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1. White House moves to adjust war aims to Qaeda focus, Peter Baker and Eric Schmitt, NYT, 2009-10-07

President Obama's national security team is moving to reframe its war strategy by emphasizing the campaign against Al Qaeda in Pakistan while arguing that the Taliban in Afghanistan does not pose a direct threat to the United States, officials said. The shift in thinking suggests that the president has been presented with an approach that would not require all of the additional troops that his commanding general in the region has requested.

- Gates: US will stay in Afghanistan, Al Jazeera, 2009-10-06
- Poll: public still OK with troops in Afghanistan if goal is to fight terrorists, Mark Memmott, NPR, 2009-10-07

2. British call for more Aussie action, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2009-10-07

On an official visit to Australia, the Minister for International Defence and Security, Ann Taylor, called for NATO countries and their allies to put fewer caveats on operations and accept a bigger combat burden in Afghanistan. Her comments came as 10 Afghan troops were killed and more than 100 Taliban militants died or were wounded in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

- NATO urges Russia to help equip, train afghan forces, James G. Neuger, Bloomberg, 2009-10-07

3. U.N. data show discrepancies in Afghan vote, Colum Lynch and Joshua Partlow, Washington Post, 2009-10-07

Voter turnout data kept confidential by the United Nations' chief envoy in Kabul after Afghanistan's disputed August presidential election show that in some provinces the official vote count exceeded the estimated number of voters by 100,000 or more, providing further indication that the contest was marred by fraud. The disclosure of the data seems likely to worsen a credibility crisis for the U.N. special envoy, Kai Eide, who is already facing allegations that he sided with Karzai.

4. Afghanistan: NATO's Graveyard? John Feffer, Tomgram, 2009-09-19

This, then, is the tug of war within NATO: between the Europe First faction and the Go Global faction. Oddly, both sides appear on the verge of falling into the mud. Now that the Obama administration is making nice with Russia, the Europe Firsters don't have a threat to stand on. For the Go Global faction, meanwhile, victory within NATO requires victory within Afghanistan, which is why, in 2007, future AfPak czar Richard Holbrooke declared that "Afghanistan represents the ultimate test for NATO." If Afghanistan is the test, then NATO is flunking.

- Australia and NATO, Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

5. Japan favours Australian inclusion in East Asia community, Peter Alford, Australian, 2009-10-08

Australia should belong to the "East Asia community" envisaged by the new Japanese government, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said. The community proposal is key to the new government's foreign policy hopes but Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has remained vague on its extent as he tries to engage China, which favours an East Asia-only grouping.

- Asia Pacific Community - reinventing the wheel? Colin Heseltine, Asialink, September 2009 [PDF, 172kb]

6. East Timor to hold first joint military exercise with US, Sify News, 2009-1--01

East Timor is scheduled to conduct its first joint exercise with the US military this month to bolster the skills of the country's armed forces, US officials said. Members of the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit and the US Navy are due to be in East Timor from Oct 13 to 23 to hold joint military exercises with the Falintil-FDTL (Force de Defesa de Timor Leste), said Hans Klem, the US ambassador to East Timor.

- Indonesia, East Timor: border dispute heats up, Keta Haluha, Global Voices, 2009-10-07

7. UN calls for better deal for migrant workers, CBC News, 2009-10-05

The global recession presents an opportunity to come up with a new deal for the world's migrant workers, a UN report suggests. The 2009 Human Development Report said "the recession should be seized as an opportunity to institute a new deal for migrants — one that that will benefit workers at home and abroad while guarding against a protectionist backlash."

- Human Development Report challenges common migration misconceptions, UNDP, October 2009

8. Indonesian navy on board with plan to shelve submarine purchases until 2011, Markus Junianto Sihaloho, Jakarta Globe, 2009-10-07

After initial reticence, the Navy is now accepting the government's decision to put off the purchase of new submarines until 2011, Navy Chief Adm. Tedjo Edhy Purdijatno said. Since 2004, the Navy has been looking to double its submarine fleet, which currently consists of two German-built vessels.

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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