



APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, January 17, 2008

Recommended Citation

"APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, January 17, 2008", APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, January 17, 2008, <https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-17-january-2008/>

APSNet 17 January 2008

1. [People Smuggler Blocks to Continue, Says Minister](#)
2. [The 'War on Terror' Moves East](#)
3. [Solomons Wants Bigger Role in RAMSI](#)
4. [RI, China to Conduct Joint Military Training](#)
5. [Indonesia, Iran to Cooperate on Bird Flu, HIV/AIDS Research](#)
6. [Peace Hopes Fade in S Philippines](#)
7. [Aussie Jobs 'Could Aid' East Timorese](#)

1. [People Smuggler Blocks to Continue, Says Minister](#), Age, Jewel Topsfield, 2008-01-17

Australia's controversial disruption program aimed at preventing people smugglers leaving Indonesia will be retained by the Rudd Government - despite Labor expressing deep concern when in opposition that it may involve the sabotage of boats.

2. [The 'War on Terror' Moves East](#), Jason Motlagh and Jim Lobe, Asia Times Online, 2008-01-16

The Pentagon is sending 3,200 marines to Afghanistan to help quell the upsurge in insurgent violence in the Pashtun-dominated southern and eastern provinces. Meanwhile, the US's decision to send 18 F-16 warplanes to neighboring Pakistan highlights the George W Bush administration's "skewed" approach to Islamabad.

- [Australia May Boost Troops in Afghanistan](#), Misha Schubert Age, 2008-01-16
- [Taliban Warns of More Attacks](#), Al Jazeera, 2008-01-16
- [Maps - Afghanistan](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

3. [Solomons Wants Bigger Role in RAMSI](#), AAP, Age, 2008-01-16

The Solomon Islands has reiterated its support for an Australian-led law and order mission but wants to play a bigger role in the initiative to maintain stability and security on the island. New Solomons Prime Minister Derek Sikua will meet another fresh leader, Kevin Rudd, in Canberra next week as the two countries seek to repair damaged relations between the two countries.

4. [RI, China to Conduct Joint Military Training](#), Jakarta Post, 2008-01-15

Indonesia and China have agreed to work together on military training and military vehicle production, a move in line with the two countries' 2007 agreement on defense cooperations.

5. [Indonesia, Iran to Cooperate on Bird Flu, HIV/AIDS Research](#), Cornelius Eko Susanto, Media Indonesia [Indonesian Language Original], 2008-01-16

The Indonesian Health Department and the Iranian Government have agreed to cooperate on research into bird flu, HIV/AIDS and other pharmaceuticals. The agreement was signed by Iranian Health Minister Kamran B Lankarani on Tuesday 15th of January when he met Indonesian Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari at the Health Department in Jakarta.

6. [Peace Hopes Fade in S Philippines](#), Marga Ortigas, Al Jazeera, 2008-01-15

Hopes for lasting peace after decades of violence in the southern Philippines have failed again after Muslim separatists walked away from the signing of a deal with the government. Despite 10 years of talks, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has said it will not sign the agreement because of a dispute over ancestral lands.

7. [Aussie Jobs 'Could Aid' East Timorese](#), SBS, 2008-01-15

East Timor's president has called on the Rudd government to let workers from the fledgling nation into Australia to work. The International Labour Organisation estimates there will be 215,000 new entrants to East Timor's labour market by 2020, putting immense pressure on the country's young economy.

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