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1. In defence of nuclear subs, Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2009-08-17

Given that powerful submarines are the key to sea-denial against adversariesm, and given Australia's uncertain long-term strategic environment and expected decline in strategic weight, this country needs every asymmetrical advantage it can get. …As Australia moves towards nuclear power generation it will develop skills and technologies that help to support nuclear submarines…..Australia should rule out nothing at this early stage."

*subscription required

2. Burma, Iran, Iraq - oil in hot waters, Jamie Freed, Age, 2009-08-15

Leighton Holdings is considering whether to accept a contract to lay oil pipelines off Burma and in Middle Eastern hot spots like Iran and Iraq as it attempts to increase its oil business. Leighton's chief executive, Wal King, said any work in Iran would be done in co-operation with the Government-owned National Iranian Oil Company, adding his company was also considering work in Iraq and Tanzania.

- China secures Myanmar energy route, Sudha Ramachandran, Asia Times, 2009-04-03
- Total chief: critics can 'go to hell', Irrawaddy, 2009-08-04
- The Shwe Project, Shwe Gas Movement

3. Diggers kicked out of Sudan, Daniel Flitton, Age, 2009-08-15

Australian soldiers have been effectively booted out of Sudan after the Khartoum Government refused to issue new visas for international peacekeepers in the troubled Darfur region. Australia appears to have been caught up in a wider diplomatic stand-off after Sudan refused to grant visas to hundreds of personnel from Western and other countries set to take part in the operation.

- Operation AZURE, Department of Defence

4. Diggers face 5 more years in Afghanistan, Sally Sara, ABC, 2009-08-17

The commander of the Australian task force in Afghanistan says Australian troops may be needed there for at least another five years, and the governor of Afghanistan's Uruzgan province agrees. On top of their normal duties, coalition and Afghan forces are providing security for this week's presidential election.

- Taliban threat to Afghanistan election, Amanda Hodge, Australian, 2009-08-17

5. Gates: no troop request in Afghanistan review, Karen DeYoung, Washington Post, 2009-08-14

The U.S. commander in Afghanistan will not make a specific request for more troops when he submits a review of the situation there in the coming weeks, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said. Instead, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal will assess conditions on the ground and make recommendations based on whether the mix and number of forces he has been allotted -- 68,000 by the end of the year -- is sufficient to execute U.S. strategy there.

- U.S. plans a mission against Taliban's propaganda, Thom Shanker, NYT, 2009-08-15
- US tweaks its rules of engagement, Danielle Kurtzleben, Asia Times, 2009-08-15

6. It's not Christmas on this island home, Frank Brennan, Age, 2009-08-15

Christmas Island has a permanent population of 1400. In recent months, the population has almost doubled. The local community is small and does not include members from the ethnic or cultural groups of these asylum seekers. There is resentment by some local residents that those in community detention are too well provided for with food and allowances, while little is done to help locals. There is also an acute shortage of accommodation, given the need for the employment of a large number of people from the mainland on short-term contracts. Public servants and community residents are trying hard to make this policy work without the benefit of mainland services and conveniences. But the strain is already showing on this small Australian outpost.

7. Hardening Australia: Climate change and national disaster resilience, Athol Yates and Anthony Bergin, ASPI, 2009-08-10

Taking account of changing climate-induced disasters should be core business, not just to the work

of our emergency services, but also to land use planners and those responsible for major infrastructure projects. If our understanding of what constitutes a threat to homeland security was broadened to include the potentially devastating climate change impacts on Australian lives and property, our security agencies would have a stronger mandate to contribute to addressing climate change impacts.

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