APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 25, 2006

Recommended Citation

"APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 25, 2006", APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, May 25, 2006, https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-for-20060525/

APSNet for 20060525

Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 25 May 2006

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2. Australia to Reduce Troop Numbers in the Solomons
3. Diggers to Pull Out of Muthanna if Iraqis Take Over
4. W.H.O. to Study Bird Flu Deaths in Family
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Austral Policy Forum 06-16A: Australian foreign policy in the twentieth century: the problem of having special friends - David Martin Jones

1. PM Sends Commandos into Dili, Dylan Welch and AAP, SMH, 2006-05-25John Howard says 150 Australian commandos will fly into the East Timor capital Dili this afternoon to secure the international airport. The commando company will be accompanied by Black Hawk helicopters and a C-130 Hercules aircraft. Australia was prepared to send 1,300 troops to help East Timor. Jose Ramos Horta, said, "The arrival of the troops from Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and possibly Malaysia is still necessary to create a secure environment for our people."

- Unrest in East Timor, Rory Callinan, Time Pacific, 2006-05-24
- Acid Test for Howard's Neighbourhood Watch, Patrick Walters, Australian, 2005-05-25
- Travel Advice, East Timor, DFAT, 2006-05-25

2.
3. Australia to Reduce Troop Numbers in the Solomons, Reuters, 2006-05-24Australia will cut the number of troops it deployed to the Solomon Islands last month. Nearly 500 troops and an extra 120 police from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea were sent to the Solomon's capital, Honiara. "We will continue to have deployed in the Solomon Islands a company of around 140," Brendan Nelson told parliament.
4. Diggers to Pull Out of Muthanna if Iraqis Take Over, Patrick Walters, Australian, 2006-05-24Australian troops in Iraq's Muthanna province could wind up their mission by early next year. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said that he anticipated the security operation for British-led coalition forces could end by December. Reports in London indicated Britain would hand over to Iraqi security forces in Muthanna province in July and that US forces would follow suit in the Shia holy city of Najaf.
5. W.H.O. to Study Bird Flu Deaths in Family, Elisabeth Rosenthal, NYT*, 2006-05-25A team of World Health Organization experts has been deployed to help investigate what is being termed a worrisome family cluster of human cases of avian influenza in northern Indonesia.
   * Free Subscription required.
6. China Expands Military Reach, Tony Walker, AFR*, 2006-05-25China has stepped up its ability to project military power in Asia well beyond its immediate vicinity, shifting a regional power balance in the process, with implications for countries like Australia. The annual US Department of Defence report notes that China's navy appeared intent on "expanding its presence through the Straits of Malacca and into the Indian Ocean".
   * Subscription required.
   - Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China, US Department of Defense, 2006-05-23
   - America's New China War Plan, William M. Arkin, Washington Post, 2005-05-24

7.
8. NZ to Allow Guest Workers from Pacific Nations, ABC Asia Pacific, 2006-05-25The New Zealand government says it is prepared to introduce a seasonal workers program to help alleviate unemployment in the Pacific. The move comes after a meeting between the New Zealand and Papua New Guinean foreign affairs ministers in Port Moresby. The Australian government has repeatedly refused requests by PNG for young Pacific workers to take up seasonal jobs in Australia.
9. Climate Alert Spurs Nuclear Debate, Stephanie Peatling and Wendy Frew, SMH, 2006-05-24Global temperatures will rise by three times as much as many scientists had estimated, resulting in irrevocable changes for life on Earth, according to advice to the Howard Government.
   - Executive Summary (and links), Stronger Evidence but New Challenges: Climate Change Science 2001- 2005 Will Steffen, Australian Greenhouse Office, DEH, May 2006
   - Stronger Evidence but New Challenges: Climate Change Science 2001- 2005, Will Steffen, Australian Greenhouse Office, DEH, May 2006 [PDF]

10.

11. Inquiry into Australia's Defence Relations With the United States, Joint Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade, 2005-05-22 (via APO)The Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America (the ANZUS Treaty), is a key element supporting Australia's national security. The evidence of the committee is overwhelmingly in favour of the alliance and the security that it provides for Australia. The committee through its inquiry has examined how Australia's alliance with the US impacts on the security of the Asia-Pacific region.

Austral Policy Forum 06-16A: Australian foreign policy in the twentieth century: the problem of having special friends - David Martin Jones

"For the first time in its history Australia is in an interesting place at an interesting time" argues Dr. David Martin Jones of the School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland. Dr Jones notes that the current "ideology driving US foreign policy comes into conflict with developing Chinese reality", which is "projecting its soft, but essentially illiberal power into the wider region". This, he argues, has profound strategic consequences for the US, Australia and South East Asia, especially as "the traditions and myths that shape Australian foreign policy ... are not designed to address such a dilemma."

Dr David Martin Jones' most recent book, co-authored with M. Smith, is: ASEAN and East Asian International Relations: Regional Delusion, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham UK, 2006.

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