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1. Star Wars: the Next Episode, Paul Dibb and Geoffrey Barker, AFR* 2008-0--03

The Rudd government appears to be loitering with intent to step up cooperation with the United States on the development of strategic ballistic missile defences. Foreign Minister Stephan Smith obviously accepts that effective missile defences are now technologically feasible and might be in Australia's national interest.
*Subscription required

2. Australia's Nuclear Dilemma: Dependence, Deterrence or Denial? Raoul E. Heinrichs, Security Challenges*, Volume 4, Number 1, 2008, pp. 55-67

An outright offensive deterrent is not the only mechanism which might eventually reduce Australia's reliance on the US nuclear umbrella. An Australian Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) shield, by shifting to a strategy of nuclear denial, may in time reduce the burden on the United States to maintain a credible offensive threat against Australian adversaries.
*Subscription required

3. Labor Resurrects Howard's Uranium Plan, Katharine Murphy, Age, 2008-04-02

The Federal Government has quietly resurrected John Howard's plan to expand uranium mining in Australia. Resources Minister Martin Ferguson says Australian uranium will play an important role in powering nuclear reactors in other countries wanting to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. He predicts substantial growth in nuclear power outside Australia.

- Uranium Industry Framework, Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, 2008-03-25

4. Australia Accused of Helping Spark Fiji Coup, ABC, 2008-04-02

A new report has accused Australia of helping spark the December 2006 coup in Fiji by sending military forces to the country and has raised questions about possible plans for an invasion. The report by the Fiji Human Rights Commission is into events leading up to the coup, with a particular focus on Australia's deployment of ships to nearby waters, and an alleged contingent of Special Air Service soldiers who flew in on a commercial flight.

- Special Investigation Report, Australian Intervention in Fiji in October-November 2006 - An Issue of International Law, Fiji Human Rights Commission, 2008-03-31 [PDF, 216 KB]
- Australia's Foreign Minister Responds to Fiji's Human Rights Commission, RNZI, 2008-04-02

5. Rudd Backs Asia-Pacific Security Forum, Age, 2008-04-01

Australia wants six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program to provide the basis for a new mechanism to deal with broader security issues in North Asia and the wider region. Mr Rudd would also like to see China more engaged in the area of development assistance, as its growing prosperity sees it move from aid recipient to donor.

- The Australia-US Alliance and Emerging Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Speech to the Brookings Institution, 2008- 03-31

6. NATO Seeks to Rewrite Afghan Script, Geoff Kitney, AFR* 2008-04-03

NATO insiders concede that it is time for a stocktake of the situation in Afghanistan and expect the Bucharest summit to produce a new strategic plan for the ISAF operation that will be sharper, better co-ordinated and better resourced. Almost daily NATO troops are dying in Afghanistan. Anything that Australia can contribute to reduce this toll will only serve to strengthen ties between NATO and Australian forces.
*Subscription required

- Rudd Urges NATO to Share Afghan Burden, AFP, Australian, 2008-04-03

7. Former East Timor Refugees Demand Govt Attention, Yemris Fointuna, Jakarta Post, 2008-02-04

Thousands of former East Timorese refugees occupied the Belu Legislative Council building demanding the central government explain why assistance has failed to reach them. This is the second such action staged by the group, who have chosen to become Indonesian citizens rather than return to their home country.

- Timor-Leste's Displacement Crisis, ICG, 2008-03-31

8. How Soon Can Donors Exit From Post-Conflict States? Satish Chand and Ruth Coffman, Working Paper Number 141, Center for Global Development, 2008- 03-07 [PDF, 316 KB]

In this paper we estimate the time and dollar costs of post-conflict rebuilding in Liberia, Mozambique, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste. Our estimates, even under the most optimistic assumptions, suggest that it would be decades, possibly generations, before post-conflict states are ready to see donors leave.

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