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Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 13 September 2007

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Policy Forum 07-17A: [A New Agenda for Australia in Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament](#) - Robert McClelland

1. [Canberra Holds Firm on Iraq Troops](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-09-12 Although the US is considering a gradual cut to its Iraq troop numbers, the Australian Government says it will not bring its soldiers home. Defence Minister Brendan Nelson said yesterday that to reduce the number of Australian combat troops in the 575-strong Overwatch Battlegroup in southern Iraq would endanger the soldiers. Prime Minister John Howard also told Parliament the troops would not be leaving.
 - [Iraqis Need to Master their own Destiny: Former Minister](#), Tony Jones, ABC, 2007-09-13
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- 2.
3. [Canada Will Not Step in to Replace Dutch Troops](#), Brendan Nicholson, Age, 2007-09-12 Canada says it will not increase the size of its 2500-strong military force in Afghanistan to fill the gap if the big Dutch force there is withdrawn.
 - [Coalition Forces: Canada](#), Australia in Afghanistan, Nautilus Institute, 2007-07-26
- 4.
5. [PNG Criticised over Lack of Gun Control](#), ABC, 2007-09-13 The former head of the Papua New Guinea defence force and chair of a 2005 committee on gun control has criticised the government for not acting to control illegal firearms in the country. Jerry Singirok said that Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare knew people were being killed by illegal guns every day in PNG.
 - [Australian Government Assault Rifle now a Common Crime Gun in Papua New Guinea](#), Philip Alpers, Austral Policy Forum 06-26A, 2006-08-07
 - [Gun-Running in Papua New Guinea: From Arrows to Assault Weapons in the Southern Highlands](#), Philip Alpers, Small Arms Survey, June 2005 [PDF]
 - [Small Arms Survey](#), Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva [updated regularly]
 - [International Small Arms Issues: An Australian Policy Framework](#), Alexander Downer, Media Release DFAT 1999, [modified] 2002-09-17
- 6.
7. [U.S. Uneasy over China's Increased Pacific Presence](#), Pacific Islands Report, EastWest Centre, 2007-09-12 The United States of America is becoming increasingly nervous about China's growing influence in the Pacific. A recent report to U.S. Congress has warned how its neglect of the Pacific has been replaced by China's growing influence.
 - [The Southwest Pacific: U.S. Interests and China's Growing Influence](#), Thomas Lum and Bruce Vaughn, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, US Government, 2007-07-06 [Primary Source, PDF]
- 8.
9. [Global Nuclear Group a Risk for Canada: Critics](#), Christopher Guly, Embassy, 2007-09-12 The [Canadian] federal government has not yet announced whether it will join U.S.-led Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), or whether it would send a representative to attend a GNEP meeting in Vienna. Australian Prime Minister John Howard has indicated that his country, which is the second-largest producer of uranium after Canada, would join.
10. [Australia-Russia Nuclear Cooperation Agreement](#): Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes, DFAT, 2007-09-07 [Primary Source, PDF] Full text of the agreement signed on 7 September 2007.
 - [Frequently Asked Questions, Australia-Russia Nuclear Cooperation Agreement September 2007](#), DFAT, Australia
 - [Australia and the Russian Federation, Climate Change and Energy](#), Media Release, Prime Minister, Australia, 2007-09-07
- 11.

Policy Forum 07-17A: [A New Agenda for Australia in Nuclear Non-Proliferation and](#)

Disarmament, Robert McClelland

Robert McClelland, ALP Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, writes that "the Howard government is worse than ambivalent when it comes to nuclear non proliferation - it is positively obstructive." International security has, he notes, "been made more volatile by a combination of nuclear proliferation and the involvement of non-state actors"* "as the number of potential nuclear actors increases, deterrence becomes a balancing act with far too many tipping points." Arguing that "the proposal to establish a Nuclear Weapons Convention is timely and responsible", McClelland concludes by suggesting that practical steps towards the elimination are possible, despite well-recognized obstacles. "What is important is commencing the process. Progressing nuclear disarmament in the context of broader discussions towards achieving a nuclear weapons convention can be used as both a tool to assist short-term disarmament goals and also as a concrete long-term political objective."

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