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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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Thursday 27 April 2006

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Austral Policy Forum 06-14A: Australia, Indonesia and the Papuan Crises - Richard Chauvel

1. Ex-Soldiers Threaten Guerilla War, AP, Australian, 2006-04-25Almost 600 soldiers dismissed last month from East Timor's armed forces for striking over working conditions threatened yesterday to wage a guerilla war if the Government failed to resolve their dispute with the military leadership. About 3000 people joined a protest rally organised by the soldiers in the capital.
2. East Timor: Torture and Mistreatment by Police, Human Rights Watch, 2006-04-20The East

Timorese government needs to urgently address the problem of police torture and ill-treatment of detainees before it becomes widespread, Human Rights Watch said in a new report released today. Independent and internal accountability mechanisms need to be greatly strengthened to stop a slide into impunity for officials who commit abuses.
    - Tortured Beginnings: Police Violence and the Beginnings of Impunity in East Timor, Human Rights Watch Report, April 2006 Volume 18, No.2
    - PNTL Commander Laments Report, UNIMISET, Daily Media Review, 2006-04-22/24

3.
4. Officers Return to PNG, Simon Kearney, Australian, 2006-04-26Australian police will soon return to Papua New Guinea as advisers, almost 12 months after being expelled. It is understood Justice Minister Chris Ellison is close to finalising the agreement.
    - The ECP and Australia's Middle Power Ambitions, Allan Patience, State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Project, Discussion Paper 2005/4 [PDF]

5.
6. Focus on Papua a Symptom of Narrow Vision, Ed Aspinall, SMH, 2006-04-27When tens of thousands of Indonesian workers protested for their rights in April, it caused hardly a blip in Australia. This despite the fact that exploited Indonesian workers make many of the shoes and clothes that Australians wear. Why is there so much interest in Papua from people who are indifferent to the other 240 million or so people in Indonesia?
7. Intelligence Gap Fails Melanesian Security Forces, Greg Sheridan, Australian, 2006-04-27The events of the last week in the Solomon Islands must lead us to question two aspects of RAMSI. Sinclair Dinnen, at the ANU, observes wryly: "The fact that we were so much taken by surprise does indicate the relative shallowness of our connection to Solomon Islands society. We have had a lot of people there since 2003." Another Australian official is much blunter: "This was a catastrophic failure of intelligence and situational awareness."
    - The 2006 Polls & the PNG Experience, Jon Fraenkel, Solomons Star, 2006-04-24
    - Big Brother Australia Walks Fine Line In The Solomon Islands, Editorial, Age, 2006-04-27

8.
9. Hill to Advise on Diggers for Sudan, David Nason, Australian, 2006-04-26The former defence minister arrives in New York on the weekend to take up his post as ambassador to the UN. The Sudan crisis is at the top of his agenda. Mr Hill's task will be to assess whether Australia's armed forces can make a useful contribution in Sudan; advise on how a military commitment would sit with Australia's national security priorities; and advise on the extent of the dangers troops might face.
    - Operation Azure: ADF support to the UN Mission in Sudan
    - Chief Joint Operations: Squadron Leader Ruth Elsley spoke with Karlene Sargent about the ADF's contribution to Operation Azure in Sudan, Defence, August 2005

10.
11. Arms Bust Puts Indonesia under the Gun, Morgan Mellish, AFR*, 2007-04-27The interception of an illegal weapons deal has proved embarrassing for military leaders. On 9 April 2006 a group including known arms dealers for the Indonesian military and two Indonesian Air Force officers, was arrested by the FBI as they tried to make the illegal $US40 million ($54 million) purchase from an unnamed US company.
    * Subscription required.
12. Nuclear Test Findings Look Grim For Veterans, Cynthia Banham, SMH, 2006-04-27A study into

cancer rates among Australian veterans exposed to radiation during British nuclear tests in the 1950s and 1960s has found their incidence of cancer 23 per cent higher than the general population. However, the study concludes that "the increases in cancer rates do not appear to have been caused by exposure to radiation".

Austral Policy Forum 06-14A: Australia, Indonesia and the Papuan Crises - Richard Chauvel

Richard Chauvel, of Victoria University, argues that Australia and Indonesia confront multi-faceted and interrelated crises in Papua. The depth of political instability in Papua is clear from key incidents in the first three months of this year, "Papuan resistance and Indonesian repression remain the dominant characteristics of Indonesian rule in the territory." On the other hand, Chauvel argues, these crises on the Indonesian side are being compounded by "a remarkable combination of Australian over-confidence, insouciance and ignorance". In policy terms, argues Chauvel, Australia faces a great political challenge because of opposition within the Indonesian army and government to the president's policy of autonomy for Papua: "a promising policy of Special Autonomy supported by the president is being opposed by an array of forces within the Indonesian government headed by the military, intelligence agencies, and the Ministry of the Interior."

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