
The Quest for Integration: Australian Approaches to Security and Development in the Pacific Islands

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With the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands in July 2003, the former Howard Government initiated its robust new engagement with Australia's Pacific island neighbours. Interventions with an initial security focus have been portals to broader and ambitious state-building exercises. The quest to integrate security and development agendas lies at the heart of 'the new interventionism'. This article examines the evolution and character of this approach, as well as reviewing its implementation in the two case studies of Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and Papua New Guinea (ECP). It also discusses the significance for Australia/Pacific relations of the recent change of government in Canberra and the differences (and similarities) to be anticipated under Prime Minister Rudd's Labor Government.

The deployment of the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) in July 2003 marked the beginnings of the former Howard Government's renewed engagement with the Pacific islands countries. Substantial resources have since been mobilised to assist Australia's island neighbours address a broad array of security and development problems. These are manifested in disappointing social and economic indicators, poor standards of governance, as well as growing levels of political instability and conflict in some countries. In addition to the post-conflict intervention in Solomon Islands, Australia's more active role in the so-called 'arc of instability' includes the Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) in Papua New Guinea (PNG), attempts to strengthen the capacity and role of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the secondment of senior Australian officers to head several Pacific police forces, as well as substantial financial and technical assistance to struggling Nauru.

While Australia's new interventionism in the Pacific has been welcomed, implementation of this approach has proved difficult. The internal diversity of the Pacific militates against uniform solutions. In the case of multifaceted interventions like RAMSI there have been technical and logistical challenges to overcome, while their intrusive character has inevitably aroused local sensitivities. Technical issues include that of coordination among the large number of Australian agencies involved, selecting and mobilising appropriate Australian human resources, as well as addressing the complexities of capacity development in a variety of institutional and cultural settings. Evolving interventions require external actors to move between working in an operational mode to building the capacity of local counterparts. This is an

inherently difficult transition, demanding rare skills, continuous learning and adaptation, as well as a willingness to operate in a fashion (e.g. guiding rather than doing) that is not typically rewarded in Australian workspaces. Moreover many members of the expanding cohort of Australian actors expected to build local capacity have little prior experience in this field.

Dealing with the political dimensions of the larger interventions has proved particularly difficult. This was illustrated in the progressive deterioration in Australia's bilateral relations with both Solomon Islands and PNG in the final two years of the Howard administration—a development that overshadowed the accomplishments of the previous five years. With its commitment to repairing these damaged relations whilst maintaining a prominent role in the Pacific, the Rudd Government's election in November 2007 was greeted warmly throughout the region. How far the new Australian Government is able to successfully negotiate the obstacles encountered by its predecessor and translate its engagements into tangible and sustainable improvements in the countries concerned remains to be seen. Early signs are certainly promising although the long-term challenges remain formidable.

The recent change in Australian Government provides a timely opportunity to reflect on the character, successes and failures of the new interventionism over the past five years, as well as to consider the approach taking shape under the Rudd administration. An underlying theme concerns the changing character of the security-development nexus in Australian policy towards the Pacific islands. The assertion that security and development are inextricably linked has become something of a policy mantra in Australian and international policy circles in recent years.¹ While recognition of the essential interdependence between these areas is a positive thing, it should not obscure the complexity of this relationship in different national settings and the real practical difficulties involved in aligning security and development policies.²

The following section outlines some of the broad characteristics of the new interventionism and the strategic context of its initial emergence. This is followed by case studies of RAMSI and the ECP, as well as an outline of the volatile nature of bilateral relations between Australia and its two largest Melanesian neighbours over the past two years. The new Rudd approach as articulated in recent policy statements is then examined before a concluding discussion addressing some of the lessons learned.

¹ See, for example, The Secretary General's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (New York: United Nations, 2004).

² See Necla Tschirgi, *Security and Development: Untangling the Relationship* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2005).

The New Interventionism

Australian concerns with the so-called 'arc of instability' beyond its northern and eastern shores have been prominent for at least the past decade.³ Initially centred on the Indonesian archipelago following the demise of the Suharto regime, the arc has been extended gradually eastwards as the range of problems besetting the Pacific island countries have become more apparent. These have been concentrated in the larger, mainly Melanesian, states of PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji, although difficulties are also evident in several smaller Polynesian countries. As well as longstanding concerns with limited economic growth and rapid population expansion, the increase in corruption, poor governance, and deteriorating services and infrastructure, as well as political instability, law and order problems, and internal conflicts in some places have added to growing disquiet among Australian policy makers. While few of these developments are new, their cumulative effect has contributed to increasingly vivid depictions of a region confronted with the endemic problems commonly associated with more familiar global trouble zones such as sub-Saharan Africa.⁴ The nine-year long conflict in Bougainville with its devastating humanitarian and economic consequences, inter-group fighting in parts of the PNG Highlands, ethnic tensions in Guadalcanal and the armed takeover of Honiara in 2000, as well as Fiji's ingrained 'coup culture', provide the principal examples of internal conflict in the Pacific islands.

At one level, the range and complexity of these challenges reflects the diverse and unsettling impacts of processes of rapid change underway in Pacific societies, in combination with enduring colonial and pre-colonial legacies. The exposure of PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to the full forces of modernity and globalisation arrived relatively late in their respective histories. At another level, they highlight the essential fragility of many Pacific island states, and the artificial and fragmented character of the larger political communities they formally encompass.⁵ From an Australian perspective, the Pacific arc has been viewed as a growing threat in its immediate neighbourhood and one requiring a robust response. While PNG has long been the focus of Australian policy in the Pacific, reflecting strong historical and continuing ties, including trade and strategic interests, less interest was generally shown in the wider Pacific region.

³ See Robert Ayson, 'The 'arc of instability' and Australia's strategic policy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 2, (2007), pp. 215-231.

⁴ See, for example, Ben Reilly, 'The Africanisation of the South Pacific', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 3 (2000), pp. 261-268. For a critique of Reilly's thesis, see Jon Fraenkel, 'The Coming Anarchy in Oceania? A Critique of the 'Africanisation' of the South Pacific Thesis', *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 42, no. 1 (March 2004), pp. 1-34; and David Chappell, "'Africanization" in the Pacific: Blaming Others for Disorder in the Periphery?', *Comparative Studies of Society and History*, vol. 47, no. 2 (2005), pp. 286-317.

⁵ See, for example, Sinclair Dinnen, 'Dilemmas of intervention and the building of state and nation', in Sinclair Dinnen and Stewart Firth (eds), *Politics and State Building in Solomon Islands* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press and ANU E Press, 2008), pp. 1-38.

LIMITED IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

The growing problems in the Pacific island countries despite high levels of development assistance from bilateral and multilateral donors have been viewed by some as evidence of the ineffectiveness of existing aid approaches. Recurring criticism has been aimed at so-called 'boomerang aid', whereby the principal beneficiaries are viewed as the international managing contractors and individual consultants who traditionally have managed and implemented aid projects.⁶ Other critics such as Helen Hughes of the Sydney-based think tank, the Centre for Independent Studies, have argued that Australian aid to the Pacific not only fails to deliver on its promises but is crucially implicated in the dynamics of political and economic dysfunction in the islands by fuelling corruption and inducing debilitating levels of dependency among recipient states.⁷ These arguments about the downsides of aid struck a chord among elements of the Howard Government. As the then Treasurer remarked in 2004,

aid can hinder as well as help—it sometimes allows governments with poor policies and weak institutions to stave off essential reforms and rely on donors to provide essential services to their people.⁸

While the complexity of aid and the measurement of its impacts is far greater than implied in these critiques, few would deny that the tangible returns from substantial long-term investment have been modest.⁹ This is particularly true of many of the large institutional strengthening projects that were formerly a staple of donors in the region. For example, almost sixteen years of Australian project assistance to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) from 1989 to 2005 produced little sign of sustained improvement in the organisational and operational performance of the RPNGC and, on the contrary, considerable evidence of progressive deterioration.¹⁰ To be fair to development practitioners, shortcomings with existing approaches have led to considerable change, such as the adoption of sector-wide approaches in areas like health and law and justice, in the ongoing search for improved effectiveness. The limitations of traditional approaches to aid nevertheless provided an important consideration in the evolution of the new interventionism.

⁶ See, AIDWATCH, *Boomerang Aid: Not good enough Minister!*, June 2005, pp. 1-12, <<http://www.aidwatch.org.au/assets/aw00728/Boomerang%20aid%20final%20jun%2005.pdf>> [Accessed 28 May 2008].

⁷ Helen Hughes, 'Aid has failed the Pacific', *Issue Analysis*, no. 33 (St Leonards: Centre for Independent Studies, 2003), pp. 1-31.

⁸ Hon Peter Costello 'The challenge of poverty reduction', Address to the Australian Council for International Development Aid Dinner, Rydges Capital Hill, Canberra, 3 August 2004.

⁹ The need to demonstrate the tangible impacts of Australian aid led to the creation of the Office of Development Effectiveness in 2006.

¹⁰ See below, p. 36. A PNG Government review of the RPNGC in 2004 described it as "close to collapse". RPNGC Administrative Review Committee, *Final Draft*, 2004, p. 40.

STATE FAILURE AND THE SECURITY IMPERATIVE

Australia's intervention in Solomon Islands in 2003 marked a significant departure from its former approach which was based on a sensibility to traditional notions of sovereignty and reliance on development assistance as the principal instrument of foreign policy. The more hands-on approach emerged soon after the release of the Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper, *Advancing the National Interest* (2003),¹¹ which while echoing the non-interventionist stance of previous years highlighted the increasing interrelatedness of aid and "regional stability and security". Australian aid was viewed as "an integral part of the government's broader efforts to promote regional development and stability"¹² and included an emphasis on improving "the capacities of police and judicial systems to strengthen stability and support local efforts to reduce tensions and conflict".¹³ Some eight months after the release of the White Paper, the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) called for more rigorous promotion of good governance. Confronting corruption in the Pacific and enhancing law and order, peace and stability became AusAID priorities. To this end, AusAID stated that "[t]o further assist our Pacific partners address their complex development challenges, Australia is adopting a more hands-on approach".¹⁴

The larger backdrop was the changing international strategic environment following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001, and the bombings in Bali in 2002 and Jakarta in 2003, which in various ways underpinned and reinforced the emphasis on security. With the 'war on terror' as the new prism for viewing international security and stability, considerable emphasis was placed on issues of state capacity. That is, the capabilities of individual states to provide their citizens with fundamental public goods such as security, political participation, basic government services, and economic development.¹⁵ Whereas powerful and aggressive states had been conventionally viewed as the most likely sources of international conflict and instability, the new strategic framework reversed this by identifying weak and failing states with limited capabilities as the most serious threats to global peace.¹⁶ The spectre of state failure, previously viewed in terms of its humanitarian consequences, was recast as a major security risk in the post-9/11 period. States that had failed or were likely to

¹¹ DFAT, *Advancing the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2003).

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ AusAID, *Papua New Guinea and the Pacific—a Development Perspective* (Canberra: AusAID, 2003), p. 16.

¹⁵ See, for example, Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Cambridge: World Peace Foundation and Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

¹⁶ In 2002, the United States re-defined its National Security Strategy to warn that 'America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones'. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: White House, 2002), p. iv.

fail were now seen as potential incubators for all manner of illicit activities, thereby posing serious threats to regional and international security. The security imperative thus became the core rationale for a spate of international state-building interventions in global trouble spots designed to bolster failing states and transform failed ones into effective states capable of delivering security, stability and development.

Although a variety of factors would have influenced the Howard Government's decision to intervene in Solomon Islands in mid-2003, the public case for intervention was set squarely within the failed state paradigm. Then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer stated that the government

will not sit back and watch while a country slips inexorably into decay and disorder... The last thing we can afford is an already susceptible region being overwhelmed by more insidious and direct threats to Australia.¹⁷

However, the clearest articulation of this position was a report of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute—published several weeks before the RAMSI deployment—that identified Solomon Islands as the Pacific's first failing state.¹⁸ If left to its own devices, it warned, Solomon Islands risked becoming “a petri dish in which international and non-state security threats can develop and breed”.¹⁹ A “sustained and comprehensive multinational effort” was proposed to undertake rehabilitation work with the consent of the Solomon Islands Government.²⁰ Restoration of law and order would be followed by efforts to “build new political structures and security institutions and address underlying social and economic problems”.²¹

SECURITY, POLICING AND ‘CO-OPERATIVE INTERVENTION’

The new interventionism exhibited some common features. Concerns with security became more pronounced and manifested themselves not only in terms of official justifications for particular interventions but also in the higher priority accorded to enhancing domestic security capabilities in the countries concerned. This meant particular emphasis on building the capacity of domestic police and related law and justice agencies. Strengthening law enforcement and the rule of law provided a key aspect of the police-led regional mission in Solomon Islands, but was also reflected in the growing number of Pacific recipients of Australian assistance and in the rising levels of assistance provided for this purpose. For example, in 2004-5, \$119 million was allocated for policing and law and justice programs in East Timor, PNG, Fiji, South Pacific Regional, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, compared

¹⁷ Alexander Downer, ‘Security in an Unstable World’, Address to the National Press Club, Canberra, 26 June 2003.

¹⁸ Elsinia Wainwright, *Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands* (Canberra: ASPI, 2003).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*

with expenditure of \$69 million in 2003-4 and \$30 million in 2002-3.²² Internal security and effective conflict-resolution mechanisms were now viewed as a precondition for the advancement of more conventional development objectives such as the eradication of poverty. Indeed, one of the four key regional themes in the Pacific Regional Aid Strategy 2004-2009 is,

improved law and justice and security through support for police and legal institutions underpinning adherence to the rule of law, assisting regional security initiatives, addressing potential instability and the causes of conflict and investing in peace.²³

The modality of assistance delivery adopted by the Australian Government also changed. Support to Pacific islands' institutions, including police, law and justice agencies, had traditionally been managed by AusAID, with program design and implementation performed by private contractors. While the private sector continues to play an important role, there has been increasing resort to seconded officials from relevant Australian Government agencies, including the Australian Federal Police (AFP), to implement international capacity development programs. This change was, in part, a response to the limited impact of traditional forms of technical assistance. It was also argued that the use of career public servants provides the extra authority of the Australian Government and helps build long-term organisational relationships between Australian departments and their regional counterparts thereby leading to more durable processes of capacity development. Greater reliance on Australian public servants was part of a broader shift towards a 'whole-of-government' approach in the delivery of Australian development assistance.²⁴ This has been promoted as a more integrated approach to capacity development, particularly in environments where systemic weaknesses exist across an array of domestic institutions.

Emblematic of the shift towards greater whole of government collaboration in the delivery of development assistance—and further emphasising the association between security and development—a Strategic Partnership Agreement between AusAID and the AFP was formed in 2004, recognising the mutual strengths of each agency and clarifying their roles in relation to improving law and order in the region. As a result of this partnership, AusAID and AFP officers have been seconded to each other's agencies, and in 2005, it was agreed that while AusAID would maintain coordination of support to overseas law and justice sectors, the AFP would be "the first port of call" for the Australian aid program's global policing initiatives.²⁵ Since formation of the partnership agreement, the two agencies have increasingly

²² AusAID, *Review of Law and Justice Programs—Issues paper* (Canberra: AusAID, 2005), p. 1.

²³ AusAID, *Pacific Regional Aid Strategy 2004-2009*, (Canberra: AusAID, 2004), p. 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁵ Paul Jevtovic, 'Harnessing relations—a year in review', *Platypus Magazine* (December 2005), p. 17.

collaborated on the design, implementation and review of Australian support to policing agencies throughout the Pacific, to the extent that overseas police capacity development is now seen as core AFP business.

Responding to the expanding demand for police officers to serve in peacekeeping, stabilisation and capacity development roles, the Howard Government announced the establishment of the International Deployment Group (IDG) in early 2004. The IDG was formed under the auspices of the AFP, which already had considerable experience in international peacekeeping and peace monitoring.²⁶ According to the then Minister for Justice and Customs, the IDG would,

enable the strategic deployment of personnel undertaking peace-keeping operations, restoration of law and order missions and the delivery of capacity building initiatives in the region.²⁷

As well as training personnel, the IDG plans and manages international police deployments of both Australian and Pacific Islander police and civilians.²⁸ It currently has approximately 360 members deployed in capacity building initiatives in Nauru, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Cambodia and Vanuatu, as well as in peacekeeping missions in Cyprus, Sudan, Afghanistan and Timor-Leste. A significant boost to IDG funding—\$493 million over five years—was approved by government in August 2006. The *IDG Future Strategy* projected a staff increase of 400 bringing total IDG personnel to 1,200 over a two year period, amounting to the largest single increase in AFP staff since the force was established in 1979.²⁹ This included the creation of an Operational Response Group of 200 people, with a high level of readiness to deliver tactical and specialist policing capabilities and a particular focus upon international offshore operations. It also included a policing and capacity development group of over 750 people located both overseas and in Australia, and promotes greater liaison between interoperable agencies such as the AFP and the Australian Defence Force.

While representing a more robust, integrated and security-oriented approach than its predecessors, the Howard Government's Pacific engagement was also intended as a cooperative undertaking with the relevant islands' governments. The phrase "co-operative intervention" was first used by

²⁶ See Abby McLeod and Sinclair Dinnen, 'New Directions in Australian Regional Policing', in Andrew Goldsmith and James Sheptycki (eds.), *Crafting Transnational Policing—Police Capacity-Building and Global Policing Reform* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2007), pp. 295-328.

²⁷ Chris Ellison, 'Australia boosts regional law enforcement capacity', *Media Release*, 2 February 2004.

²⁸ A new \$2.8 million AFP International Training Complex was opened outside Canberra in 2005 and is designed to give Australian and overseas personnel a dedicated facility to help build their skills for overseas missions.

²⁹ Data from Auditor General, *Australian Federal Police Overseas Operations*, Audit Report, no. 53 2006-7 (Canberra: Australian National Audit Office, 2007), p. 118.

former Foreign Minister Alexander Downer in respect of RAMSI but was always conceived as having a wider regional application.³⁰ Hence the title of the assistance package offered to PNG—the *Enhanced Cooperation Program*. Australian assistance was to be provided with the support and active cooperation of key partners in the recipient countries and, where appropriate, regional organisations such as the PIF. As we shall see, maintaining the co-operative quality of these engagements at the political level has proved extremely challenging.³¹ In addition, the new approach entailed a commitment to longer, costly and more open-ended interventions, as in the case of RAMSI. This acknowledged the complexity of the institutional transformations being sought and represented a significant departure from the shorter, often unrealistic, time-frames associated with older development approaches.

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

The immediate background to the deployment of RAMSI in July 2003 was five years of low-level conflict between rival ethnic militias on the main island of Guadalcanal followed by a faltering peace process that deteriorated into a process of escalating lawlessness in the national capital, Honiara, and a number of other places, as well as economic decline and a progressive paralysis of government at national and provincial levels.³² Compensation processes—the principal instrument of peacemaking under the Australian-brokered Townsville Peace Agreement 2000—were rapidly corrupted as a result of the threats and greed of a relatively small cohort of former militants, political leaders and opportunist criminals. The Solomon Islands police force had effectively collapsed as a result of the ethnic tensions enabling armed thugs to act with impunity. Ordinary citizens, public servants and even government ministers faced growing levels of intimidation from criminal elements. By 2003, it was clear that the Solomon Islands Government on its own was incapable of restoring law and order and returning the troubled archipelago to some semblance of normality.

RAMSI was mobilised rapidly following the Australian Government's decision to abandon its longstanding non-interventionist stance and accede to a request for assistance from then Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allen

³⁰ See Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka, 'Political legitimacy and state-building intervention in the Pacific', in Greg Fry and Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka (eds.), *Intervention and state-building in the Pacific—the legitimacy of 'cooperative intervention'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp. 1-36.

³¹ For a discussion of the politics of the 'co-operative intervention' in Solomon Islands see: Dinnen and Firth (eds.), *Politics and Statebuilding in Solomon Islands*.

³² Detailed accounts of the conflict and its immediate aftermath are provided in: Jon Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Custom—From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands* (Wellington: University of Victoria Press, 2004); and Clive Moore, *Happy Isles in Crisis—the historical causes for a failing state in Solomon Islands, 1998-2004* (Canberra: Asia-Pacific Press, 2004). See also Sinclair Dinnen, 'Winners and Losers: Politics and Disorder in the Solomon Islands', *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2002), pp. 285-298.

Kemakeza.³³ Although planning, leadership and most of the personnel and other resources were supplied by Australia, the intervention was undertaken on a regional basis under the auspices of the PIF and its Biketawa Declaration of 2000.³⁴ The Facilitation of International Assistance Act set out the powers and immunities of mission personnel, as well as empowering the Solomon Islands parliament to review the mission annually and, in theory, terminate it by revoking consent.³⁵ The mission initially comprised around 330 police—the Participating Police Force (PPF)—drawn mainly from the AFP but including smaller numbers from Australian state forces, New Zealand, and other Forum member states.³⁶ With the police as the lead agency, approximately 1,800 regional military personnel provided logistical support and back-up, while civilian advisers were inserted into key government agencies as part of the larger state-building exercise.

Security was restored quickly to Honiara and most of the conflict-affected areas. A month-long amnesty resulted in the surrender of 3,730 firearms, approximately ninety to ninety-five percent of the country's stockpile.³⁷ Key militia leaders were apprehended with around 860 arrests made in the first 200 days of the mission.³⁸ Cleansing the ranks of the Solomon Islands Police Force (SIPF)³⁹ of criminal and undesirable elements entailed the removal of over 400 people by early 2004, almost twenty-five percent of the total workforce.⁴⁰ The security work of the mission has been progressively integrated into an ambitious long-term state-building exercise whose overall goal is *a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous Solomon Islands*.

³³ Michael Fullilove, 'The Testament of Solomons: RAMSI and International State-Building', *Analysis* (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, March 2006), p. 7. The ANAO Audit Report on the AFP reveals that they had 70 days in which to plan the deployment, from the time that the Solomon Islands Prime Minister requested Australia's assistance until the Australian Government agreed to the terms on which a deployment would be provided. See, Auditor General, *Australian Federal Police Operations*, p. 45.

³⁴ The PIF is made up of 16 independent or self-governing Pacific states including Australia and New Zealand. PIF's Biketawa Declaration on Mutual Assistance of 2000 allowed for collective action in response to a security crisis in a member state. <www.forumsec.org/_resources/article/files/Biketawa%20Declaration.pdf> [Accessed 28 May 2008].

³⁵ Solomon Islands, *The Facilitation of International Assistance Act* (2003).

³⁶ The RAMSI website lists the following contributing nations: Australia; Cook Islands; Federated States of Micronesia; Fiji (currently suspended); Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Nauru; New Zealand; Niue; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Tonga; Tuvalu; and Vanuatu. <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/8>> [Accessed 20 May 2008].

³⁷ Robert Muggah, *Diagnosing Demand: Assessing the Motivations and Means for Firearms Acquisition in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea*, State Society and Governance in Melanesia Discussion Paper 2004/7 (Canberra: Australian National University, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2004), p. 6.

³⁸ Figure cited by the then Commander of the Participating Police Force, Ben McDevitt, at the One Year Anniversary Press Conference in Honiara, 22 July 2004. Current figures posted on the RAMSI website indicate that over 6300 people have been arrested on more than 9100 charges laid since RAMSI arrived. <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/268>> [Accessed 20 May 2008].

³⁹ Previously known as the Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP).

⁴⁰ The RAMSI website states that over 160 former SIPF officers have been arrested for serious offences including corruption, murder, assault, rape, intimidation and robbery. <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/268>>.

Implementation of this goal is organised around three broad pillars or programs: law and justice; economic governance; and machinery of government.⁴¹

As well as rebuilding the SIPF, the law and justice pillar covers assistance to judicial institutions and the prison system. Economic governance includes attempts to strengthen public finances, encourage business and economic growth, and assistance to rural agriculture. Machinery of government focuses on developing effective cabinet and parliamentary systems, public service reform, strengthening oversight institutions, providing electoral and civic education, and improving the performance of provincial governance. RAMSI advisers—many of them seconded Australian public servants—have been placed in a range of Solomon Islands departments and agencies such as the Auditor General, Treasury, Finance, Internal Revenue, Customs, Solicitor General, Public Prosecutions, the Magistracy and High Court. Overall coordination is managed through a Special Coordinator's Office in Honiara,⁴² headed by a senior Australian diplomat, while Australian-based agencies operate through an interdepartmental committee in Canberra. In addition to support channelled through the mission, Australia maintains a separate bilateral development program that provides assistance in areas like health, education, environmental and natural resource management, and community development.⁴³

RAMSI has no fixed exit date. Its duration is to be determined according to the completion of its various program objectives. Such an ambitious engagement is extremely expensive. Until recently, the level of Australia's aid to Solomon Islands was relatively modest, especially when compared to its very substantial program in PNG. An average of \$7.5 million of Australian aid was committed to Solomon Islands annually from 1984 to 1989.⁴⁴ This increased in the late 1990s from \$11 million in 1997-98 to \$13.3 million in 1998-99 and \$18.7 million in 1999-2000. In 2000-01 it grew to \$35.1 million, then to \$40.6 million in 2001-02 and \$36.2 million in 2002-03. Australia's financial outlay increased exponentially with RAMSI and has since averaged around \$200 million per annum. According to a recent Auditor-General's report, the Australian Government allocated \$840.5 million for RAMSI over the four years from 2005-08.⁴⁵ Australian aid to Solomon Islands in 2006-07

⁴¹ See RAMSI website for more details: <<http://www.ramsi.org/>>.

⁴² Further details about the Special Coordinator's Office can be obtained at: <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/32>> [Accessed 28 May 2008].

⁴³ See AusAID, *Solomon Islands Transitional Country Strategy 2006 to Mid-2007* (Canberra: AusAID, 2006).

⁴⁴ AusAID figures quoted in Clive Moore, 'Unchartered Pacific Waters: the Solomon Islands Constitution and the Government of Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, 2006-7', *History Compass*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2008), p. 493.

⁴⁵ Of this, the bulk of funds—amounting to \$538 million—was for the AFP, with \$15.1 million for DFAT, \$282.2 million for AusAID, and \$5.2 million for Customs. Auditor General, *Coordination of Australian Government Assistance to Solomon Islands*, Audit Report, no. 47 (Canberra: Australian National Audit Office, 2006-7), p. 27.

alone was estimated to be \$223 million, amounting to 52 percent of total estimated aid funding to the Pacific for that year.⁴⁶

The speedy and peaceful restoration of law and order has been RAMSI's most notable accomplishment. Progress has also occurred in other areas such as the stabilisation of government finances. Government revenues increased by around 170 percent during the first three years of the deployment, largely owing to more efficient systems of revenue collection.⁴⁷ Capacity development is now the main focus of the mission's work with the SIPF and other government agencies. While there has been progress in enhancing the quality and training of capacity developers in some areas,⁴⁸ significant constraints remain in the way of effective skills transfer. These include matters like the shortage of eligible local counterparts and, in some cases, the low level of skills among counterparts and lack of necessary infrastructure.⁴⁹ Measuring the effectiveness of capacity development is notoriously difficult.⁵⁰ RAMSI established a performance framework for this purpose in 2005. Still a work in progress, this framework comprises four main instruments: an annual People's Survey conducted in each of the nine provinces; capacity building stocktakes covering each program; analytical reviews; and self-evaluation mechanisms by individual programs.⁵¹

Almost five years after the initial deployment, most Solomon Islanders remain supportive of the intervention. While this level of popular support is a major strength of the mission, it is also indicative of the essential fragility of peace and reconstruction in the archipelago. Many citizens remain fearful of the consequences of the mission withdrawing and show little faith in the integrity and capacity of Solomon Islands institutions and political processes. Data from the People's Survey suggests that while there has been an increase in community security since the mission arrived there is still a long way to go. Thus, forty-six per cent of respondents thought that their community was safe and peaceful, forty-two percent thought there were sometimes problems, while nine percent said there were many problems.⁵² Women, young women in particular, were less likely to say that communities

⁴⁶ Ibid. AusAID treats PNG and the Pacific as two separate entities for purposes of its development assistance program. In other words, the figure for the Pacific excludes PNG.

⁴⁷ Kruno Kukoc, 'Careful Planning Puts Archipelago in the Sun', *Australian*, 15 June 2007.

⁴⁸ For example, the Annual Performance Report 2006/2007 notes improvements in the law and justice program relating to the recruitment of advisers, induction and language training for advisers, as well as with counterpart involvement in adviser performance assessment. John Winter and Kaye Schofield, *Annual Performance Report 2006/2007: A Report on the Performance of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands* (Honiara: RAMSI, July 2007), p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Heather Baser, *Provision of Technical Assistance Personnel on the Solomon Islands: what can we learn from the RAMSI experience?*, Discussion Paper, no. 76 (Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, September 2007).

⁵¹ See RAMSI website: <<http://www.ramsi.org/node/14> > [Accessed 28 May 2008].

⁵² Figures from the People's Survey quoted in: Winter and Schofield, *Annual Performance Report 2006/2007*, p. 4.

were safe and peaceful, and almost twice as likely as men to say that there were many problems. Significantly, the People's Survey reveals that approximately eighty percent of Solomon Islanders are concerned that violent conflict might return if RAMSI leaves and that high levels of mistrust continue to exist among people from different provinces.⁵³ These findings also point to one of the most fundamental concerns with Australia's enhanced Pacific engagement, namely the issue of long-term sustainability. While both the Howard and Rudd Governments have provided substantial resources and personnel to RAMSI, it is unlikely that this level of commitment will remain indefinite. What happens when RAMSI leaves as ultimately it must?

The Enhanced Cooperation Program in Papua New Guinea

Whilst never declared a failed state like Solomon Islands, PNG has been variously described as a "weak state", a "basket case", a state "on the brink," and a potential "rogue state".⁵⁴ PNG has long been renowned for its lack of social, economic and political stability, as well as serious problems of law and order in urban areas (such as Port Moresby and Lae) and some rural areas, most notably the Highlands region. In addition to problems of generalised crime, PNG has experienced a major conflict in Bougainville (1989-1997), and significant inter-group fighting frequently occurs around major resource extraction sites, such as those in the Southern Highlands and Enga Provinces.

High levels of disorder in some regions of the country enjoy a circular relationship with the operation of basic state and social services. In part, they reflect the weakness of the relationship between state and society and the state's inability to provide basic services; but violence also further undermines the provision of those services and can act as a significant disincentive to investment and economic activity. Improving law and order in PNG has thus long been a priority for donors, notably Australia, engaged in the promotion of security and development.⁵⁵

Despite the very different circumstances of both countries, in 2003 Australian journalist Paul Kelly commented that

⁵³ See *Solomon Islands People's Survey Pilot*, 2006, <<http://www.ramsi.org/files/People%20Survey%20Pilot%202006.pdf>> [Accessed 28 May 2008].

⁵⁴ See, for example, Elsin Wainwright, *Strengthening our Neighbour: Australia and the future of Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: ASPI, 2004), Hughes, 'Aid Has Failed the Pacific', p. 2; Susan Windybank and Mike Manning, 'Papua New Guinea on the Brink', *Issue Analysis*, no. 30 (St Leonards: Centre for Independent Studies, 2003), p. 1.

⁵⁵ See Abby McLeod, 'Police reform in Papua New Guinea', in A. Brown (ed.), *Security and Development in the Pacific Islands* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007), pp. 73-88.

the Australian-led intervention [in Solomon Islands] is a new strategic principle with potential to apply to other nations across the Melanesia trouble zone where PNG is the pivotal player.⁵⁶

With almost sixteen years of 'traditional' development assistance having been provided to the RPNGC under the AusAID funded, consultant implemented, RPNGC Development Project (1989-2005), on 30 June 2004, Australia and PNG signed a treaty establishing the ECP, committing an additional A\$800 million to PNG over a five-year period for the police-led intervention. Under this program, it was anticipated that in-line personnel would be placed in central government agencies (including legal, economic and financial specialists), and that approximately 230 Australian police officers would be seconded to the RPNGC, where they would hold line positions in Port Moresby, Lae, Mt Hagen, the Highlands Highway and Bougainville. The policing component of the intervention, however, was short-lived, with the withdrawal of the entire contingent on 13 May 2005, due to a high court decision that rendered the deployment of Australian police officers with full immunities unconstitutional.⁵⁷

While short in duration, the policing component of the ECP saw Australian police deploy to both Port Moresby and Bougainville. Australian police deployed under the ECP were collectively known as the Australian Assisting Police (AAP), being sourced from both the AFP and various Australian state police forces. Although it was originally envisaged that the Australian police would hold line positions, upon deployment they worked strictly as advisers, being instructed to assist, rather than do. Australian police and civilians worked in a variety of specialist policing, general policing and support areas, including (but not limited to) human resources, finance, logistics, fraud, legal, communications, criminal investigators, prosecutions and general duties in stations throughout Port Moresby, as well as in Buka and Arawa in Bougainville.

Australian police were by and large welcomed by the community. Their deployment occurred amidst community perceptions that PNG police inadequately policed the community, resulting in increasing crime and decreasing public safety. Whilst many people noted the gross wealth disparities between the Australian police and themselves—a disparity that exists between the majority of expatriates and Papua New Guineans—people welcomed their presence, reported increased feelings of safety, demonstrated greater willingness to report crime and subsequently publicly mourned the departure of the AAP.

Since the withdrawal of the policing component of the ECP in 2005, the RPNGC has received minimal donor support, with the exception of technical assistance provided by a handful of advisers employed under the

⁵⁶ Cited in McLeod and Dinnen, 'New Directions in Australian Regional Policing', p. 316.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 318-321.

AusAID/PNG Law and Justice Sector Program. However, in the context of a new Australian Government committed to long-term engagement with the Pacific,⁵⁸ as outlined below, renewed and refocussed Australian support to the RPNGC is imminent.

The Deterioration in Bilateral Relations

The eruption of serious public disturbances in Honiara in April 2006 provided an unanticipated set-back for the mission. Much of the capital's Chinatown district was destroyed.⁵⁹ Mission and Solomon Islands police appear to have been caught off guard and overseas reinforcement were required to restore order. Criticisms were directed at RAMSI and the PPF in particular.⁶⁰ Public anger was initially provoked by the announcement of an unpopular Prime Minister-elect following the 2006 elections. Less spectacular, though more damaging, was the rapid deterioration in bilateral relations between Australia and Solomon Islands after the establishment of a new government led by Manasseh Sogavare in May 2006.⁶¹ The collaborative nature of 'co-operative intervention' renders it especially vulnerable to shifting local political allegiances.⁶² The extent of this vulnerability was demonstrated when the largely compliant Kemakeza-led government was replaced by the more hostile Sogavare-led administration. During the following twenty months an acrimonious struggle took place between the Solomon Islands and Australian Governments over control of the regional mission. RAMSI was positioned uncomfortably between the two governments upon which it depended most—the first for its authorisation to continue and the second as the source of most its personnel and resources. These developments also made it extremely difficult for the mission, and especially the police,⁶³ to maintain an image of detached political neutrality.

One of Prime Minister Sogavare's first acts was to call for a review of the mission, and a clear exit strategy. He also appointed as ministers two MPs who had been detained by police on suspicion of involvement in the April disturbances. As well as expressing concern over his choice of ministers, Australia and New Zealand opposed any substantive changes to RAMSI on

⁵⁸ Kevin Rudd, *Fresh Ideas for Future Challenges: A New Approach to Australia's Arc of Instability*, Speech to the Lowy Institute, Sydney, 5 July 2007.

⁵⁹ See Clive Moore, 'Helpem Fren: the Solomon Islands, 2003-2007', *Journal of Pacific History*, vol. 42, no.2 (2007), pp. 141-164.

⁶⁰ For criticism of the police, see: Mike Wheatley, 'RAMSI Tuesday wasn't to do with intelligence failure', *New Matilda*, 24 May 2006. For the Australian-born SIPF Commissioner's response, see: Arthur Wate, 'Police Chief Replies to Criticisms', *Solomon Star*, 19 May 2006.

⁶¹ See Clive Moore, 'Unchartered Pacific Waters: the Solomon Islands Constitution and the Government of Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, 2006-7', *History Compass*, vol. 6, no. 2 (2008), pp. 488-509.

⁶² See Ellie Wainwright, 'How is RAMSI Faring? Progress, Challenges and Lessons Learned', *Strategic Insight* (Canberra: ASPI, 2005), p. 5.

⁶³ See Andrew Goldsmith and Sinclair Dinnen, 'Transnational Police Building: Critical lessons from Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands', *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 6 (2007), pp. 1091-1109.

the grounds that it was an integrated package not amenable to being 'cherry picked'.⁶⁴ Amid mounting rancour at political levels, the Solomon Islands Government abruptly expelled the Australian High Commissioner for allegedly interfering in local politics. In retaliation, visa restrictions were imposed on Solomon Islands' politicians seeking entry to Australia.

A major source of contention was Prime Minister Sogavare's campaign to appoint an Australian lawyer, Julian Moti, as his new Attorney General. Critics saw this as an attempt to install a key ally in this important office in order to protect Sogavare's political interests and undermine mission efforts to strengthen the rule of law. The AFP announced that they wanted to question Moti in relation to child sex charges in Vanuatu ten years previously. He was later arrested while in transit in PNG at the request of Australian police seeking his extradition. After failing to attend a scheduled bail hearing, he was secretly flown to Solomon Islands in a PNG Defence Force aircraft. The apparent collusion between the two Melanesian governments, as well as the refusal by veteran PNG Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare to release the findings of a Board of Inquiry into Moti's escape, infuriated the Howard Government and led to what was arguably the lowest point in relations between Australia and its former colony since the latter's independence in 1975.

In Solomon Islands, Sogavare upped the stakes by sacking Shane Castles, the Australian-born SIPF commissioner, whom he accused of following Australian orders. In February 2007, the Australian Foreign Minister took the remarkable step of writing an open letter to the people of Solomon Islands in which he berated Prime Minister Sogavare for trying to undermine the regional mission.⁶⁵ Commenting on the overall tenor of exchanges between Canberra, Port Moresby and Honiara at this time, strategic analyst Hugh White lamented the reversion to a 'puerile, immature diplomacy'.⁶⁶ Periodic threats were made by the Solomon Islands Government to terminate the mission though strong protests from many of its own citizens rendered such a prospect unlikely. Julian Moti was eventually sworn-in as Attorney General in July 2007. By the time of the Australian elections in November 2007, the cooperative dimension of Australia's 'co-operative intervention' had descended into open confrontation with the Sogavare Government in Honiara and an awkward stand-off with the Somare administration in Port Moresby.

⁶⁴ 'Australia fears Sogavare wants to 'cherry pick' RAMSI', *Radio Australia Pacific Beat*, 22 May 2006.

⁶⁵ 'A Letter to the People of Solomon Islands From the Hon. Alexander Downer Minister for Foreign Affairs, Australia', *Solomon Star*, 12 February 2007.

⁶⁶ Hugh White, 'Talks will show if Howard acted too tough', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 2006.

New Rudd Approach

As articulated in the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) National Platform, an underlying premise of the ALP's approach to the region is the belief that

if you have good relations with your neighbours, it is good for your security and if you have bad relations with your neighbours, it is bad for your security.⁶⁷

Comprehensive regional engagement and improved diplomatic relations were therefore posited as key weapons against insecurity in the region. By the campaign for office in late 2007, the deterioration of relations with Australia's near neighbours in Melanesia under the Howard Government provided then Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd, with a significant opportunity to distinguish the ALP's approach to the Pacific from that of the Coalition.

In July 2007,⁶⁸ Rudd called for renewed attention to the region, expressing concerns about: the costs of reactive rather than proactive responses to regional instability; the potential increase of refugees to Australia due to ethnic and political violence in the region; the growing risk to Australian public health posed by the HIV pandemic in PNG; and the unprecedented strategic opportunity for other non-regional states to displace Australian interests in the region due to its fragile relations with many Pacific islands countries. Playing to domestic concerns about Australian national security and physical safety, Rudd repeated these concerns one month later.⁶⁹ Closer to the election, a joint Labor media statement announced that "...to help avoid continuing instability and revolving door military deployments", a new Asia Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation would be established under a Labor Government.⁷⁰

Drawing upon former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's claim that there could be "no development without security, and no security without development", Rudd announced his party's intention to implement a long-term Pacific Partnership for Development and Security, which would simultaneously tackle a number of issues including primary education and healthcare, infrastructure, youth unemployment through targeted public works programs, microfinance, good governance, and effective security assistance and capacity building with local police.⁷¹ Whilst echoing the Howard Government's concern with the region's fragile states—and the possibility of those states harbouring terrorist cells—Rudd explicitly identified poverty eradication as an important way of addressing regional security.

⁶⁷ Australian Labor Party, *National Platform and Constitution*, 2007, p. 232.

⁶⁸ Rudd, *Fresh Ideas for Future Challenges*.

⁶⁹ Kevin Rudd, *Fresh Ideas: National Security Policy*, Speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 9 August 2007.

⁷⁰ Arch Bevis et. al., *Asia Pacific Centre For Civil-Military Cooperation*, Australian National University Media Statement, 13 November 2007.

⁷¹ Rudd, *Fresh Ideas for Future Challenges*.

Following his election as Prime Minister in November 2007, Kevin Rudd sought to transform Australia's relations with the Pacific islands early in his term, announcing the position of Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Affairs, ratifying the Kyoto Protocol and apologising to Australia's indigenous 'stolen generation', closing offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea, visiting both Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands in March 2008, and declaring Australia's desire to host the 2009 Pacific Islands Forum. In a series of media releases and press conferences, he emphasised the principles of mutual trust, responsibility and cooperation as key to Australia's partnerships with its regional neighbours,⁷² as articulated in the *Port Moresby Declaration* of 6 March, 2008.⁷³

The Port Moresby Declaration announces a "new era of cooperation" and firmly situates Australia "within" rather than "outside" the region by emphasising shared challenges such as climate change. Interestingly, the declaration specifies the "Pacific Partnerships for Development" as the mechanism through which better development outcomes (including meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals) are to be achieved, while the security focus of the previously proposed "Pacific Partnerships for Development and Security" is entirely absent. Having satisfied domestic concerns about national security prior to the election, references to regional security are conspicuously absent from post-election policy statements about the Pacific, perhaps indicating a healthy awareness that security is a sensitive issue in a region readily associated with state weakness and fragility.

The removal of 'security' from the Pacific Partnerships for Development initiative does not mean a lack of concern about regional security on the part of the Labor Government. For example, under the 2008-09 Budget, the Australian Federal Police was awarded close to eighty million to implement a Pacific Police Development Program over a four year period.⁷⁴ This program includes a raft of regional and bilateral initiatives, including a PNG-Australia Policing Partnership (APP), which will operate in close collaboration with the existing AusAID/PNG Law and Justice Sector Program. Reflecting—but not directly derived from—the new government's approach, the APP is premised upon long-term engagement and the development of mutually agreed objectives. Moreover, it embraces key aspects of best-development practice, such as mutual accountability, working through local systems and processes (where possible) and fostering local ownership.

⁷² Kevin Rudd, *Joint Press Conference with Prime Minister Somare*, 6 March 2008; *Visit Solomon Islands*, Media release, 8 March 2008; *Australia seeks to host 2009 Pacific Islands Forum*, Media release, 8 March 2008.

⁷³ Government of Australia and Government of Papua New Guinea, *Port Moresby Declaration*, March 2008.

⁷⁴ Attorney General, *2008-09 Portfolio Budget Statement* (Canberra: Attorney General's Department, 2008).

Given its short time in office, it is too early to demonstrate the practical application of the Rudd Government's policy announcements on the Pacific. Moreover, it is easy to conflate changes in agency policy and activities (e.g. those of the AFP) with the government's 'new approach' to the region. In many instances, recent shifts in approach can be attributed to agency learning and institutional evolution, rather than to the change of government. However, Rudd's emphasis upon long-term engagement and genuine partnerships can only further improve the ways in which both individual agencies and the government as a whole support development and security in our immediate region. As highlighted recently by Greg Fry, there has been a fundamental shift in the way in which Australia conducts dialogue with Pacific states, which in keeping with Labor party ideology, should contribute to regional security.⁷⁵ Whether or not the new government will continue the interventionist approach of the Howard Government (through, for example in-line rather than advisory assistance) to the Pacific—albeit in a more neighbourly manner—remains to be seen.

Conclusions

While Pacific islanders share many of Australia's concerns for security in the region, their own concerns frequently differ significantly from those of Australian policy makers, who focus primarily upon strengthening existing state institutions and addressing governance issues such as corruption and accountability. While these issues certainly worry Pacific islanders—albeit the small percentage of them (particularly Melanesians) who actually have access to state institutions—more parochial daily issues such as domestic violence, assault, burglary and sexual violence, rather than corruption and accountability, lie at the heart of their security concerns.⁷⁶ Although improving accountability and eliminating corruption might ultimately improve the ability of state institutions to respond to these problems, in the short term Pacific islanders are seeking more immediate responses to their security concerns, which cannot be met by a distant state. Relatively recent innovations such as the Community Justice Liaison Unit in PNG, which seeks to bring state and non-state actors closer together in the fight against crime, possess greater potential than traditional state strengthening exercises to bring the external and internal security agendas closer together.⁷⁷ In this respect, the Rudd Government's commitment to engaging civil society in the delivery of basic services (which may include community

⁷⁵ Greg Fry, 'Australia in Oceania: A 'new era of cooperation'?', in Lorraine Elliott et. al., *Australian foreign policy futures: Making middle-power leadership work?*, (Canberra: Dept. of International Relations, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, 2008), pp. 9-20.

⁷⁶ As illustrated, for example, in the findings of the People's Survey. See also Anna Powles, 'Mission Creep: Statebuilding from Honiara to Dili', *Security Challenges*, vol. 2, no. 2 (July 2006), pp. 9-14.

⁷⁷ See Sinclair Dinnen, 'Beyond state-centrism: external solutions and the governance of security in Melanesia', in Fry and Kabutaulaka (eds.), *Intervention and state-building in the Pacific—the legitimacy of 'cooperative intervention'*, pp. 102-118.

policing and crime prevention strategies),⁷⁸ might assist Australian aid to security institutions to better meet the needs of Pacific islanders, particularly those living in rural areas.

Despite the new rhetoric of 'partnership' and mutual cooperation, it is likely that capacity building or capacity development will remain a key aim of Australian aid programs in the Pacific. The subject of capacity development—namely capacity—is defined by the United Nations Development Program as “the ability of individuals, organisations and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.”⁷⁹ By extension, capacity development is the process through which the abilities to do so are obtained, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time by internal and external stakeholders. Capacity development must therefore be seen not only as an externally driven exercise, but also as an indigenous process of change and evolution.⁸⁰ The prominence of technical assistance in external capacity development initiatives, however, highlights the unspoken assumption that outsiders 'know' how to do the things that 'locals' ought to do in order to improve their capacity. As highlighted by McLeod, this assumption explicitly contradicts local perceptions of capacity development, whereby the external skill set is seen by 'recipients' to be merely one of many approaches, rather than a superior way of doing.⁸¹

It will be interesting to observe the ways in which future engagements with Pacific islands institutions operationalise the rhetoric of 'partnership' so as to facilitate genuine sharing of skills and experience, rather than further entrench existing perceptions of Australian superiority in the region. Recent moves, such as the AFP's involvement of Pacific islanders in the delivery of pre-deployment training, demonstrate increasing awareness of the fact that those traditionally designated as 'recipients' of aid are simultaneously developing the capacity of those who 'provide support'. These processes of exchange are limited not only to awareness of other languages and cultures, but also to alternative and more innovative 'ways of doing', including informal dispute resolution and different approaches to community policing.⁸²

⁷⁸ Government of Australia and Government of Papua New Guinea, *Port Moresby Declaration*.

⁷⁹ UNDP, *Capacity Development Practice Note*, <<http://www.capacity.undp.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=1507>> [Accessed 10 December 2007].

⁸⁰ Peter Morgan, *Capacity and capacity development—some strategies*, Note prepared for the Political and Social Policies Division, Canadian International Development Agency, 1998, <http://www.impactalliance.org/file_download.php?location=S_U&filename=10343697570CIDA_Strategy_Paper.pdf> [Accessed 21 December 2007].

⁸¹ McLeod, 'Police reform in Papua New Guinea'; Abby McLeod, 'Police capacity development in the Pacific: The challenge of local context', *Journal of Policing and Society* (forthcoming).

⁸² See Sinclair Dinnen and John Braithwaite, 'Reinventing policing through the prism of the colonial kiap', *Journal of Policing and Society* (forthcoming), <http://www.anu.edu.au/fellows/jbraithwaite/_documents/Articles/Reinventing_Policing_2007.pdf>

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