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1. Soldier's Rescue Not Botched: ADF, Tom Hyland, Age, 2008-07-27

An Australian soldier who died in Afghanistan was wounded only about 20 kilometres from base, yet the Australian Defence Force has confirmed it took about two hours for a helicopter to get him to the base's hospital. The ADF has denied claims by a Dutch army doctor that the evacuation of Signaller Sean McCarthy was delayed by a communication bungle. But its denial raises fresh questions.

2. Private Contractors' Role in Afghanistan to Grow with Awarding of Latest Contracts, Walter Pincus, Washington Post, 2008-07-28

With billions of dollars newly available in fiscal 2008 supplemental war funding, the total U.S. outlay in Afghanistan this fiscal year will be about $34 billion. A review of the FBO Daily Web site for July contracts shows that the administration, which in Iraq turned to the private sector for tasks once handled by military or government personnel, is stepping up this practice in Afghanistan.

3. Civil Discontent Growing over Alleged PNG Corruption, Steve Marshall, ABC, 2008-07-25

Transparency International's PNG boss Mike Manning says the breakdown of law and order is getting worse. "We don't have any answers immediately as to how we fix a single part of the breakdown of the system of law and order and the breakdown of the systems which would control corruption," he said. "But we do know that we're reading about them day after day after day and that they're getting worse."

4. Solomons Parliament Passes RAMSI Review Motion, ABC, 2008-07-25

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Dr Derek Sikua says the review would be carried out by Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee. "The five years of RAMSI ... has achieved much that is of great value ... [H]owever, this positive impact has been counter-balanced by local perception rightly or wrongly, that this assistance has been at the expense of local ownership and that the partnership has been unequal. A Solomon Islands review will better inform this house on the way forward," he said.

- Opening Remarks and Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003, Paper No.8 of 2008, Sir Peter Kenilorea, Hansard, Solomon Islands Parliament, 2008-07-24 [328 KB, PDF]
- People's Survey: Summary, ANU Enterprise, RAMSI, 2007 [371 KB, PDF]

5. Pakistan: Nuke Deal to Spark Arms Race, Bruce Loudon, Australian, 2008-07-25

Pakistan launched a diplomatic offensive against India's nuclear deal with Washington, warning it would provoke a new atomic arms race between the two South Asia rivals and harm non-proliferation efforts. Islamabad sent a letter to more than 60 nations - members of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, including Australia - outlining its concerns about what it sees as attempts to steamroll approval of the deal.

6. Is the ASEAN Charter Necessary? Barry Desker, RSIS Commentaries, 2008-07-17 [56.3 KB, PDF]

The ASEAN Charter is a positive development; it moves ASEAN ahead. But it is a disappointment. ASEAN's conservative approach results from its practice of consensual decision-making. It is unlikely that ASEAN will move in the direction of the people-centred organisation envisaged in the EPG [Eminent Persons Group] Report.

7. The South China Sea Hydra, Mark Valencia, Nautilus Institute, 2008-07-24

South China Sea situation deserves renewed attention by ASEAN and perhaps the ASEAN Regional Forum. Moving forward to an agreement on a legally binding Code of Conduct for the South China Sea has become urgent.

- Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, ASEAN, 2002
- Joint Exploration Pact Lapses, Donnabelle Gatdula, Philippine Star, 2008-07-12
- Satellite Images Reveal China's Underground Nuclear Submarine Base, Rowan Callick, Australian, 2008-04-24

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