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1. Indonesia 'Crucial' In Weathering Climate Storm, Tom Hyland, Age, 2008-11-23

Australia has been urged to set up a climate change commission with Indonesia amid warnings global warming could have a devastating effect on hundreds of millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region. At an international experts meeting in Melbourne former senior defence official Allan Behm said there was little sign Canberra was focusing on the security implications of climate change.

- Body to Mitigate Effects of Disasters in Asia-Pacific, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-11-24
- The Sting of Climate Change, Dr Sarah Potter, Lowy Institute, November, 2008
- Tuvalunacy, or the real thing? Inside Story, 2008-11-27
- Fisheries and climate change, Policy Brief, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2008 [PDF, 604 KB]

2. Miner Tied to Somali Pirates, Mark Hawthorne, Age, 2008-11-20

An Australian mining company has paid millions of dollars in controversial fees to Somali rebels responsible for a surge in international piracy, including the hijacking this week of an oil supertanker. Since 2005, oil explorer Range Resources has paid the disputed government of the Puntland State of Somalia more than $US6 million ($A9.3 million) for resource rights to the region.

3. China's Secrecy 'Could Affect Region', Angus Houston Warns, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-11-22

China's excessive secrecy over defence spending and its shooting down of a satellite in January could trigger regional instability, the Chief of the Defence Force, Angus Houston, has warned. Now, he said, the bigger worry appeared to be Canberra's lack of knowledge about the growing capability of China's armed forces.

4. Asian Leaders Prefer To Broaden Existing Body: Woolcott, ABC, 2008-11-27

Former diplomat Richard Woolcott says Asia Pacific countries would prefer to adapt an existing regional body to deal with future challenges, rather than create a new one. Mr Woolcott has so far visited 13 countries and has admitted there is "no appetite" among Asia Pacific leaders for a new regional body.

5. Jakarta May Have to Seek IMF Aid, Angus Grigg, AFR*, 2008-11-26

The International Monetary Fund is preparing to extend Indonesia a $US15 billion emergency loan, despite Jakarta saying less than two weeks ago that it could weather the global financial crisis. The traditionally volatile rupiah is trading around a 10-year low of 12,500 to the US dollar and speculators are betting it will depreciate a further 35 per cent. Forward contracts suggest the rupiah could hit 17,000 within the next 12 months, a level not seen since the darkest days of the Asian financial crisis.
* Subscription required.

6. US Aims to Boost Afghan Troop Surge, Patrick Walters, Australian, 2008-11-24

The US is preparing for a much larger troop surge in Afghanistan next year, and will work with key allies to bolster the UN's presence in the country. As Washington works on a new strategy for what coalition defence ministers are now calling the "Afghan-Pakistan" war, the US military build-up starting next year is expected to go well beyond the 15,000 extra troops already flagged by the Pentagon.

7. Opium Trade Plagues War against Taliban, Cameron Stewart, Australian,

2008-11-27

Australia's military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan is being undermined by a chronic failure to combat the opium trade in Oruzgan province. Written by anti-narcotics officials in Tarin Kowt, where the Australian troops are based, damning reports reveal how the war against opium crops - which help to fund the Taliban - is being sabotaged by endemic local corruption, assassination threats and recalcitrant governors and officials.

- Opium War Impasse, Cameron Stewart, Australian, 2008-11-27
- Opium and Narco-Politics, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

8. Fitzgibbon in Dispute with UN over Rejected General, Cynthia Banham and Jonathan Pearlman, SMH, 2008-11-26

The Defence Minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, has become embroiled in a public stoush with the United Nations' Afghanistan envoy, Kai Eide, over allegations the UN has obstructed efforts to rebuild the war-torn country. Mr Fitzgibbon accused the UN bureaucracy of impeding efforts to adequately resource the envoy and his mission.

9. PM Holds Tongue on Taliban Talks, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 20008-11-25

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has responded in guarded fashion to suggestions by Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai that he might begin peace talks with Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Mr Rudd said yesterday he would need to examine Mr Karzai's comments carefully before responding. But Mr Rudd said there could be no negotiations with the terrorist group al-Qaeda under any circumstances.

10. Nuclear War Threat to Grow By 2025, AFP, Australian, 2008-11-21

The use of nuclear weapons will grow increasingly likely by 2025, US intelligence warns in a report on global trends that forecasts a tense, unstable world shadowed by war. “The world of the near future will be subject to an increased likelihood of conflict over scarce resources, including food and water, and will be haunted by the persistence of rogue states and terrorist groups with greater access to nuclear weapons,” the report says.

- Global Trends 2025 - a Transformed World, National Intelligence Council, November 2008-11-27 [PDF, 8.30 MB]

11. Like There's No Tomorrow, Lindsay Murdoch, SMH, 2008-11-22

East Timor has gone on a spending spree to try to buy civil peace, but it's stirring its own unrest. Fretilin is attacking the spending. Sixteen opposition MPs challenged the spending in the Constitutional Court and won, escalating political tensions in Dili.

- Ten Questions about East Timor for Which We Need Answers, Richard Tanter, Nautilus Institute, 2006-06-08

12. Defence Department is facing More Delays over Boeing's Wedgetail Surveillance Aircraft, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2008-11-24

Ongoing problems with one of Australia's most troublesome defence contracts - Boeing's delayed $4

billion Wedgetail surveillance aircraft - continues to give Defence Procurement Secretary Greg Combet sleepless nights. Speaking to the Australian Command and Staff College today, Mr Combet said while the Wedgetail was listed on the government's infamous "Projects of Concern" watchlist, there were no plans to cancel it.

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