Related Mortality in Iraq from 2002 to 2006](#), Iraq Family Health Survey Study Group, New England Journal of Medicine, 2008-01-09

4. [Australia Tracks Japan Whalers](#), Al Jazeera, 2008-01-09

An Australian fisheries ship has left port on a mission to track Japan's whaling fleet and gather evidence for a potential international court case against the annual hunt. Australia has long opposed Japanese whaling, but Kevin Rudd, the country's new Labor prime minister, has signalled a tougher stance than previous administrations by committing government resources to collecting evidence.

5. [Building a Real Rapport with Pacific Islanders](#), Cynthia Banham, Sydney Morning Herald, 2008-01-07

John Howard left behind a rather mixed legacy in the Pacific. When it came to substantive policy, Australia had a good record in the last decade. But when it came to diplomatic style the Howard years were seriously lacking, and as a result Australia has been left with quite an image problem in our neighbourhood. Kevin Rudd has shown signs he is willing to take a fresh approach.

- [The End of The Vasco da Gama Era](#), Coral Bell, ASPI, 2008-01-14 [PDF 990KB]

6. [The Pakistan-Afghanistan Abyss](#), Paul Rogers, Open Democracy, 2008-01-04

The last days of 2007 were marked by major concerns by western military forces over the growing influence of Taliban militias in much of Afghanistan, as well as the continued activities of the al-Qaida movement on both sides of the border with Pakistan. These worries predated the assassination of the Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

- [Pakistan Warns U.S. on Attacking Al Qaeda on Its Own](#), Eric Schmitt, New York Times, 2008-01-12
- [Why Pakistan Matters](#), Simon Robinson, Time, 2008-01-03

7. [Japan PM Forces Naval Bill Approval](#), Al Jazeera, 11-01-2008

The Japanese government has taken rare steps to force parliamentary approval of a controversial bill

reviving a naval mission in the Indian Ocean in support of US-led forces in Afghanistan. The powerful lower house of Parliament, controlled by the ruling coalition, used its two-thirds majority to override opposition objections and force the bill into law.

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