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APSNet 14 January 2010

1. [ASIO checks unreliable: former immigration officer](#)
2. [Continuing Indonesian military business 'dangerous': Human Rights Watch](#)
3. [Obama wants \\$33 billion more for war](#)
4. [The shadow war in Afghanistan](#)
5. [Afghanistan: over 2,400 civilian deaths in 2009](#)
6. [China's missile test: a symbolic warning to U.S.](#)
7. [China, India, Brazil and South Africa prepare for post-Copenhagen meeting](#)
8. [The next arms race](#)
9. [\[Indonesia\] Ministry: illegal logging skyrockets during Indonesia's year-end enforcement break](#)

1. [ASIO checks unreliable: former immigration officer](#), Yuko Narushima, SMH, 2010-01-14

ASIO's security checks are open to political interference and should not form the basis of rejecting refugees from Australia, a former immigration official says. Few people know about ASIO's checking process. One of the last two men detained on Nauru had his adverse assessment dropped after contesting it in court. The other was resettled in Sweden.

- [Jakarta set to force refugees off boat](#), Stephen Fitzpatrick and Paul Maley, Australian, 2010-01-14

2. [Continuing Indonesian military business 'dangerous': Human Rights Watch](#), ABC, 2010-01-14

The Indonesian Government is being criticised by Human Rights Watch for slow progress in dismantling what it calls the Indonesian military's "dangerous business empire". In a new report the New York-based human rights organisation says many elements of armed forces enterprises are

implicated in rights abuses. It says the army still has control of more than 50 businesses, despite a law passed in 2004 requiring it to exit private enterprise by 2009. The Army and Government say such reform is an ongoing process.

- [“Unkept Promise”](#), HRW, 2010-01-11

[3. Obama wants \\$33 billion more for war](#), Anne Gearan and Anne Flaherty, AP, Washington Post, 2010-01-13

The Obama administration plans to ask Congress for an additional \$33 billion to fight unpopular wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, on top of a record request for \$708 billion for the Defense Department next year. The administration also plans to tell Congress next month that its central military objectives for the next four years will include winning the current wars while preventing new ones and that its core missions will include both counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

- [The cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other global war on terror operations since 9/11](#), Amy Belasco, Congressional Research Service, 2009-09-28, [PDF, 541KB]
- [National priorities project tallies cost of war through September 30, 2010](#), National Priorities Project, 2010-01-11

[4. The shadow war in Afghanistan](#), Tom Engelhardt and Nick Turse, Asia Times, 2010-01-12

It was a Christmas and a New Year from hell for American intelligence, that US\$75 billion labyrinth of at least 16 major agencies and a handful of minor ones. As the old year was preparing to be rung out, so were the US's intelligence agencies, which managed not to connect every obvious clue to a (literally) seat-of-the-pants al-Qaeda operation. It hardly mattered that the underwear bomber's case - except for the placement of the bomb material - almost exactly, even outrageously, replicated the infamous, and equally inept, "shoe bomber" plot of eight years ago.

[5. Afghanistan: over 2,400 civilian deaths in 2009 - UNAMA](#), IRIN, 2010-01-14

Armed conflict in Afghanistan is taking an increasing toll on civilians, according to figures released by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). At least 5,978 civilians were killed or injured in 2009, UNAMA said in a report entitled Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2009.

- [Afghanistan: annual report on protection of civilians in armed conflict, 2009, UNAMA](#), human rights, Kabul, 2010-01, [PDF, 668 KB]

[6. China's missile test: a symbolic warning to U.S.](#), Mark Thompson, Time, 2010-01-13

China invented fireworks some 1,000 years ago in hopes of scaring away evil spirits. On Monday, it successfully tested a missile-defense system aimed at scaring away the U.S. from defending the island nation of Taiwan. By shooting down one missile with another, China demonstrated its growing military prowess. But it also telegraphed its anger over last week's sale of U.S. Patriot interceptor missiles to Taiwan. Taipei would use the Patriots to blunt any attack by Beijing's 1,100 missiles poised just across the Taiwan Strait. China has threatened to use force should Taiwan, which has had its own political system for the past six decades, opt for independence.

- [Chinese missile defense test](#), Jeffery Lewis, Arms Control Wonk, 2010-01-12

7. China, India, Brazil and South Africa prepare for post-Copenhagen meeting, John Vidal, Guardian, 2010-01-13

One month after the Copenhagen climate summit ended in recriminations and a weak outline of a global deal, key groups of developing countries will meet to try to explore ways to get to agree a legally binding final agreement. As the dust settles on the stormy Danish meeting, environment ministers from the so-called Basic countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China – will meet on January 24 in New Delhi. No formal agenda has been set, but observers expect the emerging geopolitical alliance between the four large developing countries who brokered the final "deal" with the US in Denmark will define a common position on emission reductions and climate aid money, and seek ways to convince other countries to sign up to the Copenhagen accord that emerged last month.

8. The next arms race, Toshi Yoshihara & James R. Holmes, Diplomat,

A naval arms race is gathering pace in the Asia-Pacific. It will be unlike the competition that gripped Europe over a century ago, when the great powers sought to outdo each other in the number and tonnage of warships. Today, a major component of this maritime rivalry is taking place in the murky world of undersea warfare where, instead of the big-gun battleships that became the hallmark of the arms buildup prior to World War I, nations over the next decade will put to sea small, seemingly unassuming submarines.

9. Ministry: illegal logging skyrockets during indonesia's year-end enforcement break, Camelia Pasandaran, Jakarta Globe, 2010-01-13,

The government said that illegal logging activities had intensified during the end of 2009 and early 2010. "[The loggers] saw a chance to act during our break," Forestry Minister Zulkifli Hasan said at the Presidential Palace during an official event promoting the planting of the rain tree, known locally as trembesi. "It happened from Dec. 15 until likely the end of January." Zulkifli said between end of 2009 and early 2010, the officers who supervised illegal logging could not visit the affected areas. "[Illegal loggers] are aware of this and take advantage of it." Though he couldn't give an exact figure for the increase, he said illegal logging had spread to several new areas, including Lampung, North Sumatra and East Kalimantan.

- [Financial governance and Indonesia's Reforestation Fund during the Soeharto and post-Soeharto periods, 1989-2009: a political economic analysis of lessons for REDD+](#), C. Barr, A. Dermawan, H. Purnomo, H. Komarudin, Thinking Beyond the Canopy, 2010

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