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1. [New Top Brass for Military](#), Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-03-20

Kevin Rudd has ordered sweeping changes to the command of the Australian Defence Force, replacing the heads of the army, navy and air force and demanding the new team fix a growing recruitment and skills crisis.

- [New Defence Leadership Team Announced](#), Department of Defence, 2008-03-19
- Defence Leaders: [LTGEN Ken Gillespie](#), Department of Defence
- Defence Leaders: [Air Vice-Marshal Mark Binskin](#), Department of Defence
- Defence Leaders: [Lieutenant General David Hurley](#), Department of Defence
- Defence Leaders: [Rear Admiral R. H. Crane](#), Department of Defence

2. [Australian Role in Anti-Terrorism Drive](#), Tom Allard, SMH, 2008-03-19

Australian officials have been invited to assist in the interrogation of al-Qaeda suspects in the Philippines accused of plotting a wave of bombings, including a possible attack on the Australian

embassy in Manila. SAS members are also training Philippine special forces, and military and customs officials are assisting in setting up a surveillance network and coast guard in the waterways in the country's south.

[3. ALP to Stick with Super Hornet Buy](#), Sarah Smiles, Age, 2008-03-18

The Government has decided to stick by Brendan Nelson's decision as defence minister to purchase 24 Super Hornets, despite attacking his judgement over the deal and threatening to axe the project. Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon has described the Opposition Leader's \$6 billion acquisition of the fighter planes as rushed, expensive and a "gamble" with Australia's security.

- [Poor Air Power Planning Exposed but Super Hornet to Stay](#), Joel Fitzgibbon, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2008-03-17

[4. Australia and the South Pacific: Rising to the Challenge](#), Stewart Firth, Satish Chand, Andrew Goldsmith, Bob Lowry, Bob Breen, Sam Bateman, Anthony Bergin, Graeme Dobell and Richard Herr, Special Report Issue 12, ASPI, 2008-03-14

Australia's vital interests are involved in the South Pacific: the stability of the region is an important factor in our own security, and this translates into on-going defence, security, economic, aid, environmental and humanitarian activities. This Special Report, comprising 7 distinct papers by leading experts, examines key issues in South Pacific security and Australia's role in the region.

[5. Gangster's Role Queried in Timor Attacks](#), Lindsay Murdoch and Tom Hyland, Age, 2008-03-16

One of East Timor's most influential politicians, Mario Carrascalao, has called for the inquiry into the recent attacks on the nation's leaders to be widened to include the possible role of a notorious Jakarta gangster Hercules Rozario Marcal. Carrascalao said he was "surprised" when he saw television footage of Hercules meeting Mr Gusmao in Dili.

- [Suspicious Raised over Reinado's Cash](#), Paul Toohey, Australian, 2008-03-18

[6. Rubin: Points on an Integrated Strategy for Afghanistan](#), Barnett R. Rubin, Informed Comment: Global Affairs, 2008-03-14

Afghanistan faces the following strategic alternatives:

1. Strengthen the strategic partnership with the U.S. and rely on that bilateral relationship;
2. Seek strategic partnerships with all those helping it, including Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia, and India, and assure that Afghanistan is not the base for threats real or perceived to any of these.

This would also require either a settlement of U.S.-Iran conflicts or an agreement on a modus operandi to insulate Afghanistan from those conflicts.

[7. No Reason for Rudd to Take Japan Out of the Equation](#), Kenichi Ohmae, SMH, 2008-03-20

Kevin Rudd will shortly make his first grand tour as prime minister. Curious about this trip is the

omission of Japan from his list. Even if he has a good reason, I am afraid his job of paying a belated visit to his Japan is going to be rough, looking at the piling angers of the Japanese cyberspace write-ups against this whale-loving, Chinese-speaking and Japan-passing Prime Minister.

8. [Bird Flu Situation in Indonesia Critical](#), FAO Newsroom, UN, 2008-03-18

"The human mortality rate from bird flu in Indonesia is the highest in the world and there will be more human cases if we do not focus more on containing the disease at source in animals," said FAO Chief Veterinary Officer Joseph Domenech. "I am deeply concerned that the high level of virus circulation in birds in the country could create conditions for the virus to mutate and cause a human influenza pandemic".

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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