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THE SOUTH PACIFIC: REGIONAL SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS

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Introduction

External actors have been an historical factor and are a continuing factor in Oceania's security and development. We understand that today the region's security issues are primarily internal, non-traditional and focused on the needs of people and their societies rather than on the military protection of the state or of the wider region. Given the focus on security as being primarily an internal matter, so too in logic are the solutions (the supply of security) likely to be primarily internal. This is certainly the case to the extent that solutions will be sustainable in the medium to long-term rather than being short-term fixes for immediate problems.

But none of this is to say that external actors have or should have no role in the region. They have in the past, they do now and they will in the future. External powers, Spain, France, Portugal, the UK and the Netherlands became interested in the region as a by-product of the age of exploration from the 16th century. Later, the UK, Germany, the US and France colonised the region and Australia and New Zealand were active as British proxies and in their own right. Chinese business entrepreneurs and labourers were present in the region from an early date.

These outsiders came as explorers and traders, as imperialists (with civil and military officials, and with force) and missionaries, as settlers and beachcombers. Their arrival was inevitable and their effects were equally so. External actors helped make the region what it is today to a large extent, both for good and for bad. That is, external actors improved security (through the provision of health care or education, for example, and the development of

communications infrastructures) and they harmed security by introducing foreign diseases, cultural practices with no local foundation and by expropriating and alienating land and, often more importantly, the *mana* of traditional leaders. A mixed outcome.

Who are the external actors today and what do we know of their activities. The list is slightly different, but only very slightly, from that of the 18th and 19th century. Australia and New Zealand, the United States, China (both the PRC and ROC), India, Europe through the EU and France and the UK as residual colonial powers are all present. What do they do? Again, much as they did in early centuries with the exception that overt imperialism is off the table, but extending influence is firmly on it. Trade, aid and military relationships are all important. And again, both state and non-state actors are active. As well as these major extra-regional actors, states as various as Israel, Turkey, Germany, Russia, Cuba, Spain and the United Arab Emirates are reported as seeking observer status at the Pacific Islands Forum,¹ no doubt in an attempt to increase their influence and to gain Pacific Island support at international forums such as the United Nations.

If the external actors in the two or three centuries to the end of the colonial period were an inevitable result of the ability and desire of European states to explore and derive benefit from the exploration, then so too will the presence of external actors today be inevitable. The motivations might be different, the presence might be more in the control of local authorities and the effects might be different in detail, but overall external actors will provide both security and insecurity to the region. If the presence is inevitable, the aim for the region must be to maximise the benefits and minimise the costs.

The Big Picture

When we consider external actors at a macro level there are some useful indicators that place the region in relation to other similar regions. Development assistance itself, through OECD Official Development Assistance mechanisms, comes primarily from five metropolitan states, Australia (about US\$1041m in 2013), New Zealand (US\$225m), the US (US\$217m), Japan (US\$122m) and France (US\$125m) and from European Union institutions (US\$94m) from a total of some US\$2147m coming into the region.² These six sources thus provide nearly 85% of OECD development assistance to the region. On top of this, China was estimated to provide around US\$400m in financial assistance in 2011 which, if correct, would make it the

¹ Richard Herr and Anthony Bergin, 'Our near abroad Australia and Pacific islands regionalism', *Strategy*, Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, November 2011, p. 2.

² Derived from OECD data tables 'Aid disbursements to countries and regions', stats.oecd.org accessed 10 February 2015. The Fiji figure could be distorted because of the effect of sanctions against the then military government.

second largest aid provider.³ A slightly more longitudinal view of development assistance between 2006 and 2013 looks like this:⁴

1. Australia \$6.831bn
2. United States \$1.770bn
3. Japan \$1.225bn
4. New Zealand \$1.096bn
5. China \$1.057bn

At a more granular level, in 2009, for example, Oceania received a minuscule amount of international ODA, around \$2.0bn compared with nearer \$40.0bn for Asia and sub-Saharan Africa respectively.⁵ This is not surprising given the region's very small population, but it does mean, on the other hand, that on a *per capita* basis Oceania receives five times as much aid as does Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶ Of the 36 countries globally receiving more than \$100 per capita in ODA in 2008, eight were from the region with Palau being the second highest recipient overall (\$2117) and all of the eight receiving more than \$200.00.⁷ Also in 2008, six of the 26 countries receiving more than 10% of GNI in the form of ODA came from Oceania.⁸ Aid as a percentage of GNI in 2009-2010 ranged from 2.6% in the case of Fiji to 48.6% for RMI, with an average of around 25% of GNI.⁹ This is a significant level of external support to the region and points to economic security issues as the source and levels of the income are substantially outside regional control.

There are significant questions to be asked about the effectiveness of aid in terms of leading towards national development. No less an authority than the Secretary-General of the Pacific Community has asked for example:

Does the Pacific islands region need more development aid when it is already the highest recipient of aid per capita globally? Why is the Pacific islands region not

³ Jenny Haward-Jones, 'Australia-the indispensable power in a congested sea', Presentation delivered to the Royal United Services Institute's 2nd International Defence and Security Dialogue, National Maritime Museum, Sydney, 26 February 2013., p. 3. http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/hayward_jones_australia_the_indispensable_power.pdf, accessed 10 February 2015.

⁴ Philippa Brant, 'Chinese Aid in the Pacific', *Regional Snapshot*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for Public Policy, February 2015. http://www.lowyinstitute.org/files/chinese_aid_in_the_pacific_regional_snapshot_0.pdf, accessed 2 March 2015.

⁵ UNDP, 'Official Development Assistance', *Towards Human Resilience: Sustaining MDG Progress in an Age of Economic Uncertainty*, New York: UNDP, 2011. Chart 5.4, p. 153.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158

⁷ *Ibid.*, Chart 5.9, p. 158.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Chart 5.10, p. 160.

⁹ Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 'National Minimum Development Indicators', <http://www.spc.int/nmdi/mdg8>, accessed 2 February 2015.

tracking well on many global targets and indicators (such as the MDGs)? What development outcomes or achievements can be attributed directly to the high level of development aid at the individual country or the broader regional level?¹⁰

His assessment is that for much of the region aid is required for state survival, that that condition will continue for some time and that aid mechanisms must take this into account where appropriate. This clearly makes development assistance a security issue for many regional states.

Most of the region is dependent on primary commodity exports and is thus particularly susceptible to externally derived price shocks. The region has been identified by the UNDP as being particularly vulnerable in this respect.¹¹ Cross border trade is primarily external to the region. Of the total \$310bn in cross border trade in 2102, only about 6% was intra-regional with most of the rest (74%) going to Asian markets, a relatively high percentage for a single region and another source of potential vulnerability.¹²

Foreign Direct Investment is not a major component of the region's income in global terms; in 2013 about US\$2.7bn, compared with, for example, some US\$109bn directed towards the Caribbean.¹³ This FDI inward stock figure for Oceania represented some 61% of GDP (with the Caribbean at 514%).¹⁴ Between 1995 and 2009 the region had the slowest rate of FDI growth, increasing by 170% compared with 276% for Asia, the next slowest growth rate.¹⁵ The region does not get a lot of FDI and what it gets is not as significant for the region as it is for some other regions. Whether these figures represent a security issue or not is arguable. On the one hand needed capital investment, not available from within the region, does come into the region but on the other there are significant security issues if too much of the national (or regional) resource base is in foreign control.

Migration and tourism, both inwards and external, are important to the region as it develops links with external actors and develops its own cultural communities in other countries. Visitor numbers to the region in 2011, for the countries for which data are available, were about 110% of the population. Clearly, there is much interaction with the wider world.¹⁶ In

¹⁰ Jimmy Rogers, 'Small islands, big challenges: rethinking the Pacific aid architecture', *Devpolicy Blog*, 23 October 2013, <http://devpolicy.org/small-islands-big-challenges-rethinking-the-pacific-aid-architecture-20131023/>. Accessed 17 February 2015.

¹¹ UNDP, *op. cit.*, p. 7

¹² McKinsey and Company, *McKinsey on Payments*, 'Insights into the dynamics of new trade flows', May 2014. <http://www.mckinsey.com/insights>, accessed 4 February 2015.

¹³ UN Conference on Trade and Development, 'Annex Table 01', *World Investment Report*, Geneva: UNCTAD, 2014.

¹⁴ UNCTAD, *op cit.*, 'Annex Table 04'.

¹⁵ UNDP, *op cit.*, p. 89.

¹⁶ Derived from population and visitor data in Secretariat of the Pacific Community, *Pocket Statistical Summary*, SPC: New Caledonia, 2013.

terms of migration, the region is a net loser of population with up to 18 people per thousand being lost from Tonga in 2012.¹⁷ This has a clear demographic security consequence for the affected states, but these emigrants are an important source of remittances to the region and these two factors with aid and the bureaucracy necessary to deal with it form the concept of 'MIRAB' as being central to the socio-economic system.¹⁸ For the MIRAB states the effects of external factors are magnified, as migration, remittances and aid and the bureaucracy combine to form a significant component of household and national income with consequent effects on national resilience and regional security.

As migrants arrive in the region they are either assimilated effectively or remain slightly outside their host society. In the former case there are few security consequences, and those there are probably positive. In the latter case these 'foreign' communities may act as a focus for national discontent in difficult political, economic or social times. Events at different times in Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Papua New Guinea against ethnic minority 'migrant's demonstrate that point.

These kinds of datasets give only a snapshot and the numbers can and do alter dramatically from year to year. But as a snapshot they demonstrate that the region deals with the external world in a number of ways and that its dealings are a source of both strength and vulnerability.

State Actors and their Interactions

The macro data tell only a part of the story. Individual states play a significant role across the region. The first and most obvious roles are those played by the United States in Micronesia, New Zealand in Polynesia and Australia in Melanesia. These metropolitan states were the colonial power for most of the region's states and political, economic and social links are still very close. Although their relationships and interactions within the sub-regions are different from one to the other, the countries are all 'first and automatic responders' in the case of regional natural disaster, provide financial and other material support through their aid programmes, act as the ultimate guarantors for military security and act as home for most of the region's emigrants. As well, Australian and New Zealand are members of the Pacific Islands' Forum and play a significant role in the working of the Forum. France is still a colonial power, and as such a significant regional actor, but its territories are not members of the Forum.

It is a matter of perspective as to whether on balance the role played by these states has been constructive or destructive. It is safe to argue though, that without them the region

¹⁷ Index Mundi, <http://www.indexmundi.com/map/?v=27&r=oc&l=en>, accessed 5 February 2015.

¹⁸ Richard P. C. Brown *et al*, 'Migrants' Remittances, Poverty and Social Protection in the South Pacific: Fiji and Tonga', *Population, Space and Place*, 20 (5) July 2014, pp. 434-454,

would be quite different today from the way it is and probably that the region would be materially poorer.

In discussion of extra-regional states and their activities much of the narrative is about 'geo-strategic competition'; the ways the major external actors compete with each other for influence, access to resources, or status, in the region.¹⁹ Competition is in reality limited and the situation may better be described as a mixture of 'tension and accommodation, cooperation and competition'.²⁰ This activity may affect the region positively or negatively. What can be said is that it is generally done without significant consideration of the region's own needs.

Individual states have specific relationships with the region.

Australia

Australia is an original member of the Pacific Islands' Forum (then the South Pacific Forum), is the dominant aid provider to the region, primarily to Melanesia and especially Papua New Guinea, and sees itself as the source, in military terms, of much of the region's security needs, although again primarily within Melanesia. As an 'aspirant middle power' Australia normally looks well beyond Oceania as it attempts to play a continuing role on the wider Asia-Pacific and global stages.

Australia has continuing close relations with Papua New Guinea, but these relations are coloured by the colonial past. Nonetheless, PNG tends to look first to Australia for assistance. Australia works closely with Papua New Guinea especially to improve the functioning of government agencies through partnering and mentoring arrangements between Australian institutions and their PNG counterparts.²¹ These activities, which began in the early 2000s as the 'Enhanced Cooperation Programme' might well be seen as a model for the development of robust and effective national government, which is a necessary component of any security system, but there are many difficulties involved in the practical arrangements and the results are mixed.²² Indeed, the initial Australian Federal Police mentoring mission lasted only eight months following a Papua New Guinea high court ruling in May 2005 that the status of the Australian police officers was unconstitutional. The Police were immediately withdrawn, but

¹⁹ See for example, Jenny Hayward-Jones, 'Big Enough for all of us: Geo-Strategic Competition in the Pacific Islands', *Analysis*, Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, May 2013; Steven Ratuva, 'A New Regional Cold War? American and Chinese Posturing in the Pacific', *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, 1 (2), 409-422, 2014.

²⁰ Ratuva, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

²¹ Rowan Callick, 'Australian scheme to boost governance in Papua New Guinea', *The Australian*, 12 February 2015.

²² Allan Patience, 'Discussion Paper 2005/4, *State, Society and Governance in Melanesia*, Canberra: ANU, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, 2005; Penelope Murphy, 'PNG Australia Economic and Public Sector Governance Twinning Initiative Phase 1', *Independent Completion Report*, AidWorks Initiative Number ING860 and INI785, Canberra, May 2010.

returned to PNG in 2013, although now acting purely in an advisory role without police executive powers.²³

Australia has been described as doing the ‘heavy lifting’ in the Pacific region; certainly for Melanesia and perhaps Polynesia, and as such makes a significant contribution to regional security.²⁴ Australia was the lead state for the regional intervention in Solomon Islands (albeit after some years of rejecting Solomon Islands requests for assistance) and will most likely continue to lead (*de facto* if not *de jure*) any future military interventions in Melanesia if they were to be necessary, if only because the preponderance of resources for any intervention will come from Australia. Australia’s role in Solomon Islands (and other regional missions) has been described as an exercise in soft power using a ‘velvet-glove’.²⁵ (Of course, inside a velvet-glove is often a mailed-fist, and to many Australia does look to privilege the hard-power military component of security ahead of the non-military). On all these grounds, Australia is a net provider of security to the region, although the region itself does not rate particularly highly in Australia’s world view.

As well as its development assistance programme, Australia (and New Zealand, France and the US) has an active military assistance programme with the region. Australia’s programme, the Defence Cooperation Programme (about A\$31m in 2012-13),²⁶ focuses on training, capability development and, importantly, the Pacific Patrol Boat programme, which provides patrol boats to island states for fisheries protection purposes.

The major criticism of Australia and its relationship with the region is that it tends to see issues primarily from an Australian perspective and attempts to impose Australian preferred solutions to issues rather than allowing solutions to arrive by consensus: slower, less effective in the short term, but the ‘Pacific Way’. This point is made in the title of a 2005 paper: ‘the Pacific Way or Howard’s Way?’²⁷ In part consequently: ‘Around the region, people are questioning where the Pacific fits into Australia’s priorities’.²⁸

²³ Vandra Harris, ‘Building on sand? Australian police involvement in international police capacity building’, *Policing and Society*, 20 (1), March 2010, pp. 79-98.

²⁴ Stephen Hoadley, ‘Pacific Island Security by New Zealand and Australia: Towards a New Paradigm’, *Working Paper 20/05*, Wellington: Centre for Strategic Studies, 2005, p. 14.

²⁵ Benjamin Reilly, ‘Australia as a southern hemisphere ‘soft power’’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, published on-line, 23 January 2015, p. 8. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/10357718.2014.989809>, accessed 17 February 2015.

²⁶ Australian Government, Department of Defence, ‘Table W3.2: South Pacific Region Expenditure’, *Annual Report 2012-2013*, Canberra: Department of Defence, 2013.

²⁷ Gregor Allan, ‘South Pacific security & the emerging doctrine of ‘cooperative intervention’: the Pacific way or Howard’s way?’, *Rhizome*, 1, 2005, pp. 125-144. Howard was of course the Australian Prime Minister from 1996-2007. It should also be noted that the ‘Pacific Way’ is ignored by Pacific leaders when it suits them.

²⁸ Nic Maclellan, ‘Look out Australia, the Pacific mood is shifting’, *The Interpreter*, Lowy Institute, 4 February 2015. www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/02/04/australia-pacific-mood-shifting.aspx?COLLCC=1507189444&, accessed 13 February 2015.

New Zealand

Like Australia, New Zealand is an original member of the Forum and is a significant provider of development assistance to the region. New Zealand's attention is primarily focused on Polynesia, although unlike Australia, New Zealand spreads its aid more or less evenly throughout the region, in part because the Polynesian states are not able to absorb very large amounts aid. Also unlike Australia and its relationships with the Melanesian states, New Zealand has close cultural and social links with Polynesia.²⁹

New Zealand does not see itself as a provider of significant military security; indeed does not see threats to Polynesia as requiring a military response (with the exception of providing regular maritime surveillance patrols by the RNZAF and RNZN throughout the island EEZs).³⁰ One minor exception to this was in 2006 when a small contingent of New Zealand troops and police (with Australian colleagues) was sent to Tonga, at the request of the Tongan government, to assist in restoring order following riots that had broken out following pro-democracy demonstrations. The troops left within several weeks. New Zealand has sent troops, with Australia, to Melanesian states Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea to assist in restoring security in those countries.

New Zealand does provide security of a different kind however. It is much more open than is Australia to seasonal workers from the Pacific and its immigration policies are much more liberal than are Australia's. Both of these because of the cultural and social ties. As a demonstration of these ties, in 2013 some 7.4% of the population identified themselves as having a Pacific ethnic identity and some 15% of the Auckland region identified themselves as being of Pacific origin.³¹

Perhaps because of both New Zealand's Maori population and the circumstances of New Zealand's colonisation and subsequent history (which has forced a national discussion about identity) and the significant Pacific community, New Zealand is often seen as more attuned to the 'Pacific way' than is Australia.³² The reputation may be undeserved, but there is no doubt that it has allowed New Zealand to work with the region in ways Australia has found difficult. The most obvious example of this was during the truce monitoring process on Bougainville

²⁹ Some 7.4% of the New Zealand population in 2013 identified as 'Pacific peoples'. Most of these, nearly 66% lived in Auckland, and the of growth for the Pacific population from 2006-2013 was more than 11%. Source: Statistics New Zealand, 'Pacific people's ethnic group', <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/pacific-peoples.aspx>, accessed 12 February 2015.

³⁰ Australia also conducts regional surveillance patrols and Australia and New Zealand coordinate their activities in this field..

³¹ Statistics New Zealand, '2013 Census QuickStats about culture and identity', <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-culture-identity/pacific-peoples.aspx>, accessed 3 March 2015.

³² As early as 1900 New Zealand was seen as more closely linked to the Pacific Islands than to the 'ogre' Australia as seen in a cartoon of the time showing a maidenly New Zealand rejecting the Australian ogre in favour of a Pacific Island youth: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/cartoon/33125/different-race-relations>.

island between Bougainville separatists and the PNG government in 1997. New Zealand was able to lead the initial truce support intervention because it was trusted by the protagonists in a way that Australia was not, although Australia subsequently took the lead role in the peace monitoring group from mid-1998.

United States

The United States, like Australia and New Zealand in 'their' sub-regions, focuses much of its attention on one part of the region: Micronesia. The Micronesian states all have 'Free Association' status with the United States through what is known as a 'Compact of Free Association'. Compact status gives the citizens of these states access to many US domestic programmes and their countries receive significant financial aid as a matter of law rather than policy. For its part the US has more or less free access for its armed forces and the armed forces of other states are precluded from access without US permission. The US has formal responsibility for the military security of these states and for administering their international defence relationships. This is all significant because of the compact states' location in the western Pacific.

There is concern in some quarters that the compact states themselves and the US also do not adhere to either the spirit or the letter of the compact treaties and thus by their respective actions are diminishing rather than enhancing security as the compact states fail to achieve the compact purposes and goals of economic advancement, budgetary self-sufficiency and political autonomy.³³ Another perspective on the relationship between the US and the compact states is that of 'patron and client' in which the client gives away elements of autonomy, even sovereignty, in return for being able to pressure the patron for benefits that would otherwise not be obtainable.³⁴ Perceptions of security here depend to some extent on which factors are privileged in the analysis.

The US has less interest in Melanesia and Polynesia considering the states in those sub-regions to be the 'responsibility' of Australia and New Zealand respectively. This is potentially a problem for the United States because the island countries themselves do not necessarily want to talk to Australia or New Zealand when they would rather be talking to the US. The US sends mixed messages on security. It is 'committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development,

³³ See for example, Compact Review Committee, Federated States of Micronesia, *Five Year Review of the Amended Compact of Free Association*, Pohnpei: Federated States of Micronesia, June 2011; P.R. Sauer, 'No Nation Is an Island: Navigating the Troubled Waters Between Indigenous Values and Donor Desire in the Republic of the Marshall Islands', *Globalization, International Education Policy and Local Policy Formation: Policy Implications of Research in Education*, Volume 5, 2015, pp 131-142; and Keola K. Diaz, 'The Compact of Free Association (COFA): A History of Failures', unpublished MA paper, University of Hawaii, Manoa, 2012. http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10125/24265/Diaz_2012_r.pdf?sequence=1, accessed 16 February 2015.

³⁴ Wouter P. Veenendaal, 'Analyzing the Foreign Policy of Microstates: The Relevance of the International Patron-Client Model', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 2014, pp. 1-17.

responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win'.³⁵ This kind of military-focused response almost contradicts discussion of the region and its security needs from the same source: the US Pacific Command assists 'Pacific island nations to build capacity to detect, deter, and seek redress for illegal activities within their Exclusive Economic Zones'.³⁶ A much more relevant formulation.

China

China is the extra-regional state most often agonised over. We may identify some specific foreign policy objectives: maintaining a favourable and stable international environment; be seen as a 'responsible participant in the international arena' through establishing 'a strategic partnership of mutual respect and common development' with the region; reassurance; counter-containment; diversifying access to resources; and reducing Taiwan's international space.³⁷ These aims (other than that of Taiwan relations, which is in any case becoming redundant in the Oceania region) could be held by any state in almost any environment. Unless one has a strong zero-sum bent in international relations, they are in principle not objectionable. Perhaps the practice is more problematic.

China provides significant, although unquantified, amounts of 'untied' aid to the region in ways that western states often see as counterproductive. The fear (normally not expressed publicly by officials but a continuing sub-text of private conversation) is that China will replace Australia, New Zealand and the US as the significant regional power and will somehow subvert the region to conform to a Chinese world view. These worries are probably overstressed. China's relationship with the region is seen by some as being different in kind from that of the western metropolitan power in that it is in part an expression of 'South-South solidarity', ensuring, according to China, that the region does not have to continue to suffer from the west's colonial instincts. China as a victim of colonialism itself is different in kind according to its own world view.³⁸

Generally, China's activities are conducted in terms of the soft power activities of diplomacy (both political and defence), economics and aid rather than through a formal hard power

³⁵ United States Pacific Command, 'About US Pacom', <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM.aspx>. Accessed 12 February 2015.

³⁶ Samuel J. Locklear III, 'PACOM House Armed Services Committee Posture Statement', 10 March 2014. <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/SpeechesTestimony/tabid/6706/Article/565153/pacom-house-armed-services-committee-posture-statement.aspx>, accessed 12 February 2015.

³⁷ Evan S. Medeiros, 'China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism and Diversification', *Joint Force Quarterly*, 47 (4), 2007, 36-37; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 'Xi Jinping Holds Group Meeting with Leaders of Pacific Island Countries and Delivers a Keynote Speech...', 22 November 2014. http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpzxcxesgitldrdjcfhdadlyxxlfjixgsfwbtpyjdgldrhwt1214281.shtml, accessed 9 February 2015.

³⁸ Marc Lanteigne, 'China, the West and 'Soft Balancing' in the South Pacific', *The China Story*, Australian Centre on China in the World, 16 March 2013. www.thechinastory.org/2013/china-the-west-and-soft-blaancing-in-the-south-pacific/. Accessed 28 January 2015.

military presence. China's aid programme has been most scrutinised and the general conclusion often is that the aid is intended to have a public relations impact, but that it is often not delivered either effectively or efficiently. That conclusion cannot be carried completely across the region however, as different recipients have different experiences and in Samoa, for example, development assistance has met expectations. Overall, a country's experience with development assistance from China might be as much to do with the country's own oversight mechanisms as it is to do with China's processes.³⁹ China is for its part, it seems, learning from its own experiences and working with traditional donors to learn their management mechanisms and with recipient states to understand their needs.⁴⁰

In summary, China has few if any direct strategic interests in the region, no hard power levers and little soft power influence. What influence it does have is based on its aid and economic relationships which are of variable quality even if locally appreciated because of the autonomy they give the recipient state.⁴¹

Japan

Japan's main relationships with the region are economic, in the form of aid, and the search for political influence. The search for influence is probably a higher priority than assisting in economic development. In 2014 the draft of a new ODA Charter discusses aid in terms of 'national interest', 'security' and 'defence', and is seen by some analysts as a strategic move to curb 'China's rising influence.'⁴²

Japan hosts an annual leaders' summit, the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, which has been held three-yearly since 1997. These meetings focus on issues important to the region: fisheries; the environment; climate change; sustainable development, but are not central to regional security in either the traditional or non-traditional sense. The best that can be said for the meetings is that they do no harm and may do some good.

France

France has a continuing relationship with the region through its territories and dependencies, which is where its aid budget is mostly directed. France cooperates with Australia, New Zealand and the United States in the delivery of regional aid to ensure that projects do not

³⁹ Mathew Doman and Philippa Brant, 'Chinese Assistance in the Pacific: Agency, Effectiveness and the Role of Pacific Island Governments', *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, 1 (2), 2014, p. 359.

⁴⁰ Zhen Wang, 'China's Bilateral Aid to the South Pacific Region: A Constructivist Analysis', Dissertation for Master of International Relations, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 28 February 2014, p. 59.

⁴¹ Jian Yang, 'China in the South Pacific: A Strategic Threat?', *Asia:NZ Foundation*, http://asianz.org.nz/sites/asianz.org.nz/files/China%20in%20the%20SthPacific_DrJianYang.pdf. Accessed 9 February 2015.

⁴² Purendra Jain, 'The Politics of Japan's New Aid Charter', *East Asia Forum*, 15 December 2014. <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/12/15/japans-new-aid-charter-shifts-into-domestic-and-regional-political-arena/>, accessed 28 January 2015.

overlap. France's main contribution to wider regional security will be shown through the way it handles the different demands for independence and autonomy in New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna.

Indonesia

Indonesia's role as an external actor is primarily through its incorporation of Papua (previously Irian Jaya), the western half of the island of New Guinea, as an Indonesian province. The Free Papua Movement (OPM) argues that the province should gain full autonomy as an independent state, probably within a Pacific context, but OPM has not been able to gather full support within the Province let alone make headway with the Jakarta government. This is a border security issue for Papua New Guinea and for those within Oceania who believe the region should support the independence movement. There is little evidence that the regional political groupings, Pacific Islands' Forum or the Melanesian Spearhead Group, are prepared to support Papuan independence.⁴³

Other external actors and the Issues they Raise for Security

Not all external actors are state actors; there are businesses, non-governmental organisations and tourists for example whose activities impinge on the region one way or another. We are interested in such actors and their activities when their activities affect the region's security, especially when the impact is negative. Two issues are worth examining in more detail. They are the activities of distant water fishing fleets and of transnational criminal groups.

Distant Water Fishing Fleets

Oceania's fishing, mainly tuna, catch is worth some \$US\$7bn in 2012, mostly caught by fleets from North Pacific states, but also from Europe. The region itself coordinates its activities through the Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) and that body and the states themselves are members of the fisheries management organisation the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC).

Pacific states want the revenue received from allowing the fishing fleets into their waters (about 8%-15% of the value of the catch), but they also want the fishery to be sustainable in the long term, which means limiting catches in the short term. The fishing industry wants returns in the short-term ahead of long-term sustainability and the conservation movement wants conservation to be the prime value at almost any cost to fishery returns.⁴⁴ At the most recent meeting of the WCPFC, in December 2014, no agreement was reached about

⁴³ Radio New Zealand International, 'Mixed reaction to MSG's response to West Papua group', *Dateline Pacific*, 7 July 2014. <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/programmes/datelinepacific/audio/2602236/mixed-reaction-to-msg-s-response-to-west-papua-group>, accessed 2 March 2015.

⁴⁴ Undercurrent News, 'FFA director: Pacific countries need to confront distant water fishing nations', 18 February 2014, <http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2014/02/18/ffa-director-pacific-countries-need-to-confront-distant-water-fishing-nations/>, accessed 13 February 2015.

managing the fish stock in a way that allowed both fishing nations and the region to achieve their desired ends.⁴⁵

The issues reflected here have a direct effect on the region's economic viability and hence on its security. They were presciently foreshadowed a decade ago:

Perhaps the most pressing challenge, though, will be a political one. As one fisheries official put it, the region is now entering a 'new ball game' as far as management of the tuna resource is concerned. This will require cooperating and collaborating with fishing states that traditionally have been at odds with the FFA member states. It is already clear that fishing nations will seek to impose their preferred management measures on the region and to oppose measures adopted by the FFA states (rather than the Commission).⁴⁶

This issue is noteworthy also because it shows the ways non-governmental organisations (in this case, Greenpeace) can become directly involved in issues that affect regional security.

Non-Traditional Transnational Actors

Transnational criminal groups are partly external, but work closely with regional partners. They responsible for drug smuggling, money laundering, people smuggling, illegal logging and potentially terrorism into and (more normally) through the region. These issues are a continuing security threat to the region as they hurt people, divert money from legitimate (and taxable) activities to illegitimate and illegal ones, contribute to the corruption of regional officials and to the continued weakness of regional law agencies.

The region is targeted, either as a destination or as a way point, because it has limited capacity to manage its borders, lacks effective legislation and has few human or financial resources. Corruption throughout the region exacerbates the problem.⁴⁷

Conclusion: External Actors and Possible Security Solutions

Many of the region's security issues are home-grown and relate to human security, economic security, good governance and similar issues. To an extent these are a consequence of globalisation and relations with the wider world and as such cannot be wished away.

⁴⁵ Agence France Press, 'Value of Pacific fishing watchdog questioned after multi-nation talks end in stalemate', Australia: abc news, 6 December 2014. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-12-06/value-of-pacific-fishing-watchdog-questioned/5949232>, accessed 13 February 2015.

⁴⁶ Sandra Tarte, 'Managing Tuna Fisheries in the Pacific: A Regional Success Story?', 39th Otago Foreign Policy School, Dunedin, 25-28 June 2004. <http://www.otago.ac.nz/otagofps/archives/Foreign%20Policy%20School%20Archives/FPS%202004/pdfs/Tarte.pdf>, Accessed 13 February 2015.

⁴⁷ Rob McCusker, 'Transnational crime in the Pacific Islands: real or apparent danger?', *Trends and Issues*, No. 308, Australian Institute of Criminology, March 2006.

Whether or not the sources of security issues, positive or negative, are domestic or external (and this brief survey shows that many are external), there is little doubt that if solutions (to the extent that 'solutions' to the range of regional security issues are possible) can be found, external actors will be a large part of the solution, despite the assertion at the beginning of this paper that 'in logic' the solutions to the regions security problems are likely to be primarily internal. But external actors cannot be the whole solution. The region itself has to decide how it wants to develop and what needs to be done to achieve its development goals. Only when this has been determined will outside states be in a sensible position to help the region help itself.

External states can provide assistance to the region to allow the region to help itself. That assistance needs to be: relevant; proportionate; sustainable; and based around capacity building. External states should however do no more than provide assistance. They should not do the operational work themselves unless the activities are clearly beyond the region's capacity, such as in the provision of long-range maritime surveillance operations. Other examples of effective assistance models might include Australian, New Zealand and US support to the Pacific Transnational Crime Network, established through the long-standing Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference, or Australia's Enhanced Cooperation Programme with Papua New Guinea.

The development of effective regional institutions, provision of resources (of people, material and financial), and a regional culture that allows them to be effective will be a very long-term project. It is a project that is necessary and the question of how to manage external actors most effectively is one that should occupy the minds of regional leaders, both political and official. Part of the solution will be organisational and part cultural. All of the solution should be led by the region itself.

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