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1. Australia and Indonesia Sign Agreement to Improve Security Cooperation, Markus Junianto Sihaloho, Jakarta Globe, 2009-01-13

The Indonesian and Australian armed forces have signed a bilateral agreement meant to boost intelligence, maritime and counter-terrorism cooperation. Indonesian Armed Forces Chief Gen. Djoko Santoso said that the arrangement covered partnerships in counterterrorism, maritime security, intelligence, peacekeeping exercises and disaster relief. Houston said that the agreement reinforced the Lombok Treaty, a security agreement signed in November 2006.

- Chief of the Defence Force Signs Joint Statement on Defence Cooperation with Indonesian Counterpart, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2009-01-12

2. The Afghan Scam: The Untold Story of Why the U.S. Is

Bound to Fail in Afghanistan, Ann Jones, Tomgram, 2009-0--11

It's not soldiers but services that count -- electricity, water, food, health care, justice, and jobs. Had the U.S. delivered the promised services on time, while employing Afghans to rebuild their own country according to their own priorities and under the supervision of their own government they would now be in charge of their own defense. The Taliban would also have lost much of their grounds for complaint.

3. About-face Likely on Gulf illness, Leo Shanahan, Age, 2008-01-15

Veterans of the first Gulf War are likely to be able to claim compensation from the Government for what is known as Gulf War illness following a decision that could define it as a disease. Gulf War illness is thought to be linked to veterans being forced to take pyridostigmine bromide pills that were used to counter the side effects of possible nerve gas attacks by Saddam Hussein's army. The syndrome has also been linked to exposure to sarin gas in Iraq as well as the use by US and Australian forces of certain chemical pesticides.

- Gulf War Veterans' Illness and the Health of Gulf War Veterans, Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veteran's Illness, United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, November 2008 [PDF, 2.6 Mb]

4. Detainee Tortured, Says U.S. Official, Bob Woodward, Washington Post, 2009-01-15

The top Bush administration official in charge of deciding whether to bring Guantanamo Bay detainees to trial has concluded that the U.S. military tortured a Saudi national who allegedly planned to participate in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, interrogating him with techniques that included sustained isolation, sleep deprivation, nudity and prolonged exposure to cold, leaving him in a "life-threatening condition."

5. India and the US Talk Missile Defense, Siddharth Srivastava, Asia Times

Concerned about the threats emerging from Pakistan in the wake of the November terror attack in Mumbai and the predominant position of China, official sources told Asia Times Online that there had been considerable acceleration in India-US efforts to jointly build a ballistic missile defense (BMD) system.

6. Dengue Spreads in Northern Australia; Worst Outbreak Since 2004, Simeon Bennett, Bloomberg, 2009-01-11

Dengue sickened more than 100 people in North-eastern Australia. The Cairns outbreak, of type 3 of the virus, began after a resident infected in Kalimantan, Indonesia, returned to the city. Townsville's type-1 outbreak has been traced to Singapore. Hot, humid weather and rainfall in the region has helped the Aedes aegypti mosquito species, which spreads dengue, to breed more than normal for

this time of year.

Briefing note: Climate Change, Security and Infectious Disease: Dengue Fever in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Richard Tanter, Nautilus Institute, 2007-08-02

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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