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1. Department of Defence moves to bring horizon closer, Patrick Walters, Australian, 20009-06-19

The Rudd government will consider cutting the normal 10-year horizon for the $100billion defence capability plan in half, as the Defence Department begins its long quest to find $20bn in savings to pay for new equipment. Defence's plan to truncate the plan to a 2014 horizon further underlines the fiscal uncertainty that surrounds the $26bn Defence budget, despite the government's pledge to increase defence spending by 3 per cent annually in real terms.

2. AFP to launch full probe into banknote firm, Nick McKenzie and Richard Baker, Age, 2009-06-22

The Australian Federal Police is launching a full-scale investigation into whether a Reserve Bank of Australia subsidiary engaged in improper business dealings overseas to win banknote printing contracts. Last month, the Reserve Bank asked the AFP to assess claims that Securency — a banknote company half-owned by the Reserve Bank — had paid lucrative commissions to shady, well-connected overseas business people who helped the company win contracts.

3. $415m bomb-proof Australian embassy for Jakarta, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2009-06-18

Work on a $415 million high-security Australian embassy in Jakarta will begin late next year, six years after a Jemaah Islamiah terrorist bombing that killed five people and injured more than 150 others. The new chancery will be “bomb-proofed” and house 14 federal government agencies, 123 Australian and 273 local staff, Defence Secretary Mike Kelly said.

4. Iraq, AfPak, beyond: the global cost of war, Paul Rogers, openDemocracy, 2009-06-18

There is a range of evidence to show that the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan are becoming more transnational; this includes a spreading of "expertise" whereby militants with experience in fighting the Russians in Chechnya and the United States and its coalition partners in Iraq are able to share their knowledge in new environments. The United States is investing many of its far vaster resources into re-equipping its army and marine corps for wars which are radically different from those envisaged in the cold-war era - and even from those anticipated in the early stages of the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions.

5. U.S. agencies eye coordinated Afghan "civilian surge", Paul Eckert, Washington post, 2009-06-18

The Pentagon and other U.S. government agencies are boosting the number of civilian experts dispatched to Afghanistan in parallel with a large surge of American troops, officials said. Pentagon policy chief Michele Flournoy said her agency backed a "civilian surge" of at least 400 new experts, while the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan will more than double to 68,000 troops by year-end.

- U.S. Pursues a new way to rebuild in Afghanistan, Rajiv Chandrasekaran, Washington Post, 2009-06-19
- Coalition policy in Afghanistan - United States, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

6. NATO supply lines in Afghanistan: The search for alternative routes, Ryan Clarke and Khuram Iqbal, RSIS Commentaries, 2009-06-15

The financial and political costs of diverting supply routes through central Asia may not be sustainable. Russian influence over this northern route means that it has strategic leverage over the US and NATO. A long term dependence on this route may widen the conflict. Pakistan is still willing to risk the lives of thousands of its own soldiers to support the war effort in Afghanistan. This is a commitment that Washington cannot expect from any of Afghanistan’s neighbours.

7. Chinese give PM Kevin Rudd lesson on neoliberalism, Rowan Callick, Australian, 20009-06-19

Kevin Rudd has been accused by a leading Chinese economist of being "either short of economic knowledge or misleading his readers" in his famous essay attacking neoliberalism. In a scathing

assessment, Xu Xaonian, economics professor at China Europe International Business School in Shanghai, says "Lu Kewen" - Mr Rudd's Chinese name - made a "big, big mistake" in forming his "confident opinions" based on "the observation that the crisis came as a result of neoliberalism and the absence of supervision".

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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