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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Monday 24 July 2006

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Austral Policy Forum 06-24A: [Australia's New Nuclear Ambitions](#) - Richard Broinowski

1. [Extra Troops to Face Afghan Anarchy](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2006-07-24 Rising violence in Afghanistan has forced the Federal Government to increase the size of the Australian Army reconstruction team bound for the war-torn country, so troops can better protect themselves. The new Australian deployment will bring the number of Australian personnel in Afghanistan to about 600.
 - [NATO Chief: Anarchy Looms in Afghanistan](#), UPI (via WPH) 2006-07-23

- [Afghanistan: On the Brink](#), Ahmed Rashid, NYRB, Vol. 53, No. 11, 2006-07-22
- 2.
 3. [US Bombers to Practise in NT](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2006-07-24 US bombers will practise at the Delamere Range, NT. The bombers will fly from Guam and be refuelled in the air by US planes operating out of the RAAF base, Darwin. Philip Dorling said Australia was helping in weapons training by US nuclear forces, the sort most likely to be used in any US action against North Korea or Iran. Hugh White said building up forces in Guam would make the US less dependent on bases in Japan and South Korea.
 - [Delamere Air Weapons Range Map](#) (Location -15° 45'0.00", +131° 55' 11.99") Environment Centre Northern Territory [Image]
 - [Australia's Premier Spot to Drop Bombs](#), Corporal Simone Liebelt, Air Force News
 - 4.
 5. [Nelson: Army Needs Troops](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2006-07-24 Defence Minister Brendan Nelson has hinted that the government could seek to increase the size of the army to almost 30,000 by 2016. Dr Nelson said yesterday he was finalising a defence strategic policy for Federal cabinet which would guide Australia's defence policy for the next 10 years and would examine the issue of increasing the size of the defence force.
 - * [Subscription required.](#)
 6. [Defence's Discipline Problem](#), Brian Toohey, AFR*, 2006-07-22 There are serious problems with the way Australia makes decisions on its major military purchases. The procurement process allows key decisions to be made many years before normal departmental studies are completed, as with the [Lockheed Martin Joint Strike] fighter, or with almost no attempt to provide a convincing strategic rationale, as with the [air-warfare] destroyer.
 - * [Subscription required.](#)
 - [It's the Fighter We Have to Have](#), Hugh White, SMH, 2006-07-19
 - 7.
 8. [Timor Back In Business](#), Morgan Mellish, AFR*, 2006-07-24 Political tensions could affect whether parliament will pass legislation ratifying a treaty with Australia on the exploitation of oil and gas in the Timor Sea. There is concern that Fretilin, which has 55 out of 88 seats in parliament, might hold off signing the deal in a bid to put pressure on the Prime Minister and President Xanana Gusmao to go easy on Mr Alkatiri.
 - * [Subscription required.](#)
 9. [Timor Teens Terrorise Camps of Displaced](#), Lindsay Murdoch, Age, 2006-07-24 Teenage gangs are terrorising camps in East Timor's capital, Dili, where an estimated 73,000 people have been living for almost two months. UNICEF issued a statement at the weekend condemning the "manipulation of children to commit these violent acts".
 10. [Eye on Iraq: Grim News](#), Martin Sieff, UPI (via WPH), 2006-07-21 A new UN report paints a picture of the state of anarchy and chaos into which Iraq has already fallen. The report covers May and June 2006. During that period, "A total of 5,818 civilians were reportedly killed and at least 5,762 wounded," the report said.
 - [Human Rights Report, UNAMI](#), 1 May - 30 June 2006 [PDF]
 - [Price Tag to Rebuild Iraq Rises by \\$50b: Auditor Says US to Pay Most of Tab](#), Bryan Bender, Boston Globe, 2006-07-19

12. [Embrace Tiger, Retreat to Mountain, Test Nuke](#), Peter Hayes, NAPSNet Policy Forum Online, 2006-07-20 The DPRK can now take two paths. It can do nothing for a while, try to obtain the typical late year delivery of food aid from the ROK before winter hits, and hope to muddle through. Or, it can test and hope to adapt its economy in magnificent, nuclear-armed isolation, waiting for the world to adjust to the new strategic reality of North Korea's existence as a nuclear weapons state.
- [Downer to Invite N Korea to Talks](#), John Kerin, AFR*, 2006-07-24
 - * [Subscription required](#).

13.

Austral Policy Forum 06-24A: [Australia's New Nuclear Ambitions](#) - Richard Broinowski

Richard Broinowski, former diplomat and Adjunct Professor at the University of Sydney, argues that "without transparency from government about its plans Australians are left uninformed about what is really going on" concerning the Howard government's thinking about nuclear energy. "But, for speculation, there are a number of indicative straws blowing in the wind", with possibilities including enhanced exports, nuclear waste imports, uranium enrichment, nuclear waste reprocessing, and even nuclear power generation.

Broinowski concludes:

"Outlandish as it may seem to many Australians, the challenge may soon be to reassure Australia's neighbours, especially Indonesia, that Mr Howard has no plans to build nuclear weapons in Australia."

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