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**COMMON THREADS THROUGH THE PATCHWORK QUILT
MAJOR CAUSES OF INSTABILITY ACROSS THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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ABSTRACT

Violent internal conflict has occurred in a number of South-west Pacific countries in the last two decades. This thesis examines four of these, Timor-Leste, the Bougainville province of Papua New Guinea, the Solomons Islands and Tonga and tries to determine if there are common factors at the root of the instability that has plagued each one. It provides a short narrative of the history of the recent internal clashes of each and examines the major drivers in each individual case. It concludes that the major factors contributing to instability across these four are clashes of identity, weak central governments and state institutions, and poor economic management.

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INTRODUCTION

The South-West Pacific has experienced a number of internal conflicts in the last decade. While there has not been the same experience of inter-state conflict as found elsewhere, nor the global occurrences of the fight against ideologically and religiously motivated terrorist groups, the South-west Pacific has not been the serene place often seen on picture postcards. Even in New Zealand, the perception of the general population is that we live in the quietest and most peaceful corner of the world, and that the Pacific Island nations are ideal places for a well-earned holiday. There appears to be no conscious understanding of the scale of the conflicts that have taken place, nor of the effects on the populations of the affected countries. It is possible that this is because each of the conflicts that are being examined in this thesis have been internal in nature, but may also be symptomatic of a general lack of understanding of the complexities of conflict among the majority of the New Zealand population.

For example the South-west Pacific is not primarily dominated by the Polynesian races, but in fact up to 79% of the population of this region, not including Australia and New Zealand is Melanesian. This balance is weighted heavily by the large Melanesian populations within Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (Crocombe, 2008, p. 581). Polynesian-based societies in the Pacific, such as Hawaiians, Tongans, Samoans, Tahitians and Maori, are geographically dispersed. By contrast, Melanesian-based societies such as those in Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands are geographically closer together (with the exception of Fiji).

Evelyn Colbert (1997, p. 6) notes that the mobility of the sea-going Polynesian peoples has contributed to shared characteristics despite these geographic distances between societies and nations. These shared characteristics generically extend to the social structure within Polynesian societies, which she contends is more hierarchical than Melanesian societies. This hierarchy of royalty, nobility and commoners will be shown in the chapter on Tonga, while the concept of the Melanesian 'Big Man', where status is more defined by individual power and wealth and the distribution of patronage and money, can be seen in the chapter on the Solomon Islands.

The aim of this thesis is to identify broad themes behind internal conflict in the South-west Pacific and in doing so, to help educate and prepare government and military personnel for their roles in any future regional efforts to address instability. It will do this by examining the broad causes of internal conflict in four countries in the South-west

Pacific: Timor-Leste, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands and Tonga. Each of these has seen New Zealand Defence Force personnel, as well as diplomatic and New Zealand Police staff deploy there in the last decade as a result of internal conflict.

In some cases, such as Timor-Leste and the Solomon islands, foreign troops, including New Zealanders, are there still, some years after the conflict that led to them being deployed in the first place. The other South-west Pacific countries to have suffered internal conflict in the last decade are Vanuatu and Fiji. These have not been examined in this thesis purely because there has been no deployment of New Zealand forces there in a peace-keeping or peace-building role. It could be argued that Timor-Leste should not be included as it is not technically a South-west Pacific nation and is in fact a South-East Asian nation. However, its importance in the recent experiences of New Zealand participation in international peace support operations has meant it is included here.

The thesis will examine the 2006 – 2008 period of instability within Timor-Leste and note that it has been as the result of clashes of identity due to the supposed east vs. west factions within the military, weak governance due to the fractured state of politics, especially among the political elite, and the weakness of the two major state security institutions, the military and the police, and most specifically, the tension arising between the two as a result of indistinct direction on the roles and responsibilities of each.

Bougainville has since the late 1980s been affected by clashes of identity with outsiders as well as poor economic management. The mining of the vast Bougainvillean copper resources, with little regard to the social and environmental degradation suffered by the island and its peoples, contributed to a sense of being exploited. Against a backdrop of the Bougainvilleans' sense of being separate and distinct from outsiders, in this case the government of Papua New Guinea, it provided the catalyst for a resistance and independence movement which plunged the island into war against the military of the central government.

Tonga has recently experienced an unprecedented period of instability in 2006, which was caused primarily by weak governance, and a clash of identity. In this case the identity clash has been between a traditional monarchical ruling system of royalty and nobility, and a growing desire within the general population for a more democratic government. The poor personal standards of behaviour of some members of the ruling

classes, especially in the area of economic exploitation by the ruling elite, contributed to a sense of weak and oppressive governance.

Lastly, the Solomons Islands has suffered a conflict which has roots in all of these factors. It has suffered from ethnic conflict with tensions between Malaitans and the natives of Guadalcanal, as Malaitans in growing numbers have moved to Guadalcanal seeking employment and placing pressure on land ownership. Against this identity conflict, the traditional 'Big Man' style of leadership has been used by politicians who were in positions of national power. The result has been a national parliamentary system dominated by the distribution of personal favours and wealth, with little heed for the structures of party politics as seen in western countries, and a resulting debacle in the management of the nation's economy and the wasting of revenues from the country's logging industry. Lastly, the ethnic divisions between islanders also appeared in the national police force, rendering it ineffective and torn apart.

It would be too simplistic to suggest that there are absolutely identical common causes of internal conflict between these four countries. Each country's experiences are unique and yet share common themes. To determine what these are, the thesis will examine each in turn and focus on the major factors in each case. It will then provide a concluding chapter in which the common themes behind each of the factors can be compared. It will note that while each nation must not be arbitrarily assumed to have the same specific problems as others, there are enough general threads to show that this area of the globe has shared challenges which have led to conflict, and that these can be grouped into broad categories of conflicts of identity, weak governance due to a clash of traditional governance systems against Westminster-style democracy, weak state institutions especially security forces, and poor economic management.

CHAPTER 1: TIMOR-LESTE¹

“Freedom has a sour taste for some trying to overcome all that has been perpetrated on them and cope with the huge social and economic problems that exist in our country.”

Xanana Gusmao
As written in the foreword to
the John Martinkus book
‘A Dirty Little War’

Introduction

Timor-Leste’s struggle for independence from Indonesian occupation has had serious consequences for the Timorese people, and has left a legacy of a country seeking to rebuild itself, of remembering the loss of thousands of lives and coming to terms with the internal divisions within society. For a number of years at the start of this century, Timor-Leste was seen as the best example of United Nations-led state-building. It was the one the international community had ‘got right’. There was no doubt that much needed to be done, and were it not for significant unrest in the period 2006 - 2008, global attention might well have remained away from the country. After all, it had emerged from decades of oppressive colonisation by Portugal and invasion and occupation by Indonesia and appeared to be making progress, slowly but surely.

Yet in 2006, a major crisis occurred which necessitated the government of Timor-Leste once again requesting external security assistance to maintain law and order. The security forces fractured, and an assassination attempt very nearly took the life of the country’s president. At the time of writing, twelve years after Timor-Leste gained its independence from Indonesia in 1999, New Zealand Defence Force personnel are still based there and they are likely to remain there until the completion of the 2012 national elections.

While this chapter will examine the causes of that particular crisis, its underlying causes are related to Timor-Leste’ difficult and bloody past. The primary factors are the internal struggles for political power, and conflict between the security organs of the state. They were also exacerbated by a perceived identity split between the easterners

¹ The English language name for the country is East Timor. This was used widely by the international community prior to independence and even immediately afterwards, in the names of the international intervention forces, such as the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) and the United Nations’ Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). However, the official name for the country is now Timor-Leste. This thesis will use either name as appropriate.

and westerners serving within the military. The chapter will do this by briefly focusing on the pre-colonial history, before examining the Indonesian occupation and its effects on Timorese politics, and the transformation of a guerrilla resistance movement to a seemingly revered national military force, yet one which has suffered its own internal divisions.

Timor-Leste, pre-1975

Timor-Leste occupies the eastern half of the island of Timor. It also has the two islands of Atauro and Jaco as well as the enclave of Oecussi, situated geographically but not politically, within West Timor. The island of Timor prior to 1946 had been roughly split in half and consisted of West Timor, which was part of the Dutch East Indies, and Portuguese Timor, which is what is Timor-Leste today. The Portuguese had an economic presence in Timor since the 1500s and a military administration there since the early 18th century. This “possession” as it was, comprised a number of kingdoms, with a variety of languages spoken across it. There were a number of small uprisings against Portuguese rule, but by and large, the Portuguese were deemed to be benign colonial rulers (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 36). A major failing was however their failure to adequately develop the country or to promote any meaningful Timorese participation in the administration of it. This was to have lasting consequences in terms of state capacity.

Australian and Dutch forces landed in the capital, Dili, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbour, despite Portugal and her territories being neutral. Both Portugal and the Netherlands were then forced to abandon their Indonesian and Timorese colonies in the face of a Japanese invasion in February 1942. Australian and some remaining Dutch troops fought alongside local Timorese but were eventually forced to withdraw in late 1942 and early 1943 (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 37). The two European nations returned to resume colonial rule after the Japanese surrender.

In 1949, Indonesian nationalists were successful in their bid to become independent from their former colonial masters, the Dutch. Portuguese Timor however, remained a colonial possession. The overthrow in Portugal of the rightist dictatorship in 1974 caused a period of significant upheaval for all its major overseas colonies. The new left-leaning Portuguese government adopted a policy of withdrawing from its colonial possessions; in Timor-Leste it authorised the establishment of political parties as part

of this disengagement process. Three major political groupings sprang up; they would soon be involved in a bloody and fractured chapter of Timorese history.

Meanwhile, the military government of Indonesia watched with alarm the new political direction within Portugal, the impending departure of Portugal from its colonies, and the apparent slide to the left of indigenous Timorese politics. Having previously conducted their own coup to blunt communism in Indonesia, they were concerned by the possibility of a communist-style regime just across the border in Portuguese Timor. The Indonesian generals embarked upon a plan to subvert the leftist political direction within Portuguese Timor, determined to influence the new form of government.

Indonesia sought to establish relations with the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (APODETI), a small political group which advocated integration with Indonesia (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 37). They also cultivated contacts with the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) and this group soon became their favoured client. Indonesia was also positioning itself to counteract the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor party (FRETILIN), which it believed was more communist in its tendencies. FRETILIN was descended from the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), which had initially adopted a stance of eventual self-rule - over a ten-year transitional period - but it soon transformed into a party that sought immediate independence from Portugal.

The Portuguese administrator, Lemos Pires, had arrived in late 1974 and was developing plans to facilitate a transition to independence. This included a power-sharing agreement amongst the three major parties, with a general election to be held after three years of transitional government (Molnar, 2010, p. 39). Political tensions between FRETILIN and the UDT were exploited by the Indonesians, resulting in an attempted coup by the UDT on 11th August 1975. FRETILIN leaders successfully appealed to Timorese serving in the local Portuguese army to join the struggle, and backed by these increased numbers, they took the fight to the UDT. Bitter fighting between these Timorese groups ensued, with the death toll estimated to be 1,500 - 3,000 people on both sides. As Niner (2007, p. 117) describes it "A lingering bitterness remains over these events", and it is one probable cause behind some of the internal political tensions that exist today.

FRETILIN named its troops the Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor (FALINTIL), and ultimately routed the UDT forces. It now found itself in the position of

having to run the new country. FRETILIN declared the independence of East Timor on 28 November 1975, but only two days later, the routed leaders of UDT and APODETI signed a declaration along with the Indonesians, known as the Balibo Declaration, which declared that East Timor was an integrated part of Indonesia (Niner, 2007, p. 117).

Invasion and Occupation by Indonesia

Indonesia was now in possession of an agreement upon which it could now make its next move. While FRETILIN continued its process of appointing leaders to key government positions within the newly independent and re-named Timor-Leste, Indonesia prepared. On 7 December 1975, Indonesia launched a military invasion which cost thousands of lives in just the first few days. FALINTIL soldiers, although flush with weapons from the abandoned Portuguese armouries, were unable to resist the massive invasion head on and were forced into a guerrilla campaign to resist the might of the better organised and equipped Indonesian military.

Smith describes the resistance of FALINTIL to Indonesian as occurring in three distinct phases (Smith & Dee, 2003, pp. 40-41). The first was from the time of the 1975 invasion until the end of 1978. During this time there were a number of significant battles between the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI, the Indonesian military) and FALINTIL, which culminated in the destruction of the main FALINTIL base at Mount Matabean and the death of the FALINTIL commander, Nicolau Lobato. As a result of a long period of attritional battles between the two forces, FALINTIL's strength declined from 27,000 fighters to 5,000 (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 40).

The "second phase" lasted from 1979 until 1987. This period was characterised by the adoption of a guerrilla campaign. Xanana Gusmao was appointed commander of FALINTIL following the death of Lobato, and the group sustained itself by living off the proceeds of successful raids and ambushes. With no major external source of arms or supplies, FALINTIL was forced to use its enemy, the TNI, as its major logistics provider, and made use of weapons and supplies captured during raids and ambushes.

The "third phase" was from 1987 until 1999, when a referendum on independence was finally held. During this period, FALINTIL almost disappeared; at one stage its numbers were reduced to "only around 100" (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 40). Gusmao instituted a change of direction, which included separating FALINTIL from FRETILIN; that is, it was

no longer exclusively the military wing of one political party, but was to be an independent armed force in its own right and the basis of a hoped-for future national army. The disparity in military strength between FALINTIL and the much stronger TNI ensured that guerrilla operations were still FALINTIL's main tactic, but greater effort was placed in the establishment of a clandestine support network.

This clandestine network helped protect FALINTIL and gave it strength in its mountain bases, as well as enabling a guerrilla campaign that tied down TNI forces many times its size. The Indonesian reaction to this was a combination of bribery and brutality, yet this approach ensured that the occupation of Timor-Leste did not fade from the international consciousness. In fact, the occupation was the subject of growing international concern and criticism. Even the arrest and subsequent imprisonment of Gusmao in a jail in Jakarta in 1992, did not stop the guerrilla campaign; a number of field commanders succeeded him, ending up with Taur Matan Ruak. Gusmao, although incarcerated, remained commander-in-chief.

FALINTIL survived by adapting to the circumstances at hand. Its "three phases" of resistance could perhaps be described individually as 'the big battles', 'weathering the storm', and finally 'playing the long game'. Above all, it was part of a concerted campaign of military and political struggle in which it always kept its 'eye on the prize'. FALINTIL, having weathered the storm, was perfectly positioned to become the basis of a national military force when independence finally came. The status of those who fought during the occupation was high, yet this was to have further consequences when the force eventually started accepting the new blood it needed after independence.

Independence from Indonesia

The 1998 fall of the Suharto regime in Indonesia and the new presidency of B.J. Habibie marked a sea change for the Timorese pro-independence movement. From a dictatorship which did not budge on the question of Timor's place within the Indonesian state, and which was inextricably intertwined with the military domination of the province, there now existed a government led by a president who was willing to reconsider the Timor question. Shortly after assuming office, Habibie released some Timorese political prisoners and announced that Timor-Leste would be given 'special-territory status' within the Indonesian state (Hainsworth, 2000, p. 197).

These small steps reflected a liberalising change in greater Indonesia under the new regime. This change included the ability to register political parties, investigations into abuses and killings in East Timor and Irian Jaya (Hainsworth, 2000, pp. 193-194), moves towards increased press freedoms and, from an international perspective, a sense of greater openness. There was also a pledge to move towards open and democratic Indonesian elections in June 1999.

Hainsworth notes that this new era stimulated growth in political organisations within East Timor, with increased interest and participation in debate in the form of new and emerging Timorese youth and political organisations (Hainsworth, 2000, p. 195). However, this did not fundamentally change the daily lives of the majority of the Timorese people, who were still subjected to an occupation by the Indonesian military.

The East Timor situation was now firmly in the international spotlight again, as a result of these initiatives, and diplomatic pressure grew on the Indonesian government to resolve the status of East Timor. Habibie announced in early 1999 that a consultative process or referendum would take place among the Timorese people, and that should the Timorese choose independence then Indonesia would honour that decision (Niner, 2007, p. 121). However, there had been little discourse between President Habibie and the Indonesian military on the East Timor issue. This may well have been because Habibie knew the military would strongly oppose the possibility of Timorese independence. Even as Habibie made his announcement, FALANTIL and the TNI were still engaged in guerrilla warfare and the TNI had committed itself to strengthening militias and even arming civilian volunteers (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 42).

In May 1999, an agreement was signed between the UN, Indonesia and Portugal, for the conduct of a referendum on East Timor future. The proposition was simple: should East Timor become a special autonomous region within Indonesia (Smith & Dee, 2003, p. 43)? Acceptance by a majority vote would indicate that Timor remained under the Indonesian umbrella; rejection would mean that Timor could move towards independence. Under the auspices of the United Nations, and facilitated by the United Nations Assistance Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), preparations were made for a ballot on 30 August 1999. In the face of growing restlessness and intimidation by pro-integration militias, voter registration continued. When the ballot was finally conducted, approximately 98-99% of registered voters cast their ballots, and an overwhelming 78.5% rejected the autonomous region option (Hainsworth, 2000, p. 204).

Rejection of Indonesian hegemony triggered a wave of violence which shocked the world. Angered by this rejection of Indonesian sovereignty, pro-Indonesian militias and elements of the TNI embarked on a path of systematic killings, beatings, looting and forcible evacuations. In the weeks after the referendum, it was estimated that some 230,000 people were moved by either the TNI or the militias to refugee camps in West Timor. Thousands were reported to have been killed or wounded, and many fled Dili, seeking refuge in the hills (Hainsworth, 2000, p. 204).

FALINTIL showed remarkable restraint during this and remained confined to its camps. This was done in the realisation that moving into battle against the militias might well give the TNI the excuse they needed to conduct even more severe operations and prolong their presence in the country. In response, the UN Security Council authorised an intervention force to deploy to the country. Despite a campaign by some pro-integration elements to declare the voting had been rigged, and an apparent reluctance by the TNI to accept the result, Habibie and his government found they were facing a growing international outcry and external political pressure. The faltering Indonesian economy was also desperately in need of financial loans from the United States and the violence in East Timor now threatened to pull these from his grasp. In the face of this diplomatic and economic pressure, Habibie reluctantly agreed to the deployment of an UN-sanctioned foreign force, the International Force for East Timor (INTERFET).

INTERFET troops arrived in Dili on 20 September 1999, and gradually built up their forces. Over the weeks ahead, INTERFET expanded its operations until the territory was completely under its control by 22 October. The TNI left relatively quickly after INTERFET's arrival, and order was quickly restored, without resorting to major fighting between INTERFET and the militias, who had threatened to resist heavily. INTERFET then eventually transitioned to UNTAET, the United Nations' Transitional Administration in East Timor. This was the comprehensive political, social, economic and military mission charged with assisting Timor-Leste to transition to complete independence, including building state institutions.

While its task was large, the initial years of UNTAET indicated that Timor-Leste was becoming the United Nations' most successful state-building effort. This potential faded however, tarnished by a number of inherent weaknesses within the new state, especially internal political division and its influence on the security organs of the state.

Political Tensions before and after Independence

A cursory glance at the state of political parties in Timor-Leste would reveal that FRETILIN is, and has been, the most dominant political party in the country since the 1970s, and it will likely remain so. Yet this approach would ignore very real political divides that existed in Timorese politics even before the Indonesia invaded, and still exist today. The leading figures of political leadership have not always been adherents of FRETILIN, or even on the same side.

As previously discussed, Indonesia established contacts with two political parties in the months before the invasion: the pro-integration APODETI, and the UDT. FRETILIN itself had its genesis in the pro-independence ASDT. The fighting between FRETILIN and the UDT was a sign of the internal struggles to come; once the Indonesians had invaded and occupied the country, there was a divide between the pro-Indonesian sector of society and their umbrella political and militia groups, and the pro-independence factions.

Over the years ahead, under increasing pressure from the Indonesians, the left-leaning FRETILIN adopted a more Marxist-Leninist ideology (Niner, 2007, p. 118), and increasingly became more divided internally as the struggle to maintain the impetus of the resistance movement became more and more difficult. FRETILIN became concerned about policing its own ranks, and a number of persons within the party were arrested including the then-party president, Xavier do Amaral who was imprisoned; some were also executed for a variety of reasons. Gusmao, who was one of the senior leaders at this point, abhorred the violence and internal conflict, and started preaching a more moderate form of politics.

In 1981, the resistance leaders, at least those that had survived the crushing Indonesian campaigns of 1978 and 1979, met and declared the existence of a new umbrella organisation to lead the resistance, the National Council of Revolutionary Resistance. Gusmao was appointed head of the Council as well as its political leader and the leader of FALINTIL, the armed wing. Gusmao's aim was to unite all the political factions in order to solidify the resistance – he also believed that FRETILIN could be a more encompassing political body, able to include differing ideologies (Niner, 2007, p. 119). However some FRETILIN hardliners were less inclined to this way of thinking.

By the late 1980s, Gusmao, who was now firmly in control of the resistance movement, resigned from FRETILIN, and declared that FALINTIL was the armed wing of the entire Timorese resistance, and no longer politically aligned to FRETILIN. He also renamed the resistance council, calling it the National Council of Maubere Resistance (CNRM). Maubere was originally a Portuguese term for the poor and illiterate indigenous Timorese. It had been used in a derogatory manner; but the Timorese resistance adopted it as a source of pride, and to describe all indigenous Timorese. The new council was aimed embracing all Timorese, even those who had worked with the Indonesians, or who perhaps had no agreement with the FRETILIN ideology. This was another step in the disassociation of Gusmao from some of the FRETILIN leadership, and a source of tensions that were to appear later following independence in 1999. When Gusmao was President, FRETILIN was the dominant political party, and its leader, Mari Alkatiri, was Prime Minister when the crisis of 2006 erupted. By then, due to the divide that had emerged between FRETILIN's leaders on one hand, and Gusmao and Ramos-Horta and their backers on the other, "there was a major and seemingly unbridgeable fissure within the ranks of the political elite" (Cotton, 2007, p. 456).

In early 2007, Jose Ramos-Horta, who had been a vocal leader of the Timorese diaspora during the Indonesian occupation, and who led the political fight from exile in Portugal, announced he intended to run for President. By this time Gusmao had formed his own political party, the National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (CNRT). This was a very symbolic move by Gusmao on two fronts; firstly, it confirmed he had moved to establish a political counter-balance to FRETILIN, his former political home. Secondly, CNRT deliberately draws on the heritage of resistance politics, as the acronym had previously been used for the National Council for Timorese Resistance, which had existed from 1987 - 1999 (Kingsbury & Leach, 2007, pp. 9-10). In the presidential election of 2007, Ramos-Horta was elected President, and in the parliamentary elections, CNRT won the second largest share of votes behind FRETILIN. After weeks of wrangling over which party would form the government, Ramos-Horta announced that CNRT would form the next government in a coalition with other smaller parties, and Gusmao was invited to become Prime Minister.

These political divisions in Timor-Leste have also spilled over into the state of the national security sector, with undue influence from some quarters, as well as legacies of the Indonesian occupation combining to create tensions that would erupt into violence and literally threaten the lives of senior Timorese politicians.

A major weakness: The Security Sector

The state of the security sector was one of the major issues to be faced by the new governance institutions in Timor-Leste. Both UNTAET and the Timorese Government recognised that part of the successful transition to a fully-independent state required that the security organs of the state were fully viable, both in terms of capability and independence, and therefore the level of trust placed in them by society as a whole. In May 2004, domestic laws were passed which were meant to define the roles of the police force (PNTL) and of the military (F-FDTL) (Burton, 2007, p. 101), separating them into traditional internal and external security organs. However, these roles were not sharply defined in the resulting legislation, and this has no doubt contributed to some of the tensions experienced between the two forces since that time. The initial recruiting pools that the two were drawn from have also exacerbated tensions between them.

The PNTL had within its ranks, at least initially after independence, some former Timorese members of the Indonesian Police. By contrast, the F-FDTL was comprised of the former guerrilla fighters of FALINTIL. Thus, the F-FDTL was the home of the victorious armed resistance, while the PNTL became populated by some who had been, by perception at least, supporters of the occupation. This led to tensions not only between the two, but also between the police and the political leadership (Burton, 2007, p. 105). F-FDTL perceptions about the better status of the police in the national order, whether real or imagined, was one of the grievances which contributing to the devastating unrest of 2006. There was a general disgruntlement about the pay and conditions, and the general state of politics in the nation (Kingsbury, 2007, p. 21). There was also tension between the 'east' and 'west' factions within F-FDTL, reflecting a supposed east vs. west divide in the country.

The Identity Divide

The distrust of the 'old guard' of the resistance, who were primarily from the east of the country, towards those who were from the west of the country, created a very real sense of 'us vs. them' within Timorese society. Indeed, the supposed east-west split is a comparatively new phenomenon in Timor-Leste. It does not appear to derive from any particular ethnic or language differences, but more from perceptions about different experiences under Indonesian occupation. Leach notes that while there was a generalisation under Portuguese rule of the more "rebellious and independent" people

in the east of the country, and a “friendlier and more cooperative” grouping in the west, the current portrayal of a east-west division is more a post-colonial political legacy than a total reality (Leach, 2007, p. 201). He also notes that this divide has not been a significant issue until recently and that some responsibility for allowing the use of ‘*loro manu*’ and ‘*loro sa’e*’ in public discourse should be borne by the political leadership.

The terms *loro manu* and *loro sa’e* became used frequently, even though they were often done so out of context. *Loro manu* originally referred to those from West Timor, which is still part of Indonesia, while *loro sa’e* originally referred to those from East Timor, which is of course now independent. The use of the two terms in post-independence Timor-Leste has now become a case of branding, whereby those from the western half of Timor-Leste, which is part of independent Timor-Leste, have been marked by some of the ruling political and military establishment as being *loro manu*, and by name anyway, inextricably linked with West Timor and the Indonesians. In other words, they had been tarred with the brush of association with the occupiers. It is misleading to speculate that this ‘east-west’ difference is a long-term demographic issue within Timor-Leste. It is an unfortunate social issue that exists because of the public assertions of private perceptions, and Kingsbury notes that it “...was largely artificial, as there is no east-west divide as such.” (Kingsbury, 2007, p. 22) The east west divide was to cause major problems within the F-FDTL, and indeed the country, in 2006.

The crisis of 2006

In the F-FDTL, the ‘east’ refers to those who were generally from the east of the country and were predominantly the old guard, those who had served in FALINTIL during the resistance. The ‘west’ referred to those from the western part of Timor-Leste who were more often the younger generation, many of whom had been recruited into the F-FDTL after independence. There was an underlying current of entitlement amongst the easterners, or so it was felt by the younger generation from the west of the country. This extended to not only greater representation in command and promotion prospects, which is perhaps not unexpected given that military organisations rely on the benefit of experience, of people having done the ‘hard yards’ to earn positions of responsibility; there was also a perception that conditions were generally better in the garrisons in the east. Members of the military from the west of the country wrote to then-President Gusmao detailing complaints over their treatment (Nevins, 2007, p. 164). They complained of being overlooked, of worse living conditions, and of

being the subject of negative comments from the east (Kingsbury, 2007, p. 21). This growing sense of discontent led to a strike by nearly 600 soldiers in February 2006.

The government's response was to give the strikers an ultimatum to return to work; when they refused, they were sacked. This hard-line approach did not defuse the situation, as perhaps had been intended. Instead, the apparent failure to even listen to the grievances was to set in train a chain of events which eventually resulted in the return of international peacekeeping forces to the streets of Dili. The then-Prime Minister, Mari Alkatiri, was at that time experiencing tensions of his own with President Xanana Gusmao. Alkatiri was the head of a government that had in the preceding years become increasingly more authoritarian. Accusations of corruption had been levelled at both Alkatiri and the Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato (Kingsbury, 2007, pp. 19-20). Not only had questions been raised in public forums about the conduct of some of the most senior leaders within the government, the President and the Prime Minister had shown signs of diverging views on what an appropriate political balance in Timor-Leste might look like.

Alkatiri's 'harder' approach in seeking a preferred FRETILIN dominated state contrasted with Gusmao's desire for a more balanced, and thus a more open, political system. Alkatiri had proclaimed that FRETILIN could win up to 90% of the popular vote in the 2001 elections, yet Gusmao had indicated that a figure of 50% might be more preferable as it would provide a better democratic balance in parliament (Kingsbury, 2007, p. 20). This growing rift between the two was probably a significant contributor in Alkatiri avoiding calling-in Gusmao to negotiate with the striking soldiers. Of all the figures in Timor-Leste who might have had the mana to be able to sit with any disenfranchised group and seek resolutions to problems, Gusmao was, and remains, the most revered and respected person capable of such things.

On 28 April 2006, the dismissed soldiers staged a protest in Dili that went tragically wrong. What started as a demonstration of discontent and resistance to the government's approach soon turned into a riot, possibly instigated by other parties also protesting alongside the dismissed soldiers, including unemployed youths and members of a political group with criminal undertones, the Colimau 2000. Faced by the PNTL's inability, or unwillingness, to quell the riot, Alkatiri ordered the military to defuse the situation - with orders to shoot, protestors were soon lying dead and dying in the streets. The dismissed soldiers, or 'rebels' as they had now become, fled into the nearby hills along with some of their supporters. The growing crisis led to speculation

that the FRETILIN Congress being held in mid-May might result in the ousting of Alkatiri as the party's leader, in response to growing dissatisfaction over his handling of the affair. Over the following weeks, the rebels ignored calls to disarm, and the military attempted to disarm one of the known groups of rebels, only to lose soldiers in a gun battle. The ongoing tensions between the police and the military continued and resulted in further violence in Dili.

In response to this descent into internal conflict and at a request from the government of Timor-Leste, military and police personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Portugal arrived in Dili on 26 May 2006 to help restore law and order (Kingsbury, 2007, pp. 19-22). The F-FDTL was ordered to return to barracks while the PNTL were non-effective, having essentially "collapsed as an institution" (Kingsbury & Leach, 2007, p. 7) due to their failure to provide effective and politically impartial law and order. President Gusmao demanded Alkatiri's resignation but found his efforts to forcibly remove Alkatiri constrained by limits within the Constitution. With growing international and domestic pressure, Alkatiri finally resigned as Prime Minister on 26 June 2006.

After Alkatiri's resignation, FRETILIN submitted three alternative names for the Prime Minister's post to Gusmao, who chose an old ally, Jose Ramos-Horta, to succeed Alkatiri. Ramos-Horta established stronger links with local provincial authorities and the Catholic Church. He also embarked on an initiative to increase infrastructure development throughout the country. In early 2007 Ramos-Horta announced he would run for President. Gusmao had also formed a new political party, the CNRT, to contest general elections, and was eventually appointed Prime Minister. Yet the issue of the deserters from FDTL, who were led by Major Alberto Reinado, was unresolved and came to a head in 2008 when he led a group of men in an attack on the President. In the ensuing battle, Ramos-Horta was shot and critically wounded, while Reinado was killed by Ramos-Horta's bodyguards. Law and order was restored, but international forces remain in Timor-Leste at the time of writing, although they are expected to leave following national elections in June 2012.

Conclusion

The internal problems faced by Timor-Leste have a variety of contributing factors. The continued efforts of the Timorese people to be self-determinant in their future have faced many hurdles, not least of which was the brutality of the occupation by the Indonesian military. This also caused divides within the Timorese people, as some

worked with and within the Indonesian apparatus, especially where some were employed within the military and police. There has also arisen the supposed East vs. West debate, as if there was a definitive effort by some of the people from the west of the country to integrate with the Indonesians. This has been exacerbated by the fact that the majority of the FALINTIL bases during the resistance were based in the east of the country. Therefore, the east was a home, a safe haven, and perhaps the centre of gravity of the struggle, while the west was perceived as being under the influence of the occupiers and perhaps even complicit with them.

This perception has not been helped by the suspicions within the F-FDTL that the easterners were more favoured because they primarily consisted of the hardened veterans, while units based in the east were more likely to be comprised of new recruits. This divide has had deadly consequences in the post-independence period for Timor-Leste, yet it is quite logical that units stationed in the east were always going to be composed of the veterans - having been there for years during the occupation, it would seem unlikely that they might willingly relocate themselves and their families from an area that had become their home. With a need to establish units in the west of the country, closer to the Indonesian border, it's also no surprise that the F-FDTL has recruited soldiers who come from that area.

It is the perception of better treatment and conditions that has caused much division, but this should not be confused with the theory that the 'westerners were collaborators and the easterners were the patriots' rhetoric that has unfortunately appeared in Timorese politics. Ethnically, the differences between the regions of the country are few and far between, and it would be a gross generalisation to suggest that issues of ethnic identity are so clear cut and significant as causes of the internal conflict.

It is more accurate to note that the greatest contributors have been the weaknesses of the political system and the state security services. The presence of some Timorese who have previously served with the Indonesian Police, within the PNTL, may have cause some friction between F-FDTL and PNTL, but equally important has been the influence of individual politicians on each of those two entities, and a lack of clarity on the roles of the two. Timor-Leste's internal crisis post-independence has been the result of struggles for power and the weakness of state security institutions.

CHAPTER TWO - BOUGAINVILLE

Introduction

The conflict on Bougainville has its roots in outside involvement in the exploitation of resources and the economic dispersal of the resulting profits. Bougainvilleans have never been a homogenous ethnic or cultural group, but rather a collection of different tribes with various languages and dialects between them. While it is true that they share commonalities in their cultural practices, there are also differences. However, it is a common thread among them that they view themselves as being different from the peoples of mainland Papua New Guinea (PNG) and its other islands. It is also true that they view themselves as having more in common with the peoples of the Solomon Islands than they do with those of PNG.

This perception of difference and the interactions with outsiders has been deepened through its colonial past, firstly through German colonisation, and then by the Australians, and then by the practices of a central government seeking to control the exploitation of resources, with a general disregard for a fair and equitable system of distribution of the accrued profits. The negative social and ecological effects of mining on Bougainville also served to strengthen the distrust of outsiders, to the point where the most vocal critics of the Panguna mine and the central government turned to violence to protect what they believed were not only their rights, but their way of life.

The result of this conflict was a breakdown of Bougainvillean society, the loss of thousands of lives and the majority of the island's infrastructure, and the turning of islander against islander. A fragile peace has finally come to the island yet there remains rebuilding to be done, both physically and emotionally. A referendum on the island's future is yet to be held and the general disposition of the islanders towards either independence or integration will be interesting to watch.

This chapter will discuss the Bougainvillean identity by examining its pre-colonial and colonial past, before examining the effect of mining and the subsequent rise of the Bougainvillean independence movement and the resulting conflict. The conflict also has roots in environmental degradation, cultural misunderstandings, and internal identity clashes yet two factors are the most important when examining the causes. The first is the assertion of an identity distinctly different and separate from outside influence and control, and the second is the destruction of social norms over the control

of land and resources when they are confronted by a 20th century model of mineral exploitation. Regardless of how the eventual independence referendum turns out, it has been the desire of Bougainvilleans to determine their own future, and to decide what to do with their own land, that is at the heart of this society's struggles.

Bougainville, pre-colonisation

The first inhabitants of Bougainville are thought to have arrived there approximately 28,000 years ago. There was migration from both non-Austronesian and Austronesian speakers, the former having arrived first. While different ethnic groups populated the island over time, society developed without the degree of inter-tribal or inter-ethnic violence found elsewhere in Melanesia. Two key factors were deemed responsible for this: firstly the organisation of society whereby women held fairly high status and tracing ancestry was done through matrilineal descent. Secondly, there was little pressure on the arable land available due to a comparatively small population base and a lifestyle based upon subsistence agriculture. This led to a more harmonious state of affairs when compared to other regions nearby such as the Highlands of PNG (Claxton, 1998, pp. 20-21).

Bougainville society therefore was comparatively egalitarian with a relative degree of flatness of distribution of wealth, despite significant ethnic heterogeneity. Bougainvilleans speak up to 19 languages and 35 different dialects (Joint Committee, Parliament of Australia, 1999). An examination of the language groupings shows the presence of both Austronesian and Papuan, or non-Austronesian, languages. The Papuan languages are generally found in the centre and south of the main island, while the Austronesian languages are found in the north of Bougainville and on Buka Island (Tryon, 2005, p. 31). However, rather than being isolated from each other, Tryon states that linguistic evidence shows that there has been considerable interaction between the speakers from these language groupings over a long period of time.

Culturally, Bougainvilleans have considered themselves different than those from neighbouring island groups and nations. Bukans, from the island of Buka, north of Bougainville, did regard themselves as different, and even superior to those from Bougainville Island. While there were a number of similarities between Bougainvillean cultural groups, such as a subsistence economy based on self-sufficient villages, matrilineal recognition and recognition of land rights, there were also differences. These differences included settlement locations (coastal vs. mountains), degrees of

contact between language groups, varying views on the degrees of importance of matrilineal descent, and the manner of rank and leadership within groups. Ogan notes that such language and cultural differences existing within a comparatively small geographic area is quite uncommon. No wonder then that Bougainvilleans regard themselves as being unique (Ogan, 2005, p. 56).

Colonisation by European Powers

During the colonisation of many Pacific countries in the 19th Century, the control of the eastern half of New Guinea, as well as some of the islands of the northern Solomons group, was divided between Britain and Germany, the western half of the island having already been claimed by the Netherlands in 1828 and becoming part of the Dutch East Indies.

The south of New Guinea was claimed by Britain and called British New Guinea, and the Shortland, Choiseul and Isabel islands were transferred to the British-controlled Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP). The north of New Guinea was controlled by Germany since 1886, as well as the islands of Bougainville and Buka (Claxton, 1998, p. 21). Germany's control was reinforced in 1899 by an international agreement. Visits by the German authorities were infrequent, but this was to change upon the establishment of a station at Kieta, after which the German administration became more ingrained (Sack, 2005, p. 91).

British New Guinea was renamed the territory of Papua in 1906, and administrative control was transferred to Australia. The German territory, known as German New Guinea, was seized by Australia in 1914 on the outbreak of World War One. A League of Nations mandate in 1921 affirmed the Australian protectorate status of New Guinea, the word 'German' being dropped from its name. In 1948 New Guinea was formally merged with Papua and termed Papua New Guinea (PNG); this area remained under Australian administration until independence in 1975 (Claxton, 1998, pp. 21-22). During the era of Australian administration, Bougainvilleans generally felt little attention was paid to them from the colonial power. This reverberated through the decades after World War Two until the conflict with the PNG government of the late 1980s and 1990s. At one point after World War Two, the United Nations was even petitioned by some islanders to transfer the control of Bougainville from Australia to the United States (Claxton, 1998, p. 23).

There was a major change in the economic and social conditions within Bougainvillean society after World War Two. The introduction of cash cropping and a move away from subsistence agriculture placed pressure on arable land. This created a greater demand for the individual ownership of land as opposed to the traditional inheritance or gifting of land through a family, therefore increasing frustration of the younger generation, as well as starting the decline of the status of women in regards to the control of land (Joint Committee, Parliament of Australia, 1999). The coastal communities also benefitted more greatly from the economic benefits of cash cropping, compared to the communities in the mountains where the land was not only less conducive to mass crop production, but who also faced the problem of transporting of goods to markets and to the larger towns on the coast.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a period of decolonisation occurred through much of the Pacific, as nations became independent from the traditional Pacific colonial powers, primarily Britain, and to some degree France, which had some share in the administration of the New Hebrides (Vanuatu). During this time there were a number of instances whereby the re-assertion of ethnic identities ensured that the old colonial borders did not automatically transfer over into an independent nation covering the same geography or peoples. An example of this is the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, previously a single British protectorate, but upon independence, divided into two independent sovereign nations, Kiribati (the Gilbert Islands) and Tuvalu (the Ellice Islands).

However, ethnic divisions and subsequent tensions within the newly emerging nations were no more keenly felt than in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. Bougainvilleans saw themselves as more connected to Solomon Islanders than to mainland Papua New Guinea. The Bougainville province, which had become known as the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea, had a number of characteristics which differentiated it from the rest of the country. Firstly, it is of course non-contiguous with the mainland of Papua New Guinea, and is certainly geographically closer to the remainder of the Solomons Islands than it is to Port Moresby, which is approximately 1000 km away from Bougainville. Secondly, the Bougainvillean people are ethnically distinct from Papua New Guineans, as their skin is noticeably darker and the term 'red-skins' was sometimes used by Bougainvilleans when referring to New Guineans; Friedlaender notes the perceptible change in skin colour when moving from New Guinea eastwards to Bougainville (Friedlaender, 2005, p. 58). These two factors alone led to a degree of perception of both physical and cultural distance between the

islanders and the people and government of mainland Papua New Guinea. Exacerbating this was the manner in which the central government conducted and controlled copper mining operations on Bougainville.

Mining and the Rise of the Bougainville Independence Movement

Since the 1960s copper was mined from the mountains and jungles of Bougainville. The presence of this metal in great quantities, and the efforts by external forces such as the central government and large multi-national companies to mine it, naturally led the locals to believe that they would receive a significant economic windfall, since by virtue of the copper being on their land, they were entitled to. However, the resulting disbursement of the proceeds eventually led them to believe that they were being fleeced of their rightful share as revenue was being unfairly taken by both the central government in Port Moresby, and the foreign company that actually conducted the mining, principally the Australian-based Rio Tinto and its subsidiary Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL). Compensation to landowners was inadequate and the concerns of islanders were generally disregarded or dismissed by the central administration (Claxton, 1998, p. 24). It is perhaps no surprise then that calls for Bougainvillean independence emerged in the late 1960s, particularly in the face of initiatives by the central administration to expand the mining.

The Napidakoe Navitu movement rose in 1969, and while it was originally drawn from the Kieta region it soon gained a following across the whole island. This movement generally focused on attaining a degree of autonomy within the wider PNG state, after having initially sought total independence. However, there was also increasing concern over the central administration's approach to mining, as well as the environmental effects as the mine's tailings were being discharged into the Jaba River (Vernon, 2005, p. 259). Along with the tensions over the importation of "mainlanders" to work in the mine and the social problems associated with this influx of young men from the mainland, it soon led to even stronger calls for independence.

Father John Momis, a member of the National Assembly, persuaded Chief Minister Michael Somare to allow the formation of a committee aimed at reviewing the future governance structure for Bougainville. This led to creation of a local government, the North Solomons Provincial Government (NSPG), with associated representation in the National Assembly. The presence of Bougainvillean representatives in PNG's pre-independence transitional government did bring increased representation for the island

in the national political circles, yet this was undone by the 1974 renegotiation of the agreement on mining Bougainvillean copper, between the central administration and the mining company. The result was an increase in revenues for central government, but no effective change for the landowners from whose territory the riches were being mined.

Compounding this was the failure of the Port Moresby government to deliver the expected funding for the province's development plan. The secessionist tide rose again, and this led to the declaration of independence of Bougainville, becoming the Republic of the North Solomons, only two weeks before Papua New Guinea became an independent sovereign nation in September 1975 (Dinnen, 1998, p. 49). Only the efforts of the then leaders of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville averted violence and preserved the unity of Bougainville within the wider nation (Colbert, 1997, p. 45). Unfortunately, despite a reformation of the provinces' representation mechanism within the central parliament, it was not to result in lasting peace on Bougainville.

Trouble Ahead: Mining Pangs

The distribution of wealth from Bougainvillean mines was the largest factor driving the conflict between Bougainville and the central government, since the mines were the single largest source of tax revenues and industry in the new country. From 1972 - 1979 the Panguna mine was the largest industrial operation in Papua New Guinea (Colbert, 1997, p. 81). By granting the mining rights itself, the central government had positioned itself to receive a greater share of royalties than if those rights had been exclusively granted by traditional landowners. Panguna's disproportionate importance to the country and the distribution of its generated wealth make staggering reading. The central government claimed 35% of Panguna's profits; this represented 16% of internal revenue for the entire country. By contrast, the provincial government received only 5% of the profits, although this represented one third of the income for their province. Even more miserly was the estimated one percent of profits which were returned to the landowners by way of compensation and royalties (Colbert, 1997, p. 81).

Complicating this was the system for distribution of royalties, which did not take into account the traditional ownership model on Bougainville. The land upon which the mine is located is that of the Nasioi tribe. In their customs, land ownership was passed from generation to generation through matrilineal descent. Yet, during the Australian

administration of PNG, Australian patrol officers of the central government recorded men as titleholders (Joint Committee, Parliament of Australia, 1999, p. 19). The indifference of Australian government officers and mining company staff to recognise the true nature of land ownership, its fundamental importance to the communities of Bougainville, and the effect of how royalties were distributed undoubtedly contributed to discontent about the mine. Other seemingly positive development projects, such as an expanded road network linking villages and towns, also had unforeseen negative consequences; the better distribution network drove the establishment of greater cash-crop plantings. However, this in turn lessened the amount of land available for traditional personal and family gardens. Placing greater demand on land and possibly contributing to increased land disputes (Vernon, 2005, p. 262).

Social inequalities resulted from the sudden emergence of a group with disposable incomes. This created inequalities between those who worked for the mining company and those who did not; between business owners reliant on supporting the mine and its workers, and the unskilled local villagers who were unable to get jobs. John Momis wrote "it is the tragedy of the Nasioi that the economic benefits [of the mine] are not distributed in the same manner as the social costs" (Dorney, 1998, p. 39). These social costs also included the previously-mentioned environmental degradation in the area of the mine, as a result of the operation and the dumping of mine tailings.

Tensions were exacerbated by the social impact of externally-sourced labour settling in the area. This included pressure on the urban areas in terms of population, and the inevitable increase in expenditure by numbers of young 'outside' men with disposable cash in hand, and who offended local sensibilities with their behaviour. Togolo describes the effect on his own people, the Torau, as being a "deluge of people [that] threatened to inundate the Torau's physical and cultural landscape" (Togolo, 2005, p. 277). Problems included the effects of increased alcohol use, prostitution, and subsequent increase in crime in general, including rape (Boege, p. 30). The procurement of land by BCL to house the miners and their families had also been a contentious issue for some locals (Breen, 2001, p. 1).

In the negotiations over mining rights the official representative body of the population was the Panguna Landowners Association (PLA). This body was eventually accused by some Bougainvilleans of being too acquiescent to the demands of BCL, and members of advancing their own interests and misusing monies received (Colbert, 1997, p. 82). In 1988 the PLA leadership were sacked by their constituents. A new

landowners group, the New PLA, took up the cause of greater compensation for the rightful landowners. The leader of the New PLA was a Bougainvillean woman, Perpetua Serero; that a woman was the leader reflected the traditional matriarchal role in land custodianship in Bougainville (Breen, 2001, pp. 1-2).

Having been frustrated by the lack of response by the PNG Government to their demands, the New PLA took matters into their own hands. They kidnapped a member of the PLA and sought a renegotiation of the mining agreement as well as the abolition of the PLA (Breen, 2001, p. 2). The Government, led by Prime Minister Rabbi Namaliu refused to negotiate, and even reiterated their support for the PLA as the legitimate representatives of the Bougainvillean people in regard to mining negotiations. This conflict led to a deterioration of law and order on the island and eventually to outright war.

Conflict

It was some members of a splinter group of the PLA, led by Francis Ona (who was Serero's cousin and who had been a surveyor for BCL), who finally resorted to armed rebellion (Claxton, 1998, p. 8). Their patience had eventually snapped after the publication of an environmental impact report by a New Zealand consulting company Applied Geology Associates. This report had been commissioned by the PNG Cabinet, and when it was released, it effectively refuted the claims by local landowners of widespread environmental pollution and land degradation from the mining operation (Regan & Griffin, Bougainville before the conflict, 2005, p. 485). This group formed the nucleus of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Ona led his followers on a series of disruptive attacks, aimed at ceasing production. By early 1989 they had adopted the name Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) (Joint Committee, Parliament of Australia, 1999, p. 22). His followers were mainly from the disaffected young male population, those who had felt most disenfranchised by the mine, unable to find work, and jealous and resentful of outsiders, their money, and their disruptive influence on Bougainvillean life.

The BRA was initially focused on demanding greater revenue sharing from the mine, with increased compensation for landowners and a move towards greater local ownership of BCL (Joint Committee, Parliament of Australia, 1999, p. 22). However in time it also adopted secession as part of its manifesto and was able to harness the secessionist sentiments within the community; for some this was based upon a general

belief of the identity of Bougainvilleans as being distinct and separate from the mainland, but the BRA's cause was most certainly helped by the destructive efforts of the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) during the Bougainville conflict.

Ona was joined by Sam Kauona, a former PNGDF officer who deserted in early 1989 and became the BRA's military leader. Kauona was to lead BRA followers on a guerrilla campaign that targeted mine infrastructure and which succeeded in closing down the mine in May 1989 (Dorney, 1998, p. 44). The conflict which followed not only pitted Bougainvilleans against the PNGDF, but also against each other. It resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries, not just from battles, but also from disease (New Zealand Defence Force, 2003, p. 2). It also saw the destruction of much of the islands infrastructure, the death of many military personnel from the PNGDF, the collapse of government services on the island, and the resignation of at least one Prime Minister of PNG. Relationships between PNG, the Solomon Islands and Australia also deteriorated (Regan A. J., 2003, p. 10).

The PNGDF's efforts in the next two years were a confusing set of inconsistent plans, that sometimes involved going on the offence, followed by periods of defensive posturing aimed at defending towns and the mine. Through 1989, the situation on the island deteriorated, with the PNGDF embarking on a campaign of random brutality, razing houses and villages as they passed through them (Dorney, 1998, p. 45) and torturing and murdering captured 'rebels' or suspected sympathisers. The BRA was not any better, and conducted targeted assassinations of those it suspected of sympathising or collaborating with the government forces.

The PNGDF retreated from Bougainville in April 1990 having failed to suppress the insurgency. This prompted a declaration of independence by the people of Bougainville and the establishment of the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG). However, the Papua New Guinea authorities were not finished with the island just yet, and imposed a blockade restricting the flow of goods and materiel to the island. The BIG was fundamentally powerless to effectively administer the island, being a puppet of the BRA and beholden to the attitudes of not only the BRA leadership, but also those of the many armed restless young men who were BRA 'fighters'.

The PNG police force had fled the island prior to the PNGDF retreat, afraid for their own lives. This contributed to the growing lawlessness, property destruction and resulting factionalism on the island. Chiefs from northern Buka, tired at the BRA's

heavy-handed rule, approached the PNGDF and invited the force back to Buka. There, the PNGDF allied with local anti-BRA elements and once again took on the BRA. Militia groups were soon established in the north and South-west of Bougainville, and fought alongside the PNGDF against the BRA. They became known as the 'Resistance' – the Bougainville Resistance Forces (BRF); they were also termed 'loyalists' by some observers, although that of course depended on which side you were standing.

The reputation of the PNGDF suffered considerably during the Bougainville conflict, and not only in the eyes of Bougainvilleans but also within the wider PNG populace. Not only could it not win against the BRA, but reports of atrocities and incompetence circulated, leading eventually to the infamous 'Sandline' affair. The PNG Government had launched another operation in early 1996, aimed at destroying the BRA. This was to end almost as soon as it had begun; a BRA ambush of soldiers landing at Kangu beach caused 12 PNGDF casualties, and the operation ceased (Field, 2010, p. 145). Growing tired of the incessant conflict in Bougainville and the PNGDF's inability to rout the BRA, the PNG government of Julius Chan sought an alternate means to bring the conflict to a swift end by contracting a private military company, Sandline International, to conduct mercenary operations on the island against the BRA.

The plan was foiled when news of it was broken in Australian media before it had even commenced (Field, 2010, p. 46). The commander of the PNGDF, Brigadier General Singirok, although having initially been aware of the idea to bring in a foreign company (Wilson-Roberts, 2001, p. 29) refused to support this plan to produce an external solution to the Bougainville problem, and ordered his men to arrest the head of the Sandline operation. This turn of events, and public disgust over their government's actions, led to mass public protests outside the PNG Parliament, with politicians forced to remain inside until eventually Prime Minister Chan was forced to resign.

The late 1990s: A Cold Peace

Various peace negotiations continued through the mid-1990s, all of them unsuccessful. In October 1997, after talks brokered by New Zealand, a ceasefire was declared which led to the deployment of a multinational New Zealand-led Truce Monitoring Group. In January 1998, a permanent ceasefire was signed by leaders of both sides, and the Truce Monitoring Group was later replaced by an Australian-led Peace Monitoring Group (New Zealand Defence Force, 2003, p. 3), which remained on Bougainville until 2003. Francis Ona and the BRA were not entirely supportive, as they saw the

involvement of international forces as another symbol of unwanted outside interference, and remained outside the negotiations. However, he did not actively target the peacekeepers.

In August 2001, the Bougainville Peace Agreement was signed, bringing to an end the conflict between the state of Papua New Guinea and the island of Bougainville. In this agreement, the most contentious issue was that of independence of Bougainville. This was addressed by the creation of Bougainville as a special autonomous region within Papua New Guinea, and an agreement by the central government to hold a referendum on independence within a ten to fifteen year timeframe. At the time of writing, Bougainville has elected its own President, and is known as the Autonomous Region of Bougainville.

Disputes have continued to occur between some members of the PNGDF and the PNG government. These include a protest outside Murray Barracks in early 2000, ostensibly over pay, followed by a more violent event in September 2000, when soldiers burnt down buildings within the barracks at Wewak. The-then PNG Prime Minister Morauta sought help from the Commonwealth to establish an independent body to review the structures, governance, finances and purpose of the PNGDF. It was called the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (CEPG) (May R. , 2003, p. 2), and was led by Gerald Hensley. The report recommended changes in various areas, including a gradual downsizing of the force. This recommendation in particular was less than popular for the service personnel, and in April 2001 gave rise to another protest by soldiers at Murray Barracks in Port Moresby. The key demands were related to a desire not to see the force down sized (with the redundancies that would result from that course of action), and the negative reaction to a perception of too much foreign influence, in the form of Australian military personnel posted to advisory positions in PNG.

Ona died of malaria in 2005. He had declared himself the King of the Royal Kingdom of Me'ekamui, an independent enclave he established in his highland stronghold. He was succeeded first by Noah Musingku, and now by Philip Miriori. Miriori has reiterated that the Me'ekamui do not think that the mine will open unless compensation for environmental degradation and social destruction is made (Radio New Zealand International, 2011).

The consequences of the conflict still reverberate today within Bougainvillean society and in PNG politics, and even the mining company is not immune. In 2001, Sir Michael Somare, who was in opposition in the PNG Parliament at that time, made a signed statement in support of a class action suit lodged against the parent company of BCL, Australian mining giant Rio Tinto. In the statement, he alleged that Rio Tinto was complicit in the PNG Government's suppression of rebel Bougainvilleans and exerted undue influence on the PNG Government in order to suppress the rebellion and keep the mine open (Thomson, 2011). This affidavit was only reported on in June 2011 when it was obtained by the Australian State Broadcasting Service (SBS). At the time of writing, a lawsuit alleging Rio Tinto complicity in genocide is before a United States federal appeals court (Reuters, 2011).

Conclusion

The conflict on Bougainville has had a devastating impact on the lives of the people of the island. It has caused thousands of deaths and injuries, the collapse of the local economy and destruction of property. It has also had a destabilising effect on local relationships as Bougainvilleans fought each other. Papua New Guinean governments rose and fell on the back of their handling of the crisis, and the PNG Defence Force suffered many casualties, not just dead or physically and emotionally wounded soldiers, but also severe internal divisions, and a loss of confidence of their own people in their ability to carry out their state-sanctioned function without resorting to arbitrary unilateral and sometimes shockingly brutal violence.

Papua New Guinea's relationships with the Solomon Islands and Australia also deteriorated, and it resulted in thousands of troops and police from other Pacific countries being deployed there to help support a long and painful process of returning to normality. The peace may be holding now as of writing in February 2012, but there remains much to be done to return the island to a state resembling its past. The problems in Bougainville have also had an influence on the troubles experienced in the Solomon Islands since 1998 (Regan A. J., 2003, pp. 10-11).

R. May notes that in the case of the Panguna mine, it was not even the distribution of money to the landowners that was the primary and perhaps enduring objection of the local people. He suggests that its very presence is anathema to many, and rather than seeking to reopen the mine once peace is fully restored to the island, with presumably a revised and appropriately equitable system of revenue distribution, many do not want

the mine to reopen at all. He states that “most Bougainvilleans today blame the mine for exacerbating economic and social differences and fomenting political instability” (May R. , 2005, pp. 464-465).

Bougainvilleans retain a strong insular sense of identity as Bougainvilleans first above all, and ethnically they are more closely related to Solomons Islanders as opposed to mainland Papua New Guineans. Yet that is not to say they reject outside contact. The roots of the conflict stem from a strong sense within Bougainvilleans of their land and resources being exploited by outsiders.

CHAPTER THREE - THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Introduction

The Solomon Islands experienced a collapse of state functionality from the late 1990s that eventually led to the deployment of a multi-national regional peacekeeping mission to provide assistance in resurrecting law and order and the overhaul of the security apparatus of the nation. The causes of this internal conflict are probably not readily apparent to the average New Zealander. Yet the causes again are factors that have common threads with other countries that have experienced internal instability and divide, both within the Pacific region and beyond. To have reached this point represents the culmination of friction points that developed over decades, and not as a result of one or two specific events.

The intersection of all of these factors contributed to the failure of the state and resulted in New Zealand deploying diplomatic, police and military personnel to the country in 2003, and the depth of those problems has required that they are still there today. Traditional models of ethnic identity and patronage do not serve the entire country well; this approach to economic management of resources, particularly the logging industry, contributed to a feeling of disenfranchisement amongst various ethnic groups, in particular those from Guadalcanal and Malaita, which in turn led to friction and eventually a level of violence against which the state was not able to respond.

This chapter will briefly discuss the period of colonisation from the late 1890s until independence in 1978, and the era of self-governance until the present day, focusing on the unforeseen consequences of assisted internal migration to satisfy work force demands of the Allies in World War Two, the resulting inter-ethnic tension and rivalry, the effect of the traditional culture of wealth dispersal and customary family ties upon national governance efforts, and the poor economic management and governance of the country. These factors have combined to create disorder in a country once known as the 'Happy Isles'.

Colonisation then Independence

In 1893 the British Solomon Islands Protectorate was created and was governed from Tulaghi, which is in the Florida group of islands. Governance was by an appointed resident commissioner supported by district officers, who were all answerable to the

Western Pacific High Commissioner based in Fiji. This post was moved from Fiji to Honiara in 1952 when the positions of Governor of Fiji and Western Pacific High Commissioner were separated (Moore, 2004, p. 35). The district officers essentially represented government in the eyes of the rural populace.

The occupation of the Solomons by United States military forces during World War Two resulted in significant yet unforeseen negative consequences for the country some 50 years later. Guadalcanal was a significant base for Allied military operations following its liberation from the Japanese, and there was a large demand for local labour to support the military. Much of the local work force was transported from the island of Malaita, and they moved to Guadalcanal to take up the work offered by the presence of the Allied military machine. "In the carefully designed tribal state, the Americans had introduced an enclave of people very different from those whose land they occupied." (Field, 2010, p. 156)

After the War, the British resumed their governance of the islands. Due to poor planning and the British government's desire to exit the island in the 1960s, development was largely confined to the western Solomons and Guadalcanal, where Honiara was the political and administrative centre. However, the population of the Solomons was greatest on the island of Malaita. Inevitably this led to a continuation of the considerable drift of Malaitans to Guadalcanal seeking employment (Moore, 2004, p. 35).

The first island to have its own provincial council was Malaita. This was raised in response to a period of unrest on the island immediately following World War Two. Subsequently, in the period from 1952 to 1963, a new system of regional councils was established throughout the Islands, and these were responsible for raising revenue through local taxes, operating schools and hospitals, and developing infrastructure such as roads (Moore, 2004, p. 36). National political structures continued to evolve, and a new system was introduced in 1960, consisting of an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. There was indigenous representation on both of these, although the majority of members were still colonials appointed by the British. Through the next decade, universal suffrage was introduced for a number of the seats on the councils, and the Legislative Council was also increased in size.

The 1960s also saw the rise of political parties as entities. The initial development of parties was hampered by a number of factors including a lack of general

encouragement by the British administration, the heavy influence of expatriate Islanders, and the banning of public servants from involvement in politics. This last point prevented many Western-educated locals from providing input, and from being a vital source of growth and understanding for the development of party-led politics within the country.

In 1970, a new short-lived Governing Council was established to encourage more participative ownership of government. This committee-style body was comprised of both elected and appointed members, including some senior civil servants. It administered a number of smaller committees, who were in turn responsible for a number of government departments. Instead, following disapproval by many members, it was later transformed by giving departmental responsibilities directly to Ministers (Moore, 2004, p. 37).

Throughout the 1970s, political parties re-emerged as burgeoning forces of indigenous political power during the transition towards independence. Britain, Australia and New Zealand had already been granting independence to a number of other Pacific nations, including Western Samoa (1962), Nauru (1968), Fiji (1970) and Papua New Guinea (1975). The Governing Council transformed into the Legislative Assembly in 1974, with the still appointed Western Pacific High Commissioner becoming the governor. As the Solomon Islands became increasingly self-governing, although not yet fully independent, political parties were however still weak, and local politics continued to be dominated by individuals and not ideologies.

Independence was gained on 7 July 1978. The process was one that seemed rather rapid, given the serious nature of such an undertaking. There are suggestions that the speed of transition was driven more by the British government following a pattern of rapidly disinvesting itself of overseas colonies and protectorates, than by any maturity of the Solomon's political and governance structures. By contrast, the development of a constitution was a much more measured process. A draft constitution was submitted to regional councils for comment before it was moved to the National Assembly, and over 100 meetings were held throughout the country to provide people the opportunity to examine and comment on the document and its proposed composition (Colbert, 1997, p. 42).

The seven provinces that existed at the time of independence had their autonomy strengthened in 1981 under the Provincial Governments Act. Prior to independence,

the Western Province had threatened to secede due to issues of resource allocation and a “fear of domination” by Malaita and Guadalcanal (Moore, 2004, p. 43). Politics in the Solomon Islands has been, and continues to be, an interesting blend of traditional inter-personal and tribal relationships set against a national parliamentary system.

Electoral politics in the Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands’ style of governance which heavily favours personal relationships and changing loyalties has a long deep-rooted history which far outweighs, as least in longevity, the Westminster style of politics which has only existed in the country since the 1960s. In this regard, many of the senior politicians of the last forty to fifty years were often the children or grandchildren of prominent colonial-era politicians or church leaders, and this has conferred a status upon many who were able to then use this to consolidate their own positions within the political elite of the country. “Solomon Islands national and provincial politics is always rambunctious and often personal, mixing together the new and old styles.” (Moore, 2004, p. 35)

The rural areas of the Solomon Islands are still heavily influenced by the ‘big-man’ style of politics, as opposed to a strong party-centric focus, such as is found in New Zealand. Electorates may have a number of candidates within each election vying for the seat, yet their loyalty to a party, if they have one, is more geared towards positioning themselves to gain potential benefits from being within Government, should they be elected (Scales & Teakeni, 2006, p. 73). The party affiliation thus becomes a means of possible enrichment as opposed to an ideological home. “The lack of an ideological base to the political party system means that parties are useful vehicles on the road to power; but if one breaks down, or if a better vehicle is passing, quick change is normal.” (Moore, 2004, p. 42)

This type of personality-dominated politics has seen many participants flow in and out of key government positions. An example is Sir Peter Kenilorea, who became the first post-independence Prime Minister in 1978, and was re-elected in 1984. He was leader of the Opposition in between these two terms, and later in 1986 became deputy Prime Minister (Colbert, 1997, p. 66).

The influencing of communities or households over voting choices within them has been prevalent in rural Solomon Islands. Vote-buying often consists of gifts to the male head of a household, in the belief this secures the vote of the entire household. In local

elections, the “big man” candidate may be wealthy enough to provide the gifts personally, and reap the rewards of the elected position. The process and outcome is essentially similar to traditional methods despite the veneer of parliamentary democracy. When one seeks to influence an entire community and personal wealth is not sufficient, then the ties of clan or tribe are brought into play. As with many communities in the Pacific, the influence and strength of a tribe or ethnic group is often directly related to their control of resources. Where the candidate needs an outside patron to provide financial support in order to then distribute the wealth amongst his tribe, the trade-off will undoubtedly be access to resources (Scales & Teakeni, 2006, p. 74).

A constitutional review report in 1988 recommended increasing rights “exclusive to indigenous people and more restrictions on naturalised citizens...” (Crocombe, 2008, p. 108). This was aimed at countering the perceived growth in influence of foreigners, and foreign residents. It also recommended that the office of president be only open to an indigenous Solomon Islander, as well as other preferences for indigenous people in education, land, and so on. The system of forming power relationships not only before an election, but also immediately afterward when a government is being formed and a Prime Minister is elected, can result in a disproportionately large number of elected representatives being granted posts of Ministerial or executive power, in exchange for support. For example, after the 1997 election 18 of the 47 members of Parliament elected were appointed cabinet ministers (Colbert, 1997, p. 67).

Ethnic Identity and Cultural Values

The basic unit of identity in the Solomons is the family. The wider grouping outside of this is the clan, which invariably shares a common ancestry and heritage. Solomon Islanders also identify with a wider still grouping called Wantok, of those who share a common language, but possibly no blood ties. This system creates a web of ever-widening networks of identity, loyalty and obligation.

Solomon Islanders also have a more relaxed and undisciplined adherence to schedules and punctuality compared to western cultures. Meetings might be delayed by hours or for significant occasions, by days. This does not necessarily indicate that the matters at hand are not important, but reflects that “some matters are better not rushed” (Moore, 2004, p. 29).

Moore notes that the possessors of wealth would be expected by custom (or “kastom” in the local languages) to share it, thus gaining greater mana. The distribution of wealth amongst a family, clan or wantok group satisfies the expectations of providing for others within the social entity to which an islander belongs. The intersection of this kastom with the trappings of political office have shaped the way in which people in many countries across the Pacific have distributed power and largesse and they are confused when Western countries and their representatives roll their eyes at such ‘corruption’.

This accumulation of wealth has contributed to the rise and sustainment of the “Big Man” concept. Leaders of communities have often been called or noted as the “Big Man” of a family, village or wantok group. Their status has been derived and maintained through the distribution of wealth. They maintain these positions through the very Pacific approach of encouragement and coercion through persuasion, as opposed to direct orders.

When transactions occur through negotiations, the resulting outcome is not necessarily driven by maximising the best possible deal for any given party, but rather they are directly linked to “preserving relationships” (Moore, 2004, p. 29). There is a greater degree of give and take than the harder, more direct and more materialistic approach of Western capitalist cultures. Compensation for perceived wrongs is also an important part of the Solomon Islands’ culture. The compensation may be in the form of physical items which represent wealth, such as “pigs, (to) shell and feather valuables” (Moore, *Happy Isles in Crisis: The historical causes for a failing state in Solomon Islands, 1998 - 2004*, 2004, p. 30). Tensions in national politics reflect ethnic tensions, of which the most prominent has been that between Malaitans and Gualese (natives of Guadalcanal).

Internal tensions and Disintegration

The increasing internal migration of Malaitans to Guadalcanal in search of employment in the decades after World War Two caused a rise in resentment from the Gualese. The transplanted Malaitans were sometimes referred to as ‘settlers’, and some Guadalcanal locals were quick to stir up local feelings against them and foment the belief that the local residents were being discriminated against in employment (Dinnen, 2003, p. 28).

This rising distrust was also affected by resentment about the sale of land on Guadalcanal to Malaitans, on which they could live. Ownership and control of land is of course crucial to the traditions and culture of the Solomons and for some of the younger generation on Guadalcanal, the possession of traditional lands by outsiders was unacceptable. Tensions continued to build between the two groups throughout the 1990s, and young Guadalcanal men began to stockpile some weapons. A campaign of harassment against Malaitan settlers began in 1998, and the primary group conducting this was the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), Isatabu being the traditional name for Guadalcanal. The rival Guadalcanal Liberation Force (GLF) also appeared, consisting of Gualese locals, and fought with the IFM for control of the Weathercoast region of Guadalcanal. A number of smaller armed militias or gangs also existed, but the IFM and GLF were the most prominent of the Guadalcanal natives' militias.

Many Malaitan settlers were forced by this harassment to leave their homes and flee to either Honiara or back to their home islands (Dinnen, 2003, p. 29). The number of people who fled back to Malaita varies according to the source, but is estimated to be anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 (Glenn, 2007, p. 16). The Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) was raised from within the Guadalcanal-based Malaitan community and established its their own defensive enclave in Honiara, and many Malaitans on Guadalcanal fled to the capital seeking the umbrella of the MEF's protection. The MEF were aided by some Malaitan politicians and received weapons from the official Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) armoury, courtesy of Malaitans within the force. Violence continued between armed groups of the two opposing sides, and there were clear linkages between armed groups, politicians, criminals and elements of the RSIPF (Glenn, 2007, p. 17).

In June 2000, MEF members seized the main police armoury and other key locations within Honiara, aided by members of the RSIPF. The Prime Minister, Bartholomew Ulufa'alu, was forced to resign and he was succeeded by Manasseh Sogavare, who had been the opposition leader (Dinnen, 2003, p. 30). Sogavare's government clearly had links to the MEF, and the capital sank further into crisis as the MEF effectively operated alongside Malaitan elements of the RSIPF. Violence continued, anti-IMF in Honiara, and anti-MEF/Malaitan in the Guadalcanal countryside. "Violence, theft and intimidation continued to wear down Honiara residents" (Moore, 2004, p. 141). Competing factions sought compensation for wrongs committed, real or perceived.

The government, seeking to keep an array of stakeholders happy, sought further overseas funds, but foreign aid money had begun drying up following the coup. In June 2001, the government extracted US \$25 million from the EXIM Bank, owned by the Taiwanese Government, after threatening to switch the Solomon's diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China. This money was sent to the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, headed by Allan Kemakeza, and was simply re-distributed in a large number of payouts, or kept by Kemakeza himself. Although he was later dismissed for this, he was somehow able to be elected Prime Minister at the next general election in December 2001 (Atkinson, 2009, p. 50). Once again, traditional methods resulted in effectively traditional outcomes.

Tensions grew between Australia and Taiwan over the latter's perceived growing yet irresponsible influence in Solomon Islands politics. Specifically, Australia raised fair concerns about the lack of transparency in the use and distribution of Taiwanese aid money. To counter this Australia embarked on a strategy which contained parallel internal or indirect approaches, alongside a direct bilateral engagement. In the first case, it worked on shoring up the capacity of the Solomon Islands' government institutions which were charged with oversight and accountability of government and foreign donor monies. This included the Leadership Code Commission, the Ombudsman's Commission and the Auditor-General's Office (Atkinson, 2009, p. 52). Simultaneously, Australia sought greater direct bi-lateral engagement with Taiwan on the issue of control and oversight of the provision of foreign aid.

The signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in 2000 between the two sides (Malaitan and Gualese) paved the way for the deployment of an International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) but it eventually withdrew from the Solomons in mid 2002, having only partially achieved its objectives. Despite an initial short period of peace following the signing of the Townsville Agreement, and the apparent ceasefire between the IFM and MEF, violence continued, either as criminal acts or as acts of revenge. In December 2001, Allan Kemakeza was elected Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, and requested assistance from Australia in righting the sinking ship that was his country. It was clear that the state was becoming more and more dysfunctional. Corruption was an ever-present factor in the government and a number of members of the Kemakeza administration had also been in the fallen Sogavare government (Moore, 2004, p. 178), which hardly built confidence in the ability of the government to rescue the nation.

Increasing lawlessness and continued inter-ethnic violence was unable to be stopped by the government. Notable events included the assassination of the Minister for Youth, Sport and Women in August 2002, and the murder of an Australian missionary in May 2003, among others. “[The] Solomon Islands simply roared over the constitutional precipice. Now it is the first and only serious prospect of a failed state among the nine. Its situation is in large part the result of a police force that has imploded.....” (Ross, 2003, p. 691). The conflict cost the lives of up to 400 people, with the displacement of tens of thousands, the near collapse of the state as functioning entity, the collapse of the RSIPF as a trusted and effective apolitical arm of the state, and the weakening of the national economy (Hegarty & Powles, 2006, pp. 265-266).

Australia and New Zealand's increased interest in intervening in the Solomons was driven by a number of practical factors; firstly as the regional powers they were expected by both domestic constituents and foreign partners to act. It was also obvious that previous Australian foreign policy towards Pacific Island states had failed. This policy had essentially revolved around providing aid to Pacific nations, but letting the recipients resolve problems internally (Wainwright, 2003, p. 490). Both Australia and New Zealand needed to get more involved, and in the case of the Solomons, to do so quickly before the country totally collapsed.

Secondly the impending failure of the state opened it up to possible entrenching of broader threats to regional stability, including transnational crime. The possibility that criminal drug, money laundering or arms trafficking operations might base themselves in the country, or indeed any other unstable Pacific state, concerned Australia and New Zealand, as these would then pose a very real and direct threat to themselves. There was also the possibility that continued instability and the sustainment of a lack of law and order would allow the emerging ‘gun culture’ to survive and possibly be exported back to Bougainville, geographically close to the Western Province of the Solomons. This would then threaten the fragile peace that had emerged there after the years of Papua New Guinea - Bougainville conflict.

The signing of the Biketawa Declaration by South Pacific Forum members in 2000 gave the necessary regional framework, and indeed an obligation, for an intervention in another country's affairs, if requested to do so, and public expectations were that the Solomons would receive help (Greener-Barcham, 2005, p. 215). With the approval of the Solomon Islands Parliament, a treaty was signed which authorised the deployment of security forces from Pacific nations, under an Australian-led mission. The Regional

Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was established and it commenced its work in July 2003.

RAMSI

The display of force by RAMSI, by arriving in large numbers and with carefully synchronised ship and aircraft appearance in the Solomons left no doubt in the mind of the population of the strength of the force. The manner in which it conducted weapons collection and disposal was also important. Lessons learnt in Bougainville meant that weapons were destroyed immediately when they were handed in, and sometime by islanders themselves at the invitation of RAMSI personnel. The aim was to show that the weapons were not being collected and moved to some unseen location, as that might infer that they would be distributed to someone else, perhaps another militia leader (Glenn, 2007, p. 25). Within weeks of the RAMSI force arriving in the islands, the collection of weapons handed in was impressive. In the first few weeks, approximately 2,500 weapons and 300,000 rounds of ammunition were handed in, and 3,700 weapons were destroyed by the end of 2003 (Moore, 2007, p. 144).

RAMSI was able to round up militants including the feared Harold Keke, leader of the GLF. The manner in which this was done through patient negotiation, ensured that armed conflict between RAMSI and the GLF was avoided, and many wanted members of the GLF surrendered on the orders of Keke. The GLF was perhaps the most brutal of the militia groups, and had committed a number of murders as well as other violent crimes, and they were also known to be well drilled and disciplined. Therefore a bloodless disarmament of the GLF sent a powerful message to remaining armed groups and strengthened RAMSI's ability to oversee a return to general law and order. The mission has always been one where it has been led by diplomats; the major focus of the security aspect of RAMSI's operations has been the development and strengthening of the RSIPF, hence there is a large presence of police personnel from across the Pacific, under the title of the Participating Police Force (PPF). The military, while significant in numbers at times, has been in support of their efforts.

RAMSI's relationships with the Government have been fragile at times; former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare criticised it for being too Australian-dominated and for effectively diluting Solomon Islands sovereignty by being an almost parallel or duplicative governing body. However, these sentiments are in the minority, and RAMSI is still continuing its work in supporting the Government in the restoration of state

institutions, and in particular the RSIPF. It has not always been plain sailing however. An Australian police officer was shot dead in 2004, an act that saw a temporary surge of additional military forces into the country to prevent and deter further incidents. There was an even greater breakdown in law and order in 2006 following the national elections; this also resulted in an increase in troops deployed to country to deal with violence.

Following the 2006 national election, and the normal jockeying to form a government, the two leading contenders that emerged for the Prime Minister's post were Manasseh Sogavare and Snyder Rini, and eventually Rini was chosen. The crowds which had gathered to hear the results of the ballot for Prime Minister were dispersed by the police, who resorted to the use of tear gas. Rioting started immediately afterwards, and moved to the downtown area of Point Cruz. Following yet more tear gas use by the Police, the rioters moved on to the Chinatown area of Honiara (Moore, 2007, p. 152). The attacking of Chinese-owned businesses was probably based on the most part the belief that such wealthy individuals, with considerable business holdings, had been funding politicians secretly, in order to secure favourable policies for themselves and their investments (Singh & Prakash, 2006, p. 78). A surge of troops from Australia and New Zealand was able to assist RAMSI and the Participating Police Force to restore order.

RAMSI has remained in place since its arrival in 2003, providing law and order through the police and military components, and rebuilding the RSIPF. It is now preparing for expected general elections in 2013. The continuing public unrest over the choice of senior political leaders is a reflection not only of disagreement over the allegiances of the selected leaders, and the mobilisation of supporters by one political leader or another, but also due to public disgust at the continued presence of politicians who are seen as corrupt and incompetent. "Eight years ago, the Auditor-General's office was not functioning.....There were no audits and public institutions did not produce accounts. There was no basic accountability across the Solomon Islands Government...and this played a big role in feeding corruption in this country" (Edward Ronia, Solomon Islands Auditor-General, as quoted in Perry, 2011). Understandably, poor governance by some of these less than competent politicians has been reflected in the dire economic record of the country since independence.

Economic Mismanagement and Logging

The Solomon Islands economy is traditionally dependent on the export of a narrow number of commodities, and as such is very susceptible to world commodity prices and global fluctuations for such products. Its primary exports are timber, fish, gold, palm oil, copra and cocoa. Small communities in rural areas primarily still rely on subsistence agriculture for food. Primary crops include cassava, sweet potato, bananas, yams and taro. Domestic livestock includes pigs, poultry and some cattle, and fish and shellfish are also important parts of the staple diet. This existence on self-grown, harvested and managed food sources has meant that there is actually very little in the way of hunger issues for the people, despite poor economic management and major problems with the nation's exports, wealth distribution and other socio-economic factors. However, changes to this subsistence lifestyle have naturally occurred over time. Due to increasing population and the resulting pressure on arable land, the planting, harvesting and fallow cycle has reduced to two to three years, down from the previous, and more sustainable, ten to fifteen years (Moore, 2004, p. 69).

The most dramatic period of economic mismanagement occurred in the 1990s. While GDP did rise by an average of 1.7 per cent over the period 1991-2002, including some years of very high growth (8.2 per cent in 1992) (Moore, 2004, p. 68), this was driven by totally unsustainable logging of the country's forests. In the early 1990s, soaring worldwide timbers prices drove Asian-based logging companies to seek new sources for timber, as their ability to obtain whole logs from Asian forests had declined. Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands firmed as new targets for commercial forestry. The value of timber exports from the Solomons increased dramatically, from S\$60 million in 1990 to S\$349 million in 1996 (Moore, 2004, p. 76). With global timber prices high, the logging companies and the governments which authorised them to operate, were able to make large profits. In turn, this money seldom reached the communities who owned the land from which the timber was being taken. The available monetary rewards enabled companies and government officials to pay off any disgruntled locals, but this was about keeping communities quiet by making selected individuals happy – but the profits did not reach communities as a whole.

The story of mismanagement of forest resources in the Solomon Islands reflects that of Indonesia. While there are many differences between the two countries in the details of management and control of the logging companies, both suffered from unsustainable and environmentally degrading logging. In Indonesia, the government owned most

primary forests, and had the institutional capacity to develop regulation of the industry. Additionally, most logging has been conducted by domestically-based companies.

By contrast, the majority of forests in the Solomon Islands are owned by private landowners, the majority of logging was conducted by foreign companies, and the state was inherently weak and less likely to be able to develop and enforce comprehensive legislation around logging (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 136). Logging by foreign companies started in the Solomon Islands in the 1960s, and was dominated by three companies up until 1981. They were “...Levers Pacific Timber, a subsidiary of (the) United Africa Company; the Australian firm, Allardyce Lumber Company; and the US-funded Kalena Lumber Company” (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 150). Average annual production at that time was within sustainable levels.

In 1981, the Mamaloni government increased the number of licences awarded for logging, and more foreign firms moved into the country and expanded the area of logging. Production rose until it had exceeded sustainable levels, but this was mitigated by the withdrawal of Levers and by the end of the 1980s, production was once again at or within sustainable levels (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 150). However, it was during this decade that logging expanded onto more ‘traditionally-controlled’ or privately-owned lands. This was to start stretching the government’s ability to control and regulate the industry, a factor that would only be exacerbated in the next decade.

From 1991, increased investment in logging in the Solomon Islands, primarily from Malaysia, dramatically increased the rate of harvesting. An increase in the number of logging licences, coupled with the weak state administration, as well as government officials succumbing to pressure from timber companies, led to an unsustainable rate of logging and timber production. Francis Billy Hilly, Prime Minister in 1993 and 1994, attempted to introduce a range of measures designed to strengthen government control of the logging industry, including greater monitoring of companies as well as increasing revenue for the government by raising the taxes on the export of timber. Hilly’s plans to develop new legislation, to improve environmental compliance and possibly even eventually ban all log exports, came to nothing when his government fell, prompted by a “series of defections and resignations.” Joses Tuanuku, who was Minister of Forests, Environment and Conservation during that time, later blamed all this on interference by foreign logging companies (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 152). Numerous cases have been reported in recent decades of corrupt practices around the granting of logging licences, with the paying of fees, and gifts of hotel accommodation

and such like. In 1995, the Star newspaper reported one Malaysian company as having given money to ministers and officials (Larmour, 1997, p. 5).

Aggravating this was the willingness of many land owners to allow unsustainable logging of their land in order to raise revenue. With a weak economy, timber was for some the only asset of value they could sell to live on. Despite the obvious signs that rapid harvesting would lead to a sudden decline in the environmental state of the forests, not to mention that it could quickly strip a family's or village's major resource, the desire to make money in the short term outweighed any consideration of longer-term effects. Those considerations were to come second to the need to provide for children and families now (Moore, 2004, p. 76). This was a sign of the breaking down of traditional societal values in the face of economic transition and pressure.

The issue of reparations for resource exploitation has been a source of constant dissatisfaction for many Solomon Islanders, and in particular, for rural communities. As was the case in Bougainville with the Panguna mine, exploitation of resources with little or sub-standard compensation to the traditional landowners has caused resentment. In the case of the palm oil plantations on the Guadalcanal plains, the landowners were only given a 2% share in Solomon Islands Plantation Ltd, the company that owned the plantation. Similarly, only 1.5% of the Gold Ridge gold mining company is owned by the landowners of Central Guadalcanal, where the mine is located (Kabutaulaka, 2005, p. 418).

Conclusion

The Solomon Islands has suffered from the effects of weak governance. Islanders raised in a culture of obligation and kastom understand how this works in relation to the development and maintenance of personal relationships. This also holds true for the balance of social cohesion between groups from different islanders; the manner in which business is conducted and grievances are addressed is important to sustaining a balance. Wrongs committed by one person against another, or by a family or village against others, must be addressed in an acceptable customary manner; this is a prominent feature of Melanesian societies and is not exclusive to the Solomon Islands.

Where the balance is upset and tensions deepen without resolution is when affronts are made and not addressed, and when groups living together in one island or region are not treated equally by those with responsibility for running the country as a single

sovereign nation. In the case of the Solomon Islands, the disruption of any harmony between island groupings occurred with the migration of many Malaitans to Guadalcanal to seek work, and especially so from World War Two onwards. Increasing pressure on the Gualese people by this influx, as well as pressure on their lands for accommodation, led to simmering tensions between the two. Subsequent poor management of the economy occurred at the hands of politicians more accustomed to traditional practices in maintaining favour and distributing largesse, when they should have the needs of the entire nation at heart. The inequity of distribution of revenues from the logging industry did not help, with traditional landowners often aggrieved at the lack of return for the exploitation of their resources.

The weak state of party politics and the exchanging of favours and financial rewards amongst leading politicians of the country ensured that central government continued to be weak and unrepresentative, and was a magnet for opportunists who undermined any efforts by any effective politicians and competent civil servants to effectively govern and develop the state. This has fundamentally undermined the ability of successive governments to effectively run the country. Wainwright notes that there was "...an ill-fitting overlay of state institutions with traditional structures, and the traditional structures proved to be enduring" (Wainwright, 2003, p. 488). There was a general distrust of centralised government from across the provinces, due to the traditional approach to power and governance, being tribal, regional and island group-based.

Finally, the failure of the RSIPF, including the emergence of internal divisions based upon regional and island affiliations ensured that when tensions between Malaitans and Gualese appeared, it was not capable of functioning as an effective arm of the government and providing law and order that the country needed. In the case of the Solomon Islands, the 'holes in the Swiss cheese' truly did line up, and over a period of only a few decades, the country slid into chaos, from which it is only slowly recovering. Clive Moore describes the nature of the country well:

"Solomon Islanders recognise complex symbolic links between human relationships, lands, gardens, music, dance, everyday thoughts, speech, their ancestors and now Christianity, but this cosmological balance is now fragile, and rather like living comfortably in the vortex of a cyclone."

Clive Moore (Moore, 2005, p. 62)

CHAPTER FOUR - TONGA

Tonga has progressed from a country at war with itself to having a full written constitution in a comparatively short 36 years. Sullivan compares it favourably with the situation in New Zealand where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, and this country is still struggling to “come to grips with the partnership 166 years later” (Sullivan, 2007). Under the reign of King George Tupou II, Tonga became a British protectorate from 1900 until independence in 1970 (Singh & Prakash, 2006, p. 74).

Tonga’s internal politics, while having a tribal or village system of chiefs as in many Pacific nations, has a very strong central monarchical system. Local chiefs in fact lost many of their powers in the nineteenth century when the country adopted “basic rule of law principles” (Lawson, 2006, p. 94). The strength of the aristocracy and the nature of the constitutional monarchical system in Tonga meant that until recently, parliamentary members of the aristocracy outnumbered those representatives directly elected by the people.

The existence of any appointment-based political ruling system inevitably leads to accusations of lack of transparency and accountability. In turn, it can lead to increased public agitation for better democratic representation. An example of this are the “Arab Spring” revolts currently taking place since 2010 in a number of countries in the Middle East, where many authoritarian and despotic regimes are facing increasing public pressure for more open and democratic government. This has also been the case in Tonga, and in 2006 it faced an unprecedented level of public agitation and unrest, which led to New Zealand deploying troops there to support the Government.

This chapter will briefly outline the nature of political turmoil in Tonga in the period 2002 – 2012, and then examine the history of monarchical rule in Tonga, the impact of Christianity on the status of nobility, the rise of the pro-democracy movement and the influence of the Tongan diaspora. This will show that the major cause of the unrest in Tonga in the last decade has been the clash between traditional monarchical rule and an increasingly politically aware populace trying to gain greater democratic freedoms. It will also note how the personal standards of behaviour amongst some members of the nobility and the royal family have driven popular demand for a more representative form of government.

Trouble in paradise: Tongan politics and unrest, 2002 – 2012

In 2003, the Tongan government attempted to restrict free speech by closing down the democratically-leaning newspaper *Taimi 'o Tonga*, through passing two ordinances which banned the newspaper and revoked its license. The Chief Justice declared these ordinances void and ordered the government not to attempt to re-litigate this. In response, the government sought to pass a bill placing further restrictions on free speech and the media, and to abolish the right of the Supreme Court to review all legislation passed by the Legislative Assembly and the Privy Council. Understandably, there was a considerable outcry, both from the general public, the pro-democracy movement, and legal experts who decried this obvious attempt to weaken the checks and balances that a democratic country would expect to exist (Senituli, 2007, pp. 272-273).

Despite the Chief Justice's decision to void the ordinance on *Taimi 'o Tonga*, the government ignored his decision, forcing him to order again that the ban be lifted. This did not stop the progress of the new bill seeking to amend the constitution however, and it was passed by the Privy Council and sent to the Legislative Assembly, despite intense public opposition and scrutiny, and the King gave his assent on 21 November 2003. *Taimi 'o Tonga* was banned again, and new measures were now in place restricting free speech in the media and the degree of foreign ownership of Tongan media sources (Senituli, 2007, pp. 275-276).

In the 2005 general election, seven of the nine people's representatives' seats available were secured by the pro-democracy supporters. The King, Tupou IV, later appointed two people's representatives and two nobles representatives from the Legislative Assembly to the Cabinet, keeping a promise he had made the previous year. This was a significant step forward in the start of the democratic transformation of the legislative and executive branches and also showed that Tupou IV had finally recognised that the waves of change were increasing and ignoring them was not an option. One of the people's representatives, Dr Felete Sevele, was appointed Prime Minister by the King, the first commoner to hold that appointment. Sevele was pro-democracy in nature and background, and had been a political partner of 'Akilisi Pohiva. He set about instituting economic reforms and also advised the King to institute changes to the Cabinet (Powles, 2009, p. 141), including ousting some long-serving members.

In late 2005, not long after the general election, a salary claim dispute arose between the government and the civil service, leading to a strike by civil servants lasting six weeks. The government was forced to agree to salary increases of between 60 and 80 per cent, depending on the job position (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 4). Campbell describes the strike as "...the turning point in modern Tongan history." One of the key effects of the strike was to consolidate through a large part of Tongan society, a sense of solidarity with the civil servants. A march on the palace by the strikers was even co-led by Prince Tu'ipelehake himself (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 4). A more permanent demonstration ended up in a park near the Legislative Assembly.

At the protest site near the Legislative Assembly, speakers kept up a commentary which not only continued to protest and progress the call for reform, but also in itself became a rallying point, as more and more people came to see who was speaking. Over time, there was a deterioration in the civility of the speech, and in a country where polite talk and a degree of reverence for nobility and royalty had been the way of life for centuries, a sea change in the method and manner of disagreement with the government had occurred. Open protest and strong words, including direct criticisms of the royal family, were suddenly out in the open. The agitation for greater accountability by rulers to the people, and greater representation from the people, was now a growing and popular force, and one that would not be quiet.

The year 2006 saw some significant political changes in Tonga. An independent National Committee for Political Reform (NCPR) was established in 2006, with the mandate to consult widely amongst the Tongan people and Tongan diaspora, to determine their wishes and aims for reform. The chairmanship of the Committee was held by Prince Tu'ipelehake. The Committee's work was also backed by Crown Prince Tupouto'a, whose endorsement was crucial; any finding made by the Committee could well have hit a brick wall without support at the highest levels of the royal family. King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV died on 11 September 2006. He was succeeded by Crown Prince Tupouto'a, who ascended to the throne as King Siaosi [George] Tupou V. On 26 September he declared that he would divest himself of his business interests and that he supported democratic constitutional change (Powles, 2009), and would support a move to a more constitutional monarchy system as found in Westminster.

The unfortunate premature death of Prince Tu'ipelehake in a motor vehicle accident in the United States in July 2006 meant he never saw the results of his work presented to

Parliament. However the report was completed under the leadership of his fellow committee member Dr Sitiveni Halapua from the East-West Center in Hawai'i. Halapua had worked with the Prince on the Committee and took over as chairman. Halapua was a long-time observer and author on Tongan political issues, and a Tongan expatriate himself. The Committees' report contained a vision for parliamentary composition and was a "specific blueprint" (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 5). However, there was debate in the Legislative Assembly and further ideas were put forward for consideration alongside the Commission's report.

The report received only a weak endorsement from Akilisi Pohiva, the most prominent of the pro-democracy leaders. The government then presented its own alternative plan to the one submitted by Halapua and the Commission, which was not much different from the status quo; it also led to a call for another Committee to be formed to take all ideas forward (Powles, 2009, p. 142). Halapua likened it to "pouring cold water" on the Commission's recommendations (Field, 2006). This prompted further wrangling between the democracy movement, whose leaders wanted the implementation of the Halapua report, and the Government which sought a more deliberate and incremental approach with time for further discussion and debate (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 6).

On November 16 2006, pro-democracy leaders attempted to rally public opinion against this new roadblock to constitutional reform. Protests occurred again, but this time, they were to go terribly wrong. With the pro-democracy reformers demanding the recalcitrant Parliament reach an actual agreement instead of "frustrating" the process, unrest grew on the streets (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 6). The most vocal orator of the democracy movement, Pohiva, continued to lambast the Assembly for its failure to adopt his preferred proposal for reform. The crowds gathered outside grew restless and eventually, as Pohiva was meeting with Sevele, a "destructive rampage began" (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 6).

The rioters' attacked buildings, and the supermarket owned by the family of Prime Minister Sevele was the first to be targeted. Other buildings that were hit included those owned by the King and members of his wider family and associates, and businesses owned by Chinese immigrants (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 6), and fires were set in some. Unfortunately, fire had a life of its own, and the damage was however not confined to the original targets of this unprecedented public anger. The fires spread, destroying many more buildings than intended by the antagonists, and eight people died as a

result of fire (The Age, 2006). This dented the reputation of the pro-democracy movement, as the blame was, fairly or not, laid at their door.

On 18 November New Zealand troops deployed to Tonga, to work with the Australian counterparts in assisting the Tongan Defence Services to maintain law and order. The New Zealand contingent's primary task was to ensure that the main airport in Nuku'alofa remained open, and later conducted small low-level security patrols. Their presence in Tonga was short-lived – they returned to New Zealand on 2 December 2006 (New Zealand Defence Force, 2006). There was of course an opposing view, that New Zealand and Australian forces had been invited in by a government that was eager to protect itself. Dr Halapua asserted that if the foreign forces were there to "...prop up the government, they are propping the government up against everybody else" (Field, 2006). The intervention was quickly over, and law and order was restored. Despite the worrying events of November 2006, upon the closing of Parliament for the year, the King announced his intention to support the continued movement towards reform (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 6). The primary cause behind this public dissatisfaction was the nature of the traditional monarchical ruling system, which has been in place in Tonga for centuries.

A Short History of Kings and Politics in Tonga

The former Tongan empire, which at one time also included the islands of Tokelau, Samoa, Niue, Wallis and Futuna, Rotuma and the Lau group of the Fiji Islands, was ruled by kings who held the title of Tu'i Tonga (King of Tonga). A person's social rank in Tonga has, since the position of Tu'i Tonga existed, been measured by the closeness of their family ancestry to this bloodline (Kefu, 2005, p. 22). It is believed that this hierarchical system was established around the eleventh century and existed as a system of centrally-controlled authority over all the islands in the country until the fifteenth century, when the 23rd King, Takalaua, was assassinated (Lawson, 1996, p. 83). It was not the first assassination of a King, but it was to lead to a significant change in the power structures of Tonga.

Takalaua's son, Kau'ulufonua, is credited with creating a major change in the position of the monarch in that he sought to separate the roles of being the high leader, and spiritual touchstone, from that of the executive ruler. He created a post called the Tu'i Ha'atakalaua, and granted this to his younger brother. The Tu'i Ha'atakalaua was charged with the actually running of the kingdom day-to-day; in other words, becoming

the chief executive in today's business parlance. The Tu'i Tonga retained the position as the monarch, and spiritual leader of the nation.

Lawson notes that this was probably aimed at dispersing the violence which previously had at times flared and been aimed at the monarch. This devolution of power from a single position of authority, the King, ultimately meant that the position of the King was weakened. There was to be a further change when the 6th Tu'i Ha'atakalaua created the position of Tu'i Kanokupolu, and devolved much of his administrative duties to that post, which was occupied by his son Ngata. The post was originally created specifically to control the Hihifo district which had become a difficult area for the Ha'atakalaua to govern (Lawson, 1996, p. 84).

This new triumvirate was not to last however. By the eighteenth century, the diverse nature of three essential figureheads could not be sustained. The King, or Tu'i Tonga, had a defined role as the monarch, spiritual guide and figurehead. However, if the Tonga was King, and the Kanokupolu had become the administrator of the nation, where did the Ha'atakalaua sit? The Kanokupolu served both the Tonga and the Ha'atakalaua, yet only was the supreme leader. Eventually, the Ha'atakalaua title dropped away in 1799, and the Kanokupolu assumed all the duties of that post as well (Kefu, 2005, p. 23). Once again, Tonga had a power structure of two leaders; one was the monarch, and the other was the administrator or governor, if not in that exact name then certainly in that role.

That same year, was to see the start of a period of civil war as internal power struggles divided Tongan society. Chiefs had become more powerful than before, in part because of population growth, which meant that chiefs needed to become more active in the governance and leadership of their villages. In turn, this elevated the importance of the chiefs higher than they had been before, relative to the King and Kanokupolu. This created tension and the Kanokupolu in the late 18th century, Tuku'aho, sought to reassert his right, and of his position, to rule over the chiefs and the people. His murder in 1799 sparked a civil war (Kefu, 2005, p. 23).

In the early 19th century, the grandson of Tuku'aho, Taufa'ahau was appointed Kanokupolu and continued his grandfather's efforts to restore his position to leadership of the nation. This period of civil war finally ended in 1852, and Taufa'ahau triumphed. He had succeeded in reinforcing the monarchy as the supreme level of authority in the land, with chiefs subordinate to it, and the people subordinate through their chiefs. He

was crowned as King Tupou I, and he had managed to establish the genesis of the current ruling system by uniting a country which had been divided by civil war, and who established the position of a single monarch and made the warring chiefs hereditary nobles (Powles, 2009, p. 140).

When a new Tongan constitution was created in 1875, it also created positions for 20 nobles. These nobles were the most powerful chiefs in the land, and by doing this, Tupou I was attempting to solidify the monarchy and the ruling class of chiefs as the leadership of the country. It also, while recognising the importance of the chiefs and choosing to give some of them a stated rank in the national consciousness, was designed to lessen the chance that the country might once again fall into chaos because the chiefs and the King were warring again. He gave status and proclaimed it, in order to ensure his position as monarch was safe. The 20 positions were even expanded in a constitutional amendment adopted in the 1880, which increased the number of nobles to 30 (Campbell I. , 2005, p. 93).

His lineage was guaranteed through the Constitution, which also set out the arrangements for the governing structure which supported the King. This included a Privy Council, Cabinet and a Legislative Assembly. While the assembly did include representatives of the people, there were also an equal number of representatives from the nobility, as well Cabinet Ministers in that body (Powles, 2009, p. 140). The Privy Council comprised the Monarch, Prime Minister and Ministers and was the final authority for executive decision in running the country. It sat above the Cabinet, which in turn was ranked higher than the Legislative Assembly.

In 1889, administrative arrangements around the protection and administration of Pacific Island nations were negotiated between Britain, Germany and the United States. Germany and the United States divided Samoa between them, while Germany renounced its claims over Tonga and Niue in lieu of the British. Britain also took possession of the Solomons Islands with the exception of Bougainville. Tonga however was not a formal colony of any of these major powers, and retained sovereignty which was exercised by its King.

However, in 1900 King George Tupou II of Tonga negotiated a treaty with Britain which made the latter responsible for foreign affairs and defence, while Tonga retained its sovereignty and authority over domestic matters (Colbert, 1997, pp. 24-25), and it thus became a British 'protectorate'. Lawson states that it is misleading to assert that

colonial governments 'bequeathed' democratic systems. She notes that indeed, they themselves were often undemocratic and that preservation of existing or traditional forms of authority and governance was often helpful in maintaining some 'autocratic' control of a colony or, in the case of Tonga, a protectorate (Lawson, 2006, p. 95). Tonga only received full independence and responsibility for all affairs in June 1970, although this did not change the supreme authority of the King.

In 1914, a significant amendment was made to the constitution which had a profound change on the balance of power in the kingdom. The Legislative Assembly up to that point had consisted of all the nobles, an equal number of people's representatives, a number of cabinet members and the governors of H'apai and Vava'u. This resulted in a large constituent body, and the king amended the constitution so that its size was reduced; this was done by limiting the number of nobles and people's representatives, albeit the balance between the two camps was retained as they were limited to the same numbers, which is nine each. The nobles are elected from within their own ranks by the nobles, and the people elect their own representatives. The net effect of this change was to strengthen the position of the King since he still appointed cabinet members.

The King retained the authority to appoint the Cabinet and the Prime Minister. While the nobles were now limited in the representative numbers in the Assembly, they at least could elect who they wished to represent them in that forum. However, with fewer nobles in the Assembly, and the King retaining powers of appointment to higher office, it weakened their position overall vis a vis the King's. In turn this has probably contributed to a period of time, from the early twentieth century until the 1990s, of muted criticism being levelled at the monarch. In a situation where all nobles were represented in the Assembly, the numbers were there to pressure the King on chosen issues, should the nobles wish to do so. With reduced numbers, they were more reliant on the King's favour in gaining influential positions (Campbell I. , 2005, p. 93).

The three traditional arms of Tongan Government are the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislative Assembly. The Executive takes two forms; the first is the Privy Council, of which the Monarch is head, and the remaining members are the Ministers of the Crown and two Governors. The implementation of policy is however carried out by the second component of the executive, which is the Cabinet. This consists of all the members of the Privy Council, with the exception of the Monarch, and is chaired by the Prime Minister. The Legislative Assembly consisted of the Cabinet plus 18

representatives, nine of which were directly elected by the Tongan people and the other nine were nobles, elected from within, and by, the 29 nobles holding hereditary titles (Kefu, 2005, p. 4).

Social behaviour and the impact of religion

The anthropologist Irving Goldman classified Polynesian societies, including Tonga, into three groups, each with a different interpretation and evolution of authority. In the first class were the New Zealand Maori and other groups in smaller islands such as Tikopia in the Solomon Islands. In this group, rank, authority and mana was determined by seniority of descent. The second group, which includes Easter Island, Samoa and Niue, was more meritocratic, where one's political and military ability conferred rank and status. The third group includes Hawai'i, Tahiti and Tonga, and in this group, social status was clearly defined. Chiefs ruled over thousands of commoners and had become a class unto themselves, inter-marrying only within their own kind and segregated from commoners by their status. He referred to this societal structure as "stratified" (Senituli, 2007, pp. 269-270).

Societal norms meant that families were essentially led by their own chiefs, who in turn were obligated to members of the nobility, and through them, to the King. The stability of the hierarchical structures in the country and the sense of duty owed through and up the leadership ladder combined to create a stable society and reinforce the outside world's perspective of the island nation as indeed being "the friendly islands".

Tongan social customs dictated that commoners' behaviours were bound by adherence to traditional laws, customs and norms. Chiefs, by being putatively closer to the gods, and somewhat semi-divine, were less restrained by these rules, and as such, their personal behaviour could be more self-indulgent with little if any form of consequence for the ascent to the afterlife. It was thought that only chiefs and royalty would be granted entry to heaven, and that commoners, despite perhaps living a life of piety, would never be able to make that same journey. This belief not only gave licence for chiefs to develop different personal behaviours if they wished, it also strengthened the three classes of Tongan society: the royal family, the chiefs or nobles, and the commoners. The arrival of Christian missionaries was to challenge this.

The impact of Christianity has been a significant factor in shaping beliefs, debates and even perhaps protests amongst the Tongan people. Prior to the arrival of the first

missionaries in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Tongan people worshipped gods, and the connection between chiefs and the gods were priests. Chiefs were believed to have a higher degree of closeness to the gods and perhaps have some powers or insight gained from them; thus their mana was undoubtedly higher than that of a common villager.

The missionaries who arrived in 19th century Tonga delivered a message based upon the Christian principles that all men or women could be granted access to heaven, if they lived according to God's laws; a person's social rank had nothing to do with salvation. This was to lead to a stream of consciousness among the Tongan people that can still be seen today, in terms of people's concerns and even frustrations over perceptions of different standards of behaviours between the classes. If all men were equal in God's eyes, and entry to the afterlife was based upon one's actions and not position, how then could chiefs and royalty expect to behave with less restraint than common people? How could disregard of social customs or taboo matters be brushed aside just because of one's inherited status, without fear of a descent into hell after death, if all men were equal? Some chiefs also embraced the new religion, after having perhaps suffered reverses in the civil war period, and lost faith in their own gods from whom they had perhaps expected more protection. To regain status and enjoy the perceived wealth of the newly arrived Europeans, adoption of the Christian god and belief practices was perhaps a better idea than remaining faithful to the old gods (Lawson, 1996, p. 89).

The Democracy Movement

Increased political agitation was apparent in Tonga from the 1970s onwards, and especially in the 1990s (Powles, 2009, p. 141). Powles notes that the discussions around political reform in Tonga have mainly concerned three areas: the size and composition of the Assembly; the method of electing the membership of the Assembly; and the authority of the King to make appointments (Powles, 2009, p. 142). A strong pro-democracy movement has grown in Tonga in recent decades, principally since the 1970s and 1980s. The pro-democracy movement later formed the Human Rights and Democracy Movement (HRDM) in 1998 (Crocombe, 2008, p. 416) with the aim of conducting public education in support of reform. The most prominent democratic activist in Tonga for the past thirty years has been 'Akilisi Pohiva. He is a former teacher and broadcaster and became the most public symbol of a drive for change in the structure of the government in Tonga. He has a credibility in commentary on

political matters that is virtually unmatched in Tongan society, through his longevity and dedication to the cause, as well as his willingness to be interviewed and to provide opinions when asked (Campbell I. , 2008, pp. 2-3).

There were disagreements between various factions of the pro-democracy movement. Pohiva argued for more direct confrontation with the ruling class and sought to actively drive through reform while becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of response from the nobles and the political elite. On the other hand people such as Uili Fukofuka argued that change needed to come through working with the rulers. He believed that change would take place over a generation as a new crop of younger and more politically savvy group of nobles came to power, who would be enlightened by higher education and understanding that they would have having to deal with and understand a growing and better-educated middle class (Boyd, 1997). Pohiva argued that countries such as New Zealand and other donor countries should not remain neutral in what was deemed by that country, and others, to be an internal Tongan issue. This was because of the monetary ties between New Zealand and other donor countries and Tonga, for as he asserted, it was aid money that was supporting the existing regime (Boyd, 1997). Scandals associated with members of the ruling family have also emboldened the democracy movement.

One example of poor official behaviour by the leadership of Tonga that particularly inflamed public anger was the discovery in 1987 that passports were being sold to foreign nationals especially from Hong Kong, China, the Philippines, Libya and others. While the stated motivation was to raise currency for the Treasury, Pohiva and others protested that Tongan citizenship should not be given away so cheaply, and that there was no clear accounting about where the funds received had gone. Once again, transparency and accountability of government erupted as a prominent national issue. Pohiva launched court action against the government in 1989 on this issue, and was supported by street protests. Eventually, the government enacted retrospective legislation to validate the sale of passports that had already occurred (Lawson, 1996, pp. 102-103).

The passport debacle raised a level of protest that resulted in a march on the palace and the presentation of a petition to the King. The idea that the King might be unaware of the behaviour of some of his government, was quickly invalidated when the King himself assented to the retrospective passport legislation, disappointing the reformers who had hoped for stronger moral leadership. The King made no public statements on

the matter and took no disciplinary action against the Ministers involved. This expanded the focus of protests beyond inappropriate personal behaviour beyond the sight of the King, to the entire constitution and the system of power that needed reform (Campbell I. , 2005, p. 97).

In Tonga questions about corruption have most often been raised about the business dealings of the royal family, which includes electricity and communications facilities and networks. The two members of the royal family that were the greatest subjects of protestation were the Crown Prince, Tupouto'a, and his sister, Princess Pilolevu, and the Prince's business partners, Sefo and Soane Ramanlal, who had become known as the 'Indian Princes' (Field, 2006). The Prince and Princess were criticised for owning extensive business interests in the country, and for the belief that they had taken a great deal of personal control of state assets. Key areas of concern included nepotism, misuse of aid money, and the excessive use of an allowances system which enabled Ministers to spend significant time travelling abroad (Campbell I. , 2005, p. 97). Revelations in early 2005 exposed financial irregularities at the Shoreline Company, the monopoly electricity generator, including allegations of disproportionately high executive salaries, including then-Crown Prince Tupouto'a. This information generated public protest which resulted in a petition of twenty thousand signatures, which was presented to the palace by a protest march of four thousand people (Leslie, 2007, p. 264).

On the whole, during the 1990s numerous demonstrations and calls for reform of the government were mostly ignored. This public discussion included orderly demonstrations. This pressure was originally only aimed at increasing transparency in government and ensuring increased levels of probity by members of the government. By drawing attention to abuses of power, it was believed that such problems would be resolved (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 2). When change and action failed to arrive, petitions were made to the King, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, in the belief that he was probably unaware of some of the bad behaviour of some members of his government (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 2). However, he failed to respond to the satisfaction of the pro-democracy movement, which then sought reform through publicising their cause, and seeking to increase the amount of parliamentary debate on the issue. It also sought to raise public awareness of the issues, through education in communities.

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) formed in April 2005, shortly after a general election. Demand for reform of the legislative house by the pro-democracy campaign to

improve the representation of the people within the Parliament, and to introduce greater accountability of the Parliament and Cabinet, both in terms of their role to fairly govern, but as well as the personal conduct of the members. This did result in two representatives of the movement being appointed to Cabinet by the King, although this did not go as far as the campaign desired. The PDP's vision was a total reform of the house into a bi-cameral system, with the lower house comprised of twenty one seats, all of which would be by elected representation (Lawson, 2006, pp. 99-100). This was refused. One important point to note was that through this period of pro-democracy agitation, the aim was place some additional limits on the powers of the king. Campbell notes that there was never any intent by the PDP to overthrow the monarchy (Campbell I. , 2008, p. 4).

An assessment of the style of the pro-democracy movement

Lopeti Senituli (2007) argues that one of the major failings of the pro-democracy movement was its inability to adopt new tactics or approaches in the publicity of its cause, or indeed in its actions for greater democratic representation. He notes that the strident approach of Pohiva, railing against the old system, the government and the nobility, by using the media to spread his message, has become tired and worn. He suggests that a better approach might include seeking a series of incremental steps as opposed to wholesale and non-negotiable change. He says that the movement should seek to influence and work with the nobility as their primary target audience, rather than protesting against them. This is because the nobility form such a significant and powerful bloc in the Assembly, and has traditionally, although not always, voted on the side of the government.

Senituli (2007, pp. 278-279) also suggests that one reason why there has been no attempt to try new strategies to further the prodemocracy cause in the eyes of the public, is that because the movement has successfully campaigned on a set platform of consistent messages over a period of years, any suggestion of a change of approach or adjustment of goals would be seen as seeking compromise with the nobility, and thus betraying the principles of the movement. Some people's representatives have lost their parliamentary seats at election time after being viewed as having strayed from the path. Senituli's suggestions do seem to favour the more deliberate and piecemeal approach favoured by the government, and he does not paint a flattering picture of Pohiva and the democracy movement's dogmatic stance. Effectively, by 'staying on

message' for so long, the movement has almost 'painted itself into a corner' when it comes to public messages and strategy.

However, Senituli's argument is possibly biased. When he wrote his contribution to *Security and Development in the Pacific Islands; Social Resilience in Emerging States*, he was the press secretary and political advisor to Prime Minister Sevele (Brown, 2007, p. 327). Although he has a background of work as public advocate involved in issues such as human rights and corruption among others, his position in a political office could be seen as having given a certain flavour to his writing. To his credit, he identified structural weaknesses in the system of government, including areas of concern in the 1875 constitution. His article also makes no mention of the 2006 riots, having been written just before hand; an editor's note completes and notes this (Brown, 2007, pp. 284-285).

The Influence of the Tongan Diaspora

It is important to remember that there is a large Tongan diaspora, and the cause of this may not be a simple case of seeking better education or employment opportunities abroad in New Zealand, Australia or the United States. Crocombe notes that the rigid style of leadership of the paramount leaders in certain Pacific countries, including the late King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga, tended to drive away or restrict talented people (Crocombe, 2008, p. 427). The assurance born of aristocratic inheritance, coupled with an autocratic governance system, frustrated some Tongans who might wish for a better system under which their talents and ambitions might be rewarded with better opportunities and greater responsibilities.

Tonga's economy has suffered from an oversized bureaucracy, with much of the money available to the government tied up in paying salaries to under-employed civil servants. This is not an uncommon occurrence globally, and is representative of what is called a MIRAB economy; one based upon Migration, Remittances, Aid and Bureaucracy (Leslie, 2007, p. 269). 40% of Tonga's GDP comes from remittances, and most of this is from New Zealand (Hauti, 2007, p. 31). Helen Lee (2006) observes that as the Tongan diaspora results in generation of Tongans born out of their ancestral homeland, and who will increasingly identify with their new country as opposed to Tonga, it is quite likely that remittances may well reduce, threatening Tonga's economy.

An economy increasingly over dependent upon the fragile foundations of foreign aid and expatriate remittances, with a large diaspora seeking work outside the country due to the suffocation of limited economic growth and fairness by an entrenched elite, and suffering increasing urbanisation has contributed to the internal struggles and tensions in the country. A 2003 report measuring Tonga's progress towards the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals listed a number of impediments and problems facing the country, including urbanisation, migration out of rural areas and outer islands, weak private investment, poor private sector growth, lack of employment, and a weak technical training system (Leslie, 2007, p. 270)². These pressures have contributed to the growing number of Tongans seeking employment offshore.

Modern communications have increased the awareness and education of ordinary Tongans of the political issues affecting the country. The Tongan diaspora has especially benefited from the Internet; political news and opinions are conveyed in real time rather than waiting weeks for newspapers in the mail. The internet has also facilitated timely, interactive and lively debate, increasing the overall level of political awareness of Tongans, both at home and abroad (Singh & Prakash, 2006, pp. 76-77). This in turn has further served the aim of the democracy movement, as more Tongans are becoming not only aware of different governing models but are experiencing them through residence and travel through other countries.

Conclusion

In Tonga, the degree and type of powers wielded within the elite socio-political classes, as well as the lack of transparency and personal accountability, have been the cause of internal unrest. Desire for constitutional change in Tonga is focused against a hereditary monarchy and aristocracy that "...is perceived to have inhibited the growth of modern democracy" (Wilde, 1991, p. 37). This contrasts with political systems which were in place from the time of colonisation, such as those in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and other countries, and which were often based on, or models of, a Westminster system.

The initial push by reformers in the 1980s was not necessarily aimed at overhaul of the constitution or abolition of the monarchy or limiting of the powers of the executive. Rather, much of the initial impetus for the current pro-democracy movement arose out

² This last point was also discussed by the author with NZ High Commission staff in Nuku'alofa, during a visit there in July 2011. The lack of comprehensive technical training was highlighted.

of frustration and anger at apparent lack of transparency by members of the government. Various approaches using public meetings, education, and modern communications such as radio were all used in an attempt to seek higher standards of governance, but without success. It appears that failure to secure greater accountability and higher standards of behaviour had led to a transition in the goals of the movement, whereby the constitution, and the powers it confers on the monarch and the nobility, must be at fault for allowing such a situation to occur (Campbell I. , 2005, p. 92).

CONCLUSION: COMMON THEMES

Each of the countries examined in this paper has had their own history of internal conflict. This thesis does not pretend that they are all the same, as that would be denying the unique characteristics of each nation and its particular circumstances. Yet there is no doubt that there have been similar experiences and that some of the causes of conflict are at the least similar, if not the same. Rather than try and categorise all causes of internal conflict in this region as being the same, it will point towards common factors and briefly discuss each one.

Benjamin Reilly (2003) has distilled the issues which have led to recent conflict in the South Pacific into five key issues. They are as follows:

- Civil-military relations
- Small arms proliferation
- Group inequality and identity politics
- Brittle governance
- China rising

These observations were made in 2002/2003, and do not make any note of the issues being experienced at that time in Timor-Leste, nor could they have included the 2006 internal conflict within Tonga (which had not yet occurred). Yet the summary remains pertinent because it notes the influence of each of these issues across a range of South Pacific countries. In this thesis, the primary causes between the conflicts examined have been identified in the preceding chapters and are again summarised here.

In the case of Timor-Leste the primary causes of the 2006 crisis were the immaturity of the party political system and the personal ambitions of the main actors within, the weakness of the state's security services, especially the delineation of roles between the military and the police, and the perception of the existence of an East vs. West divide in the country, and more pertinently, within the old guard of the military and some of the newer members. In Bougainville, the major causes of its conflict were the sense of a distinct identity and the belief that land and resources had been systematically exploited by outside parties with resulting environmental and social pressures, but without a suitable rate of return of the benefits.

In the Solomon Islands, it has been the clash of island identities, the culture of traditional kastom and obligation within a national governance setting, poor economic management of natural resources and inequitable distribution of the proceeds, and the failure of the national police force to be a neutral arm of the state, that have caused its troubles. Tongan unrest in the last decade, and especially the events of 2006, has been caused by the existence of an appointment-based political ruling system which is being challenged by the rising aspiration for a more representative democracy from a large sector of the population. This includes distrust of the degree and type of powers wielded by the ruling classes, as well as the lack of transparency and personal accountability of elements of the leadership.

Bearing mind each nation's individual experiences and circumstances, it is possible to group these causes into the following broad categories:

- a. Clashes of identity, including tensions over internal ethnic or island identity, as in seen in Timor-Leste, Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.
- b. Weak central governance and state institutions, as seen in Timor-Leste, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga.
- c. Poor economic management, including the exploitation of resources at odds with the traditional land and resource ownership and the inequitable distribution of profits, as in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands.

These three categories correspond with some of Reilly's in that he also lists group inequality and identity politics, and brittle governance, among his five categories. The third one identified in this thesis is poor economic management, and this could easily be included as a subset of brittle governance, although each case would need to be measured on its own merits.

Clashes of Identity

For some countries in the South Pacific, the practice of being a single recognisable society with a form of some sort of central government did not exist until after colonialism. Societies, as groupings of people, revolved more around the villages or tribes, and leadership was exercised by elders or chiefs. Here in the Melanesian concept is where we see the term "big-man" sometimes used. Dauvergne notes that

Melanesian states were essentially “constructed” by the colonial powers, which imposed “a centralised bureaucratic authority” (Dauvergne, 1998, p. 6). The pre-colonial societies existed in groups that had their ties with other determined primarily by relationships and interaction as opposed to arbitrarily-drawn boundaries on a map. He goes to argue that it is therefore quite logical that today’s existing states have shown weaknesses when trying to exert control and central governance over post-colonial societies. Thus the clashes of identity seen in Bougainville and the Solomons islands are perhaps to be expected given identity and perceptions of it have revolved around tribal and island groupings long before centralised governments were imposed.

Weak central governance and state institutions

Governance is the term used to describe not only the system of government but more frequently, the manner in which power is exercised. Crocombe notes that it is more about “how.....opportunities are coordinated and what is achieved”, as opposed to what is said by constitutions or leaders (Crocombe, 2008, p. 507). He goes on to argue that it has become a catch cry to be uttered in the same vein as ‘sustainability’ in any meaningful discussion on government. Campbell (2005, p. 91) states that sympathisers with Pacific island styles of governance describe what may be criticised as corruption by external actors, as simply being the customs and traditions - he goes on to say that islanders may in turn criticise democracy as ‘a foreign flower’, that is, an alien system which does not fit all situations equally well. Campbell calls such sympathisers ‘apologists’, who describe actions which could be equated with corruption as being “the exercise of traditional choices and perquisites”.

In Melanesian countries, social status was less defined by inherited lineage and more by what a man (or woman) could make of themselves, and in turn by the sharing of any accumulation of wealth and power with their wider family or *wantok* (Colbert, 1997, p. 6). Thus, the concept of the Big Man is strengthened as the procurement of influence and money by one’s own hands allows the procurement of status - in Polynesian societies, lineage and social strata were far more influential in an individual’s standing within the community.

The practice of monetary largesse by politicians and even public servants, towards their own clans, tribes or ethnic groups, is not one that sits easily in most Western democratic societies. In fact, it is generally viewed as being a corrupt practice. However this view, when adhered to dogmatically, fails to take into account that it is a

common and indeed expected practice among many societies in the world, and the Pacific is no exception. "Extended family connections are important, and one would be foolish to ignore them" (Moore, 2007, p. 149). Where such practices have been entrenched for centuries, expecting it to suddenly cease upon the formation of new governments and institutions in a post-conflict period, especially when the UN or other multi-lateral supporters are actively seeking to re-build a society in the image of a progressive, modern, democratic (and most likely Western) nation, is perhaps aspirational beyond reality.

Political parties often lack of a Westminster government tradition in Pacific countries than in European ones. Politicians are caught between national obligations and loyalty to their own ethnic or tribal groups. Parties are thus often a vehicle for obtaining position, or a 'place at the table'. They are not necessarily an ideological movement within which a politician might expect to stay, and be expected to follow, through their political career, as would probably occur in Western societies. For example in 1990, the-then Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, Solomon Mamaloni, circumvented his possible dismissal by a member of his own party, by dismissing five cabinet ministers from his party and replaced them with five members of the opposition (Colbert, 1997, p. 68).

Poor economic management

Economic development for the purposes of improving the socio-economic status of a country and its citizens may also tread a fine line when government policies are adopted that may, coincidentally or not, benefit companies that are owned or influenced by the politicians making the laws. There are arguments that a new law which happens to benefit a politician is merely a secondary effect of a wider political choice around economics: such choices may be defended as being made in order to encourage benefits for national companies, as opposed to foreign interests (Larmour, 1997, p. 3).

Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (2005, p. 418) argues that the solution to instability and post-conflict nation-building is not necessarily large-scale economic development. In fact, he points out that in the cases of Bougainville and the Solomon Islands, large-scale developments projects have become contributors to, rather than solutions for, internal instability. In these two countries it has been the exploitation of natural resources and

the distribution of the profits from these, which has significantly contributed to landowner unease and eventually to dissent and conflict.

To determine that an economic resource of considerable size and value is so important to the nation that central government must determine how it is exploited, places a government at loggerheads with traditional landowners. This approach relies completely on open and transparent government to ensure that any economic wealth accrued is fairly distributed, to compensate the landowners for the exploitation of what they might rightly claim is their resources. At this point, it is the poor quality of governance that makes the possibility of any equitable economic gains disappear.

Conclusion

Timor-Leste, Bougainville, the Solomons Islands and Tonga have all experienced difficult and damaging internal crises in recent decades. The NZDF has deployed personnel to each of these countries as part of stabilisation efforts; some of these deployments have lasted only weeks, in the case of Tonga, and some have cumulatively lasted more than a decade, as in the case of Timor-Leste. It is too simplistic to suggest that each of these has the same underlying causes of internal conflict than the other, but there are recurring themes which show that some of the root causes are the same.

In the events studied in this thesis, the three common factors are clashes of identity, either ethnic or geographic, weak central governance and state institutions, including the clash of traditional power structures trying to operate inside western centralised democratic government models, and poor economic management. Not all of these factors have been the primary causes of instability in the countries studied, yet across the board, they all exist. An understanding of the common root causes of discontent and instability should be borne in mind by government and defence officials involved in the difficult task of conflict mediation and post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

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