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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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Monday 21 August 2006

1. Farewell of Australian Troops, Bound for Afghanistan
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7. Timor, Status of Forces Agreements

Austral Policy Forum 06-29A: Why is Australia fighting in New York to keep control of the Peacekeeping Force in Timor-Leste? - Helen Hill

1. Farewell of Australian Troops, Bound for Afghanistan, Defence Media Release, MIN124/06, 2006-08-20Australian soldiers will leave for Afghanistan as part of a 400-strong contingent to commence work on the reconstruction of community based projects around the Oruzgan Province of Afghanistan. Soldiers from the Darwin based 1st Combat Engineer Regiment, 2nd

Cavalry Regiment and 5th/7th Battalion, RAR, join with soldiers from the Brisbane based 6th Battalion, RAR to make up the majority of the 1st Reconstruction Task Force.

2. Tehran Accuses Australia, John Kerin, AFR*, 2006-08-18Iran has accused Australia of being Israel's "partner in crime" for failing to condemn Jerusalem's actions in Lebanon, and warned the conflict will generate a new wave of jihadists. The blunt warning in a letter from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was forwarded to Australian MPs by Iran's embassy in Canberra in the wake of Israel's bombing of civilians at Qana.
   * Subscription required.
   - Our Troops Too Busy For Lebanon, ADF Suffering From Recruitment Crisis, Brendan Nicholson with Sandra O'Malley, Age, 2006-08-18

3.
4. Human Rights: Australia versus the UN, Hilary Charlesworth, Democratic Audit, Regnet, ANU, Discussion Paper 22/06, August 2006 [PDF]Australia prides itself on being a 'good international citizen'. But how does Australia fare with regard to human rights from an international perspective? It is a party to all major human rights treaties and yet reluctant to make them work at a domestic level. Australia's lack of concern with its international reputation with respect to the protection of human rights ... has done a lot of damage.

5. 'A Reckoning Awaits' on China's Power, John Kerin, AFR*, 2006-08-21A former senior defence department strategist has urged the federal government to begin planning for a "tectonic shift" in the power balance in Asia, which will see China's economic and military power rival and even surpass that of the US. Australia would need to place a higher value on the promotion of human rights and democratic institutions through bi-lateral, multilateral and regional institutions.
   * Subscription required.
   - Inquiry into the Economic, Social and Strategic Trends in Australia's Region and the Consequences for our Defence Requirements Submission No.2, Allan Behm, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Defence Sub-Committee, 2006-04-21 [PDF]

6.
7. Oil 'Time Bomb' in Philippines, CNN, 2006-08-17The Philippines' worst oil spill could ravage fisheries and other coastal resources in one of the country's central provinces, officials said, as authorities tried to contain a leak from a sunken tanker.
   - Oil Spills - Philippines, Indian Ocean and Lebanon, Greenpeace International, 2006-08-18
   - Gov: Oil Spill Destroyed Guimaras Overnight, AFP, ABS-CBN Interactive, 2006-08-21
   - Brits Arrive to Assess Philippines Oil Spill: 'Huge and Expensive Operation' Needed to Clean Up Mess, Underwatertimes.com, 2006-08-18

8.
9. Mud Flood Threatens Java Residents, Lucy Williamson, BBCNews, 2006-08-17Thousands of people on the Indonesian island of Java have been forced from their homes by tonnes of hot mud and gas. The sludge, which has been spewing out of the ground for more than two months, is the result of a crack in a gas drilling project near Indonesia's second city, Surabaya. The mud now covers around 20 square kilometres.
   - Banjar Panji 1 Well Incident, Santos, 2006-06-27
   - Police seize Lapindo Brantas' rig, Antara News, 2006-08-21
   - Walhi's Position Paper on PT Lapindo Brantas Mud and Gas Leak, Indonesian Forum for Environment (Walhi), 2006-07-18

10.
11. Status of Forces Agreements, La'o Hamutuk (The East Timor Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis), August 2006On 24 May 2006, the Timor-Leste government requested international military assistance. Troops were provided by Australia, and New Zealand, and police by Malaysia and Portugal. La'o Hamutuk have published those Status of Forces Agreements, between Timor-Leste and the four countries, that they have been able to obtain.

Austral Policy Forum 06-26A: Why is Australia Fighting in New York to Keep Control of the Peacekeeping Force in Timor-Leste? - Helen Hill

Helen Hill of Victoria University reports on the current debate in the UN Security Council on Kofi Annan's recommendation to establish a new UN mission in East Timor,

> "described as 'multidimensional' and 'integrated', the same words used by Jose Ramos Horta in his letter of 4th August to the UN requesting the mission following the recent violence".

Hill asks

> "why then is Australia trying to sabotage the Secretary General's proposal for a UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), a proposal which has the full support of the East Timorese Government and President?"

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