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Monday 17 July 2006

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Austral Policy Forum 06-23A: Australian Nuclear Weapons: The Story So Far - Richard Broinowski

1. Australian Troops Hand Over to Iraqi Control, Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2006-07-14Australian and British troops in Iraq have handed over responsibility for security in al-Muthanna Province to Iraqi security forces. The Australians in Iraq will take on a new role [at Tallili Air Base] as part of the coalition "security overwatch" backing up Iraqi forces that run into trouble.

- Provincial Iraqi Control - Al Muthanna, Media release MIN105/06, Department of Defence, 2006-07-13
- Tallili Air Base, GlobalSecurity.org, 2006-04-10
- Looking Beyond Iraq's Bloody Horizon, Marian Wilkinson, SMH, 2006-07-15

2.
3. Security Job at Freeport Given to Police, Nethy Dharma Somba and Markus Makur, Jakarta Post, 2006-07-17The Indonesian Military (TNI) handed over the responsibility of securing giant mines operated by PT Freeport Indonesia to the National Police in the Papuan regency of Timika. Despite the withdrawal of the TNI soldiers, up to 350 others will still assist the 600 Mobile Brigade police officers. PT Freeport said their company had 628 security officers, but the police and TNI members were still needed.
4. No Longer Peacemakers, Martin Sieff, World Peace Herald, 2006-07-14The US handed over primary responsibility for peacekeeping in Afghanistan to NATO. It seemed like a good idea at the time. However, now the policy has fallen apart and presented the alliance with its greatest crisis in a quarter-century. For NATO's forces in Afghanistan are no longer peacekeepers. They are being forced to defend themselves as warriors. And they lack the numbers, the air power and the logistical support to even defend themselves adequately.
   - Afghanistan Wakes to False Dawn, Paul, McGeogh, SMH, 2006-07-15

5.
6. Australia and Indonesia Remain the 'Odd Couple' of Southeast Asia, Tim Lindsey, Jakarta Post, 2006-07-17So, buckle up and brace yourself for continued bilateral crises for the foreseeable future. But don't worry too much about them -- most of them will not lead to real conflict and many of them will be healthy signs of a relationship slowly developing the sort of depth and complexity that it should have had decades ago.
7. Securing the Bomb 2006, Matthew Bunn and Anthony Wier, Harvard University, commissioned by Nuclear Threat Initiative, July 2006"As President Bush has said, we need to do 'everything in our power' to make sure terrorists never get the bomb - but neither the US nor other countries are even close to meeting that standard." said Matthew Bunn. This report provides the most comprehensive assessment available of international cooperative efforts to reduce the danger of nuclear theft and terrorism and detailed recommendations for further action.
8. The Papua Region Is the HIV Capital of Indonesia - But Why? Takeshi Fujitani, Asahi/International Herald Tribune, 2006-07-12The reality is that the number of those infected with HIV is growing in the region, and will continue to do so while no effective measures are being taken. The number of people recognized as being infected with HIV in the region is 18.5 times the national average of 2.65.
9. Bird Flu-Free RI Not Likely Anytime Soon, Hera Diani and TB Arie Rukmantara, Jakarta Post, 2006-07-14Leading veterinarians doubt that Indonesia will be bird flu-free in the near future due to haphazard implementation of the government's programs to combat its spread. An animal health expert from Yogyakarta's Gadjah Mada University, Charles Rangga Tabu, said the government's bird flu plans were excellent on paper, but the implementation was ineffective.
10. Santos at Centre of Toxic Mud Disaster, Geoff Thompson, ABC, 2006-07-13Six weeks ago, something went badly wrong at a gas exploration site in the far east of the island of Java. Tens of thousands of cubic metres of hot toxic mud began spewing from the ground, and it hasn't stopped since. 8,000 people have been driven from their homes. At the centre of the disaster is the Australian gas and oil company Santos, which has an 18 per cent stake in the gas operation.
    - Century to Cap Toxic Blow-Out, Morgan Mellish, AFR*, 2006-07-11

* Subscription required.

11.

Austral Policy Forum 06-23A: Australian nuclear weapons: the story so far - Richard Broinowski

Richard Broinowski, former diplomat and author of the 2003 study Fact or Fission - the Truth about Australia's Nuclear Ambitions, writes that "in his call for a 'full-blooded' nuclear debate, Prime Minister Howard probably doesn't wish to see such a taboo subject raised."

But, says Broinowski,

> "for more than three decades Australian politicians and military, scientific and cabinet officials conducted a campaign to persuade the government of the day to acquire or develop nuclear weapons. The fact is that Australia has the resources and technology to develop its own nuclear weapons."

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