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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 24 May 2007

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Policy Forum 07-12A: [Diaspora dilemmas: Australia and the Sri Lanka conflict](#) - Sam de Silva

1. China Eyes Closer Security Ties, Greg Earl, [AFR*](#), 2007-05-22 China has stepped up its level of concern about the recent security agreement between Japan and Australia, floating suggestions for a much closer security relationship with Australia. Former senior Chinese military officer, Gong Xianfu, proposes a closer defence and security relationship that would balance the agreement with Japan and the emerging tripartite security relationship between Australia, Japan and the US.
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* [Subscription required](#).

2. [New Strategy for War Stresses Iraqi Politics](#), Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post, 2007-05-23A new campaign plan for U.S. strategy in Iraq is as much about the political deals needed to defuse a civil war as about the military operations aimed at quelling a complex insurgency. It is a joint effort between Gen. David H. Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker. Groundwork was laid out by Petraeus's senior counterinsurgency adviser, David J. Kilcullen, with the Joint Strategic Assessment Team.
 - [Briefing Note: The Re-Discovery of Theories of Counter-Insurgency: New US Strategy in Iraq](#), Richard Tanter, APSNet 2007-04-19
 - [New Iraq Plan on the Ground](#), Juan Cole, Informed Comment, 2007-05-23
- 3.
4. Nelson Draws Line in Sand over Defence, Geoffrey Barker, Geoffrey Barker, [AFR*](#), 2007-05-22Dr Nelson told a Menzies Research Seminar that a global terrorist insurgency threatened Australia's way of life. While declaring border protection remained Australia's highest defence priority, Dr Nelson refused to rule out deploying more Australian troops to distant conflicts.
 - * [Subscription required](#).
 - [Defending our People, Interests and Values](#), Australian Security in the 21st Century, Seminar Series, Brendan Nelson, Minister for Defence
 - [Question and Answer Session](#), Menzies Research Centre Lecture series, Media Release, MIN220507/07, Minister for Defence, 2007-05-22 [Transcript]
- 5.
6. [Canberra Joins Regional Missile Defence Study](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-05-23Australia will join an investigation by the US and Japan into the feasibility of a joint anti-ballistic missile defence system, according to a report from Tokyo. The Nikkei said Australian, Japanese and US defence and foreign affairs officials met in Tokyo last month and agreed that Australia would join the study amid concerns about North Korea's weapons program.
 - [Labor Backs Naval Missile Defence](#), Patrick Walters, Australian, 2007-05-24
- 7.
8. [Nuclear Power a Turn-Off: Flannery Changes Stance](#), Wendy Frew, SMH, 2007-05-23The Australian of the Year, Tim Flannery, has rejected the use of nuclear power in Australia, reversing his position that electricity could be generated using uranium with less risk to the environment than that posed by coal. He said nuclear energy might have a role to play in some countries but Australia's wealth of renewable energy ruled it out here.
9. [Chagos Families Win Legal Battle](#), BBC, 2007-05-23Families expelled from the Chagos Islands by the British have won their legal battle for the right to return home at the Court of Appeal. Some 2,000 residents were forced out when the British colony in the Indian Ocean was leased to the US in the 1960s to build an airbase at Diego Garcia.
 - [Special Report: Diego Garcia US Military Base](#), Richard Tanter, APSNet, 2005-12-19
- 10.
11. [Australia Responds to Growing Humanitarian Emergency in Sri Lanka](#), Alexander Downer, Media Release AA 07 38, AusAID, 2007-05-23All parties to the conflict are violating international humanitarian law on a regular basis. The Australian Government is concerned by the trend towards increasing violence and the growing environment of impunity surrounding human rights violations in Sri Lanka. We call on all parties to the conflict in Sri Lanka to resume peace talks without delay to seek a solution which addresses the legitimate aspirations of all Sri Lankans.

Policy Forum 07-11A: [Diaspora dilemmas: Australia and the Sri Lanka conflict](#) - Sam de Silva

Australian researcher Sam de Silva notes the recent arrests of two Melbourne men accused of being members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, Tamil Tigers).

"The arrests, and the Australian government's strong statement condemning both the government and the LTTE bring the Sri Lankan conflict closer to Australia, and present the Sri Lankan diaspora community with difficult choices."

De Silva sketches the background of the conflict and the Australian government's increasing concerns. The Tamil diaspora in Australia, de Silva argues,

"faces three main options: continue to promote their claim that the men were raising funds for humanitarian work and not the LTTE's war machine; distance themselves from the arrests and remain silent; or to affirm the LTTE's fight as a liberation struggle and argue that it is valid for Tamils in Australia to support that cause."

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