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Austral Peace and Security Net

Austral Peace and Security Network Bi-Weekly Report, from the Nautilus Institute at RMIT, Melbourne, Australia.

Monday 10 April 2006

1. Canberra Backing Push for Papuan Autonomy
2. Jakarta Kept in the Dark
3. NZ Troops to Stay in Afghanistan
4. U.S. Study Paints Somber Portrait of Iraqi Discord
5. Nelson Takes the Long View
6. Companies Urge Action on Warming
7. Burden Sharing in the Straits, Not So Straight Forward
8. Austral Policy Forum: Uranium sales to India: What should Australia's price be? - Ron Huisken

1. Canberra Backing Push for Papuan Autonomy, John Kerin, AFR*, 2006-0--10

Australia is privately encouraging Indonesia to revisit granting the troubled province of Papua autonomy similar to the deal that ended decades of separatist violence in its western province of Aceh. The Indonesian government has had a special autonomy offer on the table in Papua since 2001 but it has been resisted by Papuans.
* subscription required

- Governor Warns Papua Must Get Justice, Wealth, Mark Forbes, SMH, 2006-04-07
- Loud Echoes of East Timor, Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2006-04-08
  * subscription required

2. Jakarta Kept in the Dark, Tom Allard, SMH, 2006-04-10

Australian authorities were alerted that 43 Papuan asylum seekers had left Indonesia five days before they landed, yet failed to inform Jakarta. A spokesman for the Department of Immigration, David Seale, confirmed that the Government first heard the Papuans planned to travel to Australia on January 13. That was the night they left Merauke in Papua. As they were still in Indonesian waters, Australia's obligations under the refugee convention to protect asylum seekers had not been triggered.

3. NZ Troops to Stay in Afghanistan, AAP, SMH, 2006-04-10

New Zealand troops will remain in Afghanistan at least another 18 months, the government has announced. Prime Minister Helen Clark said the 120-strong provincial reconstruction team would stay in the central province of Bamyam until September 2007.

4. U.S. Study Paints Somber Portrait of Iraqi Discord, Eric Schmitt and Edward Wong, New York Times, 2006-04-09

An internal staff report by the US Embassy and the military command in Baghdad provides a sobering province-by-province snapshot of Iraq's political, economic and security situation, rating the overall stability of 6 of the 18 provinces "serious" and one "critical". The patterns of discord mapped by the report confirm that ethnic and religious schisms have become entrenched across much of the country.

- Provincial Stability Assessment, US Department of State, 2006-01-31 [PDF]

5. Nelson Takes the Long View, Geoffrey Barker, AFR, 206-04-10

Brendan Nelson apparently wants to supplement the competitive tendering process by developing clear guidance on which industrial capabilities must be retained in Australia and which can be imported. This will be a significant challenge for Defence, which has a long history of resisting ministerial policies it does not care for.
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- Defence Review to Aid Smaller Businesses (Australia's Top 20 Defence Contractors), Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2006-04-07
  * Subscription required

6. Companies Urge Action on Warming, Tim Colebatch and Rod Myer, Age, 2006-04-07

Six of Australia's biggest companies have called on the Federal Government to take tough action to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, including some form of charge on carbon emissions and a binding target. The group (Westpac, BP, Origin Energy, Visy, Swiss Re and IAG) called the Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change, has been meeting with the Australian Conservation Foundation for several years.

- Australian Business Roundtable on Climate Change

7. Burden Sharing in the Straits, Not So Straight Forward, Sam Bateman, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Commentaries (17/06) NTU, Singapore, 2006-03-20 [PDF]

It would seem logical and essential that measures for ensuring safety, security and environmental protection in the Straits should be both comprehensive and integrated. They should cover not just security needs but also the full requirements of safety and environmental protection in the Straits. Unfortunately the user states are only paying lip service to these latter requirements at present.

8. Austral Policy Forum 06-12A 10 April 2006: Uranium sales to India: What should Australia's price be? - Ron Huisken

Ron Huisken, of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the ANU, argues Australia can make a persuasive reaffirmation to the battered non-proliferation regime "part of the price of endorsing the US-India deal and of entertaining the prospect of exporting uranium to India." Australia could press the United States to reaffirm the article of the NPT that enjoins the nuclear weapon states to negotiate effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament"; signal "a renewed determination to conclude the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty"; and seek "a global consensus to construct one or more internationally-owned and operated facilities for the production of fissile material for peaceful purposes." For Australia, Huisken argues, this "will take courage. But we can be pretty confident that 50 years from now we will regret not having tried."

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