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## **INTERVENTION, REGIONALISM, ENGAGEMENT: NEW FORMS OF SECURITY MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC?**

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# Intervention, Regionalism, Engagement: New Forms of Security Management in the South Pacific?

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## **I Introduction**

Recent assessments of the economic and political situation in the South Pacific depict a region of small island countries facing considerable challenge and stress. An Asian Development Bank discussion paper, for example, suggests that from a once reasonably promising economic position, the Pacific is now falling behind other developing regions (ADB 2004). Economic growth (it says) has not kept pace with high population growth rates, job creation for youth has been minimal, and poverty is now a significant issue. A review of the premier regional organisation, the Pacific Islands Forum, undertaken by an ‘eminent persons group’ from within the region itself, found that variable standards of governance had impacted adversely on Islanders’ living standards and in some had contributed to instability, conflict, corruption and a weakening of democratic processes (EPG Review 2004). An Australian Senate committee report on Australia’s relations with the region concluded that Pacific countries would likely continue to suffer political, ethnic and social tensions brought about by continuing economic decline and poor governance (Australian Senate 2003).

While much in these assessments is undoubtedly accurate, general characterisations often mask considerable variations in performance and stability across the region. The region is

diverse: examples of political and social stability and successful economic management are to be found alongside examples of instability and decline (AusAID 2003, Davis, 2004).

Similarly, recent assessments of the security situation in the South Pacific offer a bleak picture. Some analysts describe an 'arc of instability' stretching eastwards from East Timor through Irian Jaya, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu to New Caledonia and Fiji. Others warn of the 'Africanisation' of the Pacific (Reilly 2000) while others still identify a 'failing state' paradigm in the region asserting that endemic conflict and persistent crises of state and governance facilitates penetration by trans-national crime and international terrorism (ASPI 2002, 2003). While undoubtedly pointing to significant security problems and considerable turbulence – the severity of the crisis in Solomon Islands, for example, necessitating external intervention in mid-2003 - these blanket characterisations as well do not take sufficiently into account the incredible diversity of the region's cultures and societies or the degree to which instability varies within the region. Nor do they assess the historical context in which such conditions have arisen. As with any broad generalisation there is a need to carefully dissect the individual circumstances and forces at play if it is to be useful as a guide to both understanding the region and to policy-making (Shibuya 2003, Hegarty 2004a).

### *A balanced view*

An informed and balanced account of the region's security situation is provided by ANU political scientist, Ron May, in a paper at a Pacific Islands Forum (Forum) workshop on national security in Vanuatu in March this year. In summary, May argues that, in terms of conventional external threats, the security environment remains 'relatively benign'; the prospect of interstate conflicts remains slight; the possible escalation of international terrorist activity poses a more serious threat to the Island states 'though probably still a small one'; of larger concern are other non-conventional threats including trans-national crime, people smuggling and natural disasters; but of even greater concern to the well-being of Pacific countries is the threat that comes from within in the form of financial mismanagement, poor governance, ethnic conflict and the breakdown of law and order

(May 2004a). It should also be borne in mind, he suggests, that the island Pacific is not Africa.

## II Major Security Challenges

### *Interstate rivalry?*

A longstanding feature of the South Pacific region has been the lack of interstate rivalry or conflict. From time to time tensions have arisen in the Papua New Guinea (PNG) – Indonesia relationship over border management, but there is no sign of that situation developing into a serious inter-state dispute. Occasionally relations between the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and Australia and New Zealand (and the other former colonial powers) have become a little tense, but for the past 30 years relations between all members of the Forum have been genuinely harmonious.

Rivalries between countries external to the South Pacific, however, on occasion do intrude and can complicate domestic politics in some jurisdictions. The ‘fraught bidding war for diplomatic recognition’ by the Chinese and Taiwanese governments, for example, has had some spill-over effect on politics in Kiribati and in Solomon Islands (Reilly 2002 p.20). Most nations of the Asia Pacific have established diplomatic and commercial links with the region and many are substantial aid contributors. The European Union is also a substantial aid contributor and regularly suggests ideas on regional integration. The United States displays only limited interest in South Pacific affairs.

The vulnerability of the PICs to natural disasters – cyclones, tidal waves, earthquakes, (and epidemics) - translates into a regular threat to human security and indeed to these countries’ economic survival. But for the purposes of this paper, security challenges in the South Pacific derive mainly from two sources: firstly from non-conventional threats usually involving external actors, and secondly from internal conflict and turbulence.

### ***Trans-national crime***

Trans-national criminal activities are of increasing concern throughout the region. These activities include money laundering through tax havens established in a number of PICs (Nauru, Cook Islands, Vanuatu), drug trafficking through the region (especially through Palau, Fiji, PNG), a small trade in illegal weapons, and the (legal though dubious) sale of passports by some PICs (Tonga, Nauru) as fund-raising ventures. Of more recent concern has been the onset of illegal migration into the region (in particular from southern China to PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji). An estimated 10,000 illegal immigrants mostly from China were reckoned to have entered PNG in the past two to three years. Last year PNG's immigration department was burgled resulting in the loss of numerous blank passports and most of the computer files. The prominence of immigrants in the small trading and retailing sectors has led to critical comments in a number of countries. The appearance of criminal syndicates from East Asia and the accompanying pursuits of gambling, prostitution and drug trading in some Pacific capitals is also exercising regional police forces and agencies. Carpet-baggers, con-men and promoters of shonky land deals and pyramid money and other such schemes, often from Pacific Rim countries, are also active.

Although on a global scale these TNC activities may not be significant, in small Pacific states the problem is magnified because of their lack of infrastructure and of monitoring and enforcement capabilities to effectively manage these issues. Most Pacific states are also unable to effectively control the poaching of resources (including transfer pricing) that occurs on a large scale in the timber and fishing industries.

### ***Terrorism***

Since the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and the Bali bombing a little over a year later, the security agenda has assumed greater urgency in the South Pacific. The link between state failure and terrorism has been taken up by the Australian and New Zealand governments and used increasingly by them as a rationale, initially for the RAMSI intervention in Solomon Islands in mid-2003, and now for a more assertive strategy for security reform and the strengthening of state institutions in the South Pacific region. In explaining Australia's decision to intervene in the Solomons, Prime Minister Howard drew

a connection between the failure of institutions and government and order in Solomons with the prospect of terrorists basing there.

Perceptions of the threat to the region from international terrorism vary. Some Pacific leaders are concerned about their generally open societies' vulnerability to the lodgement of terrorist cells and the possibility of sabotage and attack, for example, on their tourist industries. Others, groaning under the weight of the new anti-terrorism compliance regimes, are sceptical. The New Zealand Prime Minister, Helen Clark, has put it in the following terms: 'The problem to be confronted in our region is not so much that terrorists will seek to attack the citizens or institutions of Pacific countries. It is rather that the Pacific might present a tempting target, either for an attack like the one in Bali, or as a base from which terrorist cells might undertake the planning and groundwork for an attack somewhere else' (quoted in Urwin 2004).

The Forum Secretary General thinks 'it fair to say that many in the region would not consider the risk of a terrorist attack as a high likelihood', but while that may be the case, 'terrorism needs to be seen as part of the fabric of transnational crime' (Urwin, 2004). In any event, the Secretary General argues, PICs are required by international law to recognise and comply with the UN Security Council resolutions on anti-terrorism measures as well as with the strengthened requirements of such bodies as the International Maritime Organisation, the International Civil Aviation Organisation, and the Financial Action Task Force of the OECD.

Ron May's view is that while there is slight ground for being alert to a terrorist threat in PNG and Fiji because of a minor history of connections to terrorist organisations in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, PICs are unlikely bases for terrorists. He argues that there is not a local constituency for terrorism, the arrival and presence of outsiders in small, personalised Pacific societies does not go unnoticed, and the logistics of mounting attacks against more obvious targets from the PICs would be unattractive (May 2004a).

### *Internal Security*

By far the major challenge to the short and long-term security of the PICs arises from what appears to be chronic domestic political turbulence and conflict. The outward manifestations of this turbulence are frequent changes of government, constitutional crises, coups and coup attempts, ructions within the military and police forces, ethnic tension and violent conflict, separatist movements, inter-group fighting over resources, increasing rates of crime and an inability of enforcement agencies to maintain law and order, decay of government services, lack of commitment or loyalty to a specifically ‘national interest’, disenchantment with elected leadership and the institutions of government (or a lack of connection between rulers and ruled), corruption and poor standards of governance. Clearly the processes of nation and state building in the South Pacific have not always gone smoothly; but in the post-colonial world, they are by no means unique. Some PICs, as noted in the introduction, have fared better than others, and the experience across the region is diverse and by no means all negative.

Turbulence is often a product of different groupings of peoples having been pushed together under colonial boundaries, then having to work out a *modus vivendi* (not only with their neighbouring social units, but, as in the case of Fiji, with introduced peoples) following their political independence. It is also a product of a lack of ‘fit’ between introduced institutions and the practices and norms of traditional political cultures. In Melanesian societies, for example, there was no bureaucratic tradition, loyalties were clan and kin-based, leadership was achieved through intensive competition, and the notion of a state was (and still is in many parts) one of an alien ‘tribe’ which is fair game for those who can get access to it. In the more hierarchically structured Polynesian countries in the eastern Pacific, Crocombe argues that the ‘mantra of democracy’ itself is a source of friction and confusion and upsets effective ‘governing’ (Crocombe 2003). Traditional authority has declined and arguably that has contributed to an increase in lawlessness. ‘Weak’ states – often weak because as Dinnen argues they were never really constructed in the first place – cannot assert authority (Dinnen 2004a). In some cases the ‘disciplined’ forces find themselves outnumbered and outgunned and resort to undisciplined methods of

attempting to restore order. In the absence of a state presence gangs and local strongmen, ‘warlords’ of sorts, move in (May 2004b).

Turbulence is also a product of small economies based on limited resources with undeveloped infrastructure and skills unable to grow at a rate commensurate with population growth. The ‘youth bulge’ is a common demographic feature throughout the region adding to the already intense competition for paid employment and providing a pool of unemployable youth some of whom have tasted fighting and many of whom have access to guns. Those PICs with opportunities for out-migration seem to fare better economically than those without migration outlets, but again the picture is far from uniform.

A quick snapshot of the region illustrates the levels of turbulence as well as the fact that each situation is somewhat different. The Solomons Islands’ downward spiral has now been halted, but the deep causes of the conflict remain unresolved. In PNG inter-group fighting in the oil and gas rich Southern Highlands Province continues, the recent national elections were marred by violence, some parliamentary turmoil is in prospect, but the peace process in the Bougainville Province and the province’s accommodation with the national PNG government have been success stories. Nauru is virtually bankrupt, has a hung parliament - nine MPs in government and nine in opposition – resulting in ten changes of government in recent times. Fiji is still experiencing the repercussions of the attempted coup in 2000, manoeuvring for power is reported within the military, a constitutional impasse continues over the requirement that members of the opposition are entitled to serve in cabinet, but state structures remain strong nonetheless. Vanuatu has recovered from the ‘Operation Procedure’ incident in 2002 in which sections of the police hierarchy arrested the in-coming police commissioner and those who appointed him; but its parliament has recently been dissolved due to factional struggles and new elections are in prospect.

Tonga’s constitutional monarchy, while on the surface clearly stable, is coming under pressure from a pro-democracy movement and through its own mismanagement. Further east in Samoa and the Cook Islands the polities are relatively settled – as they are in the Micronesian countries to the north. The French Territories (New Caledonia, Wallis and

Futuna and French Polynesia) are a separate category of Pacific country because of the dominant position the French state holds and the overwhelming force it can bring to bear either on externally or internally generated strife. New Caledonia has worked out 'accords' on future political change, although there have been recent re-alignments within political groupings there. In French Polynesia a pro-independence party has recently won a majority in the local legislature.

An important point that flows from the above is that rambunctious domestic politicking often has an unsettling effect on Pacific polities whose institutions and 'rules of the game' are not yet firmly entrenched. In certain circumstances such politicking results in crisis; but it does not necessarily lead to the unravelling of the state.

### III Security Management

New thinking on security management in the South Pacific has evolved over the past five years. Various influences have been important: the increased incidence of conflict in the Pacific (Bougainville as well as other provincial PNG, Fiji and Solomons); crisis and international intervention in East Timor; analyses by think tanks, particularly the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, whose views on new policy paradigms were being listened to in corridors of power; critiques by journalists and opinion leaders (e.g. Dobell 2003); the security imperatives arising from 9/11 and the Bali bombing embraced quickly by the Australian and New Zealand governments; as well as calculations by governments that existing security management strategies were not fully effective and that more robust approaches were required.

Four approaches to security management have emerged: self-management by PICs of their security problems with support from Australia, New Zealand and the Forum; direct intervention by Australia and New Zealand with PIC support into internal security crises – exemplified in the Solomons intervention and signalling a radical departure from past practice; enhanced regional cooperation – the intention being to beef-up the Forum's role in security management; and stronger *engagement* in the region by Australia (and New

Zealand) with a view to developing a ‘Pacific economic and political community’ – an approach that is still very much in the ‘ideas’ stage, but one that looks to the future and appeals as a complement (or perhaps counterpoint) to the robust approach currently demonstrated by Australia and New Zealand.

### *Self-management with support*

In mid-2000 the Forum Secretariat adopted a report on ‘Enhancing Pacific Security’ that identified ‘internal’ threats as the most serious challenge to the region (Crocombe 2000). The report recommended that PICs themselves tackle more earnestly the underlying causes of domestic conflict (ethnic differences, land disputes, economic disparities), attend to the issue of leadership ‘integrity’ that was a major cause of disaffection and poor governance (MPs behaving ‘above the law’), dialogue openly about these sensitive issues, and utilise wisely the security training and resource support on offer from the larger regional powers. It also recommended a preventive diplomacy role for the Forum and the empowerment of its ‘regional security committee’. Although the report was widely accepted by PICs there was no plan developed or means to adequately implement its recommendations. The Biketawa Declaration of 2000, prompted by the coup attempt in Fiji, however, did provide the Forum with the necessary ‘clout’ and diplomatic coverage to take action in the event of an internal security crisis (Fry 2000).

This approach mirrored Australia’s strategy at the time for regional security management – an approach which rejected direct military and police intervention in favour of encouraging PIC governments and communities to resolve their own security problems, and of targeting development assistance to strengthen institutions of governance within them (Australian Government 2002). It was not a totally static approach. Australia and New Zealand were obviously prepared to assist in mediating and brokering internal PIC conflicts and to move some way beyond their basic strategy as they did in providing two important peace monitoring interventions - Bougainville (1997-2003) and Solomon Islands (2001-2002). But these were ‘monitoring’, not ‘enforcing’ operations (Regan 2001, Hegarty 2003).

### *Intervention – Solomon Islands*

In mid-2003 the Australian government reversed its previous policy of non-intervention in the affairs of its Pacific neighbours and took decisive action to address the deepening crisis in Solomon Islands. Australia embarked on a strategy of what it termed, ‘cooperative intervention’. There were compelling reasons for intervention in the Solomons: the government was unable to govern, the country was near-bankrupt, the Prime Minister and senior officials were constantly intimidated by armed gangs, some Ministers were engaged in illegal and corrupt practices, the police force was fractured, corrupted and compromised, government services to the community had become almost non-existent, the public service was a shattered shell, crime in the capital had brought most commerce and movement to a halt, most provinces were demanding increased autonomy from the centre, and, above all, it was the assessment of informed observers that this perilous situation could not be rectified from within. As Dinnen observes; ‘What began as an ethnic conflict degenerated into the effective capture and paralysis of the SI state by a small cohort of armed ex-militants, including renegade police officers, and corrupt leaders’ (Dinnen (2004b)).

In late April Australia responded to a request from Solomons, Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza, for assistance in reversing the downward economic and political spiral of his country. It sought and obtained agreement for a security operation from the Foreign Ministers of the Pacific Islands Forum - in accordance with the Biketawa Declaration that provides for a collective Pacific Island response to a crisis – and it obtained the unanimous approval of the Solomons parliament for such an operation in mid-July. A treaty between Solomon Islands and the 16 Forum member countries endorsing and providing legal cover for the operation was then signed. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) then commenced operations in the Solomons’ capital, Honiara, on 24 July. RAMSI’s mandate was to reinforce and uphold the legitimate institutions and authorities in Solomon Islands, and ensure respect for the Constitution and implementation of the laws. Phase I of the operation was designed to restore law and order; phase II was to assist the recovery of the institutions of governance and the economy.

RAMSI is a police led operation comprising 335 police drawn from the police forces of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. The head of the police contingent has been sworn in as a Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Solomon Islands Police hence is constitutionally a part of the Solomons government. A military element of 1800 personnel provides military security support to the police component as well as logistical and operational support. While Australian personnel predominate, New Zealand and those PICs with defence forces have all contributed to the operation. Civilian officials from Australian government departments are also part of the Mission working in strategic line and advisory positions within the Solomon Islands public service including in Treasury and Justice departments. The head of RAMSI is a diplomat from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade who as 'Special Coordinator' is responsible for oversight of the operation and liaison with the Solomons' government. No timeframes have been set formally, but RAMSI talks in terms of 10-year and sometimes longer commitments.

Twelve months on, the intervention has made considerable gains. About 3,700 weapons have been collected (including 700 high powered guns) though some militants have apparently cached a number. Over 50 former militants have been arrested including the ringleaders of the renegade police and are facing charges that should bring lengthy prison sentences. The Solomons police force is undergoing dramatic reform, and with law and order now reasonably settled, RAMSI has turned its attention to Phase II and the rebuilding of institutions enabling the functioning of effective government (Warner 2004). Public support in SI for RAMSI remains high, but criticisms are voiced that RAMSI is yet to tackle the 'behind-the-scenes' culprits in the conflict, that it must soon focus on strengthening the major instruments of state, that it must enable Solomon Islander 'ownership' of the post-conflict process, and that by working so closely with the government it is in fact legitimising a compromised and unpopular leadership.

The RAMSI intervention undoubtedly represents a significant policy shift for the Australian government (as well as for regional governments). Its dramatic shift from a position held in early 2003 of non-intervention, reliance on targeted aid and an emphasis on

Pacific Islanders rightly solving their own problems, to one four months later of ‘cooperative intervention’, has opened a range of debates. What caused it to move so quickly? (Probable reasons include: the influence of the Bush Administration’s adoption of ‘state failure’ as a primary cause and facilitator of international terrorism; the recognition of the symptoms of failure in the immediate region; the concern to be doing something in the war on terrorism in ‘our patch’; the recognition that the Solomons situation was close to critical, and domestic political considerations – the perceived need to keep a high profile on security issues.) Is it really a *new* strategy for security management (Callick 2004, Fry 2004)? Is the paradigm of ‘state failure’ on which it is based an appropriate analytical construct to apply to the Pacific? Does not the application of that particular ‘lens’ only identify the manifestations of failure as distinct from the more telling internal dynamics of failure (Dinnen, 2004b)? Whose security interests are paramount? Was there not another, less hyperbolic, rationale for intervention, for example, in the concept of a ‘responsibility to protect’? What *type*, precisely, was this intervention (Wainwright 2003)? Will it be effective and achieve the desired outcomes? Will this form of intervention become the model for future regional security management?

### ***Australia’s ‘Robust’ Security Agenda***

The Australian government denies that the intervention in Solomons constitutes a model for the future. At the same time it is pushing ahead with what it describes as a ‘robust’ security agenda. An ‘Enhanced Cooperation Package’ (ECP) has been signed with PNG – not without some bilateral disagreement (and considerable ire on the part of PNG’s Prime Minister). The ECP will include the placement of up to 230 Australian police officers in various posts within PNG, and 60 or more civilians including lawyers, judges and legal officers in PNG’s law and justice agencies, finance officials in key economic and planning departments, and specialists in immigration, border control and aviation security positions. These placements are in addition to a substantial number of Australian consultant specialists working in various departments and levels of the PNG bureaucracy.

An Australian-backed Pacific Regional Policing Initiative (PRPI) is under way with training facilities in Fiji likely to be expanded to include trainees from most PICs. Australia

currently funds the (Australian-filled) position of Police Commissioner in Fiji and will soon provide a police commissioner to Nauru. Training and support programs are being undertaken in Samoa (on the eve of the annual Forum heads of government meeting), in Kiribati and in Vanuatu where there has been a history of fractiousness and rivalry between the police and the para-military Mobile Force. The emphasis is clearly on strengthening law and order capabilities with an eye to enhancing border/sovereignty protection. (There are also plans for the Australian Federal Police to develop a 500 personnel component trained for overseas service and operations).

An earlier element of the 'robust' approach was a determination on the part of the Australian Prime Minister to have a former Australian diplomat (and Pacific specialist), Greg Urwin, elected to the position of Secretary General of the Forum. Australia's intention was to shake-up the Forum Secretariat, increase its role in enhancing regionalism (if not yet integration), and in alerting island members to significant trends, issues, crises and potential crises. Urwin was elected Secretary General at the 34<sup>th</sup> Forum in Auckland, August 2003.

### ***Regional Cooperation?***

The Eminent Persons' Group that reviewed the South Pacific Forum assessed the many challenges facing the region (including security) and proposed a 'Pacific Plan' the first step in which would be to provide a strategy for 'deeper and broader regional cooperation' (EPG Review 2004). One of the key areas for cooperation and 'integration' it suggested, might be in pooled governance arrangements in a wide variety of functional areas including transport, judicial and public administration, security and financial systems, processes for meeting international legal demands, and regional law enforcement aimed at trans-national crime.

Security reform was very much on the agenda. The Review noted a number of existing agreements – the Honiara, Biketawa and Aitutaki declarations - that provide for cooperation on enforcement issues, but which had not been regularly acted upon. It identified a demand in the region for rapid and effective responses to 'government

breakdown, insurrection and other emergencies’ and proposed that the Forum consider some form of ‘crisis response machinery’. It noted the need for further work on conflict prevention, perhaps more so than on conflict resolution. But the Review did not ‘bite the bullet’ on these issues and recommended only that the Secretary General be mandated to call, in consultation with the Forum Chair, an early meeting of leaders with a view to ‘galvanising regional action to prevent or respond to a crisis’. In effect, Urwin will have an early warning, troubleshooting, mediating, good offices role for countries and governments in trouble.

The Forum has been active nonetheless in helping PICs address issues of transnational crime and in meeting their obligations to UN and other counter-terrorism conventions. Model legislation on counter-terrorism and trans-national organised crime has been circulated by the Forum Secretariat and PICs are being assisted in tailoring that legislation to suit their particular circumstances. The Forum will also facilitate PICs in meeting the changing security requirements at ports and airports – requirements and procedures laid down by the IMO and the ICAO. Training is being provided to PIC officials on compliance with the IMO’s International Ship and Port Facility Security Code due to commence in July 2004. A Pacific Trans-national Crime Coordination Centre is in prospect as are Transnational Crime Units in Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, PNG and Vanuatu. Financial investigation units have already been established in some countries and a multi-jurisdictional Financial Intelligence Support Team (FIST) is to be established for the South Pacific. In addition a Combined Law Agency Groups (CLAGS) has been formed to enhance the sharing of information by law enforcement agencies (Urwin 2004).

### *Engagement?*

A proposal for a very broad form of regional security management is contained in the report by the Australian Senate on Australia’s relations with PNG and the Pacific Islands (Australian Senate 2003). The Senate report looks to the future and recommends that the idea of a ‘Pacific economic and political community’ be explored in light of Australia’s ‘obligation to assist Pacific States protect their security and stimulate their economies’. It sees regional security as a by-product of a more integrated region, elements of which would

include a more open labour market (providing access by Islanders to employment in Australia) and longer-term aid programs of 25 years or more. The report asserts that '(i)f sustainable regional economic growth can be achieved issues of governance, international crime, law and order, regional security and the health and well being of people living within the region, and in Australia, will improve' (Australian Senate 2003). In the view of most Pacific observers, the opening of the Australian labour market would be the single most important step currently available in assisting Pacific Islands development and relations across the region more generally.

#### **IV Concluding Note**

Attempting to assess the likely effectiveness of these various forms of security management raises more questions than answers. If internal conflict and disorder is the main problem, what has been learned from the experience so far in addressing it; for example in Bougainville and Fiji? Are internal conflicts in fact amenable to external remedy? If systemic (that is, political and constitutional) change is required to address internal problems, as the broadening debate over 'appropriate models' of state and polity seems to indicate, what has been learned from the experiments in 'electoral engineering' in PNG and Fiji? And what other forms of 'political engineering' might be proposed?

Of considerable importance is the question: how can regional and PIC 'ownership' of and participation in the security agenda and security management be strengthened? One answer to that is to make the existing 'security architecture' of the region – that multiplicity of separate regional co-ordinating agencies involving police chiefs, legal officers, heads of customs and immigration agencies and others – more responsive to the demands of better security management. Another is to activate those treaties and 'declarations' of commitment by regional leaders for law and security enforcement action, for example, on weapons control. A strengthened regional security committee of the Forum Secretariat would be the best placed mechanism to lead on those issues.

Perhaps the most glaring gap in the processes of security management to date is the absence of 'second track' mechanisms which, if filled, might help answer some of the above

questions. There is a clear need to construct a regional dialogue to build knowledge and confidence in policy communities, security services and the public at large on issues of sovereignty, security, conflict resolution and conflict management. The development of an informed security constituency with input into or at least engagement with policy processes, in individual PICs as well as in the region, would be a significant boost to confidence (Hegarty 2000). The type of 'second track' need not be as comprehensive as CSCAP. Regular defence, strategic and security conferencing involving politicians, official, scholars, commentators, and civil society representatives from within the Forum region as well as participation from the wider Asia Pacific would provide an appropriate start. It seems logical in the South Pacific context, that the Forum Secretariat plays a pivotal role in developing a 'second track' dialogue.

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