



APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 17, 2010

Recommended Citation

"APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 17, 2010", APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 17, 2010, <https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-17-may-2010/>

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1. [Our virtuous nuclear posture](#), Hamish Mcdonald, SMH, 2010-05-15

Kevin Rudd's government has been anxious to reburnish the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation credentials Canberra tried to build up in the Hawke and Keating years. Yet when his foreign minister, Stephen Smith, went to the review conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty taking place in New York this month, he stood up to speak with the same baggage that has weighed down his many predecessors.

- [Rethinking extended nuclear deterrence in the defence of Australia](#), Austral Special Report 09-07S, Richard Tanter, Austral Peace and Security Network, Nautilus Institute, 2009-12-10

2. [Problem defence projects list slashed](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-05-17

Defence Material Minister Greg Combet said that since 2007 the value of the "projects of concern" list had fallen from \$13 billion to \$7 billion.

*[Subscription required]

3. [Review more tinker than tailor](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-05-14

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's low-key announcement of a review of Australia's intelligence

community in the budget promises more of a stocktake than a shake-up.

*[Subscription required]

[4. U.S. efforts in Kandahar, barely begun, already are faltering](#), Dion Nissenbaum and Jonathan S. Landay, McClatchy Newspapers, 2010-05-13

Although it's just beginning, the U.S.-led effort to pacify the Taliban's spiritual capital in southern Afghanistan already appears to be faltering. Key military operations have been delayed until the fall, efforts to improve local government are having little impact and a Taliban assassination campaign has brought a sense of dread to Kandahar's dusty streets.

- [Murders rattle Kandahar, thwart drive to restore government](#), Dion Nissenbaum and Hashim Shukoor, McClatchy Newspapers, 2010-05-13

[5. Obama's flailing wars](#), Tom Engelhardt, tomdispatch.com, 2010-05-16

To all appearances, when it comes to the administration's two South Asian wars, one open, one more hidden, Obama and his top officials are flailing around. For all the policy reviews and shuttling officials, the surging troops, extra private contractors, and new bases, Obama's wars are worsening by just about every recent account, including new reports from the independent Government Accountability Office and the Pentagon. The U.S. mission in Afghanistan is going dreadfully, even as the Taliban insurgency gains potency and expands.

- [Afghanistan's security environment](#), GAO-10-613R, United States Government Accountability Office, 2010-05-05, [PDF, 245, KB]
- [Washington vs Waziristan: the far enemy](#), Paul Rogers, openDemocracy, 2010-05-14

[6. Thai protesters agree to U.N.-monitored talks, but government rejects conditions](#), Blaine Harden, Washington Post, 2010-05-17

Protesters in Thailand said that they were willing to participate in U.N.-monitored talks with the government, if the military ends a four-day-old crackdown that has turned parts of downtown Bangkok into a war zone. But the government quickly rejected any mediation by the United Nations and said that if the 'red shirt' protesters are serious about negotiations, they should set no preconditions.

- [Thailand's political transformation](#), Tyrell Haberkorn, openDemocracy, 2010-05-14
- [Thailand's unrest may unsettle region](#), Simon Tisdall, Guardian, 2010-05-14
- [Bangkok warfare: PM explains situation to UN chief](#), Nation (Bangkok), 2010-05-17

[7. Govt may free political prisoners in Papua](#), Jakarta Post, 2010-05-16

Justice and Human Rights Minister Patrialis Akbar said he planned to release a number of Papuan political activists jailed for campaigning for separation from Indonesia. The minister said during his visit to Papua that he would discuss the plan with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs Widodo AS. The policy, he explained, aimed at stabilizing the restive province.

- [Papuan separatist leader becomes RI citizen](#), Jakarta Post, 2010-05-16

8. [Indonesia's Bakrie grabs new post](#), Asia Sentinel, 2010-05-17

With the ink still wet on Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati's resignation in favor of a top World Bank job, her bitter foe Aburizal Bakrie, one of Indonesia's richest men and the head of the Golkar Party, has been appointed "managing chairman" of a new government joint secretariat that is likely to play an important role in determining government policy.

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