
Papua New Guinea's Participation in a Pacific Islands Regional Security Force – Perspectives on Security Issues in the South Pacific

**Peter Balone Kanaparo
Jerry Jacka**

Abstract

This article explores security issues in the South Pacific Region and the notion of forming a regional security force to address security issues which may be beyond the capacity of small Pacific island countries. In particular it focuses on the participation of Papua New Guinea since it is the largest of the Pacific island countries in terms of population, physical landmass and natural resources. A study by the authors, funded by the Oceania Development Network, gathered views of personnel from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, the Papua New Guinea Correctional Institutional Service and the general public, as well analysing documentary evidence from Pacific Islands Forum meetings. The findings of their research, which indicate strong support for forming a regional security force, are based on an empirical, two month study that was conducted in Lae, Port Moresby, Goroka, Wewak, Wabag and Mount Hagen, in October and November of 2006.

Key words: security issues, regional security force, Pacific island countries, police, correctional institutional services, defence force

Introduction

This article critically examines the role of a regional security force in the Pacific. In particular, the paper focuses on four stakeholder perspectives on Papua New Guinea's involvement in the development of a future regional security force based on past participation in the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The four stakeholders of relevance to this study were the Papua New Guinean Defence Force (PNGDF), the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC), the Papua New Guinea Correctional Institutional Service (PNGCIS), and the general public.

Why does this paper critically stress a need for understanding the development of a regional security force? Why does it develop an overview of security issues affecting the Pacific island countries? The authors believe that it is vitally important to do so, as, for far too long, action on security issues in Pacific island countries has been sadly neglected, despite Pacific leaders raising this topic in many Pacific Island Forums. The importance of the Pacific island

countries in the 21st century cannot be dismissed due to their considerable strategic and political importance in the world system, and due to the fact that they serve as guardians of a vast treasure trove of natural resources, both actual and potential. The question of 'full-spectrum' security in the Pacific island countries is now very important and a valid focus for Pacific leaders, academics and other researchers.

Over the years, notions of security in Pacific island countries have changed in character, with security now perceived as more complex and multi-dimensional in character; i.e. the full spectrum. No longer is security measured solely in military terms, and military-strategic concerns no longer dominate foreign policies. For example, economic strength has now emerged as one major measure of national power. Full-spectrum security thus involves all dimensions of possible security threats, both those long recognised and those now accepted as actually or potentially posing a threat to security no matter how indirect or abstract. As such, dimensions of security are manifold, and some are canvassed below from a Papua New Guinean perspective, especially Papua New Guinea's contribution towards a regional security force.

Papua New Guinea is one of the fourteen countries in the Pacific Islands Region¹. Papua New Guinea is an integral member of many of the regional associations of Pacific island countries. It is committed to playing an active and constructive role as a member of the region and therefore shares the economic, social and political aspirations of its island neighbours. This paper critically examines the role that Papua New Guinea plays in these regional endeavours and suggests strategies for increasing PNG's participation since it is the largest country in terms of population, physical landmass and natural resources. The critical question we ask is: *What are the prospects for Papua New Guinea to play a leading role and contribute to a regional security force to best serve the interests of Pacific island countries?*

Methodology

This research paper is based on an empirical, two month study that was conducted in Lae, Port Moresby, Goroka, Wewak, Wabag and Mount Hagen in October and November 2006. The study was funded by the Oceania Development Network (ODN). Three primary research methodologies were used to collect information. These were in-depth interviews, questionnaires, and the analysis of primary documentary evidence from Pacific Islands Forum governments, employers and academics regarding their knowledge of the region, particularly pertaining to regionalisation of Pacific island countries and Papua New Guinea's contribution towards a regional security force.

¹The 14 Pacific island countries are: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. These 14 PICs and the two metropolitan powers in the region, namely Australia and New Zealand are the members of the Pacific Islands Forum, the major regional organisation. All 16 countries are known as Forum countries.

Questionnaires and interviews were developed from a stratified random sampling of participants. The strata involved were members of: (a) the defence force, (b) correctional service officers, (c) the police force, and (d) the general public. Participants from each of these strata were randomly selected to answer several questions pertaining to regionalisation and security issues. Particularly knowledgeable individuals and people in key positions from each of the strata were further interviewed to gain additional insights on Papua New Guinea's participation in past and future regional security forces.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. It begins with the identification of salient characteristics of the Pacific island countries in the context of regional security forces in the Pacific. Subsequent sections look at definitions and conceptual clarifications, factors associated with the dynamic roles of Papua New Guinea's contribution towards a regional security force, and other development pillars that Papua New Guinea needs to inaugurate for its contribution towards regional defence. Several suggestions are made for policy formulation for Papua New Guinea's participation in a regional security force and policy making at a regional level by Pacific island countries.

Literature review of security issues in Pacific island countries

The literature on security issues is very broad regarding other developed and developing countries or regions in the world. But sadly, the literature on security issues in the Pacific Islands Region is very limited. Recent works are predominantly focused on 'economic regionalisation' examining the integration of regional currency, regional banks, a regional economy, and so forth (Filer and Jackson 1989, Filer 1999, Jossey-Bass 2002).

Other scattered literature on security issues in the Pacific consist of a range of articles and Forum papers, which focus on the theme of security measures and which divide the term 'security' into two areas. The first area is 'security issues' (Molloy 2004) in the Pacific region. The second area is 'a regional security force' which is stated in some of the Forum declarations, such as the 1992 Honiara Declaration, the 1997 Aitutaki Declaration, and the 2002 Nasonini Declaration (Forum Secretariat 2005). Each area is marked by a sudden upsurge of interest by a country in regional security concerns and strategic recommendations and policy options for the integration of key government departments for the practical establishment of a regional security force in the Pacific region

Security issues are a growing concern and closely related to governance or political issues. It is argued that security issues require regional and wider cooperation (Molloy 2004). To satisfy the expectations of developed countries, demands are placed on Pacific island countries. Some of the costs to address security issues are paid by outside sources, but those funds could be used for health, education or other more basic needs. There is a danger of security issues drowning out more needy areas of cooperation (Morris 2001).

Security in the South Pacific Region has a particularly broad scope. As Morris (2001) and Kanaparo (2006) observe, few of the island states possess armed forces. For all of them, security comes through resource sustainability, the state of the environment and other 'non traditional' security issues, all of which directly affect their economic viability (Joint Parliamentary Committee 1989). Although security in the South Pacific Region extends well beyond the traditional military or defence paradigms, there is value in confining an analysis of security to purely military dimensions. This is because without a peaceful environment, it is not possible to address the other non-military components of security.

Essentially, peace is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of other security measures. As the South Pacific Forum Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation stated, balanced economic and social development, the primary goal of all the countries of the region, cannot be achieved without the assurance of safety and security (World Bank 2002).

Maclellan (2005) outlines the characteristics of conflict in the South Pacific Region. Security threats in the region are both external and internal; however, the latter tend to dominate. The internal nature of conflict naturally raises difficult and sensitive questions of sovereignty. Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations is pertinent in this regard. It states that all members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations (United Nations Article 2(4), 2001). This makes the second area of security, a regional security force, a critically important component of understanding security in respect to claims of sovereignty.

The internal nature of conflict in the South Pacific Region is not an insurmountable obstacle to the establishment of a regional body to deal with security threats. Forum Secretariat Noel Levi (2000) argued that the Pacific Islands Forum 1997 Biketawa Declaration on Regional Security Cooperation recognised the vulnerability of member countries to threats to their security. Pacific islands are vulnerable because of an absence of defence forces in all but five Pacific states (Jossey-Bass 2002). This in turn makes them amenable to certain types of assistance in quelling internal violence that are beyond their national capacities to contain.

In the past when the South Pacific Region has been faced with a security threat, most states have requested assistance (Otter 2004; Snodgrass 2004), which often has not been forthcoming. When a government requests intervention, this largely removes the United Nation's article 2(4) restrictions on sovereign integrity. Thus it is political rather than legal considerations that tend to hinder the provision of extra-national assistance in meeting security threats (Outram 1985). According to Otter (2004) and Ranmuthugala (2004), internal violence has also been a recurring phenomenon in Vanuatu, where paramilitary police have found it increasingly difficult to contain domestic uprisings. Similarly, the Solomon Islands has quickly degenerated to a crisis point following the June

2000 coup, to the extent that it has now become the first 'collapsed state' in the region. Fiji is also subject to periodic outbursts of internal violence between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, which has become associated with recurrent coups, the most recent in late 2006. New Caledonia has also faced similar challenges to its Melanesian neighbours when the clashes between pro-independence and anti-independence forces emerged, resulting in bloodshed in the mid-1980s (Maclellan 2005). This sporadic and often reactionary violence has the tendency to rapidly destabilise domestic security if not addressed.

As the Pacific Islands Forum 2002 Aitutaki Declaration noted, security challenges can arise with little warning, and the region needs to be able to respond quickly. Notwithstanding the general absence of armed units, violence in the South Pacific Region can escalate to lethal levels, and expand beyond localised pockets. Strong clan and tribal identities in many parts of the South Pacific Region mean that violence often has deep-seated roots, which can result in ongoing conflict (Forum Secretariat 2006). However, despite the intensity that this violence can assume, a reliance on homemade arms and limited supplies of small arms mean that these uprisings are relatively vulnerable to suppression by a well-planned, professional response. It also means that while violence has the potential to spread, if it is contained at an early stage, this spread can be prevented (Otter 2004; Ranmuthugala 2004; Snodgrass 2004).

Otter (2004) and Singirok (2004) have elucidated a number of factors that have the potential to lead to violent internal conflict in the South Pacific Region. Citing decolonisation, indigenous fights and secessionism as major current issues, they also point out that conflicts in the South Pacific Region often 'reflect economic, social, cultural and regional cleavages and rivalries'. This characterisation of violence in the South Pacific Region has implications for the type of response required. Regis (2003), Ratuva (2004) and Otter (2004) have observed that there has been a developing recognition that conflict interventions in the region would be better undertaken by police rather than by the military.

Meeting small-scale, localised rioting and tribal infighting with heavily armed combat soldiers is not only inappropriate, but is also likely to cause a reactionary escalation of the violence. In addition, the World Bank (2001) notes that we should bear in mind that in many situations it may be more fitting to respond to a request for assistance (in the South Pacific Region) with a civilian rather than military capability. Building on what has already been said; this suggests that any 'military' response to violence in the region need not conform to traditional notions of what constitutes a military contingent (Ranmuthugala 2004).

External security threats in the South Pacific Region are minor in comparison to internal threats (Outram 1985). Until recently, internal violence in Papua New Guinea has continued for more than a decade as a result of the Bougainvillean push for independence. If violence is organised (as was the case in Bougainville), it places enormous strain on the Pacific islands affected. As the World Bank (1998) and Steven Ratuva (2004) observe, few island states

have the military or weapons capacity to defend themselves against an invasion by a well-armed, well-trained mercenary group. Beyond the troubles in Bougainville, tribal and criminal violence has repeatedly erupted across greater Papua New Guinea.

National elections recently sparked widespread internal violence and severe miscarriages in the electoral process. And as Jacka (2001), Standish (2003) and Gibbs (2003) have observed, resource projects in other parts of the country, such as the Porgera and Mount Kare mining areas, have been subject to armed attacks, and in the towns lawlessness exists on an unprecedented scale. The type of violence experienced in Papua New Guinea has extended to other parts of the South Pacific Region, with clan and tribal violence and high levels of criminal activity a common feature in several Pacific island countries. Declarations and communiqués of the Pacific Islands Forum make repeated reference to the dangerous levels of criminal activity in the region, and, in 1999, the region's leaders 'noted with concern that ... the security environment had become more fluid', with 'increasing incidents of civil unrest' (Forum Secretariat 1999, p. 9-15; Vulum 2005).

Despite this brief account of the sources and characteristics of violence in the South Pacific Region, recent developments suggest that the types of violence faced could soon change, rapidly altering the ability of many Pacific island governments to cope with this shifting dynamic. As the Pacific Islands Forum 1997 Honiara Declaration noted, 'the scale of criminal activity affecting the region could expand' (Forum Secretariat 1997, p. 6) internally and externally. Ranmuthugala (2004) has observed that East Asia, defined as the region between Myanmar [previously called Burma] and Fiji, is becoming terrorism's next battleground, and is only going to become more dangerous in the near future.

Klare (2004) supported Ranmuthugala's (2004) observation that the promulgation of terrorism by various organisations, and the economic crisis faced by many of these states, makes them nascent nurseries for terrorism. However, what is true of East Asia is also potentially true for most of the South Pacific Region. It is geographically enormous, making effective patrolling (with strained island budgets) almost impossible, thereby offering a secure haven for terrorist training (Klare 2004; Molloy 2004; Meierhenrich 2004). As the Pacific Islands Forum 2001 Communique noted, 'there is clear evidence of serious transnational crime moving into the region and posing serious threats to the sovereignty, security and economic integrity of Forum members (Forum Secretariat 2001, p. 12).

Why is security a concern in the Pacific island countries?

Security is a big topic. At one end of the spectrum it is simply the struggle to avoid subversion of lawful authority internally and externally, to prevent anarchy and cross-border conflict. At the other end, it is the promotion of national well-being through stable and ordered governance leading to increased investment and rising incomes. Most of the Pacific lies across the middle of

such a spectrum. The current view in the media and among commentators is quite negative. The recent Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) strategic assessment said ‘our closest neighbours – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu – are in different ways struggling to survive as functioning nations and societies’. It went on to conclude that, ‘the continuing viability of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu as nation states is now uncertain’ (*The National* 2006, p. 1-2). The term ‘failed state’ is widely used in reference to many of the smaller Pacific island countries.

It is suggested that implications of deteriorating state structures in Melanesia are such that Australia should adopt a more active role – a more interventionist role – to restore the quality of government and promote social and economic development in these countries through strategic approaches to security issues. It is argued that Australia and perhaps New Zealand should help Pacific island nations to form a regional security force to help themselves. These two powerful metropolitan nations should not just passively describe Pacific nations as ‘failed or dysfunctional states’, but they should take an active role and help the Pacific island countries to form a regional security force to minimise security issues facing Pacific island countries. This could also alleviate some of Australian and New Zealand security concerns, as we are all in the Pacific Rim area (Vulum 2005).

Our research sought public awareness of security issues in Pacific island countries. As shown in Table 1, 56 per cent of respondents thought security was good and 44 per cent thought it was not good. This relatively even split possibly reflects a view that it is difficult to generalise, as some areas are very safe and other areas are not.

Table 1. What is your perception/thinking of the current situation of the Pacific island countries’ security issues?

Per cent of responses from general public to the question				
Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Not Good	Not Very Good
31	25	0	25	19

It is our contention that the major threats to Pacific island nations are internal. Of these, problems of law enforcement stand out as one of the major issues. The nature and degree of these problems range across the board, varying from country to country. In Papua New Guinea, violent crime and tribal fighting have become major threats (e.g., see Jacka in press). Unlike Russia, where fraud and other types of white-collar crime have made inroads into the administration, Papua New Guinea faces crime in a ‘raw’ or violent version.

In Port Moresby, a siege mentality has developed due to a feeling of insecurity experienced by both residents and commercial enterprises. Attacks on banks, restaurants, or any commercial institute that will have cash on the premises, have escalated dramatically. Business enterprises cover costs of security

arrangements in the fees they charge for goods and services. Physical security measures have to be established around institutions and guards employed on a 24 hour basis. Further, transport of goods and money becomes a costly and dangerous exercise. At the top end of the scale, unlawful groups have threatened even the parliament itself and some politicians have become dependent on criminal elements for their safety, retention of power, and even 'senior government ministers and top police officers have directly or indirectly been involved in...bank robberies...' (*The National* 2008, June 20, pp. 2-3 & July 21, pp. 1-2).

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) case

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI), also known as *Operation Helpem Fren* (*helpem fren* is Tok Pisin for 'helping a friend'), was created in 2003 in response to a request for international aid by the Governor General of the Solomon Islands. Causes for unrest in the Solomon Islands were due to perceptions that the Solomon Islands' government was corrupt, neglectful of the outer regions of the island group, and focusing most of its resources on Guadalcanal. Small armed militant groups gained a significant following and civil unrest grew. The most significant of these groups was the Malaita Eagle Force, led by Jimmy Rasta (Fullilove 2006; RAMSI Administrator 2006).

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands has been in the Solomon Islands since July 2003. Much of its early work focused on restoring security and law and order, and stabilising government finances. This work continues, but now, there is an increasing amount of work being undertaken in the other areas of RAMSI's mandate – to restore the working of government and to promote economic recovery. However, RAMSI is a partnership between the government and people of the Solomon Islands and the contributing countries of the Pacific region.

- Fourteen countries have contributed human resources to RAMSI: Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Marshall Islands (Fullilove 2006).
- RAMSI currently includes around 250-300 police officers, 120 civilians and a contingent of military personnel from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga (RAMSI Administrator 2006).
- RAMSI personnel are working in every province in Solomon Islands.

The Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands understands that its efforts must also have a strong provincial focus as well as working at the national level. The effects of improved law and order, and of improved government finances, are already being felt in provincial areas. Provincial level assistance is becoming an increasing feature of RAMSI's work.

Since arriving in Solomon Islands on 24 July 2003, RAMSI has had many successes (Forum Administrator 2006). Law and order has been largely restored. Almost 3,600 guns have been surrendered and are now removed from the community. Many of those responsible for deaths and the destruction that spoiled the country in recent years have been arrested. Although six ministers of the highly compromised Kemakeza Government were arrested in RAMSI's first two years, probably the single greatest blow to Solomon Islanders' trust and confidence in RAMSI remains its failure to act on allegations against Sir Allen Kemakeza or any of his key cronies. Many more investigations are underway and the justice system is working again (Ranmuthugala 2004, pp. 31-48). Government finances have been stabilised. Civil servants are being paid on time. Funding for health and education has increased and the economic situation has vastly improved. But there is much hard work yet to be done and many more challenges to meet. It is with the RAMSI experience in mind that we structured our research to explore Papua New Guinea's attitudes toward participation in a regional security force.

The dynamic role of Papua New Guinea's contribution towards a regional security force

Papua New Guinea, apart from Australia and New Zealand, is the largest country in the Pacific in terms of landmass, population and economic impact. Thus, our research initiative explored the role of what Papua New Guinea can do to participate in a regional security force and how the general public, various experts and officials think this can best be achieved.

Table 2. What is your perception/thinking of forming a regional security force in the Pacific for the Pacific island countries?

Per cent of responses from the general public to the question	
Good Idea	Bad Idea
94%	6%

As indicated in Table 2, the overwhelming majority of respondents (94%) from the general public sector were in favour of the formation of a Pacific regional security force.

Table 3. What is your perception/thinking of Papua New Guinea's three disciplinary forces (PNGDF, RPNGC and PNGCIS) participating in the regional security force?

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Defence Force	71	17	4	4	4
CIS	36	36	7	14	7
General Public	31	31	25	6	6
Police Force	65	21	11	1	2

As seen in the results in Table 3, there is strong support from the respondents of the defence force (88%), the police force (86%), correctional institutional services (72%), and the general public (62%) for the disciplinary forces of PNG to participate in any kind of regional security force.

Table 4. A regional security force is good because it will provide security for the Pacific island countries.

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Defence Force	88	0	8	4	0
CIS	50	43	7	0	0
General Public	63	25	6	0	6
Police Force	65	21	11	1	2

The results in Table 4 show strong agreement from the respondents of the correctional institutional services (93%), defence force (88%), the general public (87%) and the police force (86%), that the advantage of a regional security force was that it would provide added security for the Pacific island countries.

Table 5. Pacific island countries do NOT need a regional security force.

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Defence Force	4	0	4	17	75
CIS	7	7	0	36	50
General Public	6	0	6	13	75
Police Force	8	15	7	22	48

In confirmation of results for previous items, the results in Table 5 show very weak agreement with the statement there is no need for a regional security force. This was indicated by the respondents of the defence force (4%), the general public (6%) correctional institutional services (14%), and the police force (23%).

Table 6. Pacific island countries do need a regional security force

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
Defence Force	83	4	0	8	4
CIS	50	43	0	0	7
General Public	63	25	0	6	6
Police Force	75	16	1	3	4

To re-affirm the strength of respondents' points of view, the results in Table 6 show strong agreement about the need of Pacific island countries for a regional security force, i.e. from the respondents of the correctional institutional services (93%), the police force (91%), the general public (88%) and the defence force (87%).

Is a regional security force the most effective way of producing security for Pacific island countries?

Are regional actions more cost-effective than national, bilateral or other arrangements? For some cases it appears to be the case, for example in fisheries research, negotiations and satellite tracking. But in other cases, it appears not to be, for example, it is clear that centralising higher education on one or two institutions had led to disproportionate benefits for the host country of those institutions at the expense of the others. Deeper research is needed on equitable sharing of benefits before regional approaches to the provision of services are accepted.

The significance of a regional security force

There are significant ways of testing whether the regionalisation of Pacific island countries important government departments (immigration, intelligence, foreign affairs, etc), especially military, police and correctional services can significantly add value to any initiative taken by Pacific island countries to form a regional security force.

Military test: Are the military forces of the Pacific island countries effective in ensuring external security? If so, involvement by national governments and/or regional bodies should be significant and maximised.

Police test: Are the police forces in the Pacific island countries providing effective services in terms of internal and external security, and supporting the military force when necessary? If so, involvement by national governments and/or regional bodies should be significant and maximised.

Correctional Institutional Services test: Would the proposed regional initiative of a regional security force maintain the degree of effective sovereignty held by national governments via correctional institutional services? Regional initiatives would shift only the management of security services to a regional security force, not policy-making as well, so correctional services would follow the same road as the police force.

There was strong agreement (86%) amongst disciplinary force respondents that the disciplinary forces would need to recruit additional personnel if a regional security force was formed. The results in Table 7 show percentage agreement for correctional institutional services (92%), the police force (88%), and the defence force (79%).

Table 7. For taking the leading role in the regional security force, the PNG Defence Force, the PNG Correctional Institutional Service and the Royal PNG Constabulary should recruit extra personnel for a Pacific regional security force.

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
CIS	71	21	0	7	0
Defence Force	54	25	13	8	0
Police Force	68	20	9	2	0

Of course there would be significant costs associated with establishing and maintaining a regional security force, and there was an overwhelming level of agreement (93%) amongst disciplinary force respondents that an extra budgetary allowance would be essential to fund operations of a regional security force. The results in Table 8 show percentage agreement for the defence force (96%), correctional institutional services (93%), and the police force (90%).

Table 8. For taking the leading role in the regional security force, the PNG Defence Force, the PNG Correctional Institutional Service and the Royal PNG Constabulary should have an extra budget for a Pacific regional security force.

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Totally Agree	Agree	Satisfactory	Disagree	Totally Disagree
CIS	79	14	0	7	0
Defence Force	83	13	4	0	0
Police Force	78	12	7	2	1

Table 9. What needs to be done for PNG to take a leading role in a Pacific regional security force?

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Continue to maintain this standard	Recruit more personnel	Pump more resource into the forces	Remove politics from PNGDF, PNGCIS, RPNGC	Train more personnel
CIS	7	7	36	29	14
Defence Force	7	8	67	21	4
Police Force	7	9	57	22	5
Average	7%	8%	53.3%	24%	7.7%

As indicated in Table 9, respondents saw adequate resources (53.3%) as the greatest area of need for PNG to take a leading role in a Pacific regional security force. Removing political interference in operations of a regional security force (24%) was seen as a second requirement for PNG's leadership role. Other areas had almost equal ratings: recruitment (8%), training (7.7%) and maintaining current standards (7%). As indicated by the results, there will need to be a substantial effort from the national government in terms of human resources, logistics and funding to fulfill any expectation of Papua New Guinea being involved in a regional security force for Pacific island countries.

Table 10. As a Papua New Guinean citizen, what do you think needs to be done by the government to be part of a Pacific regional security force?

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question					
Respondents	Continue to maintain this standard	Recruit more personnel	Australia, New Zealand & others to control the force	Remove politics from PNGDF, PNGCIS, RPNGC	Train the personnel
CIS	14	7	29	7	43
Defence Force	0	12	50	0	38
Police Force	13	10	47	12	18
Average	9%	9.7%	42%	6.3%	33%

An interesting finding from responses to the item ten was that respondents saw the need for the PNG government to involve Australia and New Zealand in controlling a Pacific regional security force (42%). Ratings for other government action included training personnel (33%), recruitment (9.7%), maintaining current standards (9%) and removing political interference in operations (6.3%).

Summary

This paper, whilst examining the issue of a regional security force, has attempted to shed light on inadequate security measures in the Pacific island countries. Internal security issues include law and order problems, tribal fighting and coups, and external security issues include terrorist attacks, people smuggling, drug smuggling and weapon smuggling. Such issues should prompt governments of the Pacific island countries to take up the added responsibility of helping to minimise escalation of security problems, along with the rest of the world.

From the perspective of internal security measures, an increase in this role is not only influenced by current inadequate government attention (at various levels), but also the local people's inability to involve themselves in economic activities that would enhance their own development. In other words, the inability of government to make its presence felt in much needed areas of the country invariably allows local circumstantial relativities to put pressure on the

local members of parliament to become involved in activities that would bring in more money and development at the community level. The absence of local businesses and minimal cash coming into isolated areas in smaller Pacific island countries through limited migration, have hindered the progress of social and economic change. An initiative like a regional security force could help to reduce internal security issues and enable economic activities, particularly in isolated areas, to prosper. Respondents appeared to value a regional security force for its anticipated technical expertise and financial backing to be able to address internal security problems. These are core factors that hinder the progress of social and economic developments for both Papua New Guinea and the smaller Pacific island countries.

Data from questionnaires and interviews indicate that there is a strong interest across our sampling of individuals for Papua New Guinea's participation in a regional security force. As shown in Table 11, respondents (97%) overwhelmingly considered a regional security force to be a 'good idea'.

Table 11. What is your opinion on the issue of a regional security force?

Per cent of responses from various respondents to the question		
Respondents	Good Idea	Bad Idea
Defence Force	96	4
CIS	100	0
General Public	94	6
Police Force	97	3

While this paper has presented views mainly from personnel in the disciplinary forces, it is unquestionable that their role in maintaining a peaceful and safe environment is necessary for economic and social development. Peace is prerequisite for achieving individual, community, national and regional goals. Hence, a regional security force is seen by many people as being able to fulfil their hopes of having better services and other developments.

Our research was based on several premises and the findings, in one way or another, support the assertions made at the outset of this paper. First, evidence from the two regional operations (RAMSI and ECP) demonstrates that a majority of our survey respondents have parallel expectations of a regional security force to provide security where there is inadequacy in current arrangements by individual governments. It is increasingly apparent that the activities that would be a result of a regional security force would require support by governments of all Pacific island countries in order to provide security officers in any host area. This collaboration, cooperation and neighbourly care is highly desirable for all South Pacific countries.

The findings in this paper illuminate the fact that the four sampled stakeholders – police, correctional services, defence and the general public – strongly favoured the formation of a Pacific regional security force to be formed for the purpose of tackling security issues. There was very little dispute about the

value of a Pacific regional security force to tackle internal and external issues that would at times be beyond the capacity of individual countries. This contribution to a peaceful and safe environment is necessary for harmonious social, political and economic activities.

While our study was one facet of looking at the pragmatic principle of forming a Pacific regional security force in the context of security issues, there is potential for more research to be done. Such research should respond to issues like the following.

How would a regional security force acquire and maintain local consent in order to keep operating in each of the smaller Pacific island countries? Although the consent of governments of smaller Pacific island countries can be explicitly legitimated and contractually enacted, how is local consent from communities cultivated and maintained in order to operate a safe regional security force? The ways and means Papua New Guinea would explore and use to get views and approval from smaller Pacific island countries and Australia and New Zealand might be examined to see the relationships can be effectively created and maintained.

Are forums, meetings, negotiations and workshops held in good faith? To what extent should community consultations occur prior to electing the mode of developments and other benefits to be brought to the communities through a regional security force? The issue of fair representation in meetings to allow for local input might also be interesting to note, that is, who actually determines what type and which projects should be established to address internal and external security issues in the Pacific island countries?

What distinguishes 'best practices' of a regional security force from 'bad practices' and can national and international benchmarks be determined? In the cases of RAMSI and ECP activities, how were benchmarks shaped and maintained in order to ensure sustainability of projects before the departure of RAMSI and ECP from South Pacific countries? What lessons can be learned about security interventions if we allow Australia and possibly New Zealand to take lead in the formation of a regional security force in the Pacific?

Finally, what are the foundations of relationships among Pacific island countries? Of course, each country has the ultimate regulatory power to oversee security activities in their own country, but how would each state have the power to undermine or cooperate with activities of a regional security force?

This paper has identified some immediate issues but there is a plethora of dynamics for a regional security force, which require further research and elaboration. The dissemination of ideas through scholarly research endeavours would not only explain the pragmatic application of a regional security force but also have the potential to offer lessons to further refine and tailor the

application and regulation of a regional security force to best serve the security needs of Pacific island countries, Australia and New Zealand.

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Authors

Peter Balone Kanaparo come from Par village in the Enga Province. He is a tutor in the Human Resource Management Division in the School of Business Administration at the University of Papua New Guinea. He served as a part-time (2003-2005) and full-time (2006-2008) academic staff member for the last five years and continues to do his researches and publications in the fields of human resource management, business management and political science. He has a number of publications in journals such as *Research & Practice in Human Resource Management Journal*, and *Social Pastoral Journal for Melanesia*. Email peterk@upng.ac.pg

Jerry Jacka has been an assistant professor of anthropology at North Carolina State University since 2003. He has conducted sixteen months of ethnographic research in western Enga Province in and around the Porgera valley. He has a number of publications in journals such as *American Anthropologist*, *Oceania*, *Ethnohistory*, and *Anthropology Today*. Email jerry_jacka@ncsu.edu