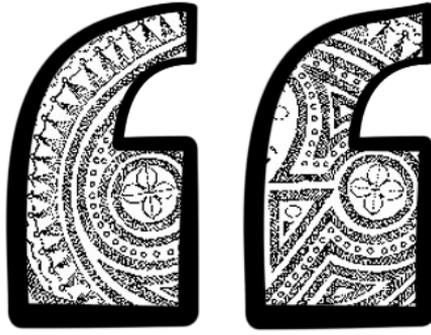




# SHARING THE PEACE

Motion Analysis 5





# MELANESIAN SCHOOL DEBATE

## MOTION:

# MELANESIAN COUNTRIES BENEFIT FROM SENDING PEACEKEEPERS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT ZONES

SHARING THE PEACE Motion Analysis 5

Published by the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, November 2015

Front cover image © Ben Bohane

The Pacific Institute of Public Policy is the leading independent, non partisan think tank serving the Pacific islands region. We exist to stimulate and support informed and inclusive policy debate in and about the Pacific island countries

Our Motion Analysis are short papers that dissect and further inform debate motions that have been put forward in the Melanesian School Debate 2015.

The Melanesian School Debate is and is an annual event bringing the best and the brightest of Melanesian Youth together to debate pressing policy issues affecting our region.

This year's event was hosted by the Pacific Institute of Public Policy, in association with the Vanuatu Ministry of Education in Port Vila, November 2015



**Pacific Institute  
of Public Policy**

# Sharing the Peace

**WE ARE EXTREMELY LUCKY** to live in a region of peace and stability. Not immune to conflict, Melanesia has seen its fair share of internal struggles in the past, with first hand experience in the devastation of war. Now Melanesian countries have the internal stability and human resources to assist internationally, as peacekeepers for the United Nations. But is it in our nation's best interest to voluntarily engage in other people's battles?

**The United Nations has been deploying peacekeeping missions to conflict around the world for over 60 years. Without its own military force, the UN relies on its member states to supply police officers and military to assist in their operations. Those that sign up are posted to countries torn by conflict, not to engage in combat but to create the conditions for lasting peace.**

Joining global efforts to maintain peace by supplying police or military to the UN peacekeeping operations is a positive step to being a good international citizen. Sending peacekeepers through the UN upholds tangible commitments to international peace and the rule of law. It plays a positive role in boosting a nation's military and diplomatic status, in turn helping to improve international affairs and forge new strategic alliances.

Providing UN peacekeepers offers a good opportunity to generate foreign exchange. For each soldier enlisted, US\$1,028 is reimbursed monthly to their home government. Of this, many countries allocate a percentage to their soldiers, and recruit the rest to national savings - something that could greatly benefit dwindling Pacific economies and low levels of employment. Missions also have the ability to improve national military and police capacity, as recruits are placed besides experienced international soldiers, developing skills that can be brought back and implemented at home to increase national stability and the upholding of domestic law.

We already have regional experience in peacekeeping missions, sending troops to conflicts in Bougainville and Solomon Islands. However few of us have taken up the chance to pursue these skills globally. In Melanesia, it is only Fiji who has taken advantage of these benefits - as

major contributors bringing home an estimated \$322 million in their first 30 years of service with the UN. Other countries have been slow to follow. Vanuatu has only just signed up 16 police officers. Papua New Guinea have a total of 4 personnel deployed, while the Solomon Islands is still yet to make a commitment. What is holding us back?

While supporting the UN has its perks, working in conflict zones comes with some risk. To date, 51 Fijian troops have been killed on UN missions. In 2014, 45 Fijian troops were detained by an Al-Qaeda-affiliated rebel group in Syria. While peacekeepers from developed nations can return to an established support and medical system, Pacific nations do not have the resources to deal with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

History has shown us that growing a military over its needs can be detrimental to state stability. "Fijian governments have unwittingly enhanced the military's capability to intervene in domestic politics" stated the former Fijian commander Jone Baledrokadroka, claiming the status and growth of the military through peacekeeping led Fiji to becoming a coup-prone state.

So where should Melanesia stand? Is the risk greater than the reward? We have the opportunity to earn UN income and demonstrate that we are good global citizens, but is it worth risking casualties and domestic stability?

# Key Terms to Define

**DECONSTRUCTING THE MOTION** will ensure you are clear in the parameters of your debate. By understanding and analyzing each term you can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying issues.

**TERMS** to deconstruct

**BENEFIT:** The motion is not asking whether we should or should not send peacekeepers - it is whether we benefit - whether there are rewards, or disadvantages to being involved.

**SENDING:** What are a host countries responsibilities and obligations when sending nations out into the UN Peacekeeping service? Who decides where the Peacekeepers are deployed - and for how long. What rights to host countries have, in example to repatriate a soldier should they feel it appropriate? Who has responsibility of the soldier if something goes wrong while in the line of duty?

**PEACE KEEPERS:** how are people selected to be a peacekeeper - is it a voluntary position? What role does the host country have in preparing and training their peacekeepers? Are they paid or reimbursed for their time - if so by who? What is their physical role whilst on assignment and what are the risks?

**CONCEPTS** to research

National Government Security Strategies Pacific Regional Security

International Relations Diplomacy Unbiased Mediator

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Strategic alliances

Military and Police Capacity Military Skills and capacity building

United Nations Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies

Peacekeepers and Military growth in Fiji

UN Peacekeeping financial remuneration UN Security Council

Psychological well-being of returned Peacekeepers RAMSI

Risk and Personal safety Bougainville Peacekeeping operations

# Essential Reading

**IN DEPTH RESEARCH IS CRUCIAL** to constructing a convincing and accurate argument. Be creative and use different methods to collect your research material. Talk to organisations, find case studies in the newspaper, look up books or search through journal articles online.

**REMEMBER! All sources should be as recent as possible. Try not to use sources older than 5 years - from 2010-2015 is best! Here are a few to get you started:**

Pacific Institute of Public Policy 'Keeping the Peace' *Discussion Starter* 26 2014

[http://pacificpolicy.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2/files/2014/11/DP26\\_KTP\\_20141106.pdf](http://pacificpolicy.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/2/files/2014/11/DP26_KTP_20141106.pdf)

D. Hegarty and D. Tryon, 'Politics Development and Security in Oceania', 2013.

<http://press.anu.edu.au/titles/state-society-and-governance-in-melanesia/politics-development-and-security-in-oceania/pdf-download/>

J. Baledrokadroka, 'The Unintended Consequences of Fiji's International Peacekeeping', *Security Challenges*, vol. 8, no. 4 2012 <http://www.securitychallenges.org.au/ArticlePDFs/Vol8No4Baledrokadroka.pdf>



One of 45 Fijian Peacekeepers detained by an al-Qaeda-affiliated rebel group in Syria, 2014

# DEBATE IT!

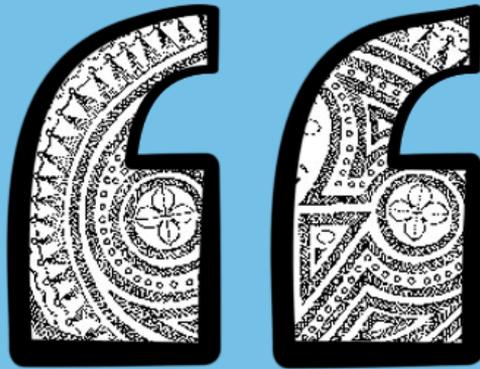
## AFFIRMATIVE

- Joining global efforts to maintain peace by supplying police or military to the UN Peacekeeping operations is a needed step to being a good international citizen. Sending Peacekeepers through the UN upholds tangible commitments to international peace and the rule of law. It plays a positive role in boosting a nation's military and diplomatic status, in turn helping to improve international affairs and forge new strategic alliances with other countries. Similarly, improving relations with the UN increases chances of securing a non- permanent seat at the UN Security Council, or at the least securing roles for nationals in key positions within international organisations. This provides the potential to give our small island states a bigger voice in the international arena.
- Providing UN Peacekeepers offers an opportunity to generate foreign exchange. The UN reimburses governments for each soldier, as well as equipment. Each month US\$1,028 is paid per soldiers. Of this, many countries allocate a percentage to their soldiers, and recruit the rest to national savings. The reimbursement of equipment costs has also helped countries to afford new equipment, increasing their own military capacity. This in turn provides another line of employment for professionals and youth. For countries with low government budgets in defense, and high rates of employment, this offers a new promising opportunity that does not burden, but could potentially supplement the national budget.
- Enlisting citizens into the peacekeeping services enhances national military and police capacity. Serving with larger nations' militaries in UN peacekeeping missions installs confidence, and provides high-level work experience. New skills of professionalism, discipline, compassion and ability, training and ethics can be brought back and implemented at home to increase stability and the upholding of domestic law . Similarly being actively involved in the dissolution of international conflict can increase country pride and solidarity. A commander general for Bangladesh Peacekeeping operations describes it as "a way of winning hearts and minds."
- Relatively isolated from partisan global politics, Pacific islands can play a neutral role - mediating peace with impartiality. Unlike countries such as America or Russia, Pacific island nations more than often do not have underlying vested interests in a conflict. In this way we can play a very useful role to mediate peace, without bias.
- As global citizens, it is the responsibility of Melanesian countries to engage in global issues. Although we are isolated, we are not immune to the world's problems. If conflict reemerged in Melanesia, we would likely look to international assistance. It is only fair that a country expecting help of the UN peacekeepers in times of need, would also contribute to the efforts globally when affairs at home are stable.

# DEBATE IT!

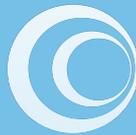
## NEGATIVE

- Pacific Island Nations should focus on maintaining peace regionally. Should conflict emerge home grown approaches should be the first point of call, such as RAMSI in the Solomon Islands or the peacekeeping mission in Bougainville assisted by Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and Fiji. This way we can support pacific neighbours in a method that is culturally relevant and supportive. Such operations can be coordinated under the auspices of regional bodies, such as the Pacific Islands Forum, that have a greater understanding of the region and it's needs, compared to global entities such as the United Nations.
- War and conflict is a traumatizing event. Despite being employed to instill the peace, there will be times where UN peacekeepers are subject to- either directly or indirectly - violence and traumatic events. While Peacekeepers from developed nations can return to a well setup support system, Pacific Islanders will often return to very little support. We do not often have the facilities to deal with issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder. It might be hard for returnees to return to the workforce, or they might need special medical care. For those who are killed in the line of duty the costs of burial and compensation lie with the government. These challenges can put added pressures on service delivery systems that are already struggling to support national populations.
- In 2014, 45 Fijian Peacekeepers were detained by an Al-Qaeda-affiliated rebel group in Syria. While all were released safely, previous soldiers have not been so lucky. In Fiji's first Peacekeeping mission to Lebanon from 1978-2002, thirty-seven Fijian soldiers died. Melanesian countries - Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea specifically are already severely under resourced in law enforcement. It would not be beneficial to send some of the most qualified police officers or soldiers into international conflicts, taking them out of their role nationally and with the potential that they could be injured or killed and unable to return to the line of duty in their home nation.
- Some argue that Fiji's heavy involvement in early UN peacekeeping ranks influenced the status and growth of the Fijian Military. These early missions saw the size of the military grow, beyond that which was necessary to defend Fiji. Peacekeeping became the centre-piece for foreign policy in Fiji, adding further strength to the military. Overall, this enhanced the military's capability to intervene in domestic politics, ultimately making Fiji a coup-prone state. This is not a path other Melanesian countries want to follow.
- Despite claiming neutrality, there is still political undertones that can dictate UN peacekeeping missions. There are often strong disagreements between the host government and the UN with a lack of consensus and political direction. It is not in Melanesia's interest to get caught up in conflicts that could be politically controversial.



MELANESIAN SCHOOL  
**DEBATE**

Proudly hosted by



Pacific Institute  
of Public Policy

in association with the Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training

**[pacificpolicy.org](http://pacificpolicy.org)**