

APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, March 29, 2010

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1. [Undiplomatic relations](#), John Garnaut, Age, 2010-03-27

The Stern Hu case has put not just China under the spotlight. Australia's management of its own relationship with China is now also under scrutiny, with some suggesting the crisis need not have blown up to the extent it did, had Australia been more skilful in its China diplomacy, and others arguing that Australian efforts at damage control have taken it too far in the other direction.

- [Opposition accuses China of diplomatic breach in Hu affair](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-03-26
*[Subscription required]

2. [Contracts under scrutiny](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-03-26

Defence weapons purchasing boss, Stephen Gumley has challenged company chiefs to justify claims that a move to shorter contracts will make it harder to deliver on the governments' \$20 billion cost-cutting drive.

*[Subscription required]

3. [Employers: your country needs you](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2010-03-29

Employers would be called on to make a bigger contribution to defending Australia in a planned comprehensive Rudd government shake-up of the Defence Force reserves. This was being considered because of the strain that long-term campaigns in war zones like Iraq and Afghanistan are putting on full-time armed forces.

*[Subscription required]

- [Exercise boss lift 2010](#), Solomon Islands, Department of Defence, 2010-03-05

4. [Afghan inquiry decision soon](#), Sophie McNeill, Nick Mckenzie and Rafael Epstein, Age, 2010-03-27

The Defence Force's chief military prosecutor is looking into whether Australian commandos deviated from an operation plan during a bungled raid in Afghanistan last year and if charges should be laid.

- [Questions from Oruzgan: a special investigation](#), Sophie McNeill, SBS Dateline, 2010-03-07, [video]
- [Questions from Oruzgan: response to Dateline's questions sent by a Defence Spokesperson](#), SBS Dateline, 2010-03-04
- [Questions from Oruzgan: Senate discussion](#), SBS Dateline [video]

5. [Australian troops join new front](#), Dan Oakes, Age, 2010-03-26

Australian troops are to embark on a new front in the Afghan war, joining a looming coalition offensive against the Taliban in the southern province of Kandahar. Defence chief Angus Houston has revealed that Australian special forces and helicopters will be involved in the summer campaign by NATO-led forces.

- [Operational Mentor and Liaison Team \(OMLT\)](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute
- [Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute
- [Nato commanders to put Afghan troops in front line for new southern push](#), Tom Coghlan, Jerome Starkey, and Deborah Haynes, Times, 2010-03-29

6. [Afghans petition the Dutch to stay](#), Bette Dam, Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 2010-03-26

Afghans in the Uruzgan province have asked the Dutch not to leave their province by presenting them with a petition. The Afghans praise the Dutch for building and restoring "bridges, schools and medical centers".

7. [Australia has a duty to take Gitmo inmates](#), Ben Saul, SMH, 2010-03-26

Australian officials are grappling with yet another request from the United States to resettle some of the remaining 183 detainees at Guantanamo Bay, as part of President Barack Obama's efforts to shut it down. Switzerland and Georgia agreed this week to accept some detainees, and Spain has taken others.

8. [Iraq faces a negotiating nightmare](#), Tony Walker, AFR*, 2010-03-29

Iraq's knife-edge election has yielded what risks becoming a hung parliament with possible negative implications for the US's plans to withdraw most of its combat forces by 2011. America and its allies, including Australia, could hardly have more at stake in an orderly outcome in Iraq.

*[Subscription required]

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