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# APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 5, 2008

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### 1. [Prisoners 'Handed to Torturers'](#), Tom Hyland, Age, 2008-05-04

While the Australian Defence Force says there is no evidence prisoners taken by Australian troops have been mistreated, official documents show three have complained they were beaten around the head by secret police after being captured by the Dutch-Australian taskforce. The Dutch documents show prisoners are routinely handed over to Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security (NDS), which human rights groups accuse of torturing and abusing prisoners.

- [Afghanistan: Detainees Transferred to Torture: ISAF Complicity?](#) Amnesty International, 2007-1-13
- [Detainee policy - Afghanistan and Iraq](#), Australian Forces Abroad, Nautilus Institute

### 2. [Why Are Australian Troops in Afghanistan?](#) Peter Mares with Joel Fitzgibbon, ABC, 2008-05-02 [Audio]

Following the death of Lance Corporal Jason Marks in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says Australia should "steel itself for hight casualties" (sic) there. He says the year ahead could be "difficult, dangerous and bloody". So why are Australian troops there; and how long will they stay?

- [Australian Government Policy - Afghanistan](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

### **3. [Rudd Seems to be Shying away from Necessary Battles over Defence](#), Hamish MacDonald, SMH, 2008-05-03**

A new white paper is being written by the current Defence deputy secretary, Michael Pezzulo, whose team includes the ANU strategist Ross Babbage, who recently suggested that the defence force needed massive offensive forces - - to be able to "rip the arms off" any opponent. Yet, unless there are surprises in the May 13 budget speech, Fitzgibbon seems to be inclined to rubber-stamp the defence force plans set by John Howard.

- [Australia's Future Defence Policy](#), Sen Lam with Hugh White, ABC, 2008-05-01

### **4. [Report: The limits of RAMSI](#), AidWatch, 2008-04-27 [342 KB, PDF]**

After five years, much uncertainty remains in the Solomon Islands over the future of RAMSI. As a security force it still enjoys broad support, but there are serious local objections to its role and its semi-permanent nature has brought new problems. In this report, Dr. Tim Anderson explores the impact that RAMSI has had for Solomon Islanders and highlights the Limits of RAMSI.

- [Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands \(RAMSI\)](#), Australia, Nautilus Institute

### **5. [Fretilin Poised as Gusmao Isolated](#), Paul Toohey, Australian, 2008-05-05**

Xaxana Gusmao's Timorese Government is heading close to collapse as parties in his ruling Parliamentary Majority Alliance (AMP) coalition turn against him and leave the door open for Fretilin, the party with the biggest majority, to form its own coalition.

### **6. [Reporters 'Being Intimidated in Fiji'](#), AAP, News.com, 2008-05-04**

An Australian publisher deported from Fiji last week says there is a culture of intimidation towards reporters in the country. Evan Hannah, the publisher of the News Limited-owned 'Fiji Times', was expelled from the Pacific nation after self-appointed interim Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama ignored a Fiji High Court ruling. Bainimarama ordered Mr Hannah's deportation on the grounds that he was a threat to national security and in breach of his work permit.

### **7. [Illegal Fishing in TSI Threatens Sea Cucumbers: Burke](#), Cathy Alexander, National Indigenous Times, 2008-05-03**

Illegal fishing in the Torres Strait is on the rise, threatening the recovery of vulnerable sea cucumber populations. The number of Papua New Guinean boats apprehended in the Torres Strait Protected Zone has soared from three in 2007 to 15 already this year, the Australian government says. Fisheries Minister Tony Burke said 10 of the boats caught this year were hunting for sea cucumbers.

### **8. Nautilus Australia Briefing Books - updated pages**

- Australia in Afghanistan
  - [Casualties - ADF](#)
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- Australia in the Solomon Islands
  - [Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands](#) (RAMSI)
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