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1. [Rudd Breaks Pledge on Iran](#), Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-10-16

Kevin Rudd has dumped his election campaign promise to take Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the world court for inciting genocide and threatening Israel. The move came as Foreign Minister Stephen Smith announced economic sanctions against Iran over its refusal to suspend development of its secretive nuclear program.

- [Australian Sanctions against Iran](#), DFAT, 2008-10-15

2. [Defence Spending Caught in the Crossfire](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2008-10-16

The credit crunch has hit Australia's \$100 billion defence purchasing and maintenance program, forcing the federal government to review ways to bring forward some projects and keep as much work as possible in the country to stimulate domestic economic growth.

* [Subscription required](#).

3. Reversal of Fortune Leaves Kabul under Taliban's Thumb, Graeme Smith, Globe and Mail, 2008-10-14

The Taliban are isolating Afghanistan's capital city from the rest of the country, choking off important supply routes and imposing their rules on the provinces near Kabul. That marks a shocking reversal of the insurgents' fortunes. Now the Taliban and their allied militias are creeping back up the same roads, quietly showing their presence on the outskirts of the city.

- [Second Taliban Attack Strikes Major Afghan City](#), John F. Burns, IHT, 2008-10-15
- [Rudd again Warns of More Casualties in Afghanistan](#), ABC, 2008-10-15
- [Australian Policy in Afghanistan](#), Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Address to the C.E.W Bean Foundation, 2009-10-15

4. A Mad Scramble over Afghanistan, M K Bhadrakumar, Asia Times, 2008-10-15

Ultimately, the objectives of nation-building and legitimate governance in an environment of overall security that allows economic activities and development can only be realized by accommodating native priorities and interests. Washington has been far too prescriptive, creating a US-style presidential system in Kabul and then controlling it. But such a regime will never command respect among Afghans.

- [U.S. plans to train Afghanistan tribal militia](#), Julian E. Barnes, LA Times, 2008-10-10
- [Peace Negotiations and Truces in Afghanistan](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

5. Report Predicts Chronic Food Shortage in E Timor, ABC, 2008-10-16

A new report shows people in parts of East Timor are now facing up to five months of the year without enough food to eat. The survey, by aid agencies including Oxfam and the Christian Children's Fund, has found food insecurity is becoming a chronic problem in the East Asia and Pacific Region.

- [Timor-Leste Food Security Baseline Survey Report](#), Oxfam Australia, October 2008 [PDF, 1.28 MB]
- [Vulnerability to Climate Variability and Change in East Timor](#), Jon Barnett, Suraje Dessai, and Roger N. Jones, Ambio* Vol 36, No. 5, pages 372-378, 2007
- * [Subscription required](#).

6. Mistrust Threatens a Hard-Won Peace, Angus Grigg, AFR*, 2008-10-15

The World Bank's conflict monitoring update shows August was the most violent month in Aceh since 2005. The rise in violence has been attributed to an increase in "political tension" as campaigning begins for next April's district, provincial and national elections. But this is not the full story. The World Bank said reports were circulating about a network of "rogue ex-combatants" looking to resume the armed struggle for independence.

* [Subscription required](#).

- [Indonesia: Pre-Election Anxieties in Aceh](#), ICG, 2008-09-09
- [Aceh Conflict Monitoring Update](#), World Bank, 1st July - 31st August 2008 [PDF, 338 KB]

7. [Rise of the Rest: The Challenges of the New World Order](#), Wolfgang Nowak, Spiegel, 2008-10-02

Who are the decisive powers in this new world order? The United States, Russia, India, China, Brazil and the European Union surely count among them. They are neither enemies, nor friends; they are "frenemies," competitors for the world's scarce resources. These countries assure their people that they can shape the coming global order and provide for their future welfare, but their respective visions of the future can differ greatly.

8. Policy Forum 08-11A: [A Step towards Security Council Reform](#) - John Langmore

John Langmore from the University of Melbourne writes that after many years of despair about much-needed reform of the Security Council, "a recent move in the General Assembly of an apparently procedural character gives cause for some optimism". Langmore discusses promising reform proposals, and one in particular "to increase the number of non-permanent members and combine that with deletion of the requirement that retiring non-permanent members not be eligible for immediate re-election." Opponents may decide, Langmore argues, that "a tenth best reform rather than none at all." Langmore concludes by noting that with recent Australian initiatives such as the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, "combined with speaking cooperatively rather than condescendingly in UN forums, Australia could gradually earn acknowledgement as a valuable participant and leader at the UN and so win support for election to the Security Council."

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