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1. Ex-envoy Counters Rudd on Arms Race, Patrick Walters, Australian, 2008-10-04

Former Defence Department chief and leading diplomat Ric Smith has challenged Kevin Rudd's assertion that Australia faces a huge surge in military spending in the Asian region. "Neither the data on military spending nor the information about acquisitions suggest that Asia is experiencing an arms race," Mr Smith writes. When compared with their spending levels a decade ago, very few countries, with the notable exception of China, are spending more of their GDP on defence.

- Asian Military Modernisation, Richard C. Smith, Lowy Institute, October 2008

2. New U.S. Intelligence Report Warns 'Victory' Not Certain in Iraq, Jonathan S. Landay, Warren P. Strobel and Nancy A. Youssef, McClatchy, 2008-10-07

A nearly completed high-level U.S. intelligence analysis warns that unresolved ethnic and sectarian

tensions in Iraq could unleash a new wave of violence, potentially reversing the major security and political gains achieved over the last year. The National Intelligence Estimate findings parallel a Defense Department assessment last month that warned that despite "promising developments, security gains in Iraq remain fragile".

3. Fitzgibbon Echoes Frustrations over Afghanistan War, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2008-10-08

As Australian Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon warned yesterday that NATO's grand plan for a broader and war-winning strategy in Afghanistan was stalling, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates said negotiating with moderates in the Taliban was a "key long-term solution". Mr Fitzgibbon said he was worried about the lack of progress in implementing the strategy agreed to at NATO's summit in Bucharest in April.

4. Modest Objectives in War on Terror, Patrick Cockburn, Canberra Times, 2008-10-08

The first serious talks between the Afghan Government and the Taliban took place 10 days ago in Mecca under the auspices of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. During the discussions, all sides agreed that the war in Afghanistan is going to be solved by dialogue and not by fighting. The Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, was not present but his representatives said he was no longer allied to al-Qaeda.

- There Will Be No Lasting Peace without the Taliban, The World from Berlin, Spiegel International, 2008-10-07
- Peace Negotiations and Truces in Afghanistan, Australian in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

5. Germans Boost Afghan Role, Mitch Potter, Star, 2008-10-08

Germany promised an additional 1,000 troops to the beleaguered NATO effort, subject to parliamentary approval. The move will increase German troop levels to 4,500, or nearly twice the number of Canadians deployed in restive Kandahar province. But unlike the Canadians, British, Dutch and Australians, the German commitment is conditional on the continuation of controversial caveats that bar deployment to southern Afghanistan, where reinforcements are needed most.

- Coalition Forces: Germany, Australian in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute

6. High Court Dismisses Fiji Coup Case, Campbell Cooney, ABC, 2008-10-09

In its judgement, Fiji's High Court found the military's removal of the elected government of Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, in December 2006, and its backing of an interim government, was not illegal, under the country's constitution. The judgement also supports the actions of the country's head of state, President Ratu Josefa Iloilo.

7. Implications of Climate Change for Australian Fisheries and Aquaculture: A Preliminary Assessment, Alistair J. Hobday, Elvira S. Poloczanska, Richard J. Matear, CSIRO and Department of Climate Change, August 2008

The report provides a preliminary assessment of the state of knowledge of the implications of climate change for fisheries and aquaculture in Australia. It identifies that there are likely to be significant climate change impacts on the biological, economic, and social aspects of Australian

fisheries and finds that there is little consolidated knowledge of the potential impacts of climate change.

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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