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Monday 12 February 2007

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1. Move to Remove Australian Influence in Solomons' Mission, ABC, 2007-02-12Solomon Islands' (SI) government, RAMSI and the Pacific Islands Forum will discuss how the smaller nation members of the Forum can play a bigger role in the mission. The meeting comes after the Australian Foreign Minister published an open letter in SI media warning that Mr Sogavare wants to undermine the Australian-led mission. Mr Sogavare said Australia talked about respect

but failed to respect SI sovereignty.
    - Australia Failing to Respect Solomons' Sovereignty: Sogavare, Sinclair Dinnen and Peta Donald, ABC, 2007-02-10 [transcript]
    - Report card on Australia's Relations with the Region 2007: Asia-Pacific NGO Opinion Survey, Minh Nguyen, Alison Jaworski, Nicola Gabay, UNIYA, 2007-0206 [PDF]
2.
3. America's Secret Air War in Iraq, Nick Turse, TomDispatch, Nation Institute, 2007-02-07A secret air war is being waged in Iraq - often in and around population centers - about which we can find out little. The U.S. military keeps information on the munitions expended in its air efforts under tight wraps. But expert opinion holds that the forms of aerial assault being employed in that country may account for most of the U.S. and coalition-attributed Iraqi civilian deaths there since the 2003 invasion.
4. Obama Blasts Howard on Iraq, AFP, SMH, 2007-02-12US presidential hopeful Barack Obama has blasted as "empty rhetoric" Australian Prime Minister John Howard's attack on Obama's plan to bring US troops home from Iraq. The 45-year-old senator waded into a major foreign policy row just one day after formally announcing his candidacy, telling Mr Howard he should dispatch 20,000 Australians to Iraq if he wanted to back up his comments.
    - PM Fires Back at Obama, AAP, Age, 2007-02-12
5.
6. Tea and Talk Tactics to Charm the Taliban, Tom Hyland, Age, 2007-02-11Amid warnings of a violent spring, a counter- insurgency campaign being waged by Australian and Dutch troops in southern Afghanistan may be about to face its toughest test. The offensive will be a major challenge to the Dutch and Australian effort in Uruzgan province, which focuses on reconstruction. What's being called the Dutch Model is also being held up as a new approach to countering an insurgency.
    - Germany Beefs up Afghan Presence with Six Fighter Jets, Kate Connolly, Guardian, 2007-02-08
    - Downer Pleads for Help in Battle against Taliban, Cynthia Banham, SMH, 2007-02-09
7.
8. On Shopping List: Fighter Jets with No Stealth, Tom Allard, SMH, 2007-02-12The Super Hornet fighter jet - earmarked to be bought by the Federal Government - would be highly vulnerable against rival aircraft and air defence systems being obtained in the region, former air force officers and defence analysts say. Concerns about the Super Hornet's lack of stealth are fuelling calls for the Federal Government to reconsider its widely expected decision to buy 24 of the jets for up to $4 billion.
    - Inquiry into Australian Defence Force Regional Air Superiority, Submissions, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 2007-02-05
    - Costs to Soar as US Air Force Cuts Order, Tom Allard, SMH, 2007-02-08
9.
10. Military Top Brass Visit Outer Islands, Jakarta Post, 2007-02-09A team of high and middle-ranking officers from the Indonesian Military (TNI) and Defense Ministry toured Ndana Island, the southernmost island in Rote Ndao regency, which is near Australian territorial waters. "The tour was to observe first-hand the condition of the island and the 40 Marines posted there," Brig. Gen. Chaeruddin Dahlan from the Defense Ministry said.
11. Information about the Treaty between Australia and Timor-Leste on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS), Laohamutuk, 2007-02-07The Treaty on Certain

Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS Treaty) allocates oil and gas revenues but delays deciding which country's territory includes which areas of the sea and seabed. This enables international companies to proceed with petroleum projects, and will provide additional revenue to Timor-Leste and Australia, but does not resolve the essential question of maritime boundaries.
    - Treaty between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 12 Jan 2006, Not yet in force No. [2006] ATNIF 1, tabled 2007-02-07, [Primary Source, PDF]

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13. War Crime Risk for MPs in 'Retro' Case against Hicks, Liz Porter, Age, 2007-02-11Australia's support of a new, retrospective terrorism charge against David Hicks has put members of the Federal Government at serious risk of committing a war crime, a leading Victorian silk and international law expert has warned. Peter Vickery, QC, said members of the Government were at risk of breaching the Australian criminal code as well as Australia's international treaty obligations.
    - Opinion on Legality of Trial of David Hicks, Peter Vickery et al, HRLRC Bulletin (Human Rights Law Resource Centre) Vol, 9, January 2007
    - Both Hicks and Ruddock Await Legal Challenge, Andrew Fraser, Canberra Times, 2007-01-23

14.

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