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1. RAN warships to the rescue as Somali pirates flee, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2009-05-19

Two Royal Australian Navy warships have gone to the aid of two merchant vessels in the troubled Gulf of Aden after they came under attack by suspected Somali pirates firing rocket-propelled grenades. It is the first time Australian warships have intervened to prevent a pirate attack in the notorious Horn of Africa sea lane. No RAN warship has been deployed to the Gulf of Aden as part of a growing international naval task force combatting Somali piracy.

- Australian Navy deters Somali pirates in Gulf of Aden, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2009-05-18
- Additional imagery and audio, Australian Navy deters Somali pirates in Gulf of Aden, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2009-05-18
- Navy ship farewelled, Media Release, Department of Defence, 2009-04-20

2. Donald Rumsfeld 'kept ADF in dark', Patrick Walters, Australian, 2009-05-21

Former US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld deliberately blocked Australian access to top-secret Pentagon intelligence on Iraq and Afghanistan in defiance of an order from George W. Bush, according to former top US officials. The Pentagon stalled for nearly two years on the presidential directive of July 2004 giving Australian military planners access to its classified internet system, prompting a formal complaint from John Howard to Mr Bush in 2006.

3. Flying colours for Wedgetail in flight tests, Patrick Walters, Australian, 2009-05-19

The RAAF's Project Wedgetail, a $4 billion airborne early warning aircraft, has passed a series of flight demonstrations and laboratory tests on its powerful radar system and could begin flight training later this year. Already running 38 months late, Project Wedgetail is planned as the nerve centre of Australia's next-generation air defence system, with the aircraft serving as flying command centres.

4. Hillary Clinton firmly commits the US to Asia-Pacific security, Geoff Elliott, Australian, 2009-05-21

The US has declared it "is not ceding the Pacific to anyone" in a forceful response to the rise of China and the Rudd Government's defence white paper, which last month flagged the possibility of US dominance fading in the Asia-Pacific region in the decades ahead. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was emphatic that Washington was looking to deepen its ties in the region and wanted to do more with allies such as Australia.

5. Arms sent by U.S. may be falling into Taliban hands, C. J. Chivers, NYT, 2009-05-19

Of 30 rifle magazines recently taken from insurgents' corpses, at least 17 contained cartridges, or rounds, identical to ammunition the United States had provided to Afghan government forces. This strongly suggests that munitions procured by the Pentagon have leaked from Afghan forces for use against American troops.

- Training and equipping Afghan security forces: Unaccounted weapons and strategic challenges, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, 2009-02-12
- NATO assists Afghanistan to improve munitions stockpile safety, News Blaze, 2009-05-07

6. Zardari's gifts come with nuclear glow, Syed Fazl--Haider, Asia Times, 2009-05-20

President Asif Ali Zardari's government needs every dollar it can get as 2 million people flee fighting in the war-torn northwest of Pakisan. Pledges of aid from as far afield as Libya and the US will be helpful. France is throwing in a little extra, with help on nuclear-energy matters.

- Costs of War: Ailing Pakistan, Shaun Waterman, ISN, 2009-05-19

- Clinton Pledges More Aid to Pakistan, Mark Landler, NYT, 2009-05-19

7. Pakistan is rapidly adding nuclear arms, U.S. says, Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger, NYT, 2009-05-17

Members of Congress have been told in confidential briefings that Pakistan is rapidly adding to its nuclear arsenal even while racked by insurgency, raising questions on Capitol Hill about whether billions of dollars in proposed military aid might be diverted to Pakistan's nuclear program.

- Pakistan Expanding Dera Ghazi Khan Nuclear Site, David Albright, Paul Brannan and Robert Kelley, ISIS, 2009-05-19 [PDF, 988KB]
- Pakistan expanding plutonium separation facility near Rawalpindi, David Albright and Paul Brannan, ISIS, 2009-05-19 [PDF, 668]

8. China ups the pressure, Greg Earl, AFR*, 2009-05-20

China has stepped up its push for better access to Australia's resources sector, warning that existing levels of investment are not consistent with the country's role as Australia's largest trading partner. In a reversal of Australia's complaints about limited investment access to China, China's ambassador, Zhang Junsai, argued that Australian companies had been the beneficiaries of more than 20 years of economic liberalisation in China and now Chinese companies were looking for similar opportunities here.
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