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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

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1. Rift Looms Over Fate Of Papuan 'Refugees', Russell Skelton, Age, 2006-01-29 Australia and Indonesia are headed for a diplomatic crisis over the 43 [West Papuan asylum seekers](#) whose claims of persecution now appear likely to be recognised. Australian immigration authorities have ruled them "in" as potential refugees. They will now be formally interviewed and their claims processed. A final determination on their status is not expected for several months. Of related interest: [Indonesia Increases Military Presence In Papua](#), Hamish Fitzsimmons, ABC online, 2006-01-26
The Indonesian military has been boosting its numbers in the province of Papua. Rev. Socrates Sofyan Yoman, Chairman of the West Papua Baptist Church, says Indonesian tanks have been patrolling the streets of the provincial capital Jayapura.

2. Helping Out The Pacific,
Editorial, SMH, 2006-01-30A Government report says several [Pacific economies' survival](#) depends on urgent action including opening up Australia's job market. Nauru, Tuvalu and Kiribati are closest to collapse, PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are in need. Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa are more stable, as they have access to labour markets in NZ and the USA. This is only part of the picture. Time for a proper debate.Of related interest:[Small Loans Scheme to Keep Pacific States Afloat](#), Cynthia Banham, SMH, 2006-01-28
Australia should set up a Pacific development trust for lenders to travel to island communities and offer small loans to villagers starting their own businesses, Labour's new foreign aid policy says. [Background Papers, Pacific 2020, AusAid, Dec 2005](#) These background papers provide the framework and content for the final Pacific 2020 report (available May 2006).
3. Nuclear-Test Workers Demand France Change Its Attitude,
Tahiti Presse, 2006-01-30Public debate over the effects of [nuclear testing in French Polynesia](#) has revived as a result of a leaked French Polynesia Assembly Committee report (due out 9 February). "France blocked the inquiry committee by not allowing permission to go to Moruroa and Fangataufa" said Roland Oldham, president of the Moruroa E Tatou Association of former workers on the nuclear tests.Of related interest:[Commission of Inquiry into the Consequences of Nuclear Testing in the Air from 1966 - 1974 in French Polynesia](#), press release, CDRPC (in French)
4. Stay Cool On China, US Told,
Geoff Elliott, Australian, 2006-01-30Mr Richardson, former head of ASIO, said Beijing was occupied with internal issues, indicating that the US should be more worried about [China's boom](#) collapsing than its military rise. "The question for Australia is not whether China's growth is innately good or bad; China's growth is unambiguously good for Asia and the United States."
5. Australia's New Man Has Big Boots To Fill,
Fran O'Sullivan, New Zealand Herald, 2006-01-28Allan Hawke, retiring Australian High Commissioner for NZ, said the [Aus-NZ relationship](#) could "go one way or the other - in defence, in trade ". But he has not broken the stranglehold against open discussion of: bilateral defence ties; potential for a trilateral relationship between NZ, Australia and the USA; and for NZ to join the US and Australian-dominated Partnership for Climate Change.
6. US Carrier Loses Jet,
AAP, Australian, 2006-01-30Nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan lost a jet fighter during [training exercises](#) 400km southeast of Brisbane. US officials confirmed the F/A-18 Hornet strike fighter ditched into the sea while attempting a night landing on the flight deck. The pilot ejected safely but the \$37 million jet was unlikely to be retrieved, officials said.Contact editor: Jane Mullett
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