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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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Monday 26 June 2006

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Policy Forum: Indonesia's good intentions, bad "fengshui": Projecting international image and coping with domestic disasters by Yeo Lay Hwee and Cynthia Chang

1. East Timor PM resigns, Lindsay Murdoch, Age, 2006-06-26East Timor Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri has announced his resignation in Dili in a move that is set to ease tensions in the

troubled nation. Mr Alkatiri said he would cooperate with the president in forming an interim government.He said he was resigning because all Timorese had a right to live in peace and tranquility. Just before Mr Alkatiri's announcement, a separate press conference had been called where according to Timor journalists seven key members of the government were about to resign.
    - Timor Police Chief Urges Arrest Of PM, Jill Jolliffe, Daily Telegraph, 2006-06-25

2.
3. Canberra Risks Accusations Of Backing A Coup, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2006-06-24Australia has allowed itself to appear like a regional power that has given the green light to a slow-motion coup. Portugal, a close friend of the man under pressure, Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, all but accused Australia of trying to interfere, offering a stark warning "not get involved in the domestic affairs". By using stories in the Australian media to put pressure on Alkatiri, and employing our troops to arrest Lobato, Canberra's ability to keep a distance appears to have been compromised.
    - East Timor: Roots Of The Political Crisis, Nick Everett, Green Left Weekly, 2006-06-28
    - Of Coup Plots And Shadowy Foreigners, John Martinkus, New Zealand Herald, 2006-06-22

4.
5. Indonesia, Beefing Up Defense, Seeks Submarines, Jets, Bloomberg, 2006-06-22Indonesia plans to buy two new German submarines next year, doubling its fleet, and four Dutch frigates within three years, Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono said. Indonesia is updating its ageing arsenal amid pressure from Asian neighbours and the U.S. to tackle piracy. Sudarsono, who called the purchases ``the bare essential,'' is buying the weaponry even as he says his defense budget can't cover a soldier's minimum wage. Indonesia's defense budget may swell to as much as $3 billion next year from $2.6 billion this year, Sudarsono said.
    - Too High a Price: The Human Rights Cost of the Indonesian Military's Economic Activities, Human Rights Watch, 2006-06-21

6.
7. Indon Police 'Tortured Papuans', Lloyd Jones, Australian, 2006-06-26A Catholic human rights group has accused Indonesian police of torturing 23 West Papuans arrested after violent protests in March. The Peace and Justice Secretariat of the Catholic diocese in West Papua's provincial capital, Jayapura, alleges cases of physical and mental abuse, and intimidation of prisoners.
    - HamPapua.org: A Human Rights Resource for Papua, Catholic Diocese of Jayapura and the Franciscan Friars in West Papua [Web site]
    - Asylum Seekers Returned To PNG, ABC, 2006-06-23

8.
9. Guns Destruction Raises Big Concern, Editorial, Post-Courier, 2006-06-26The Papua New Guinea Defence Force, on advice from the Australian military officers, today will begin destruction of more than 3400 military weapons. Army officers see this as a move to weaken the PNGDF to suit Australia's own interests. A well armed defence force is important to maintaining security for the nation and it is for this reason that we ask whether at the end of the destruction of the weapons, the PNGDF will still be able to maintain security adequately if called upon. Many people are concerned about the inability of the PNGDF to undertake regular patrols to secure our national borders. It is no joke.
10. The Rape Of PNG Forests, Greg Roberts, Australian 2006-06-24PNG government documents obtained by Inquirer demonstrate how Malaysian logging companies that hold concessions to log

eight million hectares of rainforest in PNG are operating in defiance of the country's laws with the blessing of Somare's Government. Port Moresby now faces restrictions on timber imports by Australia and other Western nations, which are increasingly frustrated at PNG's failure to act against unscrupulous operators in the industry. The report said compliance requirements were "typically either trivialised or ignored".

11. As Pentagon Narrows Focus, A Little Local Knowledge Might Be Wise, Hamish McDonald, Age, 2006-06-24When John Howard goes to China next week to see the first tanker arrive with liquefied natural gas from the North West Shelf, he will be pursuing what is now a regular balancing act in his diplomatic repertoire. While the lavish praise he got on his recent Washington trip was no doubt welcome, the Prime Minister will know the best prospects for strategic advances in Australia's economic position lie in North-East Asia. There is little sign of Howard arguing strongly, or being influential, on any of the big policy issues between the US and the main Asian countries.
12. The Tampa Effect Isn't Likely To Reappear, George Megalogenis, Australian, 2006-06-24The assumption that John Howard can't lose, no matter what he says about asylum-seekers, doesn't hold any more because he and the electorate have changed the way they view the issue. The shift can be sourced to the Prime Minister's evolving approach towards Indonesia.
    - Tampa Won Us Votes: Libs, Louise Dodson and Phillip Coorey, Age, 2006-06-21
    - The Jakarta Juggle, Dennis Shanahan, Australian, 2006-06-23
13.
14. Nauru Given $40m To Take Refugees - And Fight Graft, David Humphries, SMH, 2006-06-26Australia will pay $40 million for Nauru to clean up corruption in its administration in return for the impoverished Pacific nation accepting asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat. Nauru is also required to appoint an Australian police chief, co-operate in tax information exchange, permit Australian scrutiny of all Nauru government accounts and repair its public service. The two-year memorandum of understanding was signed by the two countries in September and tabled in a Senate hearing in November, but made public only now.
15. Bird Flu Funding Plan For Jakarta, Peter Alford, Australian, 2006-06-26The Australian Government wants to help Indonesia set up a proper compensation scheme for poultry farmers hit by avian flu because the lack of such measures is blocking regional efforts to prevent a pandemic. Indonesia has a tiny budget for controlling avian flu, and within that, only 30 billion rupiah ($4.36 million) is allocated to compensating farmers whose flocks are culled to control outbreaks. For each destroyed chicken, a farmer gets R10,000, whereas the birds fetch R15,000 to R30,000 at market.

Austral Policy Forum 06-21A: Indonesia's good intentions, bad "fengshui": Projecting international image and coping with domestic disasters - Yeo Lay Hwee and Cynthia Chang

Yeo Lay Hwee and Cynthia Chang of Southeast Asia Peace and Security Net write that "amidst internal problems of battling bird flu, dealing with the after effects of the earthquake in Central Java, and now flash floods and landslide, Indonesia played host to the second International Conference of Islamic Scholars, topping off with SBY's budding attempt to play a mediating role in North Korea, while dealing with yet another Australia-Indonesia row."

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