APSNet for 20051219

Recommended Citation

"APSNet for 20051219", APSNet Briefing Notes, December 19, 2005,
https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-for-20051219-2/

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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

Monday 19 December 2005

Bi-weekly report from the Nautilus Institute at RMIT, Australia.

1. Australia/US Alliance: Sudden Switch In Battle Plans
2. Terrorism Trial Faces Challenge
3. Australia/US Joint Military Training: Munitions Factory, Wharf Being Considered
4. Australia Says It Has Exit Plan For Iraq
5. This Is Australia?
6. Fiji Military Commander Holding Talks With Chinese Defence Officials
7. Special Report. Diego Garcia US Military Base

1. Australia/US Alliance: Sudden Switch In Battle Plans,
   Geoffrey Barker AFR*, 2005-12-19Australia has rethought its role as a US alliance partner. The shift is based on a recognition that in future conflicts the US will not be content with essentially token contributions from its allies. The longstanding defence-of-Australia doctrine, which focused on air and naval domination of the sea-air gap between the Australian and Asian land masses, has been replaced by a greater focus on the projection of heavier land forces into the region and further afield.
   * subscription required
2. Terrorism Trial Faces Challenge,
   Michael Pelly, SMH, 2005-12-19Australia's trial for an alleged terrorist bomb plot faces a long

delay because of the first constitutional challenge to the Federal Government's anti-terrorism laws. Media organisations [Fairfax, AAP, Nationwide News, Channel Seven, Channel Nine, ABC and SBS] are arguing that the National Information Security Act interferes with the conduct of trials in state courts and gives no guidance on weighing national security against the right to a fair hearing.

3. Australia/US Joint Military Training: Munitions Factory, Wharf Being Considered,
Sean Parnell, Australian, 2005-12-19A high-security explosives factory and munitions-loading wharf is being considered by the Defence Department for a joint military training facility for Australian and US troops. In a move likely to fuel speculation the US will eventually use Australia as a military staging post, the Defence Force is eyeing sites in Qld. and the N.T. to complement existing facilities in NSW.

4. Australia Says It Has Exit Plan For Iraq,
Reuters, 2005-12-16Australia has an exit strategy for its forces in Iraq but the withdrawal of troops would be based on conditions in Iraq and not on any deadline, "Obviously there is an exit plan. It is not time-bound, it's condition bound," said foreign minister Alexander Downer.

5. This Is Australia?,
Julie Macken, AFR*, 2005-12-17Rarely has the term 'un-Australian' been used as often as it has during the racial tensions on Sydney's beaches. But what exactly is 'Australian'? John Howard has spoken of qualities of 'Openness, Tolerance and a Lack of Pretension'. AFR examines how Australia measures up. On openness, successes include: postwar Australia was built on an influx of immigrants from war-torn Europe notwithstanding the White Australia policy, and Australia had amongst the world's highest refugee intake prior to 1998. Failures include: "We will decide who comes to this country, and the circumstances in which they come". John Howard, 2001, and the dissembling and deceit associated with the second Iraq war.
*subscription requiredOf related interest: Police 'Lock Down' Sydney Beaches, Reuters, Al Jazeera, 2005-12-19
The violence has hurt Australia's image, rekindling old stereotypes of white Australians as racist, opposition leader Kim Beazley said. In central Sydney, almost 2,000 people held a "United Against Racism" rally. Australia Asks If Racism Was Behind Riots On A Beach, Raymond Bonner, New York Times, 2005-12-16
Prime Minister John Howard, has said "I don't believe Australia is a racist country," which hardly settled the matter. Although increasing numbers of Asians have been allowed in, the country of 20 million is still roughly 92 percent Caucasian. Critics of Mr. Howard, leader of the centre-right Liberal Party, say he has fueled the country's ethnic tensions.

6. Fiji Military Commander Holding Talks With Chinese Defence Officials,
Radio New Zealand International, 2005-12-15Fiji's military commander, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, is making an official visit to China for talks with defence officials.

7. Briefing note: Diego Garcia US Military BaseNick Hordern in the AFR raises basic questions about the giant South Indian Ocean military base of Diego Garcia, regularly used by Australian aircraft throughout the Iraq War. Long-running legal challenges from Chagos islanders, dispossessed by Britain three decades ago to make way for the US base, pose a potentially serious problem for the US - and Australia. Meanwhile there are continuing Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch allegations that Diego Garcia is a CIA "black site" used for illegal "rendition" and torture. Just Another 'Uninhabited' Base, Nick Hordern, AFR*, 2005-12-17
Diego Garcia, the indispensable central Indian Ocean base that enables the US military to project its power into the Persian Gulf, perhaps gets less attention than it deserves. Earlier this month the UK High Court began hearing an application to overturn a 2004 Order in Council by the Privy Council that prevents the return of the Ilois, the inhabitants who were evicted thirty-five years ago. Australia's use, at the expense of the Ilois, of this vital facility is another of the ugly

entanglements that come with the US alliance.
* subscription requiredOf related interest:1.The US Diego Garcia military base: Background
Diego Garcia "Camp Justice" 7"20'S 72"25'E, GlobalSecurity.org, 2005-12-102. Dispossession of Chagos Islanders:
a. Diego Garcia, Simon Winchester, Granta 73, 2001b. Q and A: Chagos Islands Dispute, BBC News, 2003-10-09c. UK Chagos Support Associationd. Summary of Chagos Islands' legal case: Diego Garcia: The 'Criminal Question' Doctrine, Charles Judson Harwood Jr. Homepage.Ntlworld.com3. Australian use of Diego Garcia in Iraq War:
Australian F/A-18 Fighter Aircraft Operating From Diego Garcia, Australian Defence Media Release 2002-05-204. Allegations of CIA "black site" on Diego Garcia:
a. Island Paradise Or Torture Chamber? CIA Under Fire For Secret Detentions Indian Ocean Atoll Alleged Abuse Site, Lynda Hurst (Toronto Star, 2005-07-02), GlobalSecurity.orgb. United States of America / Yemen: Secret Detention In CIA "Black Sites", Amnesty International, 2005-11.8. pdfc. Secrets And Torture, William Arkin, Early Warning, WashingtonPost.com, 2005-12-085. Diego Garcia Links:
Links About Diego Garcia And The Chagos, Ted Morris, 2005-08-16This is the last APSNet for 2005.
APSNet will resume 16 January 2006Contact editor: Jane Mullett
jane.mullett@rmit.edu.au

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