

**The regionalization of peacekeeping and peacebuilding:
Comparing recent developments in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific**

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This paper has as its focus the recent experience of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific. The general context is the trend towards the regionalization of such matters at a global level. In this case we have some specific situations within the same broad area of the world (extending from the eastern end of Southeast Asia into the adjoining parts of the Pacific islands region). An analysis of peacekeeping and peacebuilding in these situations can be useful in at least two respects. It is possible to observe the political dynamics underlying peacekeeping and peacebuilding in these situations with a view to seeing whether they are consistent with broader international trends. At the same time the experience in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific might provide insights that could be relevant in other contexts. Peacekeeping refers to international 'intervention' to restore security or to deal with a deteriorating security situation. Peacebuilding is the long term process focusing on political, economic and social development as a means of rebuilding societies and avoiding situations that jeopardize security, whether defined in terms of state security or human security more broadly.

As far as East Timor is concerned this discussion will focus on developments from 2006 to the present. In the Southwest Pacific the main situation to examine is the post-2003 Solomon Islands 'intervention', but there will also be reference to Papua New Guinea, the 2006 riots in Tonga (South, rather than Southwest, Pacific), and the 2006 coup in Fiji. In both East Timor and the Southwest Pacific the aim is to enhance understanding of the political dynamics of the peacekeeping operations, but then to give consideration also to longer-term peacebuilding efforts.

The argument of the paper is that the dynamics of these interventions have revolved around the interaction between local political factors and international factors. In East Timor the post-2006 intervention was different from that which occurred in 1999. Even though Australia provided the leadership in the earlier intervention and much of the wherewithal, there was a stronger emphasis in 1999 on the involvement of the United Nations (leading later in the year to the establishment of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), which ruled the territory until independence in

2002). The support of the United States was also much more crucial in 1999. ASEAN had a low profile but significant role in 1999; this continued to be the case post-2006. Australia's involvement in East Timor in both 1999 and 2006 could be seen as 'regional' but in a different sense from ASEAN's role. In the Southwest Pacific the Solomons intervention was more narrowly regional than had been the case in East Timor, with very little UN involvement. Similarly other situations in the Southwest Pacific have also been dealt with primarily on a regional level. Australia and New Zealand have been the leading powers involved, with regional legitimization coming through the Pacific Islands Forum. The dynamics of the process of peacebuilding have been similar to those that arose during the peacekeeping phase, with greater global involvement in East Timor as compared to the Southwest Pacific, but the regional dimension being important in both cases. 'Lessons learnt' in both these situations that might be applicable to other regions focus on the general processes involved. In more specific terms the political dynamics for both peacekeeping and peacebuilding will revolve around the interaction of local, regional and global factors. Situations that do not have a significant impact at global level, particularly on the major powers, are more likely to be regionalized.

The plan for the paper is to focus first on the broader international context to establish the major trends in relation to regionalization. Then we will examine peacekeeping in East Timor (post-2006 primarily) and the Southwest Pacific from the perspective of the dynamics of regionalization. This will lead into a discussion of peacebuilding in both situations but again with regionalization as the major concern. Finally there will be an attempt to establish some of the 'lessons learnt' that might be applicable to other regions.

The international context of regionalization

A study by Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams provides a helpful perspective on the extent to which regionalization is occurring in relation to 'peace operations', a slightly more encompassing term than peacekeeping.¹ Bellamy and Williams include tables indicating

¹ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, 'Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations', *International Security*, vol. 29 no. 4 (Spring 2005), pp. 157-95.

the number of UN peace operations in February 2005 as compared to the number of non-UN peace operations in 2003-4.² In the former category were 16 operations with an authorized size of approximately 82,580; in the latter category were 18 operations with 70,650 personnel. However the non-UN operations did not necessarily represent regionalization. Some of the non-UN operations were mounted by single actors but in distant countries (Britain in Sierra Leone or France in the Ivory Coast). A broad definition would include operations under the auspices of regional organizations (whether authorized by the UN or not), and operations led by particular countries in relation to their own or neighbouring regions. On this basis 14 of the 18 non-UN operations listed by Bellamy and Williams could be classed as regionalized, with a total of 58,350 personnel involved.

An important aspect of regionalization is determining the rationale for proceeding in this way. Under the UN Charter it is the responsibility of the Security Council to ‘determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and [to] make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken ... to maintain or restore international peace and security’ (Article 39, Chapter VII). This provision covers the enhanced peacekeeping operations that have developed in the post-Cold War era. Traditional peacekeeping, involving the implementation of peace agreements normally comes under Chapter VI. It would be open to the Security Council to make use of regional organizations or particular regional actors in carrying out its responsibilities in relation to either Chapter VI or Chapter VII. There is specific provision for making use of regional arrangements for peace and security matters in Article 52 of Chapter VIII: ‘Nothing in the present Charter precludes the existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations’.³

² *Ibid.*, pp. 165-66.

³ See further W. Andy Knight, ‘Towards a subsidiarity model for peacemaking and preventive diplomacy: making Chapter VIII of the UN Charter operational’, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 17 no. 1 (1996), pp. 31-52.

Most regionalized peacekeeping operations (whether through regional organizations or through regional powers broadly defined) will either be authorized by the UN Security Council or proceed on the basis of the consent of the host government. The more problematic operations are where there is neither UN authorization nor the consent of the host government (as with some of Russia's operations in its border regions, for example; the NATO operation in Kosovo in 1999 did not have UN authorization but could not be construed as 'peacekeeping'). There is some argument as to whether regional organizations should be more proactive in responding to threats to international peace and security, rather than relying on a top-down approach focused on the UN Security Council.⁴

In assessing regionalized peacekeeping operations a particular concern of this paper is to understand the political dynamics involved. Why do particular states become involved? How do the local and the international factors interact? To what extent is there a global dimension in situations that appear to have a high level of regionalization? From the instances of regionalization surveyed by Bellamy and Williams the perception of regional neighbours is often a key factor leading to their involvement. There appears to be a view that failure to act will undermine regional security; at the same time regional factors can be a constraint (not wishing to undermine a government whose cooperation is sought on other matters). It also appears that there can be regionalized peacekeeping operations where involvement by non-regional powers can be a factor. In other words there could be situations that were neither wholly regional nor wholly global. Non-regional powers could become involved as an aspect of 'good international citizenship' or they might perceive that global security issues are at stake and they want to contribute to their resolution.

Thus far the focus has been on establishing the context of regionalization in relation to peacekeeping. Peacebuilding appears more nebulous, but is nonetheless of great importance. While peacekeeping is frequently short term in scope and focused on immediate security issues, peacebuilding involves the longer term processes whereby the

⁴ See, for example, Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum, 'The UN and Regional Organizations in Global Security: Competing or Complementary Logics?', *Global Governance*, vol. 12 (2006), pp. 227-32.

underlying issues that lead to a breakdown of security can be adequately addressed. To establish the broader international context of peacebuilding it would be necessary to survey the range of post-peacekeeping situations to see if there was any focus on the longer term issues and, if so, what form that focus took. The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission by the UN General Assembly provided an important focus for international involvement in this area. As far as regionalization is concerned one issue would be to see whether peacekeeping situations where regionalization is also involved generally develop a peacebuilding focus. If that is the case, does regionalization continue to be a focus? Are the dynamics similar to those that occurred when peacekeeping occurred? In other words, is the interaction between local, regional and global factors similar to that which prevailed during the peacekeeping phase? No observations in relation to this point in terms of the international situation more generally are offered here, but it will be possible to indicate what the dynamics appear to be in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific.

Comparing peacekeeping in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific from the perspective of regionalization

While the 1999-2002 East Timor intervention has been much analysed, less attention has been given to the involvement of international forces in that country from 2006. The focus here is on the post-2006 situation, but understanding that situation requires some attention to the earlier operation. This section of the paper will begin with some preliminary observations on the dynamics of the earlier situation, before turning its attention to the post-2006 'intervention'. Next some observations will be made about the dynamics of regionalized peacekeeping in the Southwest Pacific, focusing particularly on Solomon Islands, with some reference also to Tonga, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. A comparison of the East Timor and Southwest Pacific situations provides a basis for some generalizations about the way in which regionalized peacekeeping has proceeded in this part of the world.

A brief examination of the international intervention in East Timor from 1999 to 2002 enables some observations to be made about the dynamics of the operation. This provides useful context for understanding the post-2006 intervention. The 1999-2002 intervention had an important regional dimension but also had more of a global dimension than has been the case post-2006. The circumstances are well known. The process of democratization that developed in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto in 1998 also provided a fillip for the pro-independence movement in East Timor; East Timor had been under Indonesian rule since the demise of the Portuguese colonial regime in 1975. B.J. Habibie, interim President after the fall of Suharto, announced in January 1999 that a referendum would be held in East Timor to approve a special autonomy arrangement; rejection of the proposal would be seen as a vote for independence. This prepared the way for a settlement with Portugal, and then UN involvement to supervise the referendum. The vote on 30 August 1999 was 78.5 per cent in favour of independence. The Indonesian military in particular was very bitter about this outcome, and a campaign to wreak mayhem ensued with the involvement of pro-Indonesian militias. There was an international outcry to uphold the act of self-determination by the East Timorese.

With pro-independence sentiment clearly having majority support, the issue was whether international pressure could be brought to bear on Indonesia to withdraw and allow a peacekeeping force into East Timor. The US was in a position to apply economic and military pressure to Indonesia, and this was an important factor causing Indonesia to relent. Regional pressure came not through ASEAN, but through APEC. An APEC meeting was fortuitously being held in Auckland from 9 to 12 September, and this was a way of ensuring that Indonesia was fully aware of the views of Asia-Pacific countries more broadly. ASEAN as such was not active on the issue, mainly because of concerns about offending Indonesia; the Philippines and Thailand, however, did subsequently play significant roles in both the UN-authorized and UN operations in East Timor.⁵ Australia played a leading role in both operations, and in fact was the main force behind the formation of INTERFET (the UN-authorized phase). While Australia was not part of ASEAN, it was prominent in APEC and was adjacent to East Timor. Australia was

⁵ On ASEAN involvement, see Alan Dupont, 'ASEAN's Response to the East Timor Crisis', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54 no. 2 (July 2000), pp. 163-70.

behaving as a regional actor with its own regional security concerns; the Australian public was also exercised about the moral issues involved in rejecting the East Timorese vote in favour of independence. Australian and New Zealand involvement in both INTERFET and UNTAET indicated a strong Antipodean component in this particular instance of peacekeeping, with the ASEAN countries also having some representation. Both the Antipodean and ASEAN dimensions indicate the way in which East Timor 1999-2002 can be seen as an instance of regionalization. However the global dimension was also strong, with both the initial involvement of the US, and then the very full involvement of the UN through UNTAET. As one writer suggested East Timor became a 'United Nations kingdom'.⁶

By 2006 the situation had changed significantly. East Timor had become independent in May 2002, and entered a phase of state-building. It became a less important issue on the international agenda. UN involvement became less, although there was a UN security force present until May 2005 (as part of the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET)), and various UN agencies supporting development programmes. From May 2005 until August 2006 the UN was officially represented in East Timor through the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL). The crisis that developed in East Timor in April-June 2006 arose in the first instance because of a division within Falintil (the armed forces). This division reflected broader difference within East Timor between people from the east and people from the west of the country. The military rebels were westerners and believed that Falintil was dominated by easterners. An additional factor contributing to conflict was the divisions within the political elite, going back to the struggle against Indonesian rule. A major figure in the external leadership was Mari Alkatiri, an economist of leftist persuasion. Alkatiri subsequently became prime minister in the post-independence government led by Fretilin. Xanana Gusmao, the main figure in the internal leadership, was more populist in approach. Gusmao saw his position as transcending any affiliation with a particular political party such as Fretilin. Gusmao's charismatic leadership was recognized in his election as president of independent East Timor. Falintil's broad loyalty was to Gusmao,

⁶ Jarat Chopra, 'The UN's Kingdom of East Timor', *Survival*, vol. 42 no. 3(Autumn 2000), pp. 27-39.

whereas the police force established after independence was loyal to the Fretilin government.

The tensions that were evident in the rebellion within Falintil soon spread to other sectors of East Timorese society, with widespread demonstrations, rioting and destruction of property. The institutions of the fledgling state proved incapable of resolving the crisis, and the government sought international assistance to restore order. However the way in which international ‘intervention’ took place was different in many respects from that which had occurred in 1999. The crisis was very difficult for East Timor but it was not on the same scale as in 1999. The impact in terms of international politics was far less. In 1999 intervention occurred in the context of a breakdown in the transition to independent status that had been approved in an act of self-determination held under UN auspices. UN involvement in both the UN-authorized INTERFET and in the subsequent UNTAET was central to the unfolding events. The UN became involved in the response to the 2006 situation in East Timor but in a less central role than had been the case in 1999-2002. Indonesia was clearly an interested party in 2006 as one of East Timor’s neighbours, but was not directly involved. The major similarity between 1999 and 2006 was that Australia played the leading role in both ‘interventions’. In 1999 the despatch of an Australian military force was at the request of an independent East Timorese government. Smaller military contingents came on a similar basis from New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal. The response was regionalized in the sense that there was a large Antipodean component and a small Southeast Asian component; Portugal’s contribution related to its status as the former colonial power. The UN became involved through Security Council Resolution 1704 on 25 August 2006, paving the way for the replacement of UNOTIL with the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The UN’s contribution to dealing with the crisis focused on the provision of police, amounting to over 1400 personnel in January 2008, as well as a continuation of its development programmes.⁷

Turning next to the dynamics of regionalized peacekeeping in the Southwest Pacific, the main situation of interest is the post-2003 ‘intervention’ in Solomon Islands.

⁷ For a useful overview of the 2006 crisis in East Timor see Damien Kingsbury, ‘Timor-Leste: The Harsh Reality After Independence’, *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2007, pp. 363-77.

The relevant context here relates to the tensions on the island of Guadalcanal that culminated in a coup against the incumbent government in May 2000.⁸ These tensions related to the immigration of people to Guadalcanal from the neighbouring island of Malaita. This immigration had occurred over a long period, but had an impact on land holding on Guadalcanal; many people on Guadalcanal felt a sense of displacement. At the same time there were many pressures in Solomon Islands society more generally as a result of high population growth and inadequate employment opportunities. Disaffected elements on both sides were attracted to the rival militia movements, the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) for the Guadalcanalese, and the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) for the Malaitans. Although prime minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu was himself Malaitan, it was people linked to the MEF who mounted the coup. Political manoeuvring resulted in a prime minister more sympathetic to the Malaitan position (Manasseh Sogavare), but did not bring about a reduction in the tensions between the rival groups. In October 2000 however, the Australian government facilitated negotiations leading to the Townsville peace agreement. This agreement was designed to bring about reconciliation and the restoration of law and order in the Solomons; implementation would be monitored by a low-level International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT), including Australians and New Zealanders.

The Townsville peace agreement relied essentially on the good will of the parties involved. This proved lacking, and over the next few years the situation steadily worsened. However in January 2003 foreign minister Alexander Downer of Australia specifically ruled out Australian intervention on the grounds that Australia lacked the capacity, and that resolving the situation was primarily a matter for the Solomon Islanders.⁹ By mid-2003, however, the perception of the Australian government had changed. An Australian-led 'intervention' was now seen as an effective means of restoring law and order in the Solomons, and of encouraging reform in its government and economy. During discussions in Australia in early June 2003 Solomon Islands prime

⁸ For extended analysis of this issue, see Jon Fraenkel, *The Manipulation of Custom: from uprising to intervention in the Solomon Islands* (Sydney: Pandanus Books, 2004), and Clive Moore, *Happy Isles in Crisis: the historical causes for a failing state in Solomon Islands* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press, 2004).

⁹ Alexander Downer, 'Neighbours cannot be recolonized', *The Australian*, 8 January 2003, p. 11.

minister Sir Allan Kemakeza agreed to this course of action, which was subsequently formally approved by the Solomons government and parliament. International legitimation came through the support of a meeting of foreign ministers from the Pacific Islands Forum held in Sydney in late June 2003. The UN was not involved apart from a brief statement of support from Secretary-General Kofi Annan.¹⁰ Operation Helpem Fren commenced in July 2003 with the despatch of the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to the troubled island state. Although it was primarily a policing operation, there was initially a strong military component. The personnel involved were predominantly Australian, but New Zealand and a number of Pacific Island countries also contributed.¹¹

RAMSI was very much a regionalized peacekeeping operation. Although there were suggestions that France had offered to participate, Australia was against this and it would have been a major complicating factor given some of the past tensions between France and the Pacific island countries (not to mention Australia and New Zealand). Leadership in the operation came from Australia, which was motivated by both security and humanitarian considerations. Maintaining some semblance of order in the region was necessary to minimize criminal and hostile political activity; any decline in the quality of governance would also jeopardize the wellbeing of local people. Cooperation with New Zealand was important in relation to Pacific island affairs, with Australia normally taking the lead in relation to Melanesia. While there was not a massive groundswell in favour of intervention among the Pacific island countries, there was generally support for action that would improve the situation in Solomon Islands. The Biketawa Declaration, adopted by the Pacific Islands Forum in October 2000, encouraged greater Forum involvement in dealing with situations such as the one that had arisen in the Solomons. Apart from the issue of French involvement (with France being a Pacific power with its territorial presence in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna), external powers such as the United Kingdom and the US looked to Australia and New Zealand to provide

¹⁰ United Nations Information Service, 'Secretary-General Commends Regional Response to Solomon Islands Crisis', 6 August 2003, <http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2003/sgsm8811.html> (accessed 19 March 2008).

¹¹ For details of the personnel involved, see Derek McDougall, 'Intervention in Solomon Islands', *Round Table*, vol. 93, issue 374 (April 2004), pp. 218-19.

the lead in dealing with South Pacific issues. These issues were generally not sufficiently high on the international agenda to come before the UN; in the Solomons case a complicating factor were this to be the case would be that Solomon Islands recognizes the Republic of China (Taiwan) rather than the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Since the beginning of RAMSI in mid-2003, the other significant 'intervention' in the South Pacific (beyond the Southwest Pacific in this case) has been in Tonga in the aftermath of rioting in Nuku'alofa, the capital city, in November 2006. Much of this rioting was directed against Chinese-owned businesses, and reflected economic and racial grievances. Continued monarchical rule exacerbated the situation by limiting the channels through which dissatisfaction could be expressed. The despatch of a small military and police force from Australia and New Zealand was at the request of the Tongan government. In this case New Zealand played the leading role, reflecting the division of responsibilities with Australia whereby New Zealand had the primary role in Polynesia.

Other situations where the regionalization issue has been significant include Papua New Guinea and Fiji. In the context of the Solomon Islands issue there was increased attention to Papua New Guinea's problems as the largest of the Pacific island countries. While lawlessness was an issue in many parts of the country, and there was endemic violence in regions such as the Southern Highlands, there was not a breakdown of law and order on the scale that had been experienced in Solomon Islands. Corruption and poor governance were also issues but not on a scale to threaten the viability of Papua New Guinea as a state. In these circumstances a peacekeeping operation as such was not really an issue, and the focus was more on peacebuilding (see below).

At an earlier stage a limited peacekeeping operation had been mounted to facilitate a peace settlement on the island of Bougainville. Between 1989 and 1997 a campaign for Bougainville to separate from Papua New Guinea had brought much death and suffering.¹² The 1997 Burnham Declaration, brokered by New Zealand, prepared the

¹² The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade estimates deaths at up to 15,000 and 70,000 people displaced in a population of 180,000-200,000. See 'Bougainville peace process',

way for a small peace monitoring force to operate on Bougainville, with contributions from Australia, New Zealand and a number of Pacific island countries. Although this situation was clearly in Melanesia, New Zealand took the lead because Australia had been compromised by its close identification with Papua New Guinea. There was minor UN involvement though the United Nations Observer mission on Bougainville (UNOMB). The peace monitoring force prepared the way for negotiations leading to an agreement in 2001 that Bougainville would be recognized as an autonomous province within Papua New Guinea, with a referendum on independence to be scheduled within 10-15 years.

In the case of Fiji there have been coups and attempted coups over a number of years: 1987 (twice), 2000 and 2006. The Biketawa Declaration of 2000 was a response to the attempted coup in Fiji in that year, as well as to the Solomons situation. External powers have attempted to deal with these situations through diplomacy and sanctions. Peacekeeping has never been an option mainly because it would be resisted by the controlling authorities in Fiji, including the military there. The major response to the various coups in Fiji has been at the regional level, although bodies such as the Commonwealth and the European Union have also become involved. Australia and New Zealand have played the leading role in pressuring Fiji. They have generally been able to win the support of the Pacific Islands Forum, although some Pacific island countries have been reluctant to pressure Fiji too much. In response to the coup of December 2006, the Pacific Islands Forum appointed an eminent persons' group that devised a plan for returning democracy to Fiji by 2009.¹³

Comparing East Timor and the various situations in the Southwest Pacific, a number of generalizations suggest themselves in relation to the dynamics of the regionalized peacekeeping that has occurred. As indicated, the main focus is East Timor post-2006 and Solomon Islands post-2003, but the other situations also need to be considered. A first point is that the peacekeeping operations that have been mounted are

http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/png/bougainville_peace_process.html (accessed 19 March 2008).

¹³ 'Forum Eminent Persons' Group Report, Fiji, 29 January-1 February 2007', http://www.forumsec.org/_resources/article/files/FIJI%20EPG%20REPORT.%2029%20Jan%20to%201%20Feb%2020071.pdf (accessed 19 March 2008).

not interventions strictly speaking because the governments within whose territory the operations have taken place have given their consent. The situations have not gone before the UN Security Council as threats to international peace and security. UN involvement did occur in East Timor but in the context of assisting with the situation (UN Security Council Resolution 1704, 26 August 2006). In the East Timor case the government itself was very keen to secure international security assistance, although the neighbouring countries were also very aware of what was going on there. In Solomon Islands the Kemakeza government saw international assistance as a way of overcoming the breakdown that was occurring within the country, but the sense of crisis was probably less than in East Timor.

While the host government has to be keen for assistance for an ‘intervention’ based on consent to occur, the major regional actors also need to be willing to give that assistance. In the cases under examination it has been Australia that has taken the lead. These various situations have been seen as undermining regional stability, with consequences for Australia’s own security. In addition there has been a humanitarian dimension, with Australians (and their government reflects this too) moved by the plight of already poor people enduring even more suffering. In the case of East Timor, Indonesia is also a very relevant regional power. However because of the experience of 1999 Indonesia has eschewed significant involvement in East Timor, seeing this henceforth as a responsibility for Australia and the ‘international community’. However if there were political developments in East Timor that directly threatened Indonesia one could not rule out Indonesian intervention. Such a scenario is probably another factor encouraging significant Australian security involvement. In a sense Malaysia as a Southeast Asian country provides a substitute for Indonesian involvement; New Zealand is there as part of a shared security responsibility with Australia. The non-regional dimension is represented by Portugal, indicating an attempt by East Timor to get assistance from as many sources as possible.

Australia’s role in Solomon Islands has been more straightforward in Solomon Islands than in East Timor in terms of the regional dynamics. The UN is barely involved

at all. While Australia has taken the lead, New Zealand has played a supporting role (in the other situations discussed the Australia-New Zealand relationship has been more complex). The Pacific Islands Forum has been involved in Solomon Islands in a way that has not been the case with ASEAN in East Timor. The major function of the Pacific Islands Forum has been to legitimize ‘interventions’ led by Australia, although there have also been token contributions by Pacific island countries in Solomon Islands and elsewhere. A general point that applies in East Timor and even more so in the Southwest Pacific is that the US and other major Western powers (most notably the United Kingdom) expect Australia and New Zealand to assume the major responsibility for dealing with difficult situations in this part of the world. If there were issues that were difficult for the Antipodean powers to deal with on their own then there could be some assistance forthcoming, but for the situations discussed here ‘subcontracting’ has been the norm. East Timor 1999-2002, on the other hand gives an indication of how international involvement can be expanded should regionalization be insufficient as a means of resolving a difficult situation.

Comparing peacebuilding in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific from the perspective of regionalization

While international attention is often focused on specific dramatic events that give rise to peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping does not necessarily provide a long term solution for the societies that have experienced those events. A longer term approach is necessary and the concept of peacebuilding is relevant in that context. From that perspective peacebuilding means creating the conditions in a given society whereby peace can be sustained. In the early post-Cold War period Gareth Evans (then Australian foreign minister) defined peacebuilding strategies as ‘those that seek to address the underlying causes of disputes, conflicts and crises: to ensure either that problems don’t arise in the first place, or that if they do arise they won’t recur’.¹⁴ Peacebuilding can thus have a preventive as well as a post-conflict focus, although in practice the latter has been more important. This situation has been reinforced by the establishment of the UN

¹⁴ Gareth Evans, *Cooperating for Peace: The Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1993), p. 39.

Peacebuilding Commission in 2005, reflecting the adage that ‘half the countries who sign peace agreements fall back into conflict within five years of signing a peace agreement’.¹⁵ In discussing peacebuilding strategies Evans distinguishes between ‘international regimes’ and ‘in-country peace building’.¹⁶ International regimes for peacebuilding involve the development of broader international frameworks for assisting countries create the conditions for internal peace; in-country approaches focus more specifically on the requirements of individual countries.

In discussing East Timor and the Southwest Pacific, both dimensions are relevant. The concern is to assess the extent to which regionalization has been part of the international regime to facilitate peacebuilding within this region. At the same time it is necessary to give particular attention to the situation in the countries in question. As with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the focus is on post-conflict recovery; from this perspective indeed peacekeeping is part of a broader peacebuilding strategy. Regionalization, focusing particularly on Australian involvement, has been an important dimension of peacebuilding in both East Timor and the Southwest Pacific. New Zealand has strongly supported Australia in these efforts. ASEAN’s involvement in East Timor has been relatively minor. The Pacific Islands Forum has been more active in relation to the Southwest Pacific, but generally operating in conjunction with Australia and New Zealand. Relatively speaking UN involvement in peacebuilding has been more significant in East Timor than in the Southwest Pacific. The reasons for this situation are similar to those that were relevant for peacekeeping in the two situations: namely, the impact of global considerations has been greater in the former case than in the latter. These points can be developed first in reference to East Timor, and then in reference to the Southwest Pacific (with particular attention in this instance to Solomon Islands).

In the first instance, then, what has post-conflict peacebuilding amounted to in East Timor, and what has been the significance of regionalization in that context? A complication is that the focus of this paper has been on the post-2006 situation. It might

¹⁵ United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, ‘Questions and Answers on the UN Peacebuilding Commission’, <http://www.un.org/peace/peacebuilding/questions.htm> (accessed 17 March 2008).

¹⁶ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

be contended that UNTAET 1999-2002 was part of a peacebuilding strategy, incorporating a peacekeeping dimension, and following on from the more intense INTERFET peacekeeping operation. UNTAET's role in that period was clearly within the context of peacebuilding.¹⁷ A more comprehensive analysis of peacebuilding in East Timor alone would take into consideration the whole period from 1999 to the present. However the aim here is to focus on more recent developments and the comparative dimension. Nevertheless it is relevant to review the period after the end of UNTAET in 2002, as well as to focus more specifically on the post-2006 period. Essentially peacebuilding in East Timor has involved broader diplomatic efforts to assist the new state, as well as more specific programmes of development assistance. It could not be claimed that East Timor was a particularly high profile issue for the UN. It did not intrude significantly onto the global agenda. Even within a Southeast Asian context, Indonesia's withdrawal from the territory in 1999 signified an acceptance of the new situation prevailing there. Resentments remained but East Timor was no longer a major factor affecting Indonesia's international behaviour. Indonesia and the world more generally looked to Australia to play the major diplomatic role in relation to East Timor, and that has generally been the case in the whole post-2002 period. Should Australia not play the leading diplomatic role in that respect, Indonesia could become more active again, particularly if there were a perception that instability in East Timor might spread into neighbouring parts of Indonesia. Portugal also plays some diplomatic role in relation to East Timor, sometimes complicating Australian efforts there, but also providing additional options for East Timor. Apart from Indonesian sensitivities, Australia also needs to be aware of the attitudes of other ASEAN countries towards East Timor; this is a factor encouraging Australia to avoid excessive neo-colonial behaviour.

Apart from the diplomatic dimension of peacebuilding in East Timor, there has also been a strong focus on meeting the country's various development challenges.¹⁸ UN involvement since independence in May 2002 has been coordinated through a series of UN offices, beginning with the UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET) until

¹⁷ For a succinct analysis of UNTAET's role in this respect, see Sue Downie, 'UNTAET: state-building and peace-building', in Damien Kingsbury and Michael Leach (eds), *East Timor: beyond independence* (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University Press, 2007), pp. 29-42.

¹⁸ A recent assessment of the range of issues is Kingsbury and Leach, *op. cit.*.

May 2005, which retained a strong peacekeeping component. The UN Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), which ran from May 2005 until August 2006, was more exclusively focused on peacebuilding. From August 2006 the UN Integrated Mission in Timor (UNMIT), again had a strong peacekeeping dimension (mainly policing) within its broader peacebuilding strategy. Apart from the general issue of raising living standards in East Timor, perhaps the major challenge (highlighted by the events of April-May 2006) has been the weakness of political institutions in that country.¹⁹ There are particular problems relating to the role of the military and police, with divisions within and between these groups, and insufficient respect for constituted political authority.²⁰

As far as the development aspect of peacebuilding is concerned, Australia might be regarded as the single most important donor country for East Timor, providing A\$72.8 million in the 2007-8 Australian aid budget. However that assistance is very much coordinated with Australia's diplomatic objectives in East Timor. The Australia-East Timor Development Strategy 2007-11 includes a focus on issues such as policing, economic management and strengthening the judicial system.²¹ It should also be kept in mind that Australia drove a hard bargain in relation to the dispute with East Timor over the Timor Sea (and the accompanying revenues, actual and potential, from the exploitation of oil and natural gas in that maritime region.²² The regionalization of development efforts in East Timor through Australian involvement is important, but needs to be put in the context of broader multilateral involvement through the UN system, including the World Bank and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

In the case of the Southwest Pacific, the balance between the global and regional dimensions of peacebuilding is weighted more strongly to the latter than is the case in

¹⁹ See in particular *Strengthening the Institutions of Governance in Timor-Leste* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006); United Nations, 'Report of the United Nations Independent Special Commission of Inquiry for Timor-Leste', Geneva, 2 October 2006.

²⁰ See further 'Timor-Leste: Security Sector Reform', Asia Report No. 143, 17 January 2008, International Crisis Group, Brussels.

²¹ See AusAID, 'East Timor', <http://www.aisaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryID=911&Region=EastAsia> (accessed 19 March 2008).

²² See Paul Cleary, *Shakedown: Australia's grab for Timor oil*, (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2007); Clive Schofield, 'Minding the Gap: The Australia-East Timor Treaty on Certain Maritime Arrangements in the Timor Sea (CMATS)', *International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, vol. 22, no. 2 (2007), pp. 189-234.

East Timor. Many of the issues are similar to those encountered in East Timor, but the combination of local and international factors (regional and global) is different. The region has less significance than East Timor at the global level, and the relevant regional organization (in this case, the Pacific Islands Forum) is more involved. RAMSI's role in Solomon Islands has meant that the situation in that country has received most attention,²³ but comparisons with other relevant situations in the region are also relevant (especially Papua New Guinea and Fiji). Diplomatically UN involvement in these situations has not been very significant, reflecting the fact that the major powers do not perceive their own vital interests to be at stake. As indicated previously the US and United Kingdom look primarily to Australia and New Zealand to take the lead in dealing with situations in the South Pacific. Australia and New Zealand in turn have a rough division of responsibility between themselves, with the former focusing on Melanesia and the latter on Polynesia. There is close coordination and support between the two Antipodean powers, but with some differences of emphasis from time to time, often relating to New Zealand's perception of itself as a 'South Pacific power'. France also is involved in the South Pacific (including the Southwest Pacific) but focuses primarily on its own territories in the region.

In Solomon Islands RAMSI succeeded in restoring 'law and order' and facilitated the implementation of anti-corruption and other 'good governance' measures. However the underlying social and economic problems, relating to limited economic growth and inadequate employment opportunities for the burgeoning population, have been difficult to tackle. In addition the political institutions are weak, with corrupt behaviour by politicians and others being an issue, and a widespread lack of trust in the ability of institutions to 'deliver' in terms of the country's needs. One problem that has come to the fore during the RAMSI period has been that many politicians feel frustrated by the restrictions the mission places on their behaviour. Following national elections in April

²³ A recent assessment is Gaurav Sodhi, 'Five Out of Ten: A Performance Report on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI)', *Issue Analysis*, No. 92, 31 January 2008, Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney. Among earlier assessments, see Elsinia Wainwright, 'Australia's Solomon Island Commitment: How Is It Progressing?', *The Sydney Papers*, Summer 2006, pp. 180-91; Oxfam Australia and Oxfam New Zealand, *Bridging the Gap between State and Society: New Directions for the Solomon Islands*, June 2006.

2006 there was a period of political manoeuvring (including the incitement of riots in Honiara, the capital) that resulted in Manasseh Sogavare, becoming prime minister. Sogavare took an anti-RAMSI stance, which included the expulsion of the Australian high commissioner and the appointment of an Indo-Fijian-Australian lawyer, wanted in Australia for child sex offences, as attorney-general. Sogavare also attempted to block police reforms.

Peacebuilding in this context focused particularly on the relationship between Australia and the Solomons government. In that sense it was almost completely regionalized, with Australia applying additional pressure through support from New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum. The pressure that was applied was essentially politico-diplomatic. Australia's task was made easier when shifting parliamentary allegiances in the Solomons resulted in Sogavare's replacement as prime minister by the pro-RAMSI Derek Sikua in December 2007. As far as the longer term development aspects are concerned Australia again has been the main source of aid to Solomon Islands, with expenditure for 2007-8 estimated at A\$223.9 million (A\$28 million in bilateral aid, A\$67.4 million for RAMSI, and the rest through other AusAID regional and global programmes and expenditure by other Australian government agencies).²⁴ There is a question as to how much Australia is responding to the criticisms of RAMSI's development focus. The election of the Rudd Labor government in Australia in November 2007 has portended some changes in relation to development strategy in the Pacific island countries more generally; this point will be discussed subsequently.

Beyond Solomon Islands the other main countries where peacebuilding is relevant are Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Peacekeeping operations have not occurred in those situations, except in the more limited case of Bougainville in the former case. In terms of the more recent situation in both countries peacebuilding could be seen as preventive, although in Fiji there is also a post-conflict dimension given the circumstances of the coup of December 2006 and its aftermath. In Papua New Guinea the political institutions suffer from similar problems to those experienced in the Solomons. There are also many

²⁴ AusAID, 'Solomon Islands', <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryID=16&Region=SouthPacific> (accessed 19 March 2008).

social problems, focusing on the urbanization of former village people, the spread of HIV/AIDS and inadequate employment opportunities. Australia has been the main focus in terms of external involvement in dealing with these issues, both at a politico-diplomatic level and in terms of development assistance. The Howard Coalition government in Australia instituted an Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) for Papua New Guinea in 2003. This included the despatch of Australian police and financial officials to Papua New Guinea (the police were subsequently withdrawn because of a constitutional challenge in PNG).

In Fiji the focus has been on the politico-diplomatic dimension of peacebuilding, with Australia and New Zealand as the leading regional actors in putting pressure on the military-dominated government. There has also been some limited diplomatic pressure from external actors such as the US, Britain and the European Union. The most effective source of pressure appears to have been through the Pacific Islands Forum, suggesting a situation where Pacific islanders have been more prepared to listen to each other on this particular issue. The recommendation by a Forum eminent persons group for elections leading to a return of democratic government in 2009, has had the greatest political impact so far. Whether the military government will implement this schedule, remains to be seen.

Peacebuilding in these different situations in the Southwest Pacific can be related to broader plans for improved development strategies for the South Pacific as a whole. A major focus for the Pacific Islands Forum since 2004 has been the development of the Pacific Plan.²⁵ The Pacific Plan has been designed to encourage enhanced regional cooperation in addressing various economic, social and economic issues. The underlying principle is that regional cooperation should be encouraged in situations where such cooperation will result in a net gain for all parties concerned, as compared with a situation where parties proceeded alone or on the basis of more limited cooperative efforts. While schemes for pooling sovereignty might appear ambitious at this stage,

²⁵ See the Pacific Plan Online, <http://www.pacificplan.org/tiki-page.php?pageName=HomePage> (accessed 19 March 2008). The Plan was endorsed at the meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum in Papua New Guinea in October 2005.

more limited proposals for greater cooperation might have some impact on some of the situations that have been discussed.

The change of government in Australia in November 2007 is also relevant in this context. In July 2007 then opposition leader Kevin Rudd signalled that a Labor government would undertake a long term Pacific Partnership for Development and Security as a means of enhancing development efforts in the South Pacific; this would include a focus on ‘good governance’ and ‘the provision of effective security assistance and capacity building with local police’²⁶. On becoming prime minister Rudd elaborated the policy in his Port Moresby Declaration of 6 March 2008.²⁷ The plan at this point was to negotiate Pacific Partnerships for Development with individual island countries, using the Millennium Development Goals as a framework. These partnerships would also entail coordination with New Zealand’s development assistance efforts in the region. While Australia is the largest single aid donor in the South Pacific, and this involvement can be construed as part of the regionalization of peacebuilding in the region, the involvement of New Zealand and the coordinating efforts of the Pacific Islands Forum are also important. The global dimension is represented by the involvement of actors such as the European Union and various bodies from within the UN system. It should also be noted that while development assistance can be seen as part of peacebuilding in relevant situations, it is only one of a number of perspectives that are relevant to assessing such assistance.

Comparing East Timor and the Southwest Pacific (particularly Solomon Islands) in terms of the regionalization of peacebuilding, we see that relatively speaking regionalization is more significant in relation to the Southwest Pacific. This relates to the more prominent profile that East Timor has on the international agenda, and also the fact that the problems in that country are more serious than in any of the situations in the

²⁶ Kevin Rudd, ‘Future challenges in foreign policy’, address to the Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, 5 July 2007, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org> (accessed 16 January 2008)

²⁷ Kevin Rudd, ‘Port Moresby Declaration’, Media Release, 6 March 2008, http://www.pm.gov.au/media/release/2008/media_release_0118.cfm (accessed 19 March 2008). The question of Australia’s future policy towards the South Pacific is considered in ‘Australia and the South Pacific: Rising to the challenge’, Special Report, Issue 12, March 2008, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Barton, ACT; and ‘Engaging our neighbours: Towards a new relationship between Australia and the Pacific Islands. Report of an Independent Task Force’, Special Report, Issue 13, March 2008, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Barton, ACT.

Southwest Pacific. As far as regional organizations are concerned, ASEAN is of little significance in East Timor, whereas the Pacific Islands Forum does play an important legitimizing and coordinating role in the Southwest Pacific. The major point of comparison between East Timor and the Southwest Pacific in relation to regionalization is the role played by Australia. Whatever the differences in emphasis on this issue as between the two situations, it is Australia that is pre-eminently the regional actor in both.

‘Lessons learnt’ from peacekeeping and peacebuilding in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific

If we regard peacekeeping as a more specific dimension of the broader process of peacebuilding, what are some of the ‘lessons’ that might be learned from the experience of the regionalization of these situations in recent years? At one level one can generalize about the dynamics of these situations. At another level there are suggestions about how regionalization might be better handled in order to effect better outcomes for the people most directly involved at the local level. Whether we are analysing the underlying dynamics or considering possible improvements there seems no doubt that regionalization will become increasingly significant as the basis for peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the future. This relates to the need for the global level to prioritize in responding to crises such as those discussed in this paper. While these crises can have devastating effects for the people most directly involved, they do not necessarily register significantly on the global agenda. There are frequently much worse situations. In some circumstances the major powers will respond on humanitarian grounds, but action at this level is most likely when those powers perceive their own interests to be directly engaged. The major powers in turn will have the greatest influence on whether action will proceed from the global level. Situations such as East Timor and the Southwest Pacific are not normally categorized as issues engaging the major powers.

If the trend towards regionalization in relation to both peacekeeping and peacebuilding is likely to continue, an initial ‘lesson’ then is that the major powers will only be significantly engaged if they perceive their own security interests to be at stake,

or if they believe a major humanitarian crisis to be involved. The US became involved in the East Timor crisis in 1999 because of perceptions about the humanitarian issues involved, and also because of its relationships with Australia and Indonesia. Other major powers such as China and Japan were much more low key in their involvement during the UNTAET period. In the post-2006 period the US has not been significantly involved in East Timor. Regional involvement could come through a regional organization, such as ASEAN for East Timor or the Pacific Islands Forum for the Southwest Pacific. However, as has been pointed out, ASEAN's involvement in East Timor has been relatively insignificant. The involvement of the Pacific Islands Forum in the Southwest Pacific has been more important but frequently for legitimizing and coordinating reasons. In both cases one needs to examine the politics within the organizations concerned, and the significance of the particular issues for the organization as whole and for key members. If the cases under consideration are a guide then a major factor favouring regionalization is the willingness of a significant regional actor to become involved. In East Timor and the Southwest Pacific Australia has played this role. The reasons are similar for those indicated previously in relation to the major powers: a perception of Australia's security interests being involved, and also a belief that the mitigation of human suffering required external involvement. In these cases Australian policy has had the support of, and been coordinated with, New Zealand. New Zealand could thus be seen as another regional actor in these situations, although its significance is less than Australia's. With both Australia and New Zealand another influence on their involvement would be a perception (sometimes accompanied by pressure) that it was their duty to act on behalf of the Western world in this region. Describing Australia as 'deputy sheriff' to the US²⁸ (as in East Timor in 1999) might be an exaggeration, but there is also an element of truth in the suggestion that Australia was undertaking a devolved responsibility on behalf of the US.

If the involvement of Australia as a regional power has been a key factor underlying regionalization in East Timor and the Southwest Pacific, then we will also need to consider the interaction between Australia and the local factors involved. The key dimension here is the relationship between Australia and the local governments

²⁸ Fred Brenchley, 'The Howard Defence Doctrine', *Bulletin* (Sydney), 28 September 1999, pp. 22-24.

concerned. The consent of the local governments was necessary to legitimize the ‘intervention’, and this is also relevant with post-conflict peacebuilding. East Timor was in crisis in May-June 2006, and Australian involvement was clearly at the request of East Timor’s government. In Solomon Islands in 2003 the agreement of the Solomons government and parliament appeared to be negotiated, but was given nonetheless. Australia-Papua New Guinea relations in relation to peacebuilding and development assistance more generally have been negotiated. In the case of post-2006 Fiji Australian and New Zealand involvement has been resisted by the military government; this is one case where the role of the Pacific Islands Forum has been relatively more significant.

On the question of ‘lessons’ for future peacekeeping and peacebuilding one might argue that it can be helpful to have a regional power with a benign outlook, the relevant capacity and the political will to be prepared to undertake ‘interventions’ should relevant situations arise. However such ‘interventions’ should be on the basis of local consent involving a formal request from both the government and legislature of the country concerned. There should also be international legitimization through the relevant regional organization and also through a relevant body of the United Nations. With the most intense crises the UN Security Council should give approval. In lower level situations a statement of approval from the UN Secretary-General might suffice. In the broader context of peacebuilding the involvement of the UN Peacebuilding Commission might be appropriate. Apart from the formalities, regionalized peacekeeping and peacebuilding is likely to be more effective if there is substantial regional support through a coalition of regional states and through concrete contributions by the relevant regional organization. Having strong political support from relevant major powers also facilitates the success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Such powers include most obviously the US, but China and Japan are also important for Asia-Pacific situations. There can be complications sometimes such as with the Taiwan-China dispute in relation to Solomon Islands. Indonesian approval, or at least non-opposition, is of some importance for operations in East Timor; India is a factor in relation to Fiji. Finally, but of very great significance, the success of regionalized peacekeeping and peacebuilding will be encouraged by broad multilateral support, expressed normally through the UN system. This is not so much a

matter of formal approval as of having political support across the range of UN members, and of having the various UN agencies and related bodies involved in relevant programmes of development assistance. While regionalization might be an increasing trend in relation to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the involvement of the global level will continue to be very important in various ways.