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## **An Assessment of the Scope for Regional Cooperation, Integration and Collective Provision on Security Issues**

Graham Hassall  
Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Development and Governance  
University of the South Pacific  
Suva, Fiji Islands

# Preface

This report was prepared for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PFIS) in Suva, Fiji Islands. The report is one output of an Asian Development Bank (ADB) technical assistance project (TA 6226 REG): “Developing and Implementing the Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration.” The Commonwealth Secretariat provided funding to the project.

The lead author of the report was Dr. Roman Grynberg, Deputy Director of Trade and Regional Cooperation at the Commonwealth Secretariat. He was assisted by Michael Hyndman, a cost-benefit analyst contracted by ADB, and Sacha Silva, an economist contracted by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Consultants from PIFS and the Pacific region provided valuable inputs for the report. Bill Costello was the ADB task manager.

The report is published in three volumes. Volume 1 is the Executive Summary. Volume 2 is the main report. Volume 3 contains the working papers commissioned for the report—a series of independent studies assessing potential benefits and costs of implementing a variety of possible regional initiatives. Volume 3 has been printed in hard copy in only limited numbers. However, it is available on the websites of ADB ([www.adb.org](http://www.adb.org)) and at [www.pacificplan.org](http://www.pacificplan.org).

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## I. OVERVIEW: TOWARD A DOCTRINE OF COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN SECURITY

One of the major dilemmas of the present time for Pacific Island Countries (PICs) is determining the conditions under which responsibility for security rests with the nation-state and when it rests with a wider (regional) community. Associated questions concern the definition of security, determining the conditions under which the “normal” governance of security are transformed into “extraordinary” conditions requiring the implementation of additional security interventions, and determining the characteristics of such interventions available to the security community.

Although some PICs have experienced civil war and unrest in recent times, security is no longer viewed in the narrow sense of merely defending a state from external or internal threats of a military nature. Rather, it is now realized that security is closely linked with generating conditions that free people from fear and misery arising from various causes. This is particularly the case for security assessments of Pacific states, where current threats to stability are more often linked to domestic failures of governance and inability to meet aspirations for development and economic advance. Security assessments therefore continue to be interested in external threats of a military, political, social, or economic nature, but are also interested in the capacity of states to implement effective, efficient and equitable economic and political governance at all levels, and to handle conflicts as they arise – or preferably, prevent the emergence of conflicts by forestalling the conditions in which they arise.

With the emergence of vigorous dialogue on “regionalism” there is need to more precisely define the terms “national security” and “regional security”. In a region of 14 small Pacific Island Countries there is potential for the emergence of considerable instability within nation-states in a region that is basically stable. Similarly, there is potential for some Pacific states to view themselves as relatively stable and secure states within an increasingly unstable region.

The proposed “Pacific Plan” lists security as one of the principle goals, together with economic growth, sustainable development, and good governance. “Security” has been considered in a number of earlier Pacific Forum documents without being fully defined in any one of them. The Aitutaki Declaration (1997) referred to the region’s “vulnerability to natural disasters, environmental damage and unlawful challenges to national integrity and independence” and reaffirmed a commitment to a “...comprehensive, integrated and collaborative approach to maintaining and strengthening current mechanisms for cooperation among members in dealing with threats to the security, broadly defined, of states in the region and of the region as a whole”. The Biketawa Declaration (2000) identifies a range of “difficult and sensitive issues including underlying causes of tensions and conflict” (ethnicity, socio-economic disparities, and lack of good governance, land disputes and erosion of cultural values). The notion of “comprehensive security” is thus an existing part of the Forum’s thinking: the challenge is to make progress with the implementation of enhanced collaboration and integration.

The “National Security Assessments” undertaken for the Forum Secretariat 2000-2004 provide adequate analysis of the internal and external security threats facing PICs.<sup>1</sup> The reports on Melanesia and Polynesia settle for broad but undefined definitions of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Crocombe, R. (2000). Enhancing Pacific Security. Port Vila, Vanuatu, Forum Regional Security Committee, Anere, R., R. Crocombe, et al. (2001). Security in Melanesia: Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands & Vanuatu, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for the FORUM REGIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE (FRSC) MEETING 25-26 June 2001 Suva, Hassall, G. (2004). Micronesian Security Assessment: The Marshall Islands, The Federated States of Micronesia, and The Republic of Palau. Suva, Pacific Islands Forum.

The security report on Micronesia notes the emergence of two broad typologies of security “human security” and “comprehensive security”. These three reports focused on the integrity and security of individual Pacific nations rather than on prospects for regional security. They identify concerns at national and sub-national level but say less about issues at supra-national or regional level. None of these reports suggests the existence of an external military threat to a Pacific Island Country, while each of them suggests a range of domestic issues having a high probability of leading to insecurity. The issues presented have been classified as “governance”, “crime and violence”, “socio-economic disparities”, “ethnic tensions” and “land”.<sup>2</sup>

Although these reports have been presented to meetings of the Forum Regional Security Committee their recommendations have not been pursued in a systematic manner with member states to this point in time.

Numerous additional reports on security issues in the Pacific region have been issued by international agencies and regional scholars.<sup>3</sup>

International agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNIFEM, the World Bank, etc, have identified such threats to the security of Pacific states as:

- Political instability (frequent changes of government, removal of Ministers and corruption)
- Economic and social inequities (denial of human rights and lack of access to services)
- Land pressures
- Environmental Degradation
- “New” threats to society such as of HIV/AIDS and drugs
- Poor governance<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Calvert, I. (2005). "Forum Secretariat: What assistance does it provide for Regional Peace Building?" Global Partnership Consultation on the Prevention of Armed Conflicts, Lagoon Resort, 18-22 April.

<sup>3</sup> Tanham, G. K. and E. S. Wainstein (1988). Security trends in the South Pacific : Vanuatu and Fiji. Santa Monica, Rand Corp, Firth, S. (2001). "A reflection on South Pacific Regional Security, mid-2000 to mid-2001. (Political Chronicles)." Journal of Pacific History, Ross, K. (2001). "South Pacific Recent Political and Security Developments." The Round Table 361(September 1): 633-638, Wainwright, E. (2001). Our Failing Neighbour. Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Halapua, W. (2002). The role of militarism in the politics of Fiji, The University of the South Pacific, Hegarty, D. (2003). "Peace Interventions in the South Pacific: Lessons from Bougainville and Solomon Islands, Paper for Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies Conference Island State Security 2003: "Oceania at the Crossroads" Session IV: "Ways Out" Honolulu, Hawaii, 15-17 July 2003, Ball, D. (2004). Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific: Official and Unofficial Responses. Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding Activities. A. Jeijmans, N. Simmonds and H. v. d. Veen. Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner: 9-22, Hegarty, D. (2004). "Intervention, Regionalism, Engagement: New Forms of Security Management in the South Pacific." 18th Asia Pacific Roundtable: 30 May Malaysia, also given at PIPSA Conference Noumea, December 3-5.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (1994). Pacific human development report : 'Putting people first'. Suva, United Nations Development Programme, Westcott, C. (1996). "UNDP. Preparatory Assistance Phase. Governance for Sustainable Human Development in the Pacific Islands. First Quarter Report. 19 Sept - 31 December 1996.", UNDP (1999). Pacific human development report 1999: Creating opportunities. UNDP (2000). "Pacific Regional Conference on Governance for Parliamentarians 27-30 March 2000.", UNDP (2004). Support to Demobilization of Special Constables in the Solomon Islands. Inception Report, Status of Field Activities. Asian Development Bank (2003). "Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress," South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (2003). Pacific regional action plan on sustainable water management. Suva,

The general thrust of these diverse security assessments is that threats to the stability and security of states in the Pacific region derive more from their internal dynamics than from an external source.

This is notwithstanding the degree of instability that has been, and might potentially be, generated by such geo-political tensions as the struggle between the People's Republic of China and Taipei, China.

## II. CURRENT SECURITY COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS

The main instruments for coordination of security at regional level are normative platforms agreed by Pacific Island leaders, and followed up by committees of the Pacific Forum on an *ad hoc* basis. Military security is coordinated through quite separate agreements and agencies, while security from natural disasters (natural disaster preparedness and recovery) is coordinated by CROP agencies and other international networks.

In the context of the Pacific Forum, Secretary General Urwin has recently described the Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) as "the main regional consultative forum which identifies threats to security (broadly defined) and agrees on strategies for addressing them". The Forum Economic Ministers Meeting (FEMM) has also established standards for "good governance" that seek to improve economic security in Pacific states.

The FRSC is a meeting organised by the Pacific Forum Secretariat for Forum members. It had commenced with a focus on law enforcement issues but since the 1997 Aitutaki Declaration the Committee has considered "broader security issues" and has therefore become "one of the most important Forum committees".<sup>5</sup> The agenda for the June 2005 meeting includes:

1. A presentation on a joint report (PIF, OCO, PIDC and SPCPC Secretariats) on outcomes of Pre-FRSC Law Enforcement Meeting
2. Presentation of a joint report (PIF, OCO, PIDC and SPCPC Secretariats) on Trans-national Organized Crime (Drugs, Electronic Crime, Financial Crime, Fraud, People Smuggling/Trafficking, trade in wildlife, sex crimes, small arms, terrorism, sale and use of chemicals, the Pacific Trans-national Crime Coordination Centre, Pacific Islands Regional Security Technical Cooperation Strategy, Pacific Region Identity Protection Project)
3. Counter Terrorism
4. Pacific Regional Policing Initiative
5. Advanced Passenger Information System
6. Statements by Regional Specialised Law Enforcement Agencies (Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference, South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference, Oceania Customs Organization, and Pacific Islands Law Officers Meeting)
7. The regional Security Environment (global security threats and their impact on the Pacific region)
8. National Security Issues

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South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Development Bank (2004). Responding to the Priorities of the Poor: A Pacific Strategy for the Asian Development Bank 2005-2009. Manila, Asian Development Bank, Holden, P., M. Bale, et al. (2004). Swimming Against the Tide? An Assessment of the Private Sector in the Pacific. Manila, Asian Development Bank, Mellor, T. and J. Jabes (2004). Governance in the Pacific: Focus for Action 2005-2009. Manila, Asian Development Bank. World Bank (2004). "Pacific Regional Strategy."

<sup>5</sup> Address to the 2004 Attorney General's Conference, 3-4 December 2004.

9. Implementation of the Biketawa Declaration (RAMSI, PRAN)
10. Other Secretariat Initiatives (Regional Workshop on Human Rights Machinery, UN/PIFS Regional Conference on Conflict Prevention and Resolution, Leadership code development)

In addition to such high-level regional meetings it can be assumed that the military, intelligence and security forces in the Pacific engage in a high degree of cooperation and collaboration. Joint Naval exercises in June 2005 ('Operation Kurukuru'), for instance, involving vessels from Fiji Islands, Australia, New Zealand, France, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, were labelled "the largest maritime exercise hosted by a South Pacific nation".<sup>6</sup> In the North Pacific military aspects of security are coordinated by the United States (US) Military.

Such consultations, reporting arrangements, and military exercises, suggest the existence of several 'communities of practice' within the security sector – principally:

- law enforcement (national and trans-national crime; customs & immigration);
- trans-national terrorism;
- national security;
- regional security;
- environmental security; and
- socio-economic and political security.

### **III. SCOPE FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION, INTEGRATION, AND COLLECTIVE PROVISION OF SECURITY**

Given that future conflicts are most likely to surface as reactions to economic disparities, land pressures, and ethnic cleavages, security responses must be re-oriented to meet such internal threats rather than external ones.

This re-orientation of responses to "security threats" must focus on threat-reduction through enhancement of conditions of access, capacity, knowledge, and opportunity. This is essentially a "security through improved governance" approach.

There is a generally accepted view that engendering principles of "good governance" into the values of public life in the Pacific states will promote security in the long term. The draft Pacific Plan identifies a set of common values and approaches that includes *justice, integrity, financial management, harmonisation of laws, human rights, and democracy*.

The attainment of good governance and security at *regional level* requires the adoption of these core values particularly within regional specialist organizations as well as by individual nation-states. Good regional governance for security requires enhanced sharing of information, collaborative planning, rationalisation of resource use, and more coordinated implementation. As stated in the draft plan:

Regional security will further improve in the medium term by strengthening relationships between and alignment of the strategic planning regimes of regional specialist organizations; better intelligence services; identifying potential regional stresses and drivers of conflict; and common policing standards, policies and values to underpin regional security work. Other security dimensions, such as bio-security will also continue to be

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<sup>6</sup> "Fiji Hosts Unprecedented Multi-country Naval Exercise", PACNEWS 2: Wed 01 June 2005.

improved through the medium term.

One challenge is to determine the benefits of enhancing the activities of existing communities of practice, and determining the extent of any transformation – from greater collaboration through to joint provision.

The pressing fundamental challenge of a conceptual nature concerns the content of “national sovereignty”. The options for cooperation between states in the provision of security will be determined by the extent to which PICs remain separate political communities, and the extent to which they agree to share sovereign powers and relationships through an alternative or additional form of political association.

In making this determination, it must be remembered that many Pacific states comprise significant *sub-national* groupings and that the success of future political associations may require the consent of these sub-national communities as well as communities at nation-state level. Future dilemmas facing the Pacific community may include claims to self-determination or separatism, and coups d’etat – military or otherwise. The dilemmas in some of these cases will concern the possibility of distinguishing between the interests of “the state” and those of communities.

#### **A. Security Monitoring and Assessment**

The establishment of regional information systems, monitoring, and assessment, is an essential first step for the Forum Secretariat. Without collection of relevant data in a timely and systematic way the Forum cannot be well-positioned for early intervention. Much of the relevant data exists but remains dispersed in the information systems of member states, CROP agencies, other international or inter-governmental organizations, or even nongovernment organizations (NGOs). A specific project to identify “security indicators” for the Pacific states and the Pacific region would rectify this information deficit and enhance the “early-warning” decision-making capacities of the Forum Secretariat and member states alike. One recommendation of the Crocombe report (2000) was for enhancement of the membership of the Forum Regional Security Committee and the instigation of an annual security assessment: formalization of this suggestion would build awareness of this regularly updated security assessment.

#### Specific recommended actions:

- Review the composition and terms of reference of the Forum Regional Security Committee, to provide for:
  - A change of name to something like “Peace-building and security”, in keeping with developments within the UN at global level
  - A full-time committee secretariat to ensure continuity in security monitoring
  - high level participation by member-states;
  - greater impact of Committee decisions on national security policy and implementation
  - an annual survey of Pacific Islands’ security
  - formalization of early warning feedback to member states as well as to regional bodies.

## **B. Information Sharing**

Access to accurate information is an essential part of conflict reduction. In the context of the Pacific States security issues this information may concern social, economic, legal, and even demographic data of concern to policy makers and the public alike. Lack of information can contribute to distortion of information disseminated concerning such sensitive areas as access to and use of resources. Since access to relevant and accurate information also contributes to good planning and decision-making, the type of information to be disseminated for these purposes includes regional, national and sectoral development plans and reports. Information on the security sector, such as military expenditure in the region, should also be made transparent. The Forum Secretariat should develop the capacity to share accurate information about key sectors and encourage similar capacities in member states.

### Specific recommended actions:

- Establish at regional level a digital resource for dissemination of security-related data. This may be facilitated in collaboration with CROP agencies already having considerable digital capacities, although under a specifically “security-related” project identification.
- Review “regional deposit library” policies and practice, to ensure that official documentation from the various agencies within PICs is systematically made available in regional collections.
- Enhance cooperation with civil society actors and media agencies in the collection of security-related data.

## **C. Enhancement of the Traditional Security Sector**

The draft Pacific Plan already includes proposals for strengthening such security sectors as Maritime security and Aviation Security. It calls for the “development and implementation of a regional strategy for maritime security, including ensuring compliance with the IMO International Shipping and Port Security (ISPS) Code, and development of a coordinated regional strategy to improve regulation of aviation security, initially through regular compliance audits.” This requires: “Strengthened relationships between regional specialist organisations”, “Better intelligence services”, and “Identification of specific indicators for identifying potential regional stresses and drivers of conflict to assist responses to emerging issues before they develop into serious conflicts.”

Similarly, the draft Plan calls for strengthening regional security “through the implementation of the Forum Secretariat’s Pacific Islands Regional Security Technical Cooperation Strategy (PIRSTCS), including support for national implementation of the Biketawa, Nasonini and Honiara declarations (e.g. support for sustainable development in Solomon Islands under RAMSI and the proposed Pacific Regional Assistance for Nauru).” This requires “Increasing the effectiveness of national police forces through regional training and networks (e.g. the Pacific Regional Policing Initiative and the Pacific Trans-national Crime Coordination Centre) and short-term attachments.”

### Specific recommended actions:

- coordination of information sharing amongst traditional security sector agencies through the Security Committee secretariat, recommended above.

## **D. Quiet Diplomacy**

A recent study of the peace-making processes in Bougainville and Solomon Islands<sup>7</sup> suggests that greater use of quiet diplomacy in the early stages of these disputes may have reduced the impact of these conflicts to a significant extent. Such “quiet diplomacy” was not fully used for a number of reasons, including a lack of readily identifiable parties possessing the appropriate skills in mediation, negotiation, diplomacy, and impartiality. This deficiency can be remedied through the cultivation of these skills and an effort to learn from recent experience in the Pacific.

### Specific recommended actions:

- Establish capacity at regional level for “quite diplomacy” through an agency such as the “Peace-building and Security” secretariat recommended above.
- Equip this Peace-building agency with human resources skilled in conflict assessment, mediation, and diplomacy.
- Establish a register of such regional human resources as retired diplomats, judges, academics, senior public servants, and other public figures having capacities in early intervention.
- Ensure the development of diplomacy training within the region, at an agency as the USP.

## **E. “Track II” Diplomacy**

“Track II” diplomacy refers to conflict-reduction measures that are achieved through non-official channels. As such, it is listed as a separate capacity to “quiet diplomacy”, which may well be nonetheless official. The development of informal capabilities is particularly significant in communities where non-governmental organizations have considerable presence and influence. Ironically, “Track II” diplomacy may be directed at those currently in power in some Pacific states, given the analysis that a range of threats to national security originate in current state policies and practices. Enhancing security in the Pacific is related to improving public sector accountability and parliamentary responsibility.

### Specific recommended actions:

- Encourage the development of Track II activities by such CROP agencies as USP (possibly thought its nascent “Peace and Conflict Studies” program at PIAS-DG, but also in collaboration with civil society partners.

## **F. Enhancing Regional Governance**

The machinery of regional governance requires strengthening if the aspirations of the Biketawa Declaration and other protocols are to be met. While this has depended to date on regional consensus, future threats to the security and stability of Pacific states may not receive similar uniform approval. Similarly, whereas the regional missions to Bougainville and Solomon Islands did not encounter armed resistance and were able to operate as peace monitoring forces, future missions might be confronted with peace-enforcement responsibilities and thus be in a different relationship with international law.<sup>8</sup> Prior to any such eventuality, the Pacific states will need to

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<sup>7</sup> Hassall, G. (2005). "Peace Agreements in the Pacific Islands." Regional Workshop on Conflict Prevention & Peace-building in the Pacific. Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, United Nations DPA, Nadi, 25-27 April.

<sup>8</sup> Graham, K. and T. Felicio (2005). Regional Security and Global Governance: A Proposal for a

determine their level of commitment to such a regional security arrangement.

The thrust of this assessment is that the Forum Secretariat should promote a “comprehensive security” approach to the wellbeing of the peoples of the Pacific, and to develop capacities for early assessment and early intervention. This is a pragmatic approach based on multiple reports suggesting that internal tensions pose a greater risk to security than do external forces. This analysis requires re-conceptualisation of the nature of interventions required to reduce or eliminate perceived threats to security.

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