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Thursday 27 July 2006

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1. Australian Troops Ordered Out, Jane Holroyd, Age, 2006-07-27Twelve Australian soldiers attached to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon are to be withdrawn. Defence Minister Brendan Nelson said the decision was due to the dangers of the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah guerrillas, which resulted in the death this week of four UN observers.
   - UNIFIL Deployment as of January 2006, Khiyam reference 745E, (3)690N, ReliefWeb
   - Operation Ramp, Defence Support to Lebanon Evacuations, Australian Department of Defence [Web site]

- United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, (UNIFIL), Press Release, 2006-07-26 [PDF]

2.
3. 100 Diggers to Reinforce Mission, Australian, 2006-07-27An extra 100 troops are expected go to Afghanistan to protect Australia's reconstruction taskforce amid concerns about deteriorating security. Cabinet's national security committee will sign off on the size of the Afghanistan taskforce next month. It was initially expected to be about 240 strong, with about half being army engineers and tradespeople. Now, 100 more soldiers will be sent to bolster security.
   - Six Soldiers Hurt in Gun Battle, Cynthia Banham, SMH, 2006-07-27
   - NATO in Afghanistan Factsheet, NATO
   - NATO Afghanistan International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), NATO
   - NATO ISAF Afghanistan Map, NATO, 2005-12-08

4.
5. Lobato Retracts Admission He Armed Hit Squad, Lindsay Murdoch, SMH, 2006-07-26East Timor's former interior minister, Rogerio Lobato, during closed court hearings in Dili on June 22 and July 1 admitted that he armed civilian Timorese. But five days after the July 1 hearing, Lobato's lawyers reportedly prepared documents denying the allegations and claiming that he was coerced by Australian soldiers into making false declarations in court. A defence spokesman denied the allegations.
   - East Timor Rebel Leader Detained, BBC, 2006-07-26

6.
7. UN Efforts Amount to Castles in the Air, Morgan Mellish, AFR*, 2006-07-26Nearly $US1 billion of foreign aid has flooded into East Timor since it won independence from Indonesia in 1999. Yet the efforts of the UN, which at one point had 11,000 staff here, and other foreign organisations, have amounted to nothing. Many of the measurable indicators - including per capita gross domestic product, levels of health and education, even life expectancy - have fallen.
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