



Pacific Institute
of Public Policy



KEEPING THE PEACE

Re-thinking our approach to security issues
as new threats and opportunities emerge



Thinking for ourselves
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Key messages

Keeping it real:

It is essential to make security more inclusive of broader social aspirations, and ensure Pacific island communities have more input on the security issues that affect them most at the local level.

Keeping it together:

While regional security architecture may be in place, gaps remain at the national and local levels. Regional security needs to be underpinned by contextually relevant national action.

Keeping pace:

A broader understanding of security issues is emerging, particularly the nexus between peace and development, resource exploitation, climate change, gender based violence and the epidemic of non-communicable diseases.

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KEEPING THE PEACE

Re-thinking our approach to security issues as new threats and opportunities emerge

It was a reconciliation ceremony, but it felt more like a carnival given the singing and dancing. Lines of former fighters from Bougainville lined up and shook hands, some grief-stricken for the hurt they had caused, others weeping from joy that this day would seal the past and communities could start fresh again in peace. Bows and arrows were broken and betel nut chewed, spat into a hole and covered to symbolise an end to all grievances. The war was over and former foes now embraced each other as regional peacekeepers looked on quietly from the sidelines. A tense morning had now given way to cheerful remembrance and hope for the future. Peace was at hand, but as the Mortlock islanders displayed their incredible knife dance - juggling machetes in unison - sharp risks remained to the ongoing peace process, requiring careful alignment and awareness.

The Pacific has seen its share of coups and conflict, but deserves recognition for being a largely peaceful region, relative to others. It also has a wealth of traditional mechanisms to end conflict and initiate reconciliation, methods that may offer a template for global conflict resolution. It is worth bearing this in mind as the region develops a more 'bottom-up' approach to contemporary security issues at the local, regional and international levels.

Keeping it real – making security more inclusive of broader social aspirations

In the midst of constant posturing among regional and global powers, it is important we don't lose sight of the security issues that matter most at the local level. Mamas selling their produce at the market probably don't care much about ISIS in Syria or if China now has its own stealth fighter jets. Of greater concern is who is benefitting from local land sales, why it is not safe to walk freely at night, and when health and education services will be improved enough so their children can live in peace, be healthy and prosper.

Until recently, policymaking in the security area was the preserve of the uniformed services and the government ministries that oversee them. As our understanding of security issues broadens, we see a wider range of stakeholders involved. There is a growing acceptance in the security sector of civic engagement, and a more holistic approach to what constitutes security at the national and local level. This will help ensure governments are better equipped to deal with grassroots-level concerns – including resource exploitation, ethnic tension, urbanisation and domestic violence – just as much as managing grand chess moves in regional geopolitics by the major powers. A broader understanding of security, and particularly of the nexus between peace and development, is being built into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), scheduled to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015¹. Central to this understanding is the premise that peaceful and inclusive societies, the rule of law, and effective state institutions are core elements of sustainable development, and not optional extras². This is not new thinking³, but at the international level, a silo approach and the fear of competing mandates has stalled uptake. However, within our region there are good examples of how to make on-going peace processes an active part of the local development agenda. As in Bougainville, the people of Timor-Leste, know first-hand how vital peace is to their individual and community well-being and development. Since its 2006 crisis, the country has embarked on a long-term process of rebuilding its social fabric, strengthening state institutions and transforming its

international image. In addition to improving national resilience, the Government of Timor-Leste has championed peacebuilding and statebuilding on the world stage.⁴ As the Bougainville and Timor-Leste examples have demonstrated, this is not so much the securitisation of development as the humanisation of security. We must be careful to draw a clear distinction between the two. This is a pertinent fear, especially for those living under authoritarian regimes or governments heavily influenced by multinational corporations who use 'security' to enforce 'development' against the best interests of the population.

Keeping it together – ensuring regional security architecture is underpinned by local action

There is a broad consensus that the basic framework of regional security architecture is in place. Mechanisms such as the Biketawa Declaration⁵ are there to trigger regional responses to national problems if necessary. Growing co-ordination by officials at the national, sub-regional (e.g. Melanesian Spearhead Group) and regional level (e.g. Pacific Islands Forum) suggest that the necessary linkages exist to deal with humanitarian and natural disasters, as well as with possible peacekeeping interventions in the event of conflict. Regional law enforcement secretariats⁶ also come together annually under the Forum Regional Security Committee⁷ to collaborate on issues relating to transnational crime involving guns, drugs, money laundering and human trafficking, which remain significant policing challenges. However, while the regional mechanisms may be in place, gaps remain at the national and local level. This includes the management of cyclical 'payback' violence, tribal war, resource exploitation and personal security issues such as gender based violence.

A decade after the regional Peace Monitoring Group oversaw Bougainville's transition from war to peace and the Regional Assistance Mission in neighbouring Solomon Islands (RAMSI), lessons have been learnt about how to better manage such interventions. RAMSI has its critics⁸, particularly since it was not designed or intended to deal with the root causes of the tensions that spilled over into conflict. However it did stabilise

1 For more information see <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/owg.html>

2 Report of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda - <http://www.post2015hlp.org/the-report/>

3 The inherent link between peaceful societies and sustainable development has been agreed internationally since the 1992 Rio Principles and reinforced through the Millennium Declaration, the 2012 Rio + 20 outcomes and the 2013 special event on the MDGs

4 Timor-Leste is a founding member of the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected countries, which now includes 20 states on four continents - <http://www.g7plus.org>

5 The Biketawa Declaration outlines guiding principles for governance and courses of action for a regional response to crises in the region. See <http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/biketawa-declaration/>

6 Including the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police (PICP), Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC), Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) and Pacific Islands Law Officers Network (PILON)

7 <http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/forum-regional-security-committee-frsc/>

8 See Jon Fraenkel et al (2014) The RAMSI Decade: A Review of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands - <http://tinyurl.com/RAMSI-14>

THE BIKETAWA DECLARATION PROCESS

- (i) Assess the situation, make a judgment as to the significance of the developments and consult the Forum Chair and such other Forum Leaders as may be feasible to secure approval to initiate further action;
- (ii) Consult the national authorities concerned regarding assistance available from the Forum; and
- (iii) Advise and consult with the Forum Foreign Ministers, and based on these consultations, undertake one or a combination of the following actions to assist in the resolution of the crisis:
 - (a) A statement representing the view of members on the situation;
 - (b) Creation of a Ministerial Action Group;
 - (c) A fact finding or similar mission;
 - (d) Convening an eminent persons group;
 - (e) Third party mediation;
 - (f) Support for appropriate institutions or mechanisms that would assist a resolution; and
 - (g) The convening of a special high level meeting of the Forum Security Committee or an ad hoc meeting of Forum Ministers.
- (iv) If after actions taken under (iii) the crisis persists, convene a special meeting of Forum Leaders to consider other options including if necessary targeted measures.

SOURCE: <http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/biketawa-declaration/>

a situation that was spinning out of control and provided needed space to rebuild respect for governing institutions. The peace process on Bougainville should be seen as the gold standard so far: a case of regional partners, led by Australia and New Zealand, providing unarmed troops to oversee a rapid demilitarisation that leveraged kastom reconciliation processes to maintain peace. It is the second point that has been key to its success. Rather than imposing peace, as in so many interventions, the unarmed peace monitors on Bougainville rightly saw the mission would succeed only through local ownership. They therefore created the safe space necessary to allow chiefs and community leaders to use kastom reconciliation processes. This included many ceremonies – known locally as *belkol* – that saw opposing militants and their supporters use traditional approaches to bring peace. Kastom reconciliation processes often take years, even decades. Today, more than 15 years after the Bougainville war ended, reconciliation ceremonies are still taking place, underlining the need for national governments to maintain on-going peacebuilding measures. Many countries in our region have not invested enough in preventative measures leading to perhaps too much crisis management when tensions do flare.

Keeping pace with existing and emerging issues in a shifting geopolitical landscape

There remain some conventional threats and flash points to the region, such as tension in the South China Sea, the ongoing conflict in West Papua, and the fragile peace processes in Timor-Leste, Bougainville and Solomon Islands. We can expect some turbulence in the French Pacific too as a referendum on independence looms in New Caledonia, and Tahiti is back on the UN decolonisation list⁹. There has also been periodic unrest in Rapa Nui (Easter Island) whose indigenous population sees itself as Polynesian and wish to become an independent Pacific state rather than remain part of Chile. The most serious ongoing conflict in the Pacific region remains West Papua, where the guerrilla struggle for independence continues amid unabating reports of widespread human rights abuses¹⁰ and deplorable social development indicators¹¹. Accessing information in West

⁹ <http://www.un.org/en/decolonization/site-news.shtml>

¹⁰ <http://thediplomat.com/2014/01/the-human-tragedy-of-west-papua/>

¹¹ <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/05/01/politics-hinders-the-fight-against-hiv-in-west-papua/>

Papua remains difficult¹² despite the 2013 lifting of the ban on foreign media and international NGOs¹³. Incoming President Joko Widodo will be under increasing international pressure to honour his pre-election pledge to open up access¹⁴ and improve healthcare and education, to reduce political tension and to address the causes of discrimination¹⁵. The conflict threatens to spill over borders and impact across the region. Over the past decade there have been periodic reports of Islamist jihadis training and operating in West Papua,¹⁶ something that the PNG defence force and West Papuan guerrillas have repeatedly warned Australia and the US about. ISIS jihadis in Iraq and Syria are grabbing headlines, but in August this year, Abu Bakr Bashir, the spiritual godfather to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Laskar Jihad militants in Indonesia, declared his support for ISIS¹⁷ further raising concerns of the threat of Islamist terrorism on both sides of the New Guinea border.

West Papua is the intersection of many areas that affect regional security, and yet it represents something of a failure of regional security architecture. Fear of upsetting trade and diplomatic relations with Indonesia can no longer stifle what is admittedly a difficult, but essential, dialogue that has to happen. The Melanesian Spearhead Group has recently stepped in to begin a process of mediation, hoping to moderate Indonesia's treatment of its Papuan population and ensure basic human rights and land rights. But it has caused significant internal tensions within the sub-regional grouping¹⁸ as Indonesia continues to court Pacific nations with increased trade, aid and funding of governments and political parties in the region.

Further north, tension in the South China Sea between China and Japan also has the potential to affect Pacific communities. Micronesia could find itself on the frontline of any conflict, particularly if the United States got involved using its military bases in Guam and operationalised its Compact agreements with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Palau. A wider conflict drawing Australia and the US into hostilities could see long range missiles flying across the Pacific. People in the Marshall Islands and Tahiti are already well aware of the dangers, having been exposed to

decades of nuclear testing. Some among the Chamorro people have voiced concern over the militarisation of their island, seeing Guam now as the 'tip of the spear' for US forces in the north Pacific.¹⁹

The metropolitan powers in the Pacific, such as the US and Australia, are concerned about growing Chinese influence,²⁰ and often assume that Pacific islanders agree with their assessment. The truth is more complex – most island nations are not particularly worried about such strategic rivalry; in fact it may well be welcomed given the leverage it can provide them in dealings with the major powers. Strategic competition – like the days of China/Taiwan 'cheque book diplomacy' – caused some disruption but increased aid and trade commitments. Island nations have long learned to play off regional powers for their own benefit; now they are doing so with the superpowers. Many value China as a development partner, especially since the US has deferred to Australia where South Pacific nations are concerned. Australia in turn dances the diplomatic dance: keep good relations with major trading partners in Asia like China, while broadly accepting the US as a security guarantor in the region.²¹

Apart from recognising some of the conventional threats, it is important also to highlight unconventional threats to the Pacific, ranging from climate change impacts to the epidemic of obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), to community policing and gender based violence.

Climate change is widely perceived as a growing security threat – to the point where it may soon become recognised as a conventional, rather than unconventional, threat. It could affect maritime and territorial sovereignty for atoll nations, and the potential impact of more common and more severe natural disasters could also impact on internal security. In an earlier discussion paper on the security implications of climate change, it was also noted that one of the dangers ahead is the possibility of mass, sudden migration from Asia into the Pacific in coming decades as environmental degradation deepens, affecting access to clean water and affordable food for millions across Asia²².

12 <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/west-papua-lifting-journalist-ban-claims-untrue-say-reports-8431>

13 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/10/west-papua-opened-foreign-journalists>

14 <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2014/06/05/jokowi-open-access-papua-foreign-journalists-int-l-organizations.html>

15 <http://www.smh.com.au/national/indonesias-joko-widodo-focused-on-solving-west-papua-problems-20141018-1182ls.html>

16 <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2003/s933110.htm>

17 <http://www.smh.com.au/world/isils-tentacles-creep-into-indonesia-20140816-104sur.html>

18 <http://pacificpolitics.com/2014/07/west-papuas-msg-membership-bid-is-still-alive/>

19 An elder, who wanted to remain anonymous, from Guam's Chamorro Nation told the author (2014) 'We may as well have a big bulls eye drawn over our island - we fear that Guam will be the Pearl Harbour of the future if the US and China get into conflict. Our little island could be completely wiped out'.

20 <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-14/brisenden-rise-of-china-in-the-south-pacific/4686328>

21 See PiPP (2012) Patriot Games - Island voices in a sea of contest, Discussion Paper 21, June 2012 - <http://tinyurl.com/PiPP-D21-GEO-120607>

22 See PiPP (2012) Climate Security - a holistic approach to climate change, security and development, Discussion Paper 23, October 2012 <http://www.pacificpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/D23-CLI-121012c.pdf>

Perhaps the most complex and concerning security issues in the region from a grassroots perspective centre on big resource extraction projects, and how they so often split communities wide open. Activities are widespread: oil and gas projects in PNG, gold mining in West Papua, proposed deep sea mining throughout the region, logging in the Solomon Islands and fishing Pacific maritime zones – all can cause serious harm. Resource extraction projects have a sorry history of sparking everything from village arguments over royalty payments to full blown war such as occurred in Bougainville. PNG is particularly vulnerable to internal security problems emanating from resource projects, with unresolved complaints of logging companies using police mobile squads to intimidate local opponents.²³ The modern ‘gold rush’ in PNG from oil and gas projects in the southern highlands has already claimed dozens of lives in tribal disputes over royalties. Some locals are threatening ‘another Bougainville’ because of failed promises and lack of consultation.²⁴

Overfishing remains a chronic problem, both environmentally and economically with reports of island countries losing billions of dollars for many decades by being passive sellers of licences²⁵. Island nations find it hard to patrol their waters effectively, and often rely on the Australian patrol boat program and aerial surveillance provided by Australia, France and New Zealand. But some of the nations who claim to be friends of the Pacific are actually the worst offenders: this includes the European Union, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the United States. Some responsibility needs to be taken by those regional powers who might be undermining the security of many in the Pacific through resource exploitation, whether they be Malaysian logging companies, Australian miners or Japanese fishing fleets. Preying on negotiating weaknesses and weak regulatory capacity, along with large and small-scale corruption and tax avoidance, all contribute to undermining government and village-level peace and prosperity.

A number of Pacific island countries are, for the first time, developing national security policies. The Pacific Islands Forum has a ‘human security framework’ in place for 2012-2015,²⁶ and is working with some Member States to incorporate the principles of this into national policies. Papua New Guinea’s policy, for example, is based on the conviction that security issues cannot be separated from all other development aspirations.²⁷

A recent major regional security conference co-hosted by the Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies and the Pacific Institute of Public Policy²⁸, pointed to the Pacific’s development challenges and opportunities being deeply entwined in existing and emerging security issues. In that context, the nexus between peace and development goes far beyond simply avoiding large-scale violence, crime or conflict. It is a matter of ensuring that our governments and communities have resilience, that they use inclusive means to enable access to all to the benefits of sustainable development.

As we chart a new path for global cooperation and development through the Post 2015 Development Agenda, we can’t continue to approach security and development as if they exist in separate silos.

Putting people and their development aspirations at the heart of security will keep global, regional and national policies grounded, relevant and humane.

23 <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/20153667/png-police-brutality-highlights-troublesome-link-to-loggers>

24 For an overview of the oil and gas boom in PNG and how it is impacting local communities see SBS Dateline documentary: <http://www.sbs.com.au/dateline/story/watch/id/600542/n/Resource-Rage>

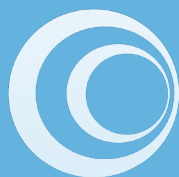
25 <http://pacificpolitics.com/2013/09/pnas-model-should-be-cloned-by-pacific-region/>

26 <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/human-security-framework/>

27 Released in December 2013 the PNG National Security Policy can be found here - <http://tinyurl.com/PNG-National-Security-Policy>

28 Regional Security Governance and Architecture in the Pacific Islands Region (August 2014) - <http://www.apcss.org/advancing-pacific-islands-regional-security-cooperation>

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