Time Running Out? The Pacific Islands and Globalization

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Table 1: Pacific Island Forum Countries (1999–2000 population estimates in brackets):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Population Estimate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melanesia</strong></td>
<td>Papua New Guinea (4.7m.); Fiji (810,000); Solomon Islands (460,000); Vanuatu (189,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Polynesia</strong></td>
<td>Samoa (180,000); Tonga (110,000); Cook Islands (20,000); Tuvalu (10,000); Niue (2,000)</td>
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<td><strong>Micronesia</strong></td>
<td>Federated States of Micronesia (130,000); Kiribati (80,000); Republic of the Marshall Islands (60,000); Palau (20,000); Nauru (10,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Former Colonial Powers</strong></td>
<td>Australia (19m.); New Zealand (3.6m.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Potential New (Melanesian) Forum Members</strong></td>
<td>West Papua (2.1 m.—1.2 m. ethnic Papuans); East Timor (890,000-including 100,000 refugees stranded in West Timor); New Caledonia (Forum observer: 190,000)</td>
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By Pacific Island countries (PICs) I shall mean those independent developing countries of the South and Central Pacific which are today grouped in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF formerly the South Pacific Forum: headquarters in Suva, Fiji) and which in large measure take their collective identity from it. The former local “colonial mastas” of the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand, who are also PIF members, will not be counted as PICs, and nor will the dependent territories of France, the United States, Britain and New Zealand which are today grouped in the Pacific Community (formerly the South Pacific Commission: headquarters Noumea, New Caledonia) — with one exception, New Caledonia itself, whose indigenous Kanak people have long made clear their desire to achieve independence free of tutelage from Paris. And indeed New Caledonia in 1999 achieved Forum observer status, while the independence option under the Noumea Accord of 1998 (which envisages steady “progress towards

\[1\] Thanks are profusely offered to David Hegarty, Stewart Firth and Richard Tanter for help in the preparation and attempted perfection of this chapter.
sovereignty") is to be presented to the people of New Caledonia for final confirmation by referendum between 2015 and 2018.

Likewise I shall also count two other potential independent states as PICs — both, like PIC giant Papua New Guinea, “half islands” of Melanesia. They are, first, East Timor which, having separated from Indonesia, is to achieve full independence under UN tutelage and sponsorship in late 2001, and whose leaders, particularly foreign affairs spokesman Jose Ramos Horta, have expressed strong interest in joining the PIF and cultivating a South Pacific identity in the future;³ and, secondly, West Papua (currently the Indonesian province of Papua/Irian Jaya), whose still predominantly Melanesian population is struggling desperately to achieve a status similar to East Timor’s.

Thus, a propos the title of this chapter, I am proposing a conception of the “Pacific islands” in which the key test of inclusion is either achieved independence by an indigenous people or ongoing assertion of national identity and a right to self-determination by such a people. In the Pacific islands several indigenous peoples-who-would-be-nations, which have been repressed and submerged over the past Cold War generation, are strongly re-emerging to claim independence. But while French colonialism in New Caledonia has now arranged at least the framework for a smooth transition to independence,³ and East Timor has claimed and will soon gain its independence, the Indonesian government is bitterly resisting any such transition for the people of Papua, who see themselves as double victims of colonialism — first under the Dutch and now under the inheritors of the Dutch East Indies empire.

Thus the forces of former colonialism and contemporary “second order” colonialism are now playing themselves out in what one hopes is an end game in Melanesia, leading to genuine self-determination for the indigenous peoples who have been denied but want it. This in turn should have the effect of significantly widening the group of Pacific island countries grouped in the PIF and strengthening and transforming its international stance towards both globalization and other international issues of serious Pacific concern.⁴

The Pacific islands are usually said to have experienced four overlapping waves or periods

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² Actually East Timor’s stance has been ambivalent. In July 1999 Ramos Horta declared that it was “far more important” for an independent East Timor to join the Forum rather than ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations. (Agence France Presse[AFP], 6/7/1999), but in July 2000, while still stressing East Timor’s “tremendous affinity’ with the South Pacific, he declared on the eve of an ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting that, if forced to choose, East Timor would prefer to join ASEAN rather than the PIF. (AFP, 21/7/00).

³ Although the population of French Polynesia is four fifths Polynesian, and autonomy on the New Caledonia model is in demand, indigenous nationalism remains rather weak. Paris-subsidized and tourist driven prosperity by contrast are strong, and there is little likelihood of the French ever feeling the need to concede to the local independentists.

⁴ As Greg Fry points out, the definition of the South Pacific region — and by the same token the Pacific islands region — is a highly variable and contested feast, with regional NGOs to the fore in expanding our notions of the Pacific islands. See his “South Pacific Security and Global Change: The New Agenda,” Working Paper, 1999/1 (Canberra: Department of International Relations, Australian National University), p.5.
of globalization:

1. **Pre-colonial**

   A wave of “merchants, convicts, missionaries, black birders [i.e., raiding expeditions to forcibly recruit native labor for plantations in Queensland and elsewhere] and white settlers” — precursors of colonialism proper.

2. **Colonialism**

   Two phases can be identified in this wave:
   a) A first classical phase — Dutch, British, French and German and American — in which the white settlers became demographically dominant in Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii, and almost so in New Caledonia, while in Fiji brown settlers — tens of thousands of indentured Indian laborers — were brought in by the British to create a plantation sector, and their descendants now constitute over 40 per cent of the Fijian population, almost matching indigenous numbers. This phase spelt submergence or finis for many indigenous Pacific people, and the fear of such a denouement has not disappeared in the Pacific — just acquired a different focus.
   b) A second “replacement” phase — Australian, New Zealand, Japanese, and American (again) — in which the colonial chess board was extensively reshuffled twice in the aftermath of two world wars.

3. **Decolonization and Neo-colonialism**

   This wave, beginning with the independence of Western Samoa (now Samoa) from New Zealand in 1962, led to the establishment of the South Pacific Forum (since October 2000 the Pacific Islands Forum) in 1971, combining independent Pacific island states — overwhelmingly ex-colonial states — and two of the “replacement” South Pacific colonizers, Australia and New Zealand. With this wave it became clear not only that American decolonization in Micronesia and Polynesia was not called for in every case, or was not going to be fully allowed, but that the French Pacific sphere — dominated as it was (until 1995) by a nuclear testing program in

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7) An extraordinarily eloquent testimonial to the losses and suffering of the Kanak people at the hands of colonial France is to be found in the Noumea Accord of 1998, which outlines a reconstituted French relationship with New Caledonia, henceforth to be designated an “overseas French country” rather than a territory. The Preamble to the Accord, which was agreed among pro-and anti-independence groups and the French government, speaks of the “long lasting traumatic effect” of colonial intrusion; “dispossession;” “confiscated identity,” and (in effect) of base ingratitude on the part of the colonizer for Kanak contributions to France, such as military service in two world wars. The lack of this kind of treaty effectively incorporating a comprehensive apology is at the heart of aboriginal and Torres Strait islander grievances against the government of Australia.
French Polynesia and (until the Matignon Accord of 1988) by the settler interest in New Caledonia— would be a long time decolonizing. It also emerged that some Pacific island peoples (West Papuans in Indonesia after 1963, and Bougainvillians in independent Papua New Guinea after 1975) were experiencing their “liberation” from colonialism as worse than the old colonial servitude, mixed up as it was with the imposition of an invidiously exploitative and environmentally devastating multinational mining operation in both cases: economic neo-colonialism with an inhuman face.\footnote{The mines in question were Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia’s Bougainville copper mine in the Papua New Guinea islands, and the Freeport McMoRan (New Orleans) copper and gold mine at Tembagapura in the highlands of Irian Jaya. On multinational corporate strategies for economic penetration see Peter King, “Redefining South Pacific Security: Greening and Domestication” in ed. Ramesh Thakur, The South Pacific: Problems, Issues and Prospects (London: St Martin’s Press, 1991).}

4. Contemporary (“End of History”) Globalization

In this climactic fourth wave of globalization choice is once again in short supply for Pacific island communities, as Stewart Firth has insisted.\footnote{Stewart Firth, “The Pacific Islands and the Globalization Agenda,” The Contemporary Pacific, 12, 1 (Spring 2000)} The promise is that self sustaining growth is at last attainable, given PIC willingness to “embrace the inevitable” and open up local economies to the full force of the global free market juggernaut. The IMF has long been pushing “structural adjustment” packages aimed at making the Pacific islands safe for more multinational investment in commodity export, tourism and (where possible) production for the global market. Conditionality reigns in the extending of loans, the chief condition being economic deregulation— labour market and tax “reform” in order to lower government and corporate costs; currency devaluation and tariff cuts for export competitiveness, and across-the-board privatization of state owned assets to purge inefficiency, encourage the private (including the foreign private) sector, trim the public sector workforce, “free up” government assets, pave the way to repayment of foreign loans and so on.\footnote{Ibid.}

It is a notorious feature of this neo-liberal globalization agenda on the economic side that global deregulation is not going to be quite total. It will apply to capital, trade, investment, financial and information flows, yes—but not to labor. And there is a great divide in the Pacific between those small island countries of Micronesia and Polynesia whose people have immigration access to the former metropole and those which do not. (More than half of all Samoans and Tongans, and three quarters of all Cook Islanders, live abroad, mostly in New Zealand). Outmigration, invariably accompanied by repatriation of wages, salaries and pensions, is a large dimension of the economy in all these countries which is not available to the larger PIC actors. And on the other hand the largest South Pacific metropole, Australia, lives in fear of illicit outmigration not only from the Pacific Islands but from the whole planet. As in post-colonial post-Cold War Western Europe, fear of demographic inundation—by immigration “queue-
jumping” and refugee flows (boat people and also aeroplane people) — looms ironically large in the concerns of the Australian government’s ideologues of globalization.

As Stewart Firth has also pointed out, the Pacific Island peoples do enjoy several “cushions” for handling or softening the impact of globalization on their societies besides outmigration, including communal land tenure (which not only ensures subsistence for all but also subsidises the IMF-ordained low wage regime, of course), and “smallness,” which according to him correlates with social harmony and political stability.\(^{(11)}\) However “smallness” is of course also a *sine qua non* of outmigration in the South Pacific. Papua New Guinea’s 4.7 million people may enjoy several “Australian cushions” (high levels of per capita aid and several ongoing institutional rescue operations) in their navigation through the new gales of globalism, but emigration to find the “formal sector” work which their own economic arrangements so strikingly fail to generate is not one of them.\(^{(12)}\)

The imposed “globalization agenda” outlined above should be contrasted in part with the PIC’s own preferred issue agenda which we can sum up under six headings:

1. Protection of resources (notably oil and gas, timber, minerals and fish)
2. Development (whether as an escape from “subsistence poverty” or “subsistence affluence”)
3. Environment (threatened by the legacy of big power nuclear testing as well as rapacious foreign-dominated extraction of timber and mineral resources)
4. Decolonization (a continuing issue for the Pacific Islands Forum in West Papua as well as New Caledonia)
5. Good governance (the effectiveness, probity and even survival of constitutional government is strongly at issue in several countries)
6. National integrity (ethnic conflict, secession movements and other disintegrative trends are a threat right across Melanesia)

It will be clear at a glance that most of these concerns arise precisely from the past and present operation of globalizing forces. It is these forces — now in the shape of multinational corporations, First World governments and the international financial institutions which they control — that hunger for and threaten resources; insist on development and present ambiguous opportunities to undertake it, endangering the environment in the process; largely dictate


\(^{(12)}\) The formal sector (private and government) supplies work for only around 10 per cent of the potential Papua New Guinea workforce of 2 million people — a proportion which has been slowly shrinking (recently at around 0.1 pc per annum) since independence in 1975. Because population in this period has almost doubled, absolute unemployment (and probably poverty also) must have more than doubled. My estimates are drawn from data in Marianna Ellingson and Karl Sopol, *Experience of Implementing Sustainable Development in Papua New Guinea*, Paper delivered at a Regional Consultation Meeting on Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, Manila, 10–12 November 1998, and *Papua New Guinea: a 2020 Vision*, ed. Ilia Temu (Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, 1997), Ch.5. By this one simple and rather decisive measure it might be said that Papua New Guinea society as a whole is disengaging from globalization.
the pattern of decolonization; present models of governance for independence and unleash forces which make them unworkable; insist (by and large) on the integrity of the colonial territorial inheritance and stand aside when the defense of this patrimony becomes a formula for oppression and even terror directed at post-independence subject populations.

The desire for that global good, "development," has of course itself been "indigenised" in a dozen distorting ways ("cargo cults" actual and metaphorical; the rationalization of "nativist" corruption, etc.), and post-colonial arrangements in the PICs, particularly in Melanesia, seem to have become a kind of parody of the globalizing development ideal.

In what follows I shall firstly argue that in the so-called "arc of crisis" (explained below) in contemporary Melanesia there has been a palpable failure to deal effectively with the local manifestations of the "crisis of globalization" — in particular ethnic and secessionist conflicts arising from pre-independence and neo-colonial development policies. However I also argue that a more representative and potent Pacific Islands Forum with a wider and better focussed agenda may yet emerge from the conflicts currently troubling the region. Secondly I shall argue that these same ethnic and secessionist conflicts nevertheless do for the time being pose a dire threat to any effective or fruitful participation in globalizing projects for the PICs, notwithstanding their enthusiasm for the same.\(^{10}\) I then critically survey current attempts both to promote conflict resolution and to fit the PICs constructively into the brave new world of globalization, and I urge the indispensability of more extensive outside involvement in PIC problems.

**Decolonization and Disintegration**

My first argument is that among the PICs problems of incomplete decolonization and post-colonial disintegration (specifically problems of frustrated self determination, ethnic conflict and secession) seems to have the potential to wreck "good governance," ruin development prospects and increase (where it exists) already great dependence on outside aid partners, especially Australia but also Japan. In addition, as I have suggested above, the two independence movements in Eastern Indonesia (in East Timor and West Papua) seem quite likely to induce nor only a significant widening of the Pacific Island Forum membership but a "deepening" of the Forum agenda — permitting it, for instance to speak its mind to Indonesia for the first time — thus fulfilling one supposed desideratum in the march towards constructive globalization, effective regionalization, which has in key ways eluded the PICs up to now. The PICs, with the exception of Papua New Guinea, are absent from the ASEAN Regional Forum and from APEC, whose full title is after all Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.\(^{11}\)


\(^{11}\) The Pacific Islands Forum does, however, have observer status in APEC. On regionalization as precursor of globalization see Sakamoto Yoshikazu, "Can peace be globalized in the 21st century?" *Japan Times*, January 1, 2000. Sakamoto argues that "civic states must become internationalized through regional unions" and that "civil society must undergo transnationalization" also.
Decolonization in the Pacific islands was carried out on the basis of notoriously arbitrary colonial boundaries which reflected not only 150 years of imperialist competition, annexation and occupation, but the outcomes of two world wars. The peace settlements after those wars twice reallocated territories from vanquished to victors, and also established various mandates (under the League of Nations) and trusteeships (under the United Nations) which became vehicles for the steady decolonization process of the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s. In brief, Germany lost all her Pacific colonies after 1918 and Japan lost all hers after 1945, and Britain and Australia lost all of theirs in the decolonization of the ’60s and ’70s. New Zealand still has shreds of sovereignty among her former micro-wards, and some territories of France and the US were happy as they were without decolonization. The Micronesian territories which chose independence from the United States were able to extensively modify their prospective boundaries and federal arrangements before emerging as independent states in the 1980s. But the boundaries and the ethno-demographic and power distributions in two Melanesian territories (Papua New Guinea — independent 1975; Solomon Islands — independent 1978) and the “ethnic legacies” of the colonial period in two others (Fiji — independent 1970; Kanaky/New Caledonia — independent 2018) have proven to be profoundly unsatisfactory for large parts of their populations.  

Finally, the fact of continuing unwanted “foreign” occupation in another large Melanesian society, West Papua, where the current “secessionist” leadership declared independence (not for the first time) or, more accurately, “non-integration” on June 1st, 2000, has produced a situation of chronic instability — an “arc of crisis” — across the whole of Melanesia with the exception (currently) of only Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

Let us inspect the situation in the currently troubled arc of crisis countries more closely:

**Papua New Guinea (PNG)**

PNG’s independence from Australia coincided with development of a large copper mine on Bougainville island (North Solomons province), which was formerly part of German New Guinea and whose ethnic and historical affinity lay with the people of Solomon Islands rather than with other Papua New Guineans. The independence movement on Bougainville which emerged in 1975 to contest incorporation in PNG continues to this day. This movement, with

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15 On present trends New Caledonia is unlikely to be independent in 2018 — indeed the referendum on independence which was provided for in the Matignon Accord of 1988 was not held, mainly because of the Kanak perception that a majority vote for independence was unattainable in view of (among other reasons) the post-Matignon influx of new settlers from France, which was an ironic byproduct of the French government’s commitment to accelerate Kanak development and education. Even so, an explosive social situation persists in view of Kanak youth unemployment and frustration over the independence issue; and the troubles of the 1980s could recur with unpredictable consequences before 2018. France’s present policy is quite bizarre in the sense that it is ostensibly thrusting autonomy and eventual independence on a settler-dominated government which wants neither. See Jean-Louis Rallu, *Population and Social Change After 1988 in New Caledonia*, Paper presented at the Kagoshima University Research Center for the Pacific Islands, February 5, 2001.
its deep grievances over loss of land, environmental despoliation, immigrant influx from the PNG highlands for mine work and lack of control over the mining operation, reemerged strongly in the 1980s. It forced the closure of the copper mine in 1989, declared independence in 1990 and fought an eight year war (aggravated by a devastating blockade) to a stalemate against Papua New Guinea’s security forces, which were actively supported by the government of Australia.

In 1997 “bad globalization” (the global market in guns for hire) manifested itself in the form of a secret British/South African mercenary operation illegally funded by the government of PNG to capture or kill the rebel leadership and reopen the Panguna mine.10 When this was aborted by a military mutiny and the collapse of the PNG government in question, the way was finally clear for a New Zealand-sponsored and Australian-subsidized peace process to take hold.17 So far it has yielded a ceasefire, a multinational Peace Monitoring Group with UN Security Council support, the election of a representative Bougainville People’s Congress and the establishment of an Interim Provincial Government under Port Moresby-based Bougainville leaders who did not join the 1989 rebellion. There has been a substantial return to normalcy, and elements of a constitutional settlement have been negotiated with the national government, but the Bougainville leaders on both sides — Congress and Interim Provincial Government — became impatient with lack of progress on the central issues of a referendum and independence, and deadlock on these issues at the end of 2000 was threatening once again to destabilize not only Bougainville but PNG itself.18 However in January 2001 the moderate Bougainville leaders and the Port Moresby government reached agreement to hold a referendum on independence within 10 to 15 years of establishing an elected provincial government under “special autonomy” arrangements which are only being offered to Bougainvilleans.19 There is now a clear prospect of Bougainville achieving peace and independence through an “autonomy transition” in an acceptable time frame.

Solomon Islands

Beginning with Japanese invasion and occupation during the Pacific war, the development of extensive infrastructure on Guadalcanal island, and the location of the capital (Honiara) there after independence, led to an influx of people from the island province of Malaita. The indigenous Guadalcanal people eventually came to see the Malaitans as usurpers of land and monopolists of education and jobs. Their efforts to expel the Malaitans and resume the land which had

been bought or occupied over the independence years saw the emergence of rival militia groups in the late 1990s and the eruption of undeclared inter-ethnic war, first for Honiara and Guadalcanal itself, and then for control of the Solomon Islands government. The seizure of guns and power in Honiara during June 2000 by the Malaitan Eagle Force was very much a "copycat coup" following the Speight coup in Fiji during the previous month (described below). The contagious spread of military intrusion in politics and "coup fever" is one unfortunate dimension of current PIC "internal" international relations, and could signal a rejection of the "Pacific Way" of dispute resolution by exhaustive discussion and consensus building.20

A cease fire and peace making process in Solomon Islands under Forum and Australian patronage was proceeding rather shakily in early 2001 without any early prospect of restoring legitimate government.21

Fiji

Two legacies of British colonial rule in Fiji underlie its contemporary problems. First, the favouring of "chieflly" over what we would now call civil society, and secondly the introduction into Fiji (in the name of what we would call development) of thousands of indentured Indian sugar plantation labourers during the 19th and early 20th century. These legacies produced an ultimately explosive social and political situation after independence in 1970. The population now is tensely divided into almost equal parts Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians, and the pretensions of traditional chiefs from the Eastern (Polynesian-influenced) provinces have bedevilled politics in the 1980s and 1990s.20

The country nevertheless enjoyed comparative prosperity after independence, and Indian success in sugar farming and business, combined with Fijian customary control of land and "normal" domination of politics and the military, had seemed to some people to be a promising formula for social peace. But Indians did in fact achieve extensive political influence, partly be-

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21 In the words of one seasoned observer, "the collapse of the state in Honiara is almost complete, with no water supplies or garbage collection there since July [2000], and with Andrew Nori’s illegitimate little "government" (recognised by Australia) surviving because Taiwan continues to pay $2 million a month in aid, which goes to the elite...[There is] secessionist sentiment everywhere (especially in Western Solomons, where BRA [Bougainville Revolutionary Army] soldiers patrol the streets and where people feel they deserve to break away because they live in the part of the country that supplies most exports, i.e., the classic resource-rich province in a weak state); a couple of hundred killed; the capital not functioning any more, etc." Stewart Firth, Pers. email, January 23, 2001.

cause of divisions between Western (Melanesian-oriented) and Eastern Fiji; and the chiefly sponsored military coups of 1987 attempted to end this influence. Having been forced by international (especially Commonwealth) pressure to abandon the racist constitution which was introduced after these coups, Fiji was once more subjected to an armed coup (this time a "civilian" one) aimed again at eliminating Indian political influence in May 2000. The military itself subsequently wrested power back from the Speight group, but the military leaders are proposing nevertheless to reassert and guarantee Fijian political dominance.

Again there has been considerable international pressure — including Forum pressure this time — on the military to abandon this attempt and reinstate the previous constitution and even the displaced Indian prime minister.23 On the other hand indigenous Fijians are now moving to resume the leased land on which Indian sugar farming depends. This sugar staple of the Fijian economy is also under threat from the European Union which currently still offers generous protected access under the Cotonou Convention (formerly the Lome Convention) to Fiji and other Carribbean smallholder sugar producers, which it is obligated in principle under WTO arrangements to eventually dismantle in favour of a REPA or Regional Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU, meaning complete free trade.24

Although the "traditional" (post independence) pattern of Fiji's economy is clearly under threat on several fronts, Fiji has not been a feckless foreign borrower and its currency has not been devalued despite a huge downturn in export and especially tourist revenue since the Speight coup. Nor has it suffered notably from resource rip-offs. In other words structures conducive to economic survival persist; but autochthonous nationalism in unscrupulous hands does pose a potentially mortal threat to these structures.

West Papua

Following Indonesian independence in 1949, the Dutch retained Nieuw Guinea, as they called it, but failed to negotiate a settlement of the issue of sovereignty which the Indonesian government would not concede to them. Despite making a large investment in preparing the Papuans for self government the Dutch gave up their effort to cling to the territory in 1962, and agreed to an eventual transfer of power to Indonesia under American diplomatic as well as Indonesian military pressure. A major West Papuan grievance since then has been that Indonesian economic exploitation of the province's mineral resources has not benefited the indigenous people, and greatly aggravates what is seen as Indonesian political usurpation of the

23 See Brij Lal, Fiji: Damaged Democracy (Suva: University of the South Pacific School of Law Home Page, 'Fiji Islands Crisis,' 2000).

24 Fiji was granted a stay of execution on this threat in late 2000, but it is also at risk of losing its other great export industry cushion — protected access to the Australian garment market: the only significant case of industrial export from any Pacific island country. 70 per cent of Fiji's garment exports enter Australia, and extension of her preferential duty advantage there seems to have become conditional on Australian endorsement of any proposed post-coup political settlement. "Fiji flags possible early elections", Sydney Morning Herald, October 4, 2000.
Papuan right to self determination. Today Papuans see both a better prospect for independence under a more democratic Indonesian government but also a continuing threat of ethnic extinction under the pressure of continuing Indonesian “spontaneous” immigration, including a refugee influx from the neighbouring Maluku islands, and past officially sponsored agricultural transmigration into Papua. At present the Papuans are a bare majority of the population of the province of Papua/Irian Jaya, and their independence drive creates an ever-present risk of a political explosion and renewed fighting and atrocities.25

However in October 2000 at the Kiribati summit the Papuan cause for the first time received serious support in the Pacific Islands Forum.26 The West Papuans openly aspire to replace their Asian/Indonesian identity with a South Pacific one and join the Forum, as I have noted, and Papuan leaders were actually included in the delegation of Nauru to the Kiribati Forum. The governments of Nauru and Vanuatu also now openly support the Papuan struggle for self-determination, and New Zealand launched a mediation initiative in 2001 to bridge the gap between the Papuans and Jakarta. However PNG and Australia are much more circumspect. They fear that an explosion in West Papua can draw them into military conflict with Indonesia. However the pattern of the Timor conflict is quite likely to be repeated in West Papua, as I discuss below.

We have seen above how problems of secession, ethnic conflict and incomplete decolonization have become a key component of the internal and external international relations of the PICs and potential PICs. These problems stem from “bad synergy” between traditional small scale societies and the various waves of globalization which they have endured over the past two centuries. Constructive resolution of the problems of West Papua, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea may well lie in “good globalization” — more extensive outside help and constructive intervention — since the “inner resources” of the societies in question are not obviously adequate to achieve such a resolution: self determination for West Papua and Bougainville and a return to internationally acceptable constitutional government in Solomon Islands and Fiji. The Forum itself collectively, and the governments of Australia and New Zealand individually, will play crucial roles in any such outcomes, but so will the global and local NGOs and popular movements which have done so much to publicize the human rights issues at stake in the current conflicts in Melanesia — from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to the international spokespersons for West Papua’s OPM (Operasi Papua Merdeka — Free Papua Movement).27 These popular movements and NGOs are an important part of Pacific Islands international relations, and in the Timor case they showed their power through

25 See Peter King, West Papua in the New Millennium: Otonomi, Merdeka or Chaos?, Kagoshima University Research Center for the Pacific Islands, October 2000.
media campaigns which eventually impacted so much on public opinion that governments were forced to change long standing policies of support for the Indonesian side in Timor.

**Resources, Development, Environment and Governance**

I summarized the key problems of development, resources and environment at the outset. In general the PICs are striving to turn their various natural endowments into developmental advantages. These endowments include marine, tropical timber and mineral resources which have attracted considerable foreign investment and exploitation but with very little domestic participation in large-scale operations and very little investment "downstream" from resource extraction. Endowments also include attractive scenery and leisure environments, and tourism is, or was, a major economic factor in Fiji and in much of Polynesia and Micronesia. Another "endowment" is small population size and continuing affinity with the ex-colonizer, as noted earlier. Freedom of legal self-determination is another post independence endowment, and Vanuatu, Nauru and several other small PICs are notorious tax havens and money laundering centers: caterers to this kind of "bad globalization."

Because resource endowments have not yet been translated into significant industrial capacity except in Fiji, and given near-universal "development desperation" — whether it be for a first aid post, a primary school and clean water, on the one hand, or electricity, TV and often Internet access in every village on the other — two quick avenues to "development" are often irresistible among the PICs. They are feckless foreign borrowing and resources "rip-offs", the latter usually with serious environmental consequences. At the elite level leaders are not daunted to promote a culture of relentless government borrowing which creates never to be repaid loans and an endless interest burden for taxpayers. As for their resource projects, we can note that, of the three largest mining projects (all involving a huge copper and gold reserve) in the South Pacific islands region, one has collapsed as a result of popular resistance (the Conzinc Rio Tinto Bougainville mine); one is quite likely going to collapse because the miner thinks it cannot afford the court-ordered compensation (or perhaps the general disgrace) flowing from its own environmental vandalism (the BHP Ok Tedi mine in PNG's Western Province), and one could collapse in the course of further popular struggle (the PT Freeport Indonesia mine in the high southern mountains of West Papua). But at the "grass roots" level, too, villagers are not daunted by logging agreements with corrupt multinationals which promise money in hand for a few years and a devastated resource and local environment thereafter. (This pattern is strongly entrenched in PNG, and in Solomon Islands rain forest has practically disappeared.)

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29) The chief offender is a single Chinese-owned Malaysian company, Rimbunan Hijau, which in PNG not only controls half of the large forestry industry, but has established its own daily newspaper (*The National*) in competition with Rupert Murdoch's *Post Courier*. Thus media globalization in the South Pacific...
South Pacific.

At the same time the very survival of established states and constitutional governments is at issue in much of Melanesia, as we have seen, because of ethnic conflicts and secessionist movements, and the economies and development prospects (in tourism, mining and agriculture) of several independent Melanesian countries have already been severely damaged by their political troubles. This has been conceded by the PIF leaders themselves. There are signs, however, of an emerging more vigorous international response to this creeping crisis of state and society, economy and ecology, in the Pacific islands and elsewhere. The concept of “security” has been undergoing a steady expansion in definition since the end of the Cold War to cover social, economic and political as well as military and strategic issues, particularly in relation to the Third World.\textsuperscript{30} NGOs, people’s movements and the Internet have been spurring on mainstream local and international media to take up human rights and environmental issues relevant to “security” broadly defined, and the Pacific Islands Forum seems to have registered the message.

The Way Forward

The Forum for the first time has committed itself to such an expanded conception of security in the face of the multiple issues threatening the lives and livelihoods of the Pacific islands people. In June 2000 it launched a widely praised commissioned report on \textit{Enhancing Pacific Security} by Ron Crocombe, expatriate/indigenous doyen of contemporary Pacific Islands scholarship. Crocombe’s is the most wide-ranging policy-oriented study so far of “comprehensive security” issues in a Pacific islands regional context, which recommends among other things for the Forum to develop a “second track” NGO/civil society approach to conflict resolution. This would be comparable to the ASEAN Regional Forum’s CSCAP (Committee on Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific).\textsuperscript{31} As for regional direct action to counter the escalating communal/security problems of the Melanesian South Pacific, in August 2000 the inaugural Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (FFAMM) in Samoa proposed a new set of democratic principles which were later incorporated in the Biketawa Declaration released on the last day of the Forum summit in Kiribati. Henceforward for the first time — and in sharp contrast to its own previous (and ASEAN’s persisting) philosophy and practice — the Forum envisages intervention and even sanctions to uphold social peace and democratic and constitutional principles among its member nations.

It seems that without determined outside (including UN) intervention and support — “good regionalization” and “good globalization” — the escalating problems of the PICs will not be satisfactorily resolved. The threat of international relations for the PICs is that through contagious ethnocracy and militarism they will destabilize each other and also become even

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.} See also Greg Fry, “South Pacific Security.”

more unable to resist the lure of quick dollars through mismanaged multinational capital investment in resource extraction and “bad globalization” in general. The promise is that they can collectively, with the help of developed countries from inside and outside the region, however belatedly, respond in a comprehensive way to the daunting challenges they now face—among them of course the urgent environmental and economic problems which they are encountering as a result of rising sea levels and an end to the cushion of EU special market access.

Back in 1997 the global greenhouse gas issue gave rise to a serious confrontation in the Forum over the Kyoto protocols between advanced Australia, which eventually won its case to move to higher emissions, and the small island Forum members belonging to the United Nations SIDS (Small Island Developing States) grouping, who demand immediate reductions in greenhouse gases as a condition of survival in the face of rising sea levels. Special EU market access for the ACP (Asia Caribbean Pacific) states will probably continue for some time in fact, as we have noted, and another “cushion” will probably continue to be provided for those PICs in danger of graduating from less developed (LDC) to developing status under UN criteria, with immediate effect on their eligibility for aid. Samoa and Vanuatu received a stay of status change in 1999/2000 on the grounds of small island type economic vulnerability, an index for which has been adopted by ECOSOC (the UN’s Economic and Social Council).

On the momentous issue of political and social breakdown as a result of ethnic/secessionist conflict among the PICs, East Timor perhaps offers one kind of model international response. Sustained international pressure over decades, combined with evidence of the futility of repression in crushing national resistance, eventually opened a first window of opportunity for the Timorese, a UN sponsored referendum conceded by Indonesia in early 2000. The violence and destruction which came in the wake of the August 2000 referendum triggered domestic outrage in Australia and a new surge of international pressure to deploy peacekeepers, leading to a US-backed IMF threat to withhold loan money, and thus opening a second window of opportunity for the Timorese in the shape of INTERFET (International Force East Timor), and then UNTAET (UN Transitional Administration — East Timor) which is tasked to bring East Timor to independence in 2001. A similar pattern is conceivable in the long struggle of the West Papuans for self-determination, as I have said. Such an outcome would end the nightmare of Indonesian occupation of Papua, and fully unlock its South Pacific identity which is being vigorously asserted by the new Post-Suharto “Civilian” (i.e. non clandestine, non violent) leadership of the national movement. It would also relieve Papua New Guinea of its principal external security concern which arises from the long, rugged, unpolicable and highly porous border which

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it shares with Indonesia. (PNG is the only Forum state with a serious external security problem.) Across this border generations of refugees and guerillas and Indonesian soldiers in hot and cold pursuit have travelled in circles and cycles of fear and futility. The challenge today is to overcome the diplomatic paralysis which for most of the last nearly three decades has afflicted PNG and the Forum in articulating a Pacific as against an Asian interest in the West Papua conflict, and moving it towards resolution on the basis of self-determination.

An international initiative for the resolution of this chronic problem will depend largely on Australia, the country located immediately underneath the Melanesian arc of crisis, in the first instance. In the wider Pacific island scene Japan has now emerged as the leading aid donor to all of the PICs except PNG;\(^{30}\) it is also the country most dedicated to high level dialogue with them, as shown in the PALM 2000 Japan-South Pacific Forum Summit Meeting held in Miyazaki during April 2000. Japan is thus the key player and “globalizing link” for resolving the urgent economic and environmental problems of the PICs. For “good globalization” to prevail over bad among the PICs, the collaboration of the two “external heavy hitters” in Pacific island diplomacy, Australia and Japan, is essential.

\(^{30}\) Fry, *South Pacific Security*, p.17.
〈Summary〉

Peter King

The Pacific Island countries (PICs), the independent developing countries of the South and Central Pacific, which are today grouped in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and in large measure take their collective identity from it, are facing serious challenges from globalization processes, few of which they are well placed to deal with. In particular, across the Melanesian “arc of crisis” in the South West Pacific the PIF must deal with chronic and recently escalating ethnic conflicts which variously threaten established constitutional democracy (armed “civilian” coups in Fiji and Solomon Islands), and/or the integrity of state boundaries (secession movements in Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea). In its evolving relationships with the Kanaks of French New Caledonia, the West Papuans of Indonesian Papua/Irian Jaya and the post-Indonesia East Timorese, the PIF also faces a parallel challenge to become more responsive to regional movements of national liberation and prepare to accommodate new members, thus potentially expanding received definitions of the Pacific islands as well as the scope of the regional agenda and the potential for regional assertiveness.

The Forum PICs are responding to these challenges by showing a new willingness to intervene against delinquent member states to uphold constitutional and democratic norms. But more outside help is urgently needed to combat widespread civil disorder and state breakdown in Melanesia. This disorder poses a dire threat both to established export industries (including tourism) and domestic economies generally, and to effective implementation of the globalization agenda which the PIF has set for itself in terms of promoting regional as well as global trade, building a Pacific information economy, achieving global action on global warming with its special threat to small island states and reducing regional dependence on special aid, trade and immigration relationships with Australasia and Europe.