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Thursday 1 February 2007

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Austral Policy Forum 07-02A: Background to the 2006 Fiji Military Coup - Rev Akuila Yabaki

1. Jakarta Shops for Defence Ties as Relations Thaw, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2007-01-30Indonesia is planning to buy coastal patrol vessels to bolster border protection with the Philippines and to

crack down on illegal fishing and people-smuggling to Australia. As part of the expansion of defence contacts between Canberra and Jakarta, Admiral Slamet Soebijanto's visit in September was followed in November by army chief General Joko Santoso. Air Chief Marshal Herman Prayitno is expected next month.
    - Indonesian Navy Exercise in West Papua, David Chan, koteka.net, 2007-01-13

2.
3. Hunger Threat for Papua Refugees, Nethy Dharma Somba, Jakarta Post, 2007-01-30Thousands of people fleeing a crackdown on Papuan separatists are now facing food shortages. The crisis is hitting refugees in Yamo district, Puncak Jaya regency, Papua, after Indonesian Military and police attacks on Free Papua Movement (FPM) rebels in the area. The Evangelical Church of Indonesia (GIDI) reports that 5,137 people are now facing hunger.
4. Indonesia to Declare Bird Flu a National Disaster, Jakarta Post, 2007-02-01Indonesia will declare bird flu a national disaster, giving the government access to special funds to combat the disease that has killed 63 people nationwide, the planning minister said. "It has become an epidemic," Paskah Suzetta said. "The president has indicated he will declare it a national disaster so money can be allocated from the state budget's disaster fund."
5. Solomons Confirms Reforming Disbanded Police Units, ABC, 2007-02-01Last year, Solomons Prime Minister, Manessah Sogavare, dismissed the protective detail provided by RAMSI, ordering his bodyguards be provided by the Royal Solomons Police Force and that they be re-armed. The Solomons Police Minister, Isaac Inoke, now says it will be reforming and re-arming not only the Protection and Guarding Unit, but also the Rapid Response and Police Field Force units.
6. Memorandum of Understanding between the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the United Nations, and Australia on the Provision of Assistance to the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, 2007-01-26 [Primary source]Australia, the UN and East Timor have signed a memorandum of understanding on security cooperation in East Timor. This document was signed on 26 January 2007.
    - UNMIT-RDTL Arrangement on Policing: December 2006, La'o Hamutuk, January 2007 [Primary source]
    - Concern at Timor Army Conscription, Mark Dodd, Australian, 2007-01-31

7.
8. The Danger of Bush's Anti-Iran Fatwa, Juan Cole, Salon.com, 2007-01-30George W. Bush has announced that American troops in Iraq were henceforth authorized to "kill or capture" any Iranian intelligence agents they discovered in Iraq Maybe what is really going on is that the Bush administration finds itself competing with Iran for influence with erstwhile allies in Iraq and losing.
    - Iran Role Seen in Attack on US Troops, Australian, 2007-02-01

9.
10. UK General Admits to Mistakes in Helmand, Kim Sengupta, Independent, 2007-01-31NATO forces are set to launch a spring "surge" in Afghanistan in an attempt to drive the Taliban out of Helmand and seal infiltration points along the Pakistani border. The US will provide an extra 3,200 troops and Poland 1,000 for use in the operation, to be codenamed Nawriz. Britain is likely to send a battalion plus support - about 800 in total - to add to the 6,000 already in Afghanistan.
    - The Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Afghanistan: A Human Security Challenge for Canada, Human Security Bulletin, Vol 5 Issue 1, the Canadian Consortium on Human Security, 2007-01-31

- Afghanistan's Endangered Compact, Asia Briefing 59, CrisisGroup, 2007-01-29

11.
12. Nuclear Costs Low-Balled to Keep It in Energy Debate, Dr Ben McNeil, New Matilda, 2007-01-30Accurate cost estimates for nuclear energy are vitally important for the current energy policy debate in Australia. The Prime Minister's Nuclear Review found that nuclear energy is Australia's 'least cost low-emission baseload technology option'. Given Australia has never built a commercial nuclear reactor, how reliable are these economic estimates? The most recent overseas evidence sheds important light on this.

Austral Policy Forum 07-02A: Background to the 2006 Fiji Military Coup - Rev Akuila Yabaki

Rev Akuila Yabaki, Executive Director of the Citizens Constitutional Forum, writes that "this is the fourth coup that Fiji has experienced in the past 20 years, after two military takeovers in quick succession in 1987 and one civilian-led coup in 2000". He sets out the sequence of events from 5 December 2006, the date that the military coup d'etat took place, and outlines the causes of the conflict. He also says, "many commentators, including the Citizens' Constitutional Forum (CCF), believe that Fiji is now in the grip of a dangerous 'coup cycle' that needs to be broken if the country is to have any hope of achieving long-term prosperity. Breaking this cycle will at least require de-politicisation of Fiji's military, and possibly much wider social change".

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org