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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 8 March 2007

1. [Timor Forces Get More Power](#)
2. [Indonesia: Arrest Warrant Issued for Former Officer](#)
3. [Iraq: The Redirection](#)
4. [Iraq and Afghanistan Wars: Two Different Places](#)
5. [Riots in Vanuatu Lead to yet another State of Emergency in Pacific](#)
6. [US Report Slams Fiji over Human Rights](#)
7. [US Fighter to Fill Air Defence Gap](#)
8. [HIV/AIDS: The Looming Asia Pacific Pandemic](#)

Austral Policy Forum 07-06A - [Comfort Women: It's Time for the Truth \(In the Ordinary, Everyday Sense of the Word\)](#) - Tessa Morris-Suzuki

1. [Timor Forces Get More Power](#), Lindsay Murdoch, Age, 2007-03-06 East Timorese President Xanana Gusmao has increased the powers of security forces in his country in an effort to stop escalating violence. Mr Gusmao said that Australian and New Zealand soldiers and UN police had been given extra powers that included the authority to stop and search people and enter
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homes. He also gave authority for East Timorese soldiers to patrol the streets of Dili with international security forces.

- [Crisis and Rice in East Timor](#), Douglas Kammen and S.W. Hayati, East Timor and Indonesia Action Network (ETAN), March 2007
- 2.
 3. [Arrest Warrant Issued for Former Officer](#), Judicial System Monitoring Programme (JSMP), 2007-03-02The Indonesian government will not respond to an arrest warrant issued by an Australian court for Lt. Gen. (ret.) Yunus Yosfiah, saying it considers the case long since closed. The NSW state coroner issued the warrant after Yunus failed to appear at an inquest into the death of journalist Brian Peters, one of five Australia-based reporters killed by Indonesian troops in the town of Balibo, East Timor, 1975.
 - [Interview with Metro TV \(reply to journalist's question\)](#), Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2007-03-05 [transcript]
 - 4.
 5. [The Redirection](#), Seymour M. Hersh, New Yorker, 2007-03-05As the situation in Iraq has deteriorated, the Bush Administration has significantly shifted its Middle East strategy. The 'redirection' has brought the US closer to an open confrontation with Iran and, in parts of the region, propelled it into a widening sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunni Muslims.
 6. [Iraq and Afghanistan Wars: Two Different Places](#), William Maley, Australian Policy Online (APO), 2007-03-02Despite what the defence minister says, the most striking thing about the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan is how different they are. It is also time to put pressure on Pakistan, which is acting far more destructively in Afghanistan than Iran is in Iraq. But building wider support for a good cause like the Afghanistan commitment is not helped by linking it in any way to the Iraq fiasco.
 7. [Riots in Vanuatu Lead to yet another State of Emergency in Pacific](#), Pacific Radio News, 2007-03-07Police in Vanuatu are today working on getting the 140 people arrested after a tribal riot, through the courts. A State of Emergency for two weeks has been announced and authorities say they're still looking for offenders.
 8. [US Report Slams Fiji over Human Rights](#), AAP, SMH, 2007-03-07Fijian women have been sexually molested for speaking out against the country's military coup, while other protesters have been beaten and intimidated, the US says in a scathing report. The US, Australia, Britain and New Zealand imposed sanctions on Fiji following the coup, and the European Union indicated it could withdraw about 200 million euros (\$A340 million) of aid earmarked for the country.
 - [Fiji, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 2007-03-06
 - [2006 Annual Report on Human Rights](#), US Department of State, 2007-03-06
 - 9.
 10. [US Fighter to Fill Air Defence Gap](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-03-07The Government will spend \$6 billion buying 24 US Super Hornet jet fighters to ensure the RAAF can deal with any regional air threat while it waits for its revolutionary Joint Strike Fighters.
 - [\\$6 Billion to Maintain Australia's Regional Air Superiority](#), Press Release MIN17/07, Minister for Defence, 2007-03-06
 - 11.
 12. [HIV/AIDS: The Looming Asia Pacific Pandemic](#), Bill Bowtell, Policy Brief, Lowy Institute, March

2007There is a need to double global funding and to radically overhaul strategies that have not brought the global pandemic under control. The international community must commit itself to the eradication of HIV/AIDS by the end of the 21st century. Australia is well placed to increase its already significant contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS in the region, and especially in the south Pacific and Melanesia.

[Austral Policy Forum 07-06A: Comfort Women: It's Time for the Truth \(In the Ordinary, Everyday Sense of the Word\) - Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#)

Tessa Morris-Suzuki from the ANU writes that "the denial of responsibility for the fate of the 'comfort women' is, of course, an extremely important issue for Japan's relations with its Asian neighbours and regional partners, including Australia." The Japanese government notes Morris-Suzuki, "seems unable to grasp the extent of the damage which comments such as Abe's cause to Japan's international image in many other countries, particularly those (like Australia) where memories of the war remain an emotive issue." The story concludes Morris-Suzuki, "is depressingly familiar. The victims this time are first and foremost the surviving 'comfort women' themselves, who are once again being insulted and denied justice by the morally bankrupt hair-splitting rhetoric of politicians. But the other group of victims is the Japanese people themselves, whose relationship with neighbouring countries is being damaged by the short-sighted and inept behaviour of their political leaders."

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