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1. $1.3b Helicopter Project Dumped, Tom Allard, SMH, 2008-03-06

The troubled Super Seasprite project has been dumped, leaving the Defence Force with a substandard naval aviation capability and taxpayers with a $1.3 billion bill for helicopters that will never enter service. The inglorious end to perhaps the most spectacular of a series of mishandled Defence acquisitions over the past decade was announced by the Defence Minister, Joel Fitzgibbon.

2. Papua New Guinea Indicates it Would Welcome Australian Police on its Streets, RNZI, 2008-03-05

The issue is set to be revived during a visit to PNG by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, starting today. PNG's Internal Security Minister, Sani Rambi, says he supports a new influx of Australian police under a revamped Enhanced Cooperation Program between the two countries.

3. HIV Fears over PNG Border Breaches, Sean Parnell, Australian, 2008-03-01

Australian and PNG officials have been secretly examining the need for tough border restrictions in the Torres Strait to protect remote indigenous communities from a looming public health disaster. A committee has been grappling with the need to stop thousands of PNG citizens illegally crossing the border to use health services, 30 years after the Torres Strait Treaty allowed free movement

between the two countries.

- Treaty between Australia and the Independent State of Papua New Guinea Concerning Sovereignty and Maritime Boundaries in the Area Between the Two Countries, Including the Area Known as Torres Strait, and Related Matters, Australian Treaty Series 1985 No 4, Department of Foreign Affairs, 18 December 1978 (entry into force: 1985-02-15)
- Responding to HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea: Australia's Strategy to Support Papua New Guinea 2006-2010, April 2006 [PDF 90KB]

4. Indonesia Cancels Russian Arms Contract, Angus Grigg, AFR*, 2008-03-05

Indonesia's planned military build-up has failed after the government said its $US1 billion arms deal with Russia was on hold and that it could not afford to buy new F16 fighter jets from the United States.
* Subscription required.

5. Cautionary Tale for Foreigners, Angus Grigg, AFR*, 2008-03-05

The Minster for Energy and Mineral Resources, Purnomo Yusgiantoro, has sought international arbitration to have Newmont Mining's contract of work cancelled. This is all part of a less than subtle campaign in Indonesia to buy back the farm. The country appears more than happy to have foreign investors pump money into the stockmarket, but it does not want them controlling local assets.
* Subscription only.

6. Afghanistan: Taliban Destroy Cell Towers, Taimoor Shah, New York Times, 2008-03-04

The Taliban knocked out two cellphone towers near the city of Kandahar over the weekend, carrying out a threat they made last week against all four cellphone companies in Afghanistan. The Taliban demanded that the companies stop operating at night because, they said, American and NATO forces were using phone signals to track Taliban movements.

- Canadian SIGINT and Afghanistan, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

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Richard Tanter,
Project Co-ordinator

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org