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1. Blow to Rudd's Asia Plan, Angus Grigg, AFR*, 2008-07-23

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's push for a new regional forum has been rejected by a second senior Asian leader, after Indonesian Vice-President, Jusuf Kalla, said there was "no reason" for such a body. Rudd's proposal for a security and economic grouping, goes against Golkar's [Kalla's party] nationalistic principles, which are also espoused by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the opposition.
* Subscription required.

- Smith Still Keen on Regional Group, Katrina Nicholas, AFR*, 2008-07-24
  * Subscription required.

2. Terror Focus on Pakistan, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-07-23

Australia has offered to help train Pakistani troops in counter-insurgency operations as part of a broader strategy for victory in Afghanistan. Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon said that in recent talks in the United States he found a new determination to "up the ante" on the diplomatic front with Pakistan. He said Australian military instructors would not be sent to Pakistan's dangerous border.

3. Rules Protecting Civilians Hamper Airstrikes in Afghanistan, Military Says, Tom Shanker, IHT, 2008-07-23

U.S. and allied commanders said that even as orders for air attacks in Afghanistan had increased significantly this year, their ability to strike top insurgent leaders from the air had been severely restricted by rules intended to minimize civilian casualties.

- Casualties - Civilian, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute
- Rules of Engagement (ROE), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

4. We're in Iraq for Long Haul: Labor, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-07-24

The 1000 Australian soldiers, sailors and air force personnel in and around Iraq will be there "for a long time to come", Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon has warned. He said that while Labor opposed the invasion of Iraq, Australia now had an obligation to help get the country on its feet. That completes a comprehensive adjustment of the ALP's policy on Iraq.

5. Iran: The Threat, Thomas Powers, New York Review of Books, Vol. 55, No. 12, 2008-07-17

"Another war in the Middle East is the last thing we need," Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said, "But the military option must be kept on the table." Forgive me, but why? The military option is a threat; if the threat is carried out it promises widening war and the possibility of failure on the scale of disaster. Why does a policy of courting disaster have to remain on the table?

6. Bribery Claims Cast Cloud over Nuclear 'Yes' Vote, Matt Wade, Age, 2008-07-24

The Indian Government has shrugged off a bribery scandal after winning its crucial confidence vote, opening the way for a landmark nuclear pact with the United States and prompting fresh calls for the Australian Government to lift its ban on uranium sales to India.

- Uranium to India: A Decision to Face, SMH, 2008-07-24

7. Interview - Indonesia Millers Fret over Australia Wheat Supply, Fitri Wulandari, Reuters, 2008-07-22

Indonesia plans to return to buy more Australian wheat, but uncertainty over the wheat crop in their big neighbour means it may have to rely on other suppliers this year. Indonesian wheat flour millers depend entirely on imports and Australia had been a key wheat supplier until severe drought damaged Australia's wheat crop last year, cutting supplies.

- Costs and Benefits of CO2 Increase and Climate Change on the Australian Wheat Industry, Mark Howden and Roger Jones, Department of Climate Change, October 2001
- Climate to Slash Farm Exports Heavily, Daniel Lewis, Age, 2007-12-07

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