APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, December 18, 2006

Recommended Citation

"APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, December 18, 2006", APSNet Semi-Weekly Bulletin, December 18, 2006, https://nautilus.org/apsnet/apsnet-for-20061218/

Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

Twice weekly report from the Nautilus Institute at RMIT, Australia.

Monday 18 December 2006

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Austral Policy Forum 06-37A: Aceh: Elections and the Possibility of Peace - Edward Aspinall

1. Troubled Stealth Fighter Tackles First Test Flight, Geoff Elliott, Australian, 2006-12-18The most expensive military project in history took to the skies in its first test flight. Australia, which is committing about $12 billion to buy up to 100 fighter jets, signed up to the next phase of the program and will begin negotiating final price and delivery dates for the planes - not expected until at least 2011.
   - Defence Experts Divided about Super Hornet Deal, Geoffrey Barker, AFR*, 2006-12-16
   * Subscription required.

2.
3. France Will Withdraw Some Forces from Afghanistan, AP, IHT, 2006-12-17France will withdraw its 200 soldier special-forces unit from Afghanistan - all of its ground troops engaged in the US anti-terror operation code-named Enduring Freedom. Among the planned changes is a "withdrawal of special forces from Jalalabad," said Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie. France's 1,100 troops working with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force will remain in Afghanistan.
   - Saving Afghanistan, Barnett R. Rubin, Council on Foreign Relations, January/February 2007

4.
5. Iraq Out of Sight, Paul Rogers, Open Democracy, 2006-12-14The USA opposition to the Baker-Hamilton report is rooted in the dilemma that only two military options present themselves - complete withdrawal or stay to win. The Baker-Hamilton analysis presents a middle way proposing two policy changes - reducing combat troops while boosting the training of Iraqi forces, and engaging with the Iranians and the Syrians. Each is a non-starter.
   - Envoys Join Clamour to Quit Iraq, Brendan Nicholson Age, 2006-12-18
   - Defence Experts Sound Alarm on Iraq, Nick McKenzie, SMH, 2006-12-16

6.
7. Small Arms Analysis of Iraq Study Group Report, Rachel Stohl, CDI, 2006-12-06Lack of acknowledgement of the small arms issue in Iraq is deeply troubling. A recently released audit by the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction revealed that, of more than half a million U.S. weapons legally transferred to Iraq, the serial numbers of only 2 percent of these weapons were recorded, resulting in 'major discrepancies' in records of the weapons' whereabouts.
   - Iraqi Security Forces: Weapons Provided by the US Department of Defense Using the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund, SIGIR-06-033, 2006-10-28 [PDF]

8.
9. Voice of the People - People's Survey Pilot 2006, Ann McCraig, RAMSI, 2006-12-14The survey has been launched. Fifty nine per cent of people interviewed think that law and order have improved in the last year. However, mixed responses were given in other areas fundamental to people feeling safe, confident and secure within their community, and about their future.
   - People's Survey Pilot, ANU Enterprise P/L and ANU for RAMSI, 2006

10.
11. Panel Seeks Consensus on U.S. Nuclear Arsenal, Walter Pincus, Washington Post, 2006-12-16A prestigious Defense Department advisory panel has determined there is no national agreement on what the nation needs in the way of nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War period.
   - Report Summary, Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Nuclear Capabilities, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, December 2006 [PDF]

12.

Austral Policy Forum 06-36A: Papua and the Security Cooperation Treaty with Indonesia - Richard Chauvel

Victoria University's Richard Chauvel argues that while the Framework for Security Cooperation Agreement signed recently by Indonesia and Australia "reflects the Indonesian government's anxieties about the way the Papuans used their presence in Australia 'to champion their separatist

aspirations'", but "does little to address to core issues of the conflict in Papua." Chauvel concludes that "the history of Australia-Indonesia tensions over East Timor and Papua, would suggest that reform in Papua is a prerequisite for good neighbourly relations."

Austral Policy Forum 06-37A: Aceh: Elections and the Possibility of Peace - Edward Aspinall

Edward Aspinall from the Australian National University writes that "Aceh has become a possible model for resolving conflicts in other parts of the world, not only because of the remarkably low level of violence which has accompanied it, but also because of the remarkable attitudinal change it has brought about on the part of the main players." "At this point," argues Aspinall, "the signs are mostly hopeful, and it seems churlish to point to long-term dangers. Nevertheless, the enmities on both sides run deep and resumption of violence, albeit on a smaller scale, still can't be ruled out in the future. It's worth remembering that GAM itself began life in the 1970s as a response to disillusionment with a peace settlement, reached in the early 1960s, for an earlier round of conflict in the 1950s."

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