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1. [Canberra Asked For Help on N Korea](#), Peter Alford, Australian, 2008-10-23

The Australian Government has been asked by its allies in Washington and Tokyo to help buy 200,000 tonnes of oil for North Korea, to assist with the six-party nuclear disarmament agreement. The 200,000 tonnes of heavy crude oil, worth about \$20million, is the share Japan refuses to contribute to the 1million tonnes as one of the inducements offered to Kim Jong-il's regime to begin the disarmament process.

2. [ADF East Timor Deployment to Reduce - A Positive Sign of Stability](#), Joel Fitzgibbon, Department of Defence, 2008-10-22

The Australian Defence Force will reduce its total force presence in East Timor to approximately 650 personnel by early next year. The reduction in the total number of deployed personnel under Operation ASTUTE is appropriate given improvements in the security situation in East Timor.

- [East Timor Warns Against Stoking Tensions](#), Rob Taylor, Reuters, 2008-10-22

- [Troop Drawdown 'Not Aimed at Boosting Afghan Role'](#), ABC, 2008-10-22

3. [Defence Budget to Keep Its Increase](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-10-22

Defence spending will increase by 3% a year despite the global economic crisis. Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement Greg Combet said Defence would have to cut waste and find savings but the promised 3% annual increase would be delivered.

4. [Diggers Start New Role in Afghanistan](#), AAP, Age, 2008-10-21

Australian troops are entering a new phase in operations in Afghanistan with trainers embedding within an Afghan National Army battalion. Under this transition, the Reconstruction Task Force will become the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF) with members serving in Afghanistan for an eight-month deployment, rather than the previous six months.

- New Role for Diggers in Afghanistan, Joel Fitzgibbon, Department of Defence, 2008-10-21
- [Reconstruction and a Whole of Government Approach](#), Presentation by Lt Gen Ken Gillespie, Lowy, 2008-10-21 [MP3, 20MB]
- [Reconstruction Task Force](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

5. [Afghan Military Victory 'Unlikely'](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-10-23

Defence Chief Angus Houston has warned that progress in Afghanistan is frustratingly slow, victory by military means alone is unlikely and while Australian troops are winning their battles, the war is not being won.

- [Senate Estimates - 22 October 2008](#), CDF Statement, Department of Defence, 2208-10-22

6. [Meltdown Boosts PM's Asia Pacific Vision](#), Daniel Flitton, Age, 2008-10-21

The global financial storm may boost Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's grand vision for the future of the Asia Pacific, according to his special envoy Richard Woolcott. He said the crisis in global financial markets bolstered the case for countries to find better ways of working together.

7. [Five Arrested Over Foiled Indonesia Bomb Plot](#), Geoff Thompson, ABC, 2008-10-22

Indonesian police say they have arrested five members of a terrorist cell that was planning to blow up a state oil facility in north Jakarta. Deputy spokesman Sulistyo Ishak said the men were believed to have studied bomb making under Malaysian extremist Azahari Husin, a notoriously callous explosives expert who was tracked down and shot at a house in Java in November, 2005.

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