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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 12 April 2007

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Austral Policy Forum 07-10A - [Approaching the Benchmarks](#) - William T Tow

1. [High-Risk Mission for Troops](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-04-11A 300-strong contingent of elite Special Forces troops, comprising SAS and commandos, will go to Oruzgan Province in southern Afghanistan. A further 75 RAAF personnel will be sent to Kandahar this year, followed by a helicopter contingent next year, lifting total troop numbers to about 1000. Announcing the commitment, a sombre Mr Howard said: "It is difficult, it's dangerous work and that should not

in any way be underestimated."

- [More Troops for Afghanistan](#), Prime Minister John Howard Media Release, 2007-04-10
 - [Afghanistan the Other War](#), Frontline, PBS, 2007-04-10
- 2.
- 3. [East Timor Run-off on 8 May](#), ABC, 2007-04-12 East Timor's presidential election will now go to a second round on 8 May. Next month's election will pit the Prime Minister, Jose Ramos Horta, against the Fretilin party's Francisco "Lu Olo" Guterres. Five of the unsuccessful candidates are demanding a recount, alleging that serious irregularities took place in the counting process and accusing the Fretilin party of intimidating voters.
 - [East Timor Decides 2007](#), ABC, updated 2007-04-12
 - [Ramos Horta Has Doubts about Timor Poll](#), AAP, Age, 2007-04-12
- 4.
- 5. [How to Get Out of Iraq](#), Juan Cole, Nation, 2007-04-23 The US should announce its intention to withdraw its military forces from Iraq, which will bring Sunnis to the negotiating table and put pressure on Kurds and Shiites to seek a compromise with them. But a simple US departure would not be enough; the civil war must be negotiated to a settlement, on the model of the conflicts in Northern Ireland and Lebanon.
 - [Sheila Carapico and Wayne White reply to Juan Cole's 'How to Get out of Iraq'](#), Informed Comment, 2007-04-11
- 6.
- 7. [Iraq: A Conflict that Spares No One](#), International Committee of the Red Cross, 2007-04-11 [PDF] The humanitarian situation is steadily worsening and it is affecting, directly or indirectly, all Iraqis. Protecting Iraq's civilian population must be a priority, and the ICRC appeals to all those with military or political influence on the ground to act now to ensure that the lives of ordinary Iraqis are spared and protected. This is an obligation under international humanitarian law for both States and non-State actors.
 - [Iraq: Follow the Money](#), Joy Gordon, Le Monde diplomatique, 2007-04-04
- 8.
- 9. [Deal Signed to Combat People Smuggling](#), AAP, Age, 2007-03-22 Australia and Malaysia have signed a memorandum of understanding to share a greater range of intelligence to combat people smuggling. Australia and Malaysia will work together to investigate organisers of people smuggling and escorts of "irregular migrants". Both countries will share immigration intelligence, information on lost and stolen passports, developments in biometric technology, travel document security and document fraud.
10. [Weapons Theft Sparks Review](#), Patrick Walters and D.D. McNicoll, Australian, 2007-04-07 Defence is conducting a major review of its weapons storage practices after 10 rocket launchers were allegedly stolen by army personnel and sold on the black market. The review, led by Defence's deputy secretary for intelligence and security, Steve Marchant, will report by July and is likely to generate new rules for storing key weapons.
11. [Bottomless Coffers Cost Army: Report](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-04-06 The Australian Defence Force has so much money that it has lost sight of the need to operate efficiently, a review has found. The probe, headed by Elizabeth Proust, found, "The comparative wealth of the organisation undermines respect for cost and efficiency" and "Accountabilities are confused, absent or accorded a low priority." The report said the ADF was feeling the strain of simultaneous major military operations.

- [Report of the Defence Management Review](#), Department of Defence, 2007 [Primary source, PDF]
 - [Defence Response to Defence Management Review](#) [Primary source, PDF]
 - [Antarctic Treaty Secretariat](#)
 - [Political and Territorial Maps of the Anctarctic Region](#), Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin
- 12.
13. [Summary for Policymakers, Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, Climate Change 2007: Fourth Assessment Report](#), Working Group II Contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [PDF]Observational evidence from all continents and most oceans shows that many natural systems are being affected by regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases.
- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)

14.

Austral Policy Forum 07-10A: [Approaching the Benchmarks](#) - William T Tow

William Tow of the Australian National University notes that the forthcoming Australian election will take place at a time when US foreign policy has become a major issue in the presidential election campaign in that country. "The geopolitical stakes", writes Tow, "could not be higher with nothing less than the future of the United States' global standing increasingly at risk". He argues that "the key question here is whether President Bush's successor can integrate soft power strategies into a U.S. posture that has been viewed as largely incredible and clearly detrimental to the United States' international influence throughout much of his administration." Tow concludes that "the U.S. presidential candidate that is best able to capture and articulate this reality is the one most likely to prevail. It is reasonable to surmise that the Australian counterpart who consolidates a similar type of foreign policy agenda into an election platform slated to be tested before the end of the year will have the best chance of overcoming the same challenge."

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