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Background Paper

MORAL SUPPORT?
AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S
INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THE SECURITY FRAMEWORK	1
<i>Security agreements</i>	2
<i>Defence Cooperation Program</i>	4
THE PNGDF AND INTERNAL SECURITY 1975-1989	6
AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO BOUGAINVILLE	7
<i>Intervention?</i>	8
<i>The "Hands Off" Approach?</i>	12
<i>"Moral" Support</i>	12
ONGOING ASSISTANCE	13
<i>Arms Supply</i>	14
<i>PNGDF Expansion and Training</i>	17
<i>Reviewing the PNGDF's Function</i>	19
<i>Assistance to the Police</i>	24
FUTURE DIRECTIONS	26
CONCLUSION	27

MORAL SUPPORT? AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO
PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS

INTRODUCTION

The gloomy predictions made on Papua New Guinea's independence appeared to have been given the lie by more than a decade of economic prosperity and stable government. By 1989 however the strains of development had begun to tell on the cohesion and stability of Australia's former colony and closest neighbour. The police and military were being stretched beyond their capabilities by a secessionist crisis and rising lawlessness, causing Australian foreign and defence policy makers some concern and compelling them to come to terms with the full implications of Australia's role as Papua New Guinea's "primary security partner".

This paper does not purport to be a comprehensive discussion of the many problems facing Papua New Guinea as these have been extensively detailed elsewhere.¹ Neither is it an exhaustive history of the Australia - Papua New Guinea defence relationship as this too has already been attempted.² The purpose of this paper is rather to examine the interaction between these two areas - between Papua New Guinea's internal problems and Australian defence policy. It gives an overview of the dynamic from Australia's perspective, with particular emphasis on the pivotal Bougainville crisis, and highlights dilemmas old and new facing Australian foreign and defence policy makers.

THE SECURITY FRAMEWORK

After Papua New Guinea's independence in 1975 Australia retained an interest in the security of its former colony and closest neighbour. This unusual combination of

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1. See for example Sean Dorney, Papua New Guinea: People, Politics and History Since 1975, Random House, Australia, 1990, and David Hegarty, Papua New Guinea at the Political Crossroads? Working Paper No.177, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, A.N.U, Canberra, 1989.
 2. A recent example is Katherine Bullock, Australia and Papua New Guinea: Foreign and Defence Relations Since 1975, Working Paper No.277, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, A.N.U, Canberra, 1991.

historic and geographic circumstances has, however, made Australian policy on PNG particularly difficult to steer. The colonial relationship between the two countries left Australia with a sense of responsibility for PNG's welfare that was part benevolence and part concern for its own reputation. At the same time, however, Australia wanted to avoid any suggestion of paternalism - partly because this would be offensive to PNG and partly because it might be interpreted in such a way as to unreasonably increase Australia's obligations. The tension between these opposing imperatives is readily apparent when contrasting the two facets of Australia-PNG defence relations: security agreements and defence cooperation.

Security Agreements

Australia entered into a number of interim defence arrangements with the newly independent PNG in 1975 which were formalised in 1977. These were a *Status of Forces Agreement* making legal provision for the status of personnel when in each other's country; a *Consultative Agreement* providing for prior discussion on the use of Australian loan personnel in politically sensitive situations; a *Supply Support Agreement* allowing PNG access to the ADF logistic system; and a *Statement of Understanding* acknowledging the need for continuing consultation on matters of mutual concern to the defence forces of both countries.

What the *Statement of Understanding* did not contain was any suggestion of an Australian commitment to the defence of PNG.³ Three explanations may be offered for this omission. The first is that Australia probably wanted to avoid putting any strain on the triangular relationship between Australia, PNG and Indonesia. A security treaty might have caused offence in Jakarta, removed incentives for PNG to proceed cautiously in its disputes with Indonesia, and drawn Australia into any future conflict between its two neighbours. Secondly, it is likely that Australia was anxious to avoid giving such a formal reminder of PNG's continuing dependence. Finally, Australia was well aware of the potential for domestic disorder in PNG. In 1970 unrest on the Gazelle Peninsula had reached such proportions that the Australian Government had made contingency plans for the use of military force.⁴ Fortunately this proved unnecessary but the experience probably increased Australia's reluctance to conclude any arrangement with an independent PNG that could be interpreted as a commitment to its internal security.

3. Joint Statement by Prime Ministers on the Defence Relationship Between Papua New Guinea and Australia, Document tabled before Parliament 23 February 1977, Hansard, Representatives, p.345.

4. Dorney, p.187.

Canberra was to remain reluctant to agree to a more concrete mutual security arrangement for another decade. Then, in 1987, two distinct developments in regional international relations led to a reappraisal. Firstly, bilateral relations between PNG and Indonesia improved, reducing the risk of conflict. Secondly, and more importantly, PNG's security concerns took on new significance in light of Australia's changing strategic perceptions.⁵

The 1986 *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities* and the *Defence White Paper* of the following year articulated a redirection of Australian defence policy, away from Forward Defence and towards Defence Self Reliance (or Defence in Depth), a process that had been in train since the early 1970s. Rather than matching its defence capabilities to the force structures of powerful allies the ADF would focus primarily on the defence of Australia and its immediate environs or area of direct military interest.

The 1987 White Paper placed PNG well within this area, according it particular strategic importance because of its geographic proximity to Australia's northeastern coast and sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and its position as part of the northern archipelagic screen through (or from) which any attack on Australia was, and still is, considered most likely to come. As a corollary Australia would become more vulnerable should a hostile power gain lodgement in or control over PNG.⁶ Mention was also made in the White Paper of Australia's interest in PNG's relations with its neighbour, Indonesia, the most populous and militarily capable country in the archipelagic screen.

In light of this assessment and Australia's existing security arrangements with countries less strategically important than PNG⁷, Defence Minister Kim Beazley considered that Australia should grant PNG's request for a stronger defence commitment than that contained in the *Statement of Understanding*. Foreign Minister Bill Hayden favoured a more cautious approach however, his particular concern apparently being that a firm security commitment might encourage future governments in Port Moresby in a more reckless border policy. The compromise which emerged was contained in the defence section of the *Joint Declaration of Principles* which required the governments of both

5. Norman MacQueen, "New Directions for Papua New Guinea's Foreign Policy", *Pacific Review*, Vol.4 No.2 1991, p.165.

6. *The Defence of Australia 1987*, Presented to Parliament by the Minister for Defence, the Hon Kim C. Beazley, M.P, March 1987, p.19.

7. This was a reference to the *Five Power Defence Arrangement* (FPDA) including Australia, Singapore and Malaysia. See David Hegarty, "Links With Australia Mature as Both Nations Seek Cooperation", *Australian Financial Review*, 14 September 1989, p.7.

countries to consult in the event of an external attack on the sovereignty of either.. "for the purpose of each Government deciding what measures should be taken, jointly or separately, in relation to that attack". While this was not a concrete promise of support it was politically and psychologically reassuring to PNG.⁸

As both the 1987 documents - Australia's *Defence White Paper* and the *Joint Declaration* - make clear, the Australia-PNG security relationship was framed in terms of mutual vulnerability to external threat. No mention was made in either of the internal security dimension in Papua New Guinea. In part this can be explained by Australia's continuing concern about the potential for domestic violence in PNG and its determination not to become directly committed to its resolution.⁹ Australian foreign and defence policy makers, increasingly concerned about domestic political instability in neighbouring territories like Fiji and Vanuatu, were beginning to enunciate justifications for intervention¹⁰ but they preferred such a course of action to remain a matter of choice and not compulsion. Moreover, from Australia's point of view it was primarily PNG's external security that was seen as impinging on Australia's own security. From Australia's strategic perspective, the chief significance of domestic instability in the region was the potential it created for hostile external interference. Defence assistance was largely aimed not at damping down the instability but at preventing any such opportunism.

Defence Cooperation Program

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Pacific Island Regiment (PIR) of the pre-independence Territory of Papua New Guinea were integrated into the Australian Defence Force (ADF); supplied, maintained and trained largely from Australia and commanded by Australian senior officers. The defence force inherited at independence was meaningful in the framework of the Australian Defence Force during that period but militarily unbalanced, expensive and non-viable as a separate force. It was basically a force-in-being, not a force tailored to PNG's specific security requirements.¹¹

8. Ibid.

9. Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s, Melbourne University Press, 1991, p.170.

10. Greg Fry, "A South Pacific Peacekeeping Force?" in Hugh Smith ed, Australia and Peacekeeping, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1990, p.121.

11. Colonel Colin East, "PNGDF: Colonial Legacy or Independent Force?" Pacific Defence Reporter, November 1985.

Since 1975 Australia has provided funding and training for the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) under the aegis of the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP). Australia provided PNG with \$77.8 million in its first year of independence, \$70.0 million of which was to "facilitate the purchase of Australia's defence assets". From FY 1976/77 to FY 1985/86 Australia provided PNG with between \$11 and \$19 million in DCP funding annually. PNG's share of funding declined relatively during this period as the DCP was broadened to include the South West Pacific island states and the ASEAN nations. However it remained the largest single country recipient of DCP funds, always accounting for at least 35% of total DCP outlay.¹²

Much of the DCP funding went towards the payment of advisers to the PNGDF in the early years. Gradually, however, the number of Australian loan and exchange personnel was reduced and funding redirected to improving PNG's maritime and border surveillance capabilities, upgrading its defence infrastructure, and providing specialist training for PNGDF personnel in Australia. Civil engineering assistance remained constant throughout this period.

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force now consists of land, sea and air elements; the two PIR infantry battalions, an engineering battalion, a signals squadron, an explosives ordinance and disposal unit and a preventative medical platoon; a patrol boat squadron and a landing craft squadron; a small air transport squadron and four *Iroquois* helicopters received from Australia in 1989. PNGDF strength has varied between approximately 3,500 and 3,000 between 1975 and 1990.

The cost of maintaining the expensive, relatively technology intensive equipment inherited from Australia and that the PNGDF came to insist was necessary for its external defence role¹³ made PNG both heavily reliant on Australia for defence funding and vulnerable to Australian leverage. Some thirty per cent of PNG's defence budget was provided annually by Australia until 1989.¹⁴ Not surprisingly politicians and soldiers in PNG viewed this relationship with some ambivalence which manifested itself in alternate requests for greater assistance and less interference.

12. Bullock, pp.1-3.

13. In 1985 PNG's Defence Minister criticised patrol boats offered by Australia because they did not have a sufficient military capability, arguing that PNG's "soldiers need a sense of pride. They are trained soldiers and their morale would be high if they are on proper navy boats". Mark Baker, "PNG Rejects Patrol Boats", *The Age*, September 7 1985.

14. Dorney, p.189.

THE PNGDF AND INTERNAL SECURITY 1975-1989

Although the PNG Government did not approve its first defence policy until 1982 the functions of the new PNGDF were decided on before independence. PNG's Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC) was sceptical of the need for an indigenous defence capability and thought internal security a higher priority but, for reasons that will be discussed later, primary responsibility for the latter was assigned to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC).¹⁵ The PNGDF's priorities would be defence against external attack, assistance in economic development and promotion of national unity; and assistance to the police as *a last resort* in maintaining public order and security internally.¹⁶

The PNGDF continued to assign priority to external defence even when PNG's own 1988 Defence White Paper openly acknowledged that the country's security was most threatened by "internal instability situations such as secessionist movements, tribal fighting and insurgencies".¹⁷

PNG's internal stability was indeed under stress from a whole raft of economic, social and political problems including slow economic growth, industrial and landownership disputes, urban drift, unemployment and soaring crime rates, coalition tensions in parliament, bureaucratic inertia, corruption and restlessness within the military.¹⁸

Worse was to come. On May 15th 1989 repeated attacks by militant landowners finally shut down the giant, part-Australian owned, Panguna Copper Mine on the North Solomons Province island of Bougainville. The Bougainville Revolutionary Army's (BRA) initial claims for closure of the mine and compensation for environmental destruction and pollution grew into demands for independence from Papua New Guinea.

When the PNG government's peace initiatives and a State of Emergency enforced by RPNGC riot police failed to resolve the crisis, Prime Minister Namaliu declared a military campaign the only answer. *Operation Footloose* was launched and the defence force ordered in "to rid the island of terrorist scourge, restore peace and reopen Bougainville". The operation was a failure. The PNGDF was ill equipped to

15. Yaw Saffu, Military Roles and Relations in Papua New Guinea, Department of Political and Social Change, A.N.U, Canberra, 1989. pp.7-8.

16. "Separate Police, Defence Forces", Papua New Guinea News Release, 26 April 1974.

17. Papua New Guinea Defence White Paper 1988, Department of Defence, Murray Barracks, p.5.

18. Hegarty, SDSC Working Paper No.177, 1989.

combat a determined BRA and resorted, like the RPNGC before it, to indiscriminate violence, alienating the civilian population and compounding its own operational difficulties. Commercial life on the island ground to a halt as hostilities worsened and just six weeks after declaring the military option the only one, the government announced a ceasefire with the acknowledgment that "any lasting solution will need much more than just a military solution."¹⁹

Several organisational factors contributed to the PNGDF's poor performance on Bougainville. For the first few months of the crisis a power struggle between PNGDF commanders led to confused lines of communication and logistical difficulties.²⁰ The top heavy command structure of the PNGDF also meant that no more than three companies of 400 men could be committed to the island, leaving only 30 soldiers in Kiunga and 30 in Vanimo for border duties.²¹ Officers had insufficient experience of intelligence collection and utilisation and of planning, developing and executing major campaigns. Middle ranks had difficulty relating to each other in the field and junior officers' leadership skills were poor, contributing to a breakdown in the implementation of orders and indiscipline at soldier level. And compounding all these problems was confusion within the PNGDF about the government's objectives and intentions; the outcome of differing perspectives and poor communications.²²

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO BOUGAINVILLE

Bougainville was the first major test of the Australia - PNG security relationship and it placed Australia in something of a dilemma. Mindful of just such an eventuality, Australia had always avoided signing a binding and inclusive defence treaty and was thus free of any formal obligation to assist in combating the BRA. However, the

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19. "Political Chronicle - Papua New Guinea", The Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol 36 No 2, 1990, p.346.
 20. The Bougainville operation was controlled from Port Moresby. On-site command was initially given to Colonel Lima Dataona - an unpopular choice with the Defence Force hierarchy. Dataona found himself bypassed in the chain of command and his authority undermined to such an extent that he had to rely on civilians for transport. When his rival for command of the PNGDF Brigadier General Rochus Lokinap was reinstated he immediately and successfully demanded the replacement of Dataona by Colonel Leo Nuia. Dorney, pp.147-148.
 21. Peter Hastings. "PNG: the Crisis that \$4 Million Cannot Solve", The Sydney Morning Herald, January 18 1990, p.18.
 22. Defence Department evidence to Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JCFADT), Foreign Affairs Subcommittee: Australia's Relations With Papua New Guinea, Hansard, October 22 1990, p.721-758.

defence establishments in the two countries had maintained a very close relationship since independence. While this relationship was based on a perception of mutual vulnerability to external threat, it was sufficiently symbiotic that Australian defence policy makers considered themselves under de facto obligation to assist the PNGDF when its focus shifted from external defence to internal security, a conviction strengthened by the PNGDF's apparent inability to cope alone. The way in which Australia reconciled these two positions and attempted to resolve other dilemmas becomes apparent in the following discussion of the different policy options considered -direct military action, indirect assistance to the PNGDF and complete non-involvement.

Intervention?

As is frequently noted those considering intervention in the affairs of another state must always take as their starting point the "presumption that intervention in general is wrong." Such is the weight ethical and legal arguments against intervention carry in the international community that such a course of action requires very strong justification. Australia had begun to enunciate such justifications in 1987²³ when official announcement of its newly self reliant Defence in Depth policy coincided with the first signs of domestic instability in the region.

The most comprehensive discussion of these principles for possible Australian intervention is contained in Foreign Minister Senator Gareth Evans' 1989 ministerial statement on regional security. Evans pointed out that Australia had the military capability to undertake such regional "peacetime" initiatives as the protection or rescue of Australian citizens abroad or the provision of support for a legitimate government in maintaining internal security. The Minister also stated that the use of military force might be appropriate in "extreme and unusual" circumstances.

In what looked remarkably like the American Weinberger Doctrine of 1984, Evans went on to suggest cumulative criteria for military intervention. These were the agreement of the recognised domestic authorities; a manifestly direct threat to major Australian security interests; a finite time frame for the military operation; a clear and achievable operational objective; and consultation with, and if possible, the cooperation and participation of, other regional states.²⁴

23. Fry, pp.121-122.

24. Australia's Regional Security, Ministerial Statement by Senator the Hon. Gareth Evans Q.C, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, December 1989, p.22.

These criteria were clearly not met in the case of Bougainville. Taking them in reverse order, it is unlikely that PNG's Melanesian neighbours would have been keen to commit their paramilitary or police to a joint force in such a politically sensitive situation and Australia would have been wary of involving PNG's western neighbour, Indonesia, so closely in the resolution of PNG's problems.

Nor was there a clear and achievable operational objective with a finite time frame. Australia may prefer the territorial status quo in PNG but there are problems with translating such a preference into operational terms. Eliminating the BRA may have provided a short term solution but even that would not have been easy, given the unfamiliar and difficult terrain on Bougainville and the rebels' ability to blend in with the population at large. If military intervention had actually succeeded in quelling the BRA it would only have decapitated a problem with deep and complex roots. Moreover, as the PNG operations on the island demonstrated, counterinsurgency (COIN) techniques tend to increase civilian alienation. The ADF could have found itself drawn into a long term, costly and manpower intensive commitment.

Policy makers had to consider domestic attitudes to direct Australian military involvement and any such action would have evoked comparisons with Vietnam, being ethically questionable as well as being potentially costly in terms of Australian lives. Regional attitudes also had to be considered, especially in the South West Pacific where Australia is potentially vulnerable to charges of neo-colonialism and cultural insensitivity.

The costs of intervention would have been especially difficult to justify when no critical link existed between the Bougainville crisis and Australia's security, especially as the BRA did not have, nor was it likely to gain, the assistance of any external power.

In the interval between the tabling of the 1987 Defence White Paper and the outbreak of the Bougainville crisis, Australia's concern that regional instability might create the conditions for unwelcome outside interference had abated somewhat. Secessionist movements like the BRA have lost much of their ability to attract external support and funding as the superpowers have wound back competition for influence in the Third World. BRA leader Sam Kauona's threat to seek assistance from communist regimes unless Bougainville's independence was recognised as a hollow one²⁵ and elicited none of the concern that it would have in 1987. There was equally little likelihood of the BRA attracting support from neighbouring countries who would have nothing to gain and much to lose from encouraging regional instability.

25. "Political Chronicle - Papua New Guinea", 1990, p.347.

It is also clear that no regional power has the intention and capability to intervene unilaterally in PNG at present. Even Indonesia, PNG's closest neighbour, with a not insignificant military capability and some experience of attempting absorption by force would be unlikely to do so. The fact that the Indonesian Defence Minister, General Benny Murdani, urged Australia to play a "bigger role" on Bougainville²⁶ was not taken as a warning that Indonesia might act if Canberra did not. Indonesia's security concerns now lie to the north and Jakarta would be reluctant to deliberately jeopardise the relationship with Australia on its southern flank. The established regional principles of ASEAN, and the concern of other non-aligned states, amongst which Indonesia is attempting to build its credentials, would probably also hinder any inclination to interfere.²⁷

Moreover, while Indonesia has an interest in the maintenance of stability and cohesion in PNG, because of its desire to contain the West Irianese secessionist movement, the Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) and keep its own domains intact, it would probably be reluctant to intervene in PNG and have to face the much stronger national sentiment than exists in Irian Jaya or East Timor.²⁸ This would only add to the considerable logistic and operational difficulties involved in intervening in a country with such formidable terrain and minimal infrastructure.²⁹

Not only is the probability of external interference now recognised as low but the risk to Australia's security from hostile lodgement in PNG has also been reassessed. Any aggressor would after all have to overcome the twin hurdles of distance between PNG and most potential targets in Australia and the ADF's formidable air and naval interdiction capability.³⁰

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26. Peter Coster, "Indonesia Urges Canberra to Intervene in Bougainville Rebellion", The Australian, July 26 1990, pp.1-2.
 27. Norman MacQueen, "Papua New Guinea's Relations With Indonesia and Australia: Diplomacy on the Asia-Pacific Interface", Asian Survey, Vol XXIX No 5, 1989, p.535.
 28. Bill Standish, "Bougainville: Undermining the State in Papua New Guinea (Part Two)", Pacific Research, February 1990, p.10.
 29. Ross Babbage, The Dilemmas of Papua New Guinea (PNG) Contingencies in Australian Defence Planning, Working Paper No 128, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, A.N.U, Canberra, 1987, pp.16-17.
 30. Stewart Woodman and David Horner, "Land Forces in the Defence of Australia", in Reshaping the Australian Army: Challenges for the 1990s, Canberra Paper No.77, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, A.N.U, Canberra, 1991, p.101.

The first and most important of Senator Evans' criteria was that the recognised domestic authorities should agree to Australian military involvement and PNG did not ask Australia to play an active role in resolving the crisis. An RAAF Hercules was requested to transport troops to and from Bougainville during the early stages of the fighting but available evidence suggests that no more direct involvement was sought. In the absence of a request for direct assistance, Australian intervention would be highly unlikely.

The constraints on Australian involvement in the Bougainville crisis were a reminder of just how limited a military role Australia could be expected to play in regional internal security. PNG is Australia's most strategically important neighbour in the South West Pacific, yet even in PNG, according to the Australian Prime Minister, the time is "long past when Australian forces could act in an internal security role...except perhaps in the most extraordinary, agreed and limited of circumstances." Such circumstances, he added, related specifically to the rescue of Australians with PNG government approval.³¹

Extricating foreign nationals from PNG in the event of widespread violence and disorder would be far from straightforward. Over 10,000 Australian expatriates are scattered throughout the country, many of them in remote and inaccessible locations. Evacuation from a limited area such as Bougainville is more feasible, however, and contingency plans were made for such an eventuality in late January 1990, following the wounding of a second Australian on the island. The Lavarack based 2/4 Battalion RAR of the Operational Deployment Force (ODF) was put on alert and the HMAS Jervis Bay, recalled from a goodwill visit to Auckland, was deployed to Queensland along with a landing ship, destroyer escort, guided missile frigate and several Hercules aircraft.³² In the event civil transport proved adequate to the task, obviating the need for Australian military action. This may not always be possible, however, and should the need arise Australia would at least attempt evacuation of its nationals from PNG.

Woodman and Horner suggest that Australian policy makers would be extremely reluctant to send in troops under any other circumstances, listing four reasons. First, there would be operational difficulties in deploying a large force in aid of a civil power in an unfamiliar environment. Second, Australia could find itself committed to a long term military presence. Third, if intervention were seen as bolstering a particular constituency in PNG Australia's long term strategic access could be jeopardised.

31. Roy Eccleston, "Hawke Tells PNG to Stand on Own Feet", The Australian, September 4 1990, p.3.

32. "Navy Waits For Orders to Sail to Bougainville", Townsville Bulletin, January 31 1990, p.3.

Fourth, planners would have to consider the impact on the ADF's reputation, both domestically and within the region, should it become too closely associated with the PNGDF's rather controversial methods.³³

The "Hands Off" Approach?

Although there were compelling reasons to avoid direct Australian military involvement in the fighting on Bougainville, complete non-involvement was never a serious option. Concern remained about the possible ripple effect on regional stability of a successful BRA bid for secession and consequently about the PNGDF's counterinsurgency capabilities. The poor performance of the PNGDF also reflected badly on Australia as its principal foreign trainer and supplier. If Australia had adopted a "hands off" approach and denied all PNG's requests for assistance it would have remained vulnerable to criticism over the PNGDF's performance but lost its ability to exercise any influence over events on Bougainville. The PNGDF's operational capability would decline even further - at least in the short term - and along with it military discipline. Moreover, while the defence section in the *Joint Declaration of Principles* related only to external security, the conclusion reached in Canberra was that Australia had an obligation to support the PNGDF. To ignore that obligation completely would have been to undermine Australia's credibility as a security partner both in PNG and in the wider region.³⁴

"Moral" Support?

To overcome this policy dilemma, Australia sought indirect means of providing support. *Iroquois* helicopters, offered tentatively in 1988 for border surveillance, were transferred in late 1989 to assist PNGDF operations on Bougainville. A Declaration was made under the *Crimes (Foreign Incursions and Recruitment) Act* to allow PNG to recruit Australian citizens as helicopter pilots³⁵; small arms and ammunition were

33. Woodman and Horner, pp.103-104.

34. "PNG Questions Australia's Worth as Ally", *Australian Financial Review*, 13 July 1989, p.12.

35. *The Crimes (Foreign Incursions and Recruitment) Act 1978* makes illegal the recruitment in Australia of persons to serve in any capacity in or with an armed force in a foreign state but does allow for exemption by Ministerial declaration should such recruitment be in Australia's defence or foreign policy interests. The 1989 Declaration states that "it is in the interests of the defence of Australia to permit the recruitment in Australia by the Government of the independent state of Papua New Guinea or its contractors or agents, of persons to serve in or with the Papua New
(continued...)

discounted by 50%; Special Air Service Personnel (SAS) instructors were sent to train reconnaissance troops; and an aerial survey of Bougainville was commissioned.³⁶

In addition to providing this emergency package, Australian policy makers felt a longer term commitment... "not to solving PNG's problems but building its capacity to do so for itself".³⁷ Australia had to carefully assess just what assistance and advice it gave to this end and not simply because curing one ill could create another with less remediable effects. The *Iroquois* deal illustrated just how blurred the distinction between being actively involved and providing support could become. During operations on Bougainville the helicopters were the property of PNG and flown by civilian pilots under contract to the PNG government. However, Australia not only paid for the helicopters and provided some, if not all, of the weaponry employed on them but facilitated the recruitment of Australian citizens as pilots, (reportedly also paid with an Australian grant³⁸), and provided ADF loan personnel who advised on the "safety and security" of PNGDF air assets during the Bougainville operation. Even when the symbiosis is less overt, Defence Department officials admit that "Australia's extensive involvement with the PNGDF means we are inextricably linked with any PNGDF operation"³⁹ When DCP funding support for the PNGDF swelled to some \$38 million in FY 1989-90 and then to \$52 million in FY 1990-91 it constituted over forty per cent of PNG's defence budget.⁴⁰ Even at "normal" levels Australian funding is critical. The Australian Government could be held partly responsible by the international community and the domestic electorate if the internal security situation deteriorated further or human rights abuses by the PNGDF continued.

ONGOING ASSISTANCE

The assistance decided on consisted of continued logistical access, funding and training to improve the PNGDF's capabilities, increased support for the RPNGC, and

35.(...continued)

Guinea Defence Force in any capacity for the purpose of facilitating the use of 4 *Iroquois* helicopters supplied to that government by the Australian Government..." Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No.S 253, 24 July 1989

36. Roy Eccleston, "Defence HQ Wanted PNG Role", The Australian, July 23 1990, PP.1-2.

37. Eccleston, September 4 1990.

38. Bullock, 1991, p.15.

39. Eccleston, July 23 1990.

40. Defence Department evidence to JCFADT, Hansard, November 20, 1990, p.31.

advice on the roles of two forces. Most of these measures carry some degree of risk and merit some examination.

Arms Supply

PNG acquires arms from Australia in three ways. They are received free or heavily discounted under the Defence Cooperation Program; accessed through the ADF's logistic supply system in accordance with the 1977 agreement; or purchased from private sector defence manufacturers. Since PNG's independence equipment ranging from patrol boats and *NOMAD* aircraft to small arms and ammunition has been transferred, attracting little criticism. This changed during the Bougainville crisis when allegations surfaced of PNGDF human rights abuses. Of particular concern were reports, later confirmed, that the *Iroquois* transferred under the DCP had been used to strafe villages and dump bodies at sea.⁴¹

It has long been declaratory Australian government policy to deny permission for the export of military equipment to regions of instability or governments which could be expected to use such equipment against their own people. However, these restrictions applied to sales by industry, not the sale, transfer, or disposal of military equipment by the Australian Commonwealth. Moreover, their application to private sector arms export applications was rather flexible in view of Australia's countervailing interest in boosting defence self reliance by encouraging domestic arms manufacturers. Mounting criticism has recently impelled the government to announce the extension of restrictive guidelines to Defence Cooperation arms transfers and government disposals of surplus or obsolete military equipment and to promise more stringent arms export controls across the board.⁴²

PNG now qualifies both as a region of instability and as a country in which Australian supplied arms might well be used for "domestic order" purposes. Yet Australia's declaratory policy on arms exports to PNG has gone against the general trend, despite public outcry over the misuse of the *Iroquois*. Senator Ray announced in June 1991 that, while the transfer of major pieces of military equipment would continue to be conditional, Australia would lift restrictions on the use of items sent to PNG through normal supply channels.

41. Transcript of "Blood on the Bougainvillea", Four Corners, ABC Television, June 24 1991.

42. The evolution of defence export policy is discussed in a June 1991 Parliamentary Research Service Defence Group Background Paper by Niki Raath, Australia's Arms Exports: Prospects and Problems.

There are, of course, strategic and foreign policy arguments for exempting PNG from standard arms export guidelines. It is apparently believed that Australia's interest in the maintenance of cohesion in PNG is furthered by provision of arms to the central authorities. And, while PNG could, and does, acquire arms from other sources to this end, Australia would not want to lose such influence and leverage as its present role as PNG's largest arms supplier allows. Tightening restrictions on supply and increasing end use controls would undermine this position by lessening Australia's attractiveness as a dependable source of supply. Moreover, Australia's official logistics agreement with PNG predates changes to the arms export policy and could not easily be revoked without undermining Australia's credibility.

It is nevertheless unlikely that Senator Ray's statement signals any substantial relaxation of restrictions on the supply of arms to PNG. The Minister's statement was made in response to the comment by PNG Defence Minister Benais Sabumei that PNG got "the distinct impression that it still was not treated as an independent nation" by Australia.⁴³ Australia's status as both neighbour and former colonial power has made it unusually vulnerable to charges of neo-colonialism in its dealings with PNG and the Senator would have been anxious to assure his counterpart that Australia considered the relationship one of sovereign equality. Senator Ray's apparent commitment to the lifting of restrictions on the supply of minor items under the logistic support agreement should be viewed within this context.

Australia has never attached end use conditions to PNG's employment of defence equipment purchased under supply support arrangements. Since 1975 these arrangements have included a clause providing that "items of Australian manufacture sold to Papua New Guinea...may be employed without let or hindrance from Australia."⁴⁴ What Australia has been able to do, and is likely to continue to do, is to reserve the right to refuse non routine requests. Arms and ammunition have traditionally been provided for normal training needs with anything surplus to training requirements considered on a case by case basis, weighed against a range of factors including PNGDF or police requirements, contingency levels and armoury security.⁴⁵ While Australia may move to ease the flow of standard small arms and ammunition for non training needs, constraints are likely to remain on "inappropriate" items. Australian policy makers are, after all, well aware that an unfettered flow of arms to PNG could

43. "No More Constraints on Arms to PNG: Ray", The Canberra Times, May 4 1991, p.3.

44. Interim Arrangement for the Supply Support of the New Guinea Department of Defence by The Department of Defence, tabled in House of Representatives 9 October 1975.

45. Defence Department evidence to JCFADT, Hansard, October 22 1990, pp.747-751.

have serious strategic, foreign policy and domestic political costs. The problem lies in determining which items are inappropriate i.e. surplus to "legitimate defence needs" and likely to cause unnecessary civilian suffering. While Australia did deny some of PNG's requests during the Bougainville crisis,⁴⁶ helicopters apparently supplied by Australia for transport and surveillance were used to strafe villages. Among the weapons used for this purpose were submachine guns and M203 grenade launchers, probably also supplied by Australia.⁴⁷

DFAT and Defence apparently disagreed on the issue of end use controls with Mr Beazley reportedly considering them unnecessary and Senator Evans in favour of restricting use of the *Iroquois*. Unrestricted provision of the helicopters, would, according to the Senator, raise "quite complex and delicate policy considerations, not least the fact that there are up to 2000 Australians still there on Bougainville"⁴⁸ It is difficult to ascertain which viewpoint prevailed. In May 1990 the Australian Prime Minister said that "the only condition that we, properly, imposed in those circumstances was that no Australian defence personnel would be used in the operation of those helicopters".⁴⁹ Defence Department officials claimed another condition was placed on the supply of the *Iroquois*, namely that they not be employed as gunships.

It is also difficult to establish whether this latter condition (if in fact applied) was breached. The difficulty lies, not only in ascertaining whether helicopters were used as weapons platforms for attacks against civilians, but in establishing whether or not such attacks were permissible under the conditions of the supply arrangement. The Defence Department's claimed that this problem had arisen because, while the condition was "quite specific", it "did not seek to address all of the theoretical possibilities in an exhaustive way".⁵⁰

These equivocations are surface indicators of a delicate balancing act between competing foreign policy, security, and domestic political concerns. Conditions on the

46. Ibid.

47. Colonel Nuia admitted that submachine guns and M203s were fired from the *Iroquois* on the Four Corners program referred to in footnote 34. Defence Department officials acknowledge supplying F1 submachine guns and receiving requests for grenades "of various types" during the Bougainville crisis.(previous footnote reference). M203s are included in the ADF's weapons inventory. Ross Gillett ed. Australia's Armed Forces, Nautical Press, Sydney, 1981, p.220.

48. Roy Eccleston, "Evans May Retreat on Choppers for PNG", The Australian, June 29 1989.

49. House of Representatives, Hansard, May 9 1990, p.114.

50. Defence Department evidence to JCFADT, Hansard, October 22 1990, p.744.

transfer of the *Iroquois* might do something to protect Bougainvilleans against PNGDF excesses, the Australian Government against domestic political criticism, and Australian nationals on Bougainville against retribution. Overly stringent conditions could, however, restrict PNGDF operations and offend the PNG Government as neo-colonial and interfering. They would also allow for strict interpretation and might place Australia in the invidious position of publicly determining adherence by PNG. Official criticism by Australia of a deliberate breach would, again, put some strain on relations with PNG.

It is worth mentioning Australian intelligence collecting activities in this context. It has recently been confirmed that Australia's Defence Signals Directorate (DSD) monitored PNGDF radio transmissions on Bougainville throughout the crisis.⁵¹ While the intelligence gained may have been useful in formulating long-term Australian policy, there were obvious foreign policy and domestic political constraints on making a more immediate response. If the Australian Government had demonstrated detailed knowledge of operations on Bougainville the intelligence operation would have been compromised and relations with PNG damaged. Equivocation on the issue of human rights abuses would also have been more difficult, and pressure would probably have mounted for a reduction in support for the PNGDF.

PNGDF Expansion and Training

A training assistance team was dispatched to PNG to assist in the "fast track" formation of a fourth PNGDF rifle company and in bringing the remaining companies up to strength. Further expansion is unlikely, especially in view of the increasing budgetary constraints facing PNG (and Australia for that matter). As the Bougainville crisis demonstrated all too clearly the PNGDF has been less hampered in the execution of its duties by lack of numbers than by organisational and operational deficiencies. Ongoing training is being provided in an effort to remedy these.

The provision of advisers, training instructors and technical specialists is not without its problems. Concerned at the prospect of ADF personnel becoming entangled in border disputes between PNG and Indonesia, Australia has long insisted on consultation on the use of its loan and exchange personnel in "politically sensitive"

51. Transcript of "Special Report on the Intelligence-Gathering Capabilities of Australia's Defence Signals Directorate, Particularly in Relation to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea", *Dateline*, SBS Television, 22 November 1991.

situations.⁵² The *Consultative Agreement* was originally designed with such external defence contingencies in mind but the definition of a politically sensitive situation was sufficiently vague to allow for consultation in internal security crises. This made it possible for Australia to limit the involvement of ADF personnel in the PNGDF's Bougainville operation.⁵³

Five members of the ADF on loan or exchange to the PNGDF, including the Director of Air Operations, did nevertheless visit Bougainville during the crisis.⁵⁴ While their duties were apparently confined to the provision of technical advice, their presence and contribution, albeit indirect, to the PNGDF's campaign fuelled allegations of Australian complicity in human rights abuses.⁵⁵

Restricting the involvement of ADF personnel in "politically sensitive" operations may reduce this risk; it is unlikely, however, to remove it entirely. Australia has assumed much of the responsibility for enlarging and training the PNGDF since Bougainville; one of the objectives being to minimise the recurrence of human rights abuses. Recent PNGDF successes against the BRA suggest that Australian training has already had an impact on operational effectiveness but the impact on the level of human rights abuses is less evident. While the incidence of atrocities on Bougainville itself seems to have declined, the level of military indiscipline and indiscriminate violence remains alarmingly high elsewhere.⁵⁶

If such violations persist in the strengthened PNGDF there is bound to be criticism and resentment of the Australian government as progenitor. Moreover, as the recent fatal

52. Although Australia provided logistic support to the PNGDF when it was invited by Vanuatu to assist in quashing the 1980 Espiritu Santo rebellion, ADF loan personnel were reportedly excused operational duty after consultation with PNG. See Dorney, p.190. and Bill Standish, Melanesian Neighbours: The Politics of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Republic of Vanuatu, Legislative Research Service Basic Paper No 9, Commonwealth Parliament, 1984, p.77.

53. Defence Department evidence to JCFADT, Hansard, October 22 1990, p.739-740.

54. Senate Hansard, November 27 1990, p.4613.

55. Robert Cockburn and Mark Corcoran, "What Happened on Bougainville?", The Bulletin, December 18 1990, pp.42-43.

56. A recent example reported in The Times of Papua New Guinea October 17 1991 took place on the island of Manus; villages were burnt and several people wounded in clashes between soldiers from Lombrum Naval Base and civilians. The soldiers went on to raid the local police station; freeing one of their members arrested for arson.

shooting of a "raskol" gang leader by an Australian policeman highlights,⁵⁷ the potential exists for ADF personnel to become more directly implicated in human rights violations.

Scepticism amongst Bougainvilleans about Australian impartiality put paid to any hope of Canberra playing a constructive role in the conciliation process. It would be even more disadvantageous to Australia if such negative perceptions were to become widespread throughout PNG. It is therefore important that Australian personnel not be employed at the coalface of law enforcement in PNG and that their assistance to the PNGDF and RPNGC has general community understanding and support.⁵⁸

Reviewing the PNGDF's Function

Both Australia and PNG undertook after Bougainville to review PNG's security situation and the PNGDF's roles, functions and missions. The conclusion of the Australian reviews, summarised by the Prime Minister on 2nd September 1991, was that PNG..."requires security if development is to proceed and development if security is to be maintained" and that internal security therefore required urgent attention. In light of this assessment the reviews recommended PNG's overall security posture be reoriented to some degree away from external defence towards internal security, including law and order. It also proposed that security co-operation between the two countries..."be developed in ways that reflect these changing priorities."⁵⁹

Priorities would be training of the disciplined services in the maintenance of internal security, including law and order; provision of infrastructure, equipment and other facilities to support the disciplined forces and other law enforcement agencies in maintaining internal security; and exchanges of personnel between the two countries.⁶⁰

Australia's recommendation that the PNGDF concentrate more on internal security was most probably based on three assumptions. First, internal security problems are likely

57. "Aust Officer Kills Leader of 'Raskol' Gang", Canberra Times, 14 September 1991, p.3.

58. Professor Ross Garnaut's evidence to JCFADT, Hansard, April 8 1991.

59. Agreed Statement on Security Co-operation Between Australia and Papua New Guinea, September 2 1991, Canberra.

60. Ibid.

to pose an increasing threat, not only to development, but to PNG's stability and cohesion, and second, there is little likelihood for the foreseeable future of an external attack on that country. Third, counterinsurgency and internal security skills would probably stand the PNGDF in better stead than conventional military training if a foreign power were ever to attempt lodgement in PNG.

A PNG Security Review Task Force evidently arrived at much the same conclusion, recommending the role of the PNGDF be redefined within existing laws and constitutional provisions, enabling it to play a greater role in internal security. The Report suggests that police and Corrective Institution Service (CIS) instructors begin intensive training of PNGDF personnel who would then be sworn in as reserve constables, the Joint Services College at Lae be reopened and a Joint Services Command established. The Review also recommends creating a Department of Defence and Security, amalgamating the current department of defence and units within the police and the CIS. The new department's primary functions would be to monitor law and order trends and report to the government; develop policy for law enforcement agencies; provide financial and administrative support to the PNGDF, the police and CIS; and coordinate training, equipment purchases and external arrangements. Curiously, neither this new department nor the Joint Services Command would be given responsibility for joint operations. These would be coordinated instead by the National Intelligence Organisation (NIO).⁶¹

These recommendations regarding the PNGDF's role in the maintenance of internal security marked a complete *volte-face* for both Australia and PNG. It had hitherto been limited as far as possible for two important reasons. Firstly, while police forces are trained to protect life and property in maintaining law and order, armies have to be prepared to use lethal force in the national defence. There was some concern that force might prevail over law if internal security operations were conducted by the military. The second concern was that an army so employed could become politicised and pose a threat to the democratic order.

The PNGDF is not a complete stranger to internal security operations. Estimations are that some 25 to 30 percent of officer training time has been devoted to internal security training since Independence⁶² and the PNGDF was called on to assist the RPNGC in restoring law and order on three occasions between Independence and the Bougainville crisis. They joined forces with the police in Operation Green Beret in Port

61. Bernard Maladina. "Joint Command for Disciplined Forces Recommended", The Times of Papua New Guinea, June 27 1991, pp.1-2.

62. Saffu, p.11.

Moresby in 1984; in Operation Coolex covering Morobe, Madang and Eastern Highlands provinces in 1987; and in Operation LO-MET in the Highlands in 1988.⁶³ However, the army has generally been called out as a last resort and routine law enforcement may not accord with the military's idea of its proper role and function.

The PNGDF's norms were those of its Australian progenitor; it was to be a professional and apolitical organisation whose primary and ultimate responsibility lay in ensuring the nation's external security. Its officers, like those in most defence forces trained, organised and equipped to fight similarly prepared enemies, find the prospect of routine law and order enforcement distasteful and the role of de facto policemen demeaning.⁶⁴ While senior officers of the PNGDF are likely to consider counterinsurgency, of the type being waged on Bougainville, as a legitimate military function the Bougainville experience is unlikely to be repeated often - if at all. Chronic lawlessness will probably continue to be the more common response to economic and social upheaval in PNG and law enforcement a more likely routine for the PNGDF.

Military forces responsible for maintaining internal security are not in themselves much more likely to attempt coups than those dedicated to external defence. However, forces in transition during periods of public disorder quite often do so, prompted by "deep resentments towards governments whose incompetence has forced them to take on the unsavoury role of policemen".⁶⁵

There are several other causal factors behind military ousters which reports in the PNG media suggest now exist and which make the shift from external defence to internal security for the PNGDF seem even more of a gamble. The first of these are threats to the military's corporate interests.⁶⁶ Such threats include inadequate budgetary support and interference in its internal affairs.

The 1989 soldiers' pay riots in Port Moresby marked the nadir of a decline in defence budget allocations only reversed by an injection of aid from Australia post-Bougainville. Defence spending is likely to shrink again as PNG and Australian resources are channelled increasingly into the maintenance of law and order and, while some of

63. Ibid, p.10.

64. Saffu, p.11.

65. Coups in Nigeria, Upper Volta, Dahomey, Turkey, Colombia, and Syria are quoted as examples in Eric A. Nordlinger, Soldiers in Politics: Military Coups and Governments, Prentice-Hall, N.J. 1977, p.91.

66. Ibid.

these resources will fund greater PNGDF participation in internal security, the corresponding de-emphasis of external defence is unlikely to be popular.⁶⁷

Inadequate budgetary support for the PNGDF has sometimes been perceived as politically rather than financially motivated. Similar charges have been levelled at the Government's periodic attempts to reshuffle and weed out politically ambitious officers in the upper ranks.⁶⁸ Senior officers have also been discharged for causing the government embarrassment, notably in its dealings with Australia. A case in point was Colonel Nui's dismissal for publicly acknowledging (not for committing) human rights abuses by the PNGDF.

Another recent government action which provoked displeasure within the armed forces was the February 1991 announcement of a ceasefire and the withdrawal of troops from Bougainville, apparently without consultation with the military command on the island. This added insult to injury for some senior members of the disciplined forces who already held the Government responsible for their defeat on Bougainville, citing the ever shifting emphasis between taking the military offensive and attempting conciliation with the BRA.⁶⁹

In addition to causing resentment within the military the proposed change of role for the PNGDF carries two other risks. First, the longstanding animosity between the PNGDF and the RPNGC could be eroded by increased cooperation in maintaining internal security, thus removing an important counterweight to military ambitions. And second, increased experience in internal security may seduce the military into the belief that it should play a more authoritative role in such matters, breeding disdain for the principles of civilian law enforcement and perhaps even for the concept of civilian government. Factors which would increase this probability include political instability, weak administration government vacillation, and corruption.⁷⁰ Political instability and weak administration have long been a problem for PNG, perceptions already exist in the military of government vacillation, and the scale and extent of corruption is on the increase.⁷¹

67. Frank Senge, "Keeping the Peace", *Pacific Islands Monthly*, November 1988, p.15.

68. Saffu, p.22.

69. Dorney, p.148.

70. Nordlinger, 1977.

71. In his recent investigation into PNG's forest industry, Mr Justice Barnett found that bribery, corruption and the buying of support were so prevalent as to constitute a "major social sickness". Dorney, P.228.

Senior members of the PNGDF have not, in the past, been averse to taking matters into their own hands when disagreements have arisen over government policy. Examples of such action include PNGDF Commander, Tony Huai's leaks to Indonesia on bilateral defence negotiations with Australia in 1987⁷²; the illegal Defence Force reoccupation of Lae airport in 1988,⁷³ and Colonel Nuia's unilateral return to Bougainville in 1991. Even if one discounts the somewhat farcical "Bar B Coup" attempt by disgruntled Bougainville emergency controller, Police Commissioner Paul Tohian, there has already been one plot to force the government to accede to military demands. The plan by officers of the 1st Battalion PIR was reportedly rehearsed twice in 1977 but aborted when fears that Brigadier General Ted Diro would be dismissed came to nothing.⁷⁴

It is important to note, however, that a coup attempt is neither the greatest danger nor the most credible threat to PNG's internal security.⁷⁵ The prospect was discussed at this point only because it has always informed decisions about the role of disciplined services and the Australian Government has facilitated greater participation by PNG's military forces in internal security with the provision of training, equipment and advice. An unintended outcome may be an internal security problem of quite a different nature for PNG and another policy dilemma for Australia.

Options facing the Australian Government in the event of a coup would include military intervention; assistance to opposing forces or groups; complete withdrawal of budgetary assistance; cessation of the Defence Cooperation Program and logistics supply; and diplomatic pressure through international fora. There may well be

72. Saffu, p.15.

73. "Army Illegally Occupies Lae Aerodrome", The Times of Papua New Guinea, June 9-15 1988, p.3.

74. Transcript of "Papua New Guinea: An Unsuccessful Coup by Officers of the First Battalion, Pacific Islands Regiment in October 1977 and Arguments for and Against a Combined Police/Army Force", Background Briefing, ABC Radio, August 21 1983.

75. Many would argue that the prospect of a coup attempt remains highly unlikely. First, PNG cannot be compared with Fiji, lacking strong communal interest groups and having a military broadly representative of the society at large. (On the one occasion when an ethnic interest group - "the Papuan colonels" - has begun to crystallise within the military it has been quickly neutralised.) Second, PNG has a safety valve lacking in many Third World countries in that senior members of the PNGDF with political ambitions can satisfy them by resigning their commissions and running for parliament. Third, the prospects for maintaining post-coup order in PNG with such a small military force would have to be considered dim. And fourth, PNG's relationship with Australia could well act as a brake on military ambition. While Australia has avoided making a commitment to become directly involved in PNG's internal security, Australian intervention in support of an ousted civilian government has to be a consideration. PNG is also unusual in its dependence on a single foreign power for economic assistance and the prospect of a massive aid withdrawal by Australia would give any rational coup plotter pause for thought.

domestic pressure for economic and diplomatic measures but some uncertainty must always exist concerning the efficacy of such responses. The Fijian coup makers, for example, resisted pressure from the Commonwealth, Australia and New Zealand and their political heirs are successfully reorienting their foreign policy, defence and trade relations. Moreover Australia's strategic interest in maintaining good relations with its nearest northern neighbours may well hinder application of economic and diplomatic sanctions.⁷⁶ If a coup regime appeared well entrenched or widely supported in PNG, Australia's policy makers could consider its long term interests to be undermined by punitive action. Similar considerations apply to the military intervention option. Tactical uncertainties and strategic constraints would have to be carefully weighed against a range of factors including the impact of a "hands off" approach on Australia's regional and domestic credibility.⁷⁷

Assistance to the Police

The more pressing internal security problems facing Papua New Guinea are rather more complex. Many of these consequences of the process of economic development and social change have constitutional and administrative dimensions that are beyond the scope of this paper.⁷⁸ Others, like violent or obstructive landowner disputes, tribal fighting and urban lawlessness, require an immediate "public order" response if the PNG state is to remain intact and continue functioning in the public interest.

The Bougainville experience has encouraged provincial governments, landowners, and "nationalist" businessmen elsewhere in PNG to press for greater compensation for resource exploitation.⁷⁹ These claims are unlikely to grow into demands for secession, an option which has particular appeal and plausibility to Bougainvilleans because of their historic experience and geographic position.⁸⁰ However, the violent disruption of exploration and mining activities is of major concern in such a resource dependent economy.

76. Australia faces a similar dilemma when considering its response to events in East Timor.

77. This discussion assumes a hostile Australian reaction to a coup in PNG. Sir Anthony Siaguru suspects instead that, "faced with a *fait accompli*," Australia's "feelings might well be of regret and relief". "Till Death Us Do Part?" in David Anderson ed, The PNG-Australia Relationship: Problems and Prospects, Institute of Public Affairs, Sydney, 1990, p.63.

78. See Standish (1985) Hegarty (1989) and Dorney (1990).

79. "Political Chronicle - Papua New Guinea", 1990, p.348.

80. R.J May and Matthew Spriggs eds, The Bougainville Crisis, Crawford House Press, Bathurst, 1990.

Social and economic life in the rural areas is also being threatened by tribal fighting, a traditional means of resolving disputes, which is again becoming endemic in PNG's highland provinces. Modernisation has multiplied possible sources of friction and increased the lethality of available weaponry but provided no satisfactory alternative means of resolving disputes. The law treats tribal fighting as the crime and the police mete out arbitrary "punishment" for participation, an approach which not only leaves the originating disputes unresolved but often adds new grievances.⁸¹

In the towns, especially the larger centres like Lae and Port Moresby where urban drift and unemployment are particularly high, the major problem is violent crime. "Raskol" gangs have become increasingly sophisticated and aggressive with petty pilfering being replaced by organised theft, marketing and distribution of stolen goods, and protection rackets. Violence is no longer random but a calculated and integral aspect of raskol culture.⁸² The criminal justice system cannot cope: the police, the courts and the correctional institutions are all so inadequately funded and staffed that criminals who do not escape apprehension often escape trial or from detention.⁸³

In March 1991 PNG Prime Minister Rabbie Namaliu gave an address on the problem of escalating lawlessness. "Crime today," he said, "is more than a threat to our personal safety. It is a threat to the very future of our young country". Namaliu proposed a range of legislative countermeasures; reintroduction of both the death penalty (for murder and pack rape) and the Vagrancy Act, and the introduction of new laws to allow repatriation of unemployed urban youth to their villages and to limit compensation claims by landowners. He also proposed the construction of more secure detention facilities and the formation of a national service scheme to provide PNG's youth with "a real sense of pride and discipline".⁸⁴ More immediate measures included a crackdown on the manufacture, sale and ownership of firearms and the imposition of a curfew in Port Moresby, Lae, Popondetta and part of the Highlands.⁸⁵

81. Dorney, pp.309-314.

82. Hegarty, 1989, p.8.

83. Dorney, pp.286-319.

84. The genesis, evolution and implications of the National Service Scheme concept are discussed in Lt Col T.M.Boyce's The Introduction of the Civilian National Service Scheme for Youth in Papua New Guinea, Working Paper No.237, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, A.N.U, Canberra, 1991.

85. "Statement by the Prime Minister, Rt.Hon.Rabbie L.Namaliu, CMG, MP - On The List of Government's Measures to Fight Crime in Papua New Guinea", The Times of Papua New Guinea, March 21 1991, p.33.

While the Australian Government has recognised that the economic and social problems underlying the upsurge in violence need to be addressed, it has also considered improved law and order enforcement urgent. In January 1990 Senator Evans announced a \$3 million boost to the existing \$20 million in aid to the PNG constabulary, with the additional aid to strengthen training and administration. The fifteen Australian police who had been in PNG since late 1988 were to be joined by twenty senior officials to be seconded to provincial centres.⁸⁶ By 1991 AIDAB was funding over 40 such "long-term advisers" in PNG under the RPNGC Development Project as well as a Police Housing Project.⁸⁷

There can be little doubt that Australian assistance to the RPNGC will be useful. The 5,000 man force is undermanned, underequipped, underpaid and poorly trained. Moreover, lawlessness is not the only problem Australian assistance may help curb. The police are themselves notoriously undisciplined and reports of theft, arson, and brutality have become increasingly commonplace.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Papua New Guinea continues to seek a more binding security treaty with Australia but Canberra seems more determined than ever not to enter any arrangement that could be interpreted as a commitment to PNG's internal security. Australia has pledged instead to assist PNG improve its own internal security capabilities.

Australia will, however, need a clearer idea of PNG's intentions before it can decide whether the Defence Cooperation Program is an appropriate funding mechanism. Specific areas for future defence cooperation therefore remain vague. These can not really be determined until Papua New Guinea completes its security review. The Task Force Review findings on disciplined forces cooperation mentioned on page 19 and the law and order measures announced by Namaliu and outlined on page 25 have yet to be supplemented by an overall internal security agenda and a list of funding priorities.

In the meantime, although AIDAB funding for the PNG police is likely to remain relatively high, assistance under the DCP is winding back, from a high of \$52 million in FY 1990-91 to an expected \$37 million in FY 1991-92. Much of the reduction comes

86. Rowan Callick, "Bougainville Revolutionary Army Takes Charge", *Islands Business*, April 1990, p.21. and Eccleston, 10 September 1990.

87. Australia's Overseas Aid Program 1991-92, Budget Related Paper No.4, Canberra 1990, p.21.

from the completion of such infrastructural projects as the Lombrum Wharf naval facility and the new Air Transport Squadron headquarters in Port Moresby. Training and personnel exchange now constitutes the bulk of the DCP budget, accounting for some \$32 million in FY 1991-92 - a considerable percentage increase on the \$19 million allocated in FY 1989-90's \$38 million budget.⁸⁸

CONCLUSION

Australia has always been conscious of the potential for major internal security problems in Papua New Guinea. However, while this awareness influenced Australia's decision not to sign any binding security treaty with PNG, it did not impact on Australia's policy of funding and training the PNGDF which was for many years primarily oriented towards external defence. The maintenance of this close defence relationship has helped perpetuate a "colonial" sense of responsibility for PNG and drawn Australia into the resolution of that country's present internal security problems despite the absence of a formal defence commitment.

Australia has not intervened directly in PNG for a number of reasons, not the least of which is its desire to avoid domestic, regional and international criticism. Attempting to resolve one's own internal security problems by force is contentious enough - attempting to resolve another country's in this way even more controversial. Instead Australia opted to give training, logistic and other forms of support to the PNGDF. This policy is not risk free, however. As the *Iroquois* imbroglio demonstrated, Australian assistance is so critical that Canberra has found it difficult to convincingly refute charges of complicity in human rights abuses committed by the PNGDF.

Since Bougainville, Australia has sought to ameliorate this problem by redirecting DCP funding towards training and improving the discipline of the PNGDF. Nevertheless, as long as PNG's internal security problems persist and Australia provides support, however well meaning, to the PNGDF in dealing with them, the issue of defence cooperation between the two countries is likely to remain a sensitive one. The costs and benefits of the Australia - PNG security relationship will therefore need to be constantly reassessed.

88. Defence Portfolio Explanatory Notes, pp.423-426; and Defence Program Performance Statements 1991-92, pp.438-440.