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Monday 2 October 2006

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6. Australia Urged to Step in as China Stokes Illegal Logging

1. Most Iraqis Favor Immediate U.S. Pullout, Polls Show, Amit R. Paley, Washington Post, 2006-0--27A strong majority of Iraqis want U.S.-led military forces to immediately withdraw from the country, saying their swift departure would make Iraq more secure and decrease sectarian violence, according to new polls by the State Department and independent researchers. The 20-page State Department report, titled "Iraq Civil War Fears Remain High in Sunni and Mixed Areas", was based on 1,870 face-to-face interviews conducted from late June to early July.
    - Australian Poll: Iraq War 'Failing To Cut Terror Threat', AAP, Australian, October 02, 2006-1--02
    - Australia, Indonesia and the World: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, Ivan Cook, Lowy

Institute 2006

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3. Iraq at the Gates of Hell: George Bush's Iraq in 21 Questions, Tom Engelhardt, TomDispatch.com, Nation Institute, 2006-09-28So what exactly does "victory" in George Bush's Iraq look like 1,288 days after the invasion of that country began with a "shock-and-awe" attack on downtown Baghdad? A surprising amount of information related to this has appeared in the press in recent weeks, but in purely scattershot form. Here, it's all brought together in 21 questions (and answers) that add up to a grim but realistic snapshot of Bush's Iraq.
   - Iraq War Was Terrorism 'Recruiting Sergeant', Richard Norton-Taylor, Guardian, 2006-09-28
   - American Commanders Question Political Will of Iraqi Prime Minister, Sudarsan Raghavan, Washington Post, 2006-09-28
   - U.S. General Warns that Iraq Is Close to Dissolving into Civil War, Nancy A. Youssef, McClatchy Newspapers, 2006-09-27

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5. Responsive, Only to his Political Masters, Geoffrey Barker, AFR* 2006-09-29Michael L'Estrange was the very model of a modern departmental secretary when he addressed the National Press Club in Canberra this week. So policy reality seems to be that ministers set long-term policy without recourse to public service advice. Public servants deal reactively with day-to-day issues. And secretaries, given a national forum, wallow in self-congratulation and the blindingly obvious. Subscription required.
6. Afghan Attacks Up Despite Truce, BBC, 2006-09-28Militant attacks in Afghanistan, near the Pakistan border, have tripled in some areas, the US military has said. The rise in activity comes despite a peace agreement meant to end violence by pro-Taleban militants in Pakistan's North Waziristan border area. Meanwhile, Nato has announced that it will extend its mission in Afghanistan to cover the whole country, taking command of thousands of US troops.
   - Human Rights Groups Urge ADF to Release Rules of Engagement, Peter Lloyd, ABC, 200-09-29

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8. Terrorist Nuclear Weapon Construction: How Difficult? Matthew Bunn and Anthony Wier, The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 607 (1), September 2006.This article attempts to determine the difficulty of such an endeavor by examining the underlying physical facts about nuclear fission, nuclear materials, and nuclear weapons design. The facts bear out a simple conclusion: while the danger should not be exaggerated, a nuclear terrorist attack is potentially within the capabilities of a well organized and sophisticated terrorist group.
   - Chronology of Nuclear Weapons Threats Confronted by the United States, Matthew Bunn, The American Academy of Political and Social Science, September 2006

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10. Australia Urged to Step in as China Stokes Illegal Logging, Greg Roberts, Australian, 2006-09-27Three out of four logs exported from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia are felled illegally and developed countries such as Australia should do more to stop importing them, says a new report by the World Bank on the forestry industry.
    - World Bank: Weak Forest Governance Costs US$15 Billion A Year, World Bank News Release No:2007/86/SDN

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