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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Monday 27 February 2006

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Austral Policy Forum: West Papua, Refugees & Australia: Scott Burchill

1. Papuan Backlash Closes Gold Mine, Tom Allard and Agencies, SMH, 2006-02-25Indigenous Papuans have blockaded Freeport's goldmine and the Indonesian military is being sent in to

break up the protest. Papuans have long complained they get little money and few jobs from the huge gold and copper mine, and yet suffer from the severe environmental damage.

2. Best Defence Seen As Mix of Regional and Global Strategy, Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2006-02-25ThDefence Department secretary Ric Smith warned that Australia should not aspire to a strategic policy it could not afford in the long run, saying the debate between supporters of regional and global defence policies was phoney.
   *Subscription required
   - Defence: The Prime Minister's Man, Geoffrey Barker, APO, 2006-02-20.
   - Lightweight Response to Army's Role, Robyn Lim, AFR*, 2006-02-16 (* in Centre for Independent Studies: Executive Highlights)
   - Seduction of Dr Nelson, Greg Sheridan, Australian, 2006-02-18
3.
4. PM's Foreign Faces, Hugh White, Age, 2006-02-27If anything seems clear about Howard's record, it is the course he has steered on the US alliance and regional diplomacy. However, Howard's biggest contribution to Australian foreign policy may have been to move us closer to China, not closer to the US. The image of him welcoming Hu in Parliament shows us one who sees Australia's future in our region and is willing to adjust our relationships to accommodate the changing power balance in Asia.
5. Nelson's Clear Eye On Law, Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2006-02-27Defence Minister Brendan Nelson has voiced refreshing scepticism about his department's attack-dog hostility towards legal actions launched by aggrieved service personnel and their families. Nelson should reject the Defence assertion that it is necessary to trade off the demands of justice against the need to preserve military discipline.
   * Subscription required.
6. Corruption Undermines Aceh Tsunami Aid, Matt Wade, SMH, 2006-02-27Government aid to the tsunami-devastated province of Aceh has been undermined by corruption, poor communication with locals and a failure to protect the environment, says a report by Aid/Watch. Aid/Watch, is critical of Australia's assistance to Aceh, saying it has been painfully slow and excessively secretive.
   - Activities by Province - Aceh: AusAID in Indonesia, 2005-07-14
   - ActivAustralia Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development (AIPRD), AusAID, December 2005
7.
8. Mass Mutiny Hits E Timor Army, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2006-02-27More than 400 East Timorese soldiers - a quarter of the country's army - will be dismissed for deserting after protesting over poor conditions and selective promotions. The sacking is a blow to East Timor's fledgling defence force and a potential security risk. It is an embarrassment for Canberra as most of the rebel troops received training from the ADF.
9. US Tries To Avoid Iraq Civil War, Tony Walker, AFR*, 2006-02-27American diplomacy has moved into overdrive in an attempt to slow Iraq's slide towards all-out civil war and preserve a crumbling political process aimed at forming an inclusive government.
   * Subscription required
   - An Unholy Mess, Paul McGeough, SMH, 2006-02-25
10.
11. Cutting Edge: The Collins Experience, Patrick Walters, ASPI Strategic Insights, 2006-02-23The

Collins Class submarine project is the most ambitious and controversial defence project ever undertaken in Australia. The Commonwealth's $5 billion investment has not only provided Australia with a key strategic asset but also greatly boosted the skill base of our naval construction industry.

12. Avian Flu 'To Come In From PNG', Lloyd Jones, Herald Sun, 2006-02-23Once the deadly avian flu reaches Papua New Guinea it will quickly spread to its near neighbour Australia along migratory bird flyways, a World Health Organisation (WHO) expert has warned. Disease specialist Dr Luo Dapeng is assisting PNG health, quarantine and agriculture authorities prepare a contingency plan for the arrival of the H5N1 strain of the virus.
    - Avian influenza, WHO site
    - Avian Influenza - Responding to the Threat of a Regional Pandemic, AusAid, January 2006
    - Scientists Doubt Virus Has Arrived, Deborah Smith, AAP, SMH, 2006-02-24

13.

Austral Policy Forum 06-04A: West Papua, Refugees & Australia

In this speech at an RMIT University forum on West Papua, Scott Burchill of Deakin University discusses the political issues surrounding the application by 43 West Papuans arrived in northern Australia in late January following a sea journey in an outrigger canoe. Burchill argues that

> "successive Australian Governments have adopted the mistaken belief that political stability across the Indonesian archipelago - which they believe is bedeviled by inherent centrifugal forces - can be secured through military repression. Precisely the opposite is true. Military repression is a cause of political fragmentation and secession in Indonesia."

Read the complete essay - West Papua, Refugees & Australia.

http://nautilus.rmit.edu.au/forum-reports/0604a-burchill.html

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