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APSNet for 13 December 2007

Austral Peace and Security Network (APSNet)

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

Thursday 13 December 2007

1. [New Drive to Talk Burma into Reform](#)
2. [US Intelligence Personnel Tap Indonesian Phones](#)
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6. [The War on Terror After Iraq: Report of an Independent Task Force](#)

Austral Policy Forum 07-25A: [Nuclear fatwa: Islamic jurisprudence and the Muria nuclear power station proposal](#), Richard Tanter

New Briefing Book from the Nautilus Institute: [Australia in Solomon Islands](#), Australian Forces Abroad - Nic Maclellan

1. [New Drive to Talk Burma into Reform](#), Patrick Walters, Australian, 2007-12-13 Australia is expected to join a new informal UN grouping aimed at building international dialogue with
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Burma's military rulers and encouraging them to embrace democracy. Senior government sources said Canberra had welcomed Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's proposal, with the Rudd Government wanting a more determined effort by the international community to bring about political change in Burma.

2. [US Intelligence Personnel Tap Indonesian Phones. British Also Involved. Detachment 88, Kopassus Get Covert US Aid](#), Allan Nairn, News and Comment, 2007-12-12 US intelligence officers in Jakarta are secretly tapping the cell phones and reading the SMS text messages of Indonesian civilians. Some of the Americans work out of the Jakarta headquarters of Detachment 88, a US-trained and funded para-military unit whose mission is described as antiterrorism, but that was recently involved in the arrest of a West Papuan human rights lawyer.
 - [Detachment 88](#), Wikipedia

- 3.
4. [Dutch Pound Taliban Positions](#), Mark Dodd, Australian, 2007-12-11 Dutch heavy artillery has been used to pound suspected Taliban positions as round-the-clock military operations continue without to root out insurgents operating in mountains close to this strategic base in Oruzgan province jointly manned by an Australian task force. Concerns have been raised that the NATO-backed International Assistance Security Force-ISAF of which Australia is a major member is spread too thinly especially in violence-racked Oruzgan.
 - [Report Confirms Civilian Deaths](#), Craig Skehan, SMH, 2007-12-13

- 5.
6. [Taliban Regroup After Losing City](#), Ron Synovitz, Asia Times, 2007-12-13 Rumors of brutality by Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters spurred Afghan President Hamid Karzai to order the attack that led to the recapture of the key southern town of Musa Qala. But even as the Taliban, reported to be 2,000-strong in the area, fled into the mountains, counterattacks were mounted just south of the newly secured area near a key dam reconstruction project.
 - [Britain's Afghan Mission is a Fruitless and Failing Pursuit](#), Simon Jenkins, Guardian, 2007-12-12
 - [Taliban Killed in New Afghan Battle](#), Al Jazeera, 2007-12-12 More than 50 Taliban fighters have been killed in two days of fighting in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province, according to the Afghan defence ministry.

- 7.
8. [British to Hand Over Basra in Days](#), Australian, 2007-12-13 Four car bombs killed at least 33 people in Iraq overnight, as Baghdad said it would retake control of Basra province from British forces on Sunday. The Amara attacks dealt a blow to claims by London and Baghdad that security in southern regions of Iraq was under control.
9. [The War on Terror After Iraq: Report of an Independent Task Force](#), Special Report, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, December 2007 A major hurdle to any thinking about a world 'after Iraq' is the condition in which we leave Iraq after disengagement. The Coalition cannot afford to leave a broken state and a civil war at the heart of the Middle East. The War on Terror will continue. It will be fought primarily in Afghanistan, Pakistan and a wide range of Western countries attempting to improve their homeland security.
10. [Nuclear fatwa: Islamic jurisprudence and the Muria nuclear power station proposal](#), Richard Tanter, Austral Policy Forum 07-25A, 2007-12-13 Richard Tanter of the Nautilus Institute at RMIT writes that the decision by a gathering of Islamic teachers in the Central Java town of Jepara in September to declare the Indonesian government's plans to build a nuclear power station on the Muria peninsula haram or forbidden was a remarkable event. "For the first time anywhere in the world" Tanter writes, "the authority of mainstream Islam spoke authoritatively

on the question of nuclear power. The Nahdlatul Ulama initiative was a milestone in the creative use of classical Islamic jurisprudence or fiqh to address issues of pressing social concern to the umma in a responsible and constructive manner as part of the process of cultural renewal of Islam in Indonesia.” He concludes that “there appears to be no precedent anywhere else in the Islamic world for this innovation, but we can be sure there will be successors.”

11. [Australia in Solomon Islands](#), Nic Maclellan, Australian Forces Abroad, Nautilus Institute. Nautilus Institute is proud to announce the publication of the second of Nautilus Institute’s series of Australian Forces Abroad Briefing Books. Australia in Solomon Islands, written by Nic Maclellan provides detailed resources on Australia’s military, police and civilian advisory role in Solomon Islands.

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