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1. Rudd Kept Silent on Our Nuclear Pact Role, Richard Baker, Age, 2009-011-24

The Federal Government has secretly continued Australia's role in a controversial nuclear energy pact designed by the Bush administration and embraced by John Howard, despite Labor's previous opposition to it. Documents reveal that last August Kevin Rudd and his cabinet made decisions — which have yet to be publicly announced — about Australia's involvement in the US-led Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP).

- Confusion over Uranium Policy is Damaging Our Credibility, Daniel Flitton, Age, 2009-01-28

2. Aides Say Obama's Afghan Aims Elevate War, Helene

Cooper and Thom Shanker, New York Times, 2009-01-27

President Obama intends to adopt a tougher line toward Hamid Karzai, the Afghan president, as part of a new American approach to Afghanistan that will put more emphasis on waging war than on development. Senior administration officials said that the Obama administration would work with provincial leaders as an alternative to the central government, and that it would leave economic development and nation-building increasingly to allies, so that American forces could focus on the fight against insurgents.

- Gates Predicts 'Slog' in Afghanistan, Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post, 2009-01-28
- Australia Awaits Afghan Review, Michelle Grattan, Age, 2009-01-29

3. Russia Stops US on Road to Afghanistan, M K Bhadrakumar, Asia Times, 2009-01-27

Petraeus overlooked that the US's needless obduracy to keep the Hindu Kush as its exclusive geopolitical turf right in the middle of Asia has become a contentious issue. No matter the fine rhetoric, the Obama administration will find it difficult to sustain the myth that the Afghan war is all about fighting al-Qaeda and the Taliban to the finish.

4. Obama's Vietnam? Juan Cole, Salon.com, 2009-01-26

Despite the positive harbingers from Obama of a new, civilian-friendly foreign policy that will devote substantial resources to human development, the very first practical step he took in Pakistan was to bomb its territory. This resort to violence from the skies even before Obama had initiated discussions with Islamabad is a bad sign. Such military operations take on a momentum of their own, and produce popular discontents that can prove deadly to the military mission.

5. PM's Line in the Sand as Pacific Forum Sets Poll Deadline, Daniel Flitton, Age, 2009-01-28

The Pacific Islands Forum has given Fiji until May 1 to nominate an election date before the end of this year, or face suspension from the forum. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said the timetable was a "line in the sand". Fijian leader Frank Bainimarama told soldiers in Suva he could be in power for the next 10 years.

- Pariah of the Pacific, Paul Toohey, Australian, 2009-01-29
- Don't hold your breath, Fiji PM warns, ABC, 2009-01-29

6. Australia to Attend Key African Union Meeting, Daniel Flitton, Age, 2009-01-02

Australia has won a place at a key meeting of African leaders in a move interpreted as early progress in the Federal Government's push for a UN Security Council seat. It is the first time an Australian foreign minister has been invited to such a meeting, at which regional crises in Sudan, Zimbabwe, Congo and Somalia are likely to top the agenda.

7. Policy Forum 09-2A: Ending Somalian Piracy: Pitfalls and Possibilities of Australian Naval Intervention and Long-Term Human Security Policy Initiatives - Carolin Liss

Carolin Liss of Murdoch University discusses “the possible benefits and disadvantages of Australian participation in an international, UN approved, anti-piracy task–force operating in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. In themselves, Liss notes, “the patrols of pirate-infested waters are of limited use because they will only foil individual attacks, and only within the area covered by patrol vessels.” As a result, Liss argues, “countries such as Australia, Japan and South Korea that consider sending warships to Somalia therefore have to understand that deploying warships could be a long-term commitment that may make little difference – particularly in regard to human security – if the political and humanitarian situation in Somalia is not addressed.” In conclusion Liss notes that “the deployment of an Australian warship would make little sense unless Australia and other countries also take an active role in ensuring that long-term measures are taken and successfully implemented.”

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