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1. North Korea fires artillery at South Korean island of Yeongpyeong, Keith B. Richburg and William Branigin, Washington Post, 2010-11-23

North Korea launched a massive artillery barrage on a South Korean island Tuesday, killing two South Korean marines, wounding at least 19 other people and setting more than 60 buildings. South Korea immediately responded with its own artillery fire and put its fighter jets on high alert, bringing the two sides - which technically have remained in a state of war since the Korean armistice in 1953 - close to the brink of a major conflagration.

- North Korean dictator-in-waiting linked to deadly artillery attack, John Garnaut, SMH, 2010-11-24
- North Korean artillery hits South Korean island?, BBC News, 2010-11-23

- S Korea faces dilemma over North's attack, Christian Oliver, Financial Times, 2010-11-23 [Registration required]

2. Spy agency ASIS shuts six foreign stations, Dylan Welch, Age, 2010-11-21

In a remarkable step for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, the closures have been privately blamed on a ''cash freeze'', though some intelligence sources are doubtful an agency that has grown by almost 350 per cent in a decade is starved of funds. It is believed a number of the intelligence officers from the [Baghdad] station have been relocated to Oruzgan province in Afghanistan.

- Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), Agency resources and planned performance, DFAT, Budget Papers, 2010-11 [110 Kb PDF]
- ASIS – Afghanistan, Australia in Afghanistan, Australian Fortces Abroad, Nautilus Institute

3. NATO adopts transition plan for Afghan war, Karen DeYoung, Washington Post, 2010-11-20

Obama responded sharply to Karzai's recent criticism of some U.S. military actions in Afghanistan. Partnership, he said, was a "two-way street," adding of Karzai: "We have to listen and learn. But he's got to listen to us, as well." Officials emphasized that transition did not mean withdrawal, because coalition forces taken out of one area of Afghanistan would be transferred elsewhere inside the country. Each nation makes its own decision on when to withdraw troops

- Julia Gillard backs Obama on 'staying the distance', Peter Wilson, Australian, 2010-11-22
- Lisbon can cement Afghan-led transition, Julia Gillard, Australian, 2010-11-19
- French Defense Minister: Afghanistan 'A Trap', Voice of America News, 2010-11-17
- How to Schedule a War: The Incredible Shrinking Withdrawal Date, Tom Engelhardt, Tomdispatch.com,2010-11-23

4. Afghanistan Transition, Missing Variables, International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), November 2010

Over 90% of interviewees in the south are not familiar with the events of 9/11 which brought NATO-ISAF to Afghanistan and 40% of respondents believe that foreigners are in Afghanistan to destroy the country, to occupy Afghanistan, or to destroy Islam.

- Nowhere to Turn: The Failure to Protect Civilians in Afghanistan, Oxfam International, 2010-11-18

5. US often asked for more troops, Dan Oakes and Rafael Epstein, Age, 2010-11-19

The US repeatedly asked for more Australian troops to be sent to Afghanistan and for Australia to take control of the coalition forces in Oruzgan province, but was rebuffed. The revelation comes after repeated denials by the Australian government and Defence Force hierarchy that the NATO commanders had asked Australia to boost its existing contingent of 1550 troops.

- Claims US rebuffed on troops 'baseless': Stephen Smith, Peter Wilson, Australian, 2010-11-20

- US 'sick' of asking Australia for more troops in Afghanistan, Herald-Sun, 2010-11-19

6. Kevin Rudd calls for boost to DFAT, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2010-11-20

Kevin Rudd is demanding a large funding boost for his bureaucratic empire - despite overseeing Foreign Affairs cutbacks as prime minister.. Mr Rudd said. "The truth is, DFAT was starved for a decade." Mr Rudd did not mention his own hand in ripping money out of the department when he was leader. The cutbacks in 2008 saw $57 million stripped from the budget and the loss of 44 jobs including 25 overseas-based diplomats.

7. Veterans fail to prove illnesses result from nuclear tests in Australia and Pacific, AP, Australian 2010-11-23

Sick veterans who took part in Cold War nuclear weapons tests in Australia cannot sue Britain's Defence Ministry, a court has ruled. The [British] Court of Appeal said nine out of the 10 test cases cannot continue in court because the veterans launched the cases after the legal time limit expired and because the men could not prove that radiation - rather than the onset of old age - prompted their illnesses.

- Ministry of Defence v AB & Ors [2010] EWCA Civ 1317, England and Wales Court of Appeal (Civil Division) Decisions, 2010-11-22

8. George W. Bush can't fight for freedom and authorise torture, Boris Johnson, Daily Telegraph, 201-11-15

Unless the 43rd president of the United States has been grievously misrepresented, he has admitted to authorising and sponsoring the use of torture. Asked whether he approved of "waterboarding" in three specific cases, he told his interviewer that "damn right" he did, and that this practice had saved lives in America and Britain. It is hard to overstate the enormity of this admission.

- Mayor Of London Warns George Bush He Might Face Arrest As A War Criminal, MSNBC, YouTube, 2010-11-19 [video]
- US must begin criminal investigation, Amnesty International. 2010-11-10

9. North Korea Reveals Stunning Nuclear Advance, Washington Post, 2010-11-21

Robert Carlin and two other Stanford University nuclear experts were recently invited to North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear facility, and what they saw there rocked them on their heels. "It's going to drop like a bombshell," Carlin said. "We walked over to the window and we were suddenly surprised to see row after row after row of centrifuges. The North Koreans say it was 2,000. It was a lot."

- North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex: A Report, Siegfried S. Hecker, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, 2010-11-20
- DPRK Enriched Uranium Highlights Need for New US DPRK Policy, Peter Hayes, NAPSNet Policy Forum, 2010-11-22
- NORK Enrichment Facility, Jeffrey Lewis, Arms Control Wonk, 2010-11-21
- North Korea's Mixed Messages, Joshua Pollack, Arms Control Wonk, 2010-11-22

10. China Should Remain Prudent in Its Nuclear Fuel Path, Mark Hibbs, Nuclear Energy Brief, 2010-11-22

Although China has thus far moved very cautiously in implementing a nuclear fuel cycle strategy, moving too quickly down its forecasted path could have detrimental effects. It's unwise for China to commit itself to a rapid deployment of plutonium reactors and premature establishment of commercial-scale reprocessing, as that would burden China's young nuclear power program with additional safety, security, and proliferation challenges and could prove unnecessarily costly to China.

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