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## Intervention in Solomon Islands

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**ABSTRACT** *From the late 1990s Solomon Islands had been moving towards the status of a 'failed state'. Corruption was widespread and there was considerable resentment expressed by Guadalcanal people towards immigrants from the neighbouring island of Malaita, because of the perceived economic gains made by the latter at the former's expense. Conflict over this issue led to the coup of 5 June 2000 and the installation of a pro-Malaitan government. Australia and New Zealand adopted a cautious approach to dealing with the situation. They saw themselves as facilitating attempts at conflict resolution but without assuming a strongly interventionist rôle. The political system in Solomon Islands proved incapable of stemming corruption and combating the increasing level of criminal behaviour. By mid-2003 Australia, supported by New Zealand, had changed its judgement as to whether external intervention in Solomon Islands could be effective in remedying the situation there. Once it became clear that the Solomon Islands parliament and people were receptive to intervention, Australia organized a regional force that was deployed from late July. International legitimacy came from the support of the Pacific Islands Forum. The intervention emphasized the restoration of 'law and order' through policing, but with a strong military backup. In the long term issues of governance and social and economic development will need to be addressed. Political leadership from within Solomon Islands will be crucial in determining whether external intervention can assist with these matters.*

**KEY WORDS:** Solomon Islands, intervention, failed state, Southwest Pacific, Pacific Islands Forum, development

### Introduction

Australian military forces have been deployed in a number of situations in recent years. In September 1999 Australia led a United Nations-authorized intervention to restore order in East Timor after the referendum on independence from Indonesia. In October 2001 it provided military support to the USA in its campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. In March–April 2003 Australian forces, alongside those of the USA and the UK, took part in the war to topple Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Since July 2003 Australia has led a major international intervention in Solomon Islands. Why has this intervention occurred and what form has it taken? What has been the impact of the

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intervention in its early stages, and what appear to be the prospects in the longer term?

This article argues that the Solomons intervention derives from the intersection of four major factors. In the first place was the fact that the situation in Solomon Islands, particularly in terms of law and order, was spiralling steadily downwards. Solomon Islands was certainly a 'failing state' and risked becoming a 'failed state'. These difficult circumstances would not in themselves have led to intervention. However, a second factor was that Australia, the major regional power in the South Pacific, appeared more predisposed towards an activist approach in dealing with regional problems in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. For intervention to occur there needed to be a judgement that the chances for achieving success were good. Hence a third relevant factor in understanding the Solomons intervention is that there was a 'receptiveness' among Solomon Islanders towards accepting international assistance in dealing with their problems. A fourth factor was that the international environment was favourable to intervention. The major powers involved in the South Pacific gave their support. International legitimacy came not through the United Nations, but at a regional level through the Pacific Islands Forum. New Zealand and some Pacific Island countries (PICs) contributed to the intervention force. The emphasis has been on policing, but with a strong military backup in the initial stages. In the short term the intervention appears to be having a positive impact. In the long term the challenge will be to develop a broader approach that addresses the important development issues underlying the problems in Solomon Islands.

While the focus in this article is on the circumstances of Solomon Islands and the international intervention, this situation can be related to wider debates about failed states and what can be done about them (for example, Zartman, 1995; Rotberg, 2003). Solomon Islands can be seen as an example of a situation where there has been a breakdown in law and order, widespread corruption, and a failure to provide basic services. In Solomon Islands the state might not have collapsed but it was definitely failing. This situation in turn had implications not just for the citizens of Solomon Islands, but also for the South Pacific region and beyond. Failed states can become havens for international criminal and terrorist groups, as well as having a destabilizing effect more generally. International intervention to deal with failed or failing states might be appropriate in certain circumstances. Questions of legitimacy and effectiveness are important to consider. Legitimacy generally involves some means for the people of the affected country and for the 'international community' to express their support for intervention. Effectiveness involves a judgement as to whether intervention is going to lead to the problems contributing to state failure being dealt with. Is the intervention focusing on symptoms rather than causes? Is it dealing with short-term issues while neglecting the more long-term ones? What is the most effective way of structuring an intervention to respond to the problems of a failed or failing state? These issues are all central to the Solomons intervention. The 'lessons learnt' could be relevant to other situations where international intervention is proposed as a means of dealing with state failure.

### **The Development of the Situation in Solomon Islands before mid-2003**

The emergence of Solomon Islands as an independent state in 1978 was the outcome of the colonial history of the Southwest Pacific. Melanesian social

organization focused on clans, tribes and localities. Loyalty to one's *wantok* ('one talk') was primary. The islands that became the state of Solomon Islands came under British rule in two phases in 1893 and 1900. Neighbouring Bougainville became part of German New Guinea, and later Australian-ruled New Guinea and then the independent state of Papua New Guinea. The apparatus of the state in Solomon Islands derived from the British colonial administration. Solomon Islands was an important scene of fighting between Japanese and Allied forces during the Second World War. Honiara, located on Guadalcanal and close to the important wartime base at Henderson Field, became the capital after the war. Many people moved from the neighbouring island of Malaita to Guadalcanal because of the economic opportunities associated with Honiara's rôle as capital. Nevertheless the provincial level of government remained important. Apart from maintaining law and order, the colonial administration was responsible for economic and resources policy. It also supervised the provision of services such as health and education, where religious organizations were the main providers. A strong administrative elite did not emerge during the colonial period. At the time of independence there were only about 12 university graduates (Bennett, 2002, p. 7).

With localized and personal loyalties taking priority over commitment to the state, one of the main issues in the post-independence Solomons has been corruption. This has been most obvious in the timber industry, one of the country's most lucrative exports. There have been numerous instances of foreign companies (often Malaysian) avoiding environmental controls to exploit rich stands of timber. Licence fees were waived or reduced by making illegal payments to key officials and ministers. At the 1997 parliamentary elections half the sitting members lost their seats because of popular resentment at corrupt practices. The defeated members included the previous prime minister, Solomon Malamoni. The successful party was the Solomon Islands Alliance for Change (SIAC), which was committed to bringing about reform. Bartholomew Ulufa'ulu, a Malaitan, became prime minister (Dinnen, 2002, p. 287).

Alongside the continuing issue of corruption, there were also rising tensions in the late 1990s on the island of Guadalcanal. Local Guadalcanal people resented the influx of Malaitans that had occurred since the transfer of the capital to Honiara after the Second World War. There was a belief that these changes had been at the expense of Guadalcanal people, and that compensation was due. Ezekial Alebua, premier of Guadalcanal province, was a leading advocate of this position. From 1998 the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA), later known as the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), began attacking Malaitans in rural Guadalcanal. Many of these people fled to Honiara, with some 22 000 returning to Malaita (Bennett, 2000, p. 11). The Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) emerged to protect the Malaitans. The MEF's position was strengthened by its close links to the predominantly Malaitan police force.

When Ulufa'ulu, despite being a Malaitan, refused to pay compensation to displaced Malaitans, the MEF and its police supporters took him hostage in a coup in Honiara on 5 June 2000, and forced his resignation on 14 June. Manasseh Sogavare became the new prime minister when the MEF prevented six government members from returning to Honiara for the vote (Dinnen, 2002, p. 288). With the IFM refusing to recognize the new government, Sogavare sought to achieve peace by making compensation payments to both sides. The effect of this approach was to drain the government's exchequer. While the differences

between groups of islanders remained important, increasingly the actions of many people (including political leaders) were criminally motivated.

It would be an oversimplification to see the situation in Solomon Islands as an example of 'ethnic' conflict, and specifically as a conflict between Malaitans and Guadalcanal people. These groups were the two broadest identities in Solomon Islands, and there was competition between them (Fry, 2000, p. 301). As a *wantok* society, attachment to one's particular group is very important. However, this attachment is often very localized, rather than focusing on broader island identities. Competition among groups at various levels became more intense the more the economic situation in Solomon Islands weakened. While corruption undermined the economy of Solomon Islands, as a small island state the country had limited bargaining power in terms of the international political economy. It should also be noted that the country has experienced very rapid population growth: from 195 000 inhabitants in 1978 to 450 000 in 2000 (Bennett, 2000, p. 13). This growth not only places additional pressure on the economy, it also means that the population is relatively young, with demand for employment difficult to satisfy (see Oxfam Community Aid Abroad, 2003, pp. 5–9).

Australia and New Zealand were cautious in their response to the deteriorating situation in Solomon Islands in the late 1990s, and then to the coup in 2000. During the 1950s there had been some discussion as to whether Australia should assume Britain's colonial responsibility in the protectorate (Goldsworthy, 2002, pp. 67–70). This discussion came to nothing at the time, but during the post-independence period Australia (supported by New Zealand) became the leading external power involved in Solomon Islands. The Commonwealth dimension is part of this involvement. From the British perspective it makes sense for Australia and New Zealand, as the leading Commonwealth states in the South Pacific, to be the major source of external support for Solomon Islands.

The initial external involvement in the deteriorating situation in Solomon Islands came through the dispatch of former Fijian prime minister Sitiveni Rabuka as a special Commonwealth envoy in mid-1999. While declining a request for police support before the June 2000 coup, Australia and New Zealand did become more involved after that event. Following the conclusion of a ceasefire between the IFM and the MEF in August 2000, Australia and New Zealand facilitated the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000. This agreement was designed to bring about the disarmament of the opposing groups, while also providing for amnesties for those who had been involved in the conflict. Two bodies were to assist with the implementation of the agreement. The International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) consisted mainly of civilians from Australia and New Zealand and remained in Solomon Islands until mid-2002. The Peace Monitoring Council had representatives from various elements of civil society in Solomon Islands. Both bodies had a facilitating and monitoring role, but lacked power to enforce the agreement.

While the Townsville Agreement did contain some of the worst excesses of violence, in other respects the situation in Solomon Islands continued to spiral downwards. Corruption and intimidation appeared endemic. Intimidatory tactics were used to extort money from government departments. Compensation payments, as provided for under the Townsville Agreement, were frequently a cover for illegal financial aggrandizement by individuals. 'Law and order' meant little as corrupt police often collaborated with gang leaders. Following national elections in December 2001 Sir Allan Kemakeza became prime minister as head

of a new government. Kemakeza had previously lost office because of the way in which he diverted compensation payments to family members. With such a background it was difficult for Kemakeza to arrest the decline. The government lacked funds to provide for basic services. It hoped to obtain assistance from foreign donors, with provision for 60% of the government budget to come from international sources (Bennett, 2002, p. 11). However, for obvious reasons, such donors lacked confidence in the government.

### **The mid-2003 Intervention**

By mid-2003 the question was what was to become of Solomon Islands. While recognizing the seriousness of the situation, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer had indicated in January 2003 that there was little that Australia could do:

Sending in Australian troops to occupy Solomon Islands would be folly in the extreme. It would be widely resented in the Pacific region. It would be very difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers. And for how many years would such an occupation have to continue? And what would be the exit strategy?

The real show-stopper, however, is that it would not work—no matter how it was dressed up, whether as an Australian or a Commonwealth or a Pacific Islands Forum initiative. The fundamental problem is that foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting Solomon Islands. (Downer, 2003a)

By mid-2003 an Australian-led intervention was under way. What had changed in the meantime?

A key factor leading to intervention in Solomon Islands was a recognition that, while the situation was continuing to deteriorate, the prospects for external parties to provide effective assistance were better than had been suggested by Downer in January 2003. Quite apart from the consequences for the Solomon Islanders, there was a realization that a 'failed state' in the region could provide a haven for criminal activity and even international terrorist groups. In early 2003 developments that highlighted the weakness of 'law and order' in Solomon Islands were the murders of Sir Fred Soaki, former Solomon Islands police commissioner, on 10 February, and an Australian Seventh Day Adventist missionary in May. Banks were forced to close in May because of attempted standover tactics.

Indicative of changing Australian thinking on the Solomons issue, although not necessarily the direct cause of the change in Australian government policy, was the release of a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) in June 2003. ASPI is a government-funded but independent body that prepares reports on topics relevant to Australian security and defence. ASPI's report, entitled *Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands*, advocated a two-stage intervention (ASPI, 2003). In the first stage the focus would be on policing, with a small military backup. ASPI argued that 150 police would be sufficient to restore law and order in Honiara and vicinity. There would also be some correctional and judicial personnel required. Personnel should come from a number of countries and be under the control of a multilateral agency

representing donors. This agency would also have oversight of government finances. In the second stage of intervention the focus would be on "longer-term capacity building". The focus would be on rebuilding law and order institutions and making governance more effective. Economic and social development would also be emphasized during this stage, including the improvement of education and health services. ASPI estimated the cost of intervention at A\$853 million over a decade, with Australia paying about half this amount.<sup>1</sup>

Downer gave some indication of changing Australian thinking on the Solomons issue when he spoke at the launch of the ASPI report on 10 June 2003. On this occasion he argued that, while solutions to problems in the region needed to be based on "full ownership" by Pacific island countries, there were situations where Australian involvement might need to be more "proactive" and extend to "security assistance" (Downer, 2003b). The Solomons issue had been under discussion in the national security committee of the Australian cabinet, and Kemakeza met Prime Minister John Howard in Canberra for talks on 5 June 2003 (O'Callaghan, 2003, p. 8). From the Australian perspective it was important that intervention have the support of the government and people of Solomon Islands. The discussions with Kemakeza made clear that the Solomons government did support the intervention that was being proposed. A resolution of the Solomons parliament would also be necessary, both for legal reasons and as an indication that there was broad popular support for intervention. This would help to convey the message that the intervention was not motivated by neocolonialism.

International support was another issue that needed to be considered if the proposed intervention was to have legitimacy. In most circumstances such support comes from the United Nations, usually in the form of a resolution from the Security Council. In this case the complication was that Solomon Islands had diplomatic relations with Taiwan, a major aid donor. China was likely to block UN involvement, or else insist that Solomon Islands withdraw its recognition of Taiwan. While regional support would also be important for international legitimacy, this dimension became the sole focus for diplomatic efforts relating to this objective. Support came from a meeting of foreign ministers of the Pacific Islands Forum in Sydney on 30 June 2003. This support was confirmed when the Pacific Islands Forum held its annual meeting in Auckland in August. The Forum's involvement was in accord with the principles of the Biketawa Declaration of October 2000, providing for a regional response when developments within a member country raised issues for the region as a whole. This approach had been confirmed in the Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security in August 2002.<sup>2</sup>

On 17 July 2003 the Solomons parliament unanimously approved legislation giving authority for the intervention force to enter the country (Forbes, 2003a, p. 5). With both international support and Solomons consent, Howard confirmed on 22 July that Operation Helpem Fren would proceed. On 24 July the first elements of the Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) began arriving in Honiara. While the primary focus was on policing, RAMSI also had a very long military 'tail'. Most of the military personnel were in logistic and support roles, but some were available to assist the police should additional force be necessary. Of the total force of 2225, Australia was the major contributor, with 1500 from the Australian Defence Force, 155 Australian Federal Police, and 90 Australian Protective Force personnel. New Zealand contributed

35 police and 105 defence personnel. A number of Commonwealth PICs also made small contributions. Fiji, Tonga and Papua New Guinea contributed military personnel. These same countries, together with Samoa, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Nauru, Tuvalu and Kiribati, also contributed police.<sup>3</sup> Although small, these contributions were helpful in giving RAMSI a Pacific face; Australia provided the necessary funding. The focus on a regional dimension also helps to explain why a suggestion that France should contribute to the intervention force did not proceed (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003, p. 2).

Given the scale of Australia's contribution, the leaders of RAMSI were Australians. Nick Warner, a senior Australian diplomat with postings as High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea and most recently Ambassador for Counter-Terrorism, became Special Coordinator to Solomon Islands. Federal Agent Ben McDevitt of the Australian Federal Police led RAMSI's police operations and was concurrently Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Solomon Islands Police (RSIP). Peter Noble, a civilian with the New Zealand Defence Force, assumed the position of Deputy Coordinator. It should be noted that the Commissioner for the RSIP since January 2003 has been William Morrell, seconded from the UK but with funding from the EU.

During RAMSI's initial phase the emphasis has been on disarming militias and restoring law and order. Under a 21-day amnesty about 3400 illegal weapons were handed in to RAMSI officials (Dodd, 2003, p. 21). However, Warner expressed disappointment at the limited handover of high-powered weapons on Malaita (Forbes, 2003b, p. 5). The negotiated surrender of Harold Keke, the militant leader on Guadalcanal's Weather Coast, was a clear success for the intervention force. RAMSI also aimed to take MEF figures such as Jimmy Rasta and Edmund Sae into custody; the latter was the alleged killer of former police commissioner Sir Fred Soaki (Dodd, 2003, p. 28). Because of the widespread collusion between members of the police and the militias, McDevitt planned to create a new police force. Stopping extortion would clearly help in improving government finances. External personnel were assisting in both the financial and judicial areas (Dodd, 2003, p. 28). Attempts to take action against corrupt practices had initially focused on the militias and the police. However, it was likely that, as the RAMSI operation proceeded, many officials and politicians would be implicated.

Although Howard had spoken of Kemakeza as a "straightforward, good man to deal with" (O'Callaghan and Harvey, 2003, p. 2), the Solomons Prime Minister had previously been accused of engaging in corruption. One report referred to allegations of "improper receipt of hundreds of thousands of dollars in government funds ... complicity in a failed assassination bid on an ethnic militia leader ... claims of improper dealings with foreign logging companies and the international export of live dolphins" (Skehan, 2003). A test for RAMSI will be whether the judicial process runs its course in terms of prosecuting corrupt politicians and officials. It has been suggested that such a situation could bring about a political crisis that would lead to new elections (Dodd, 2003, p. 28). Presumably people convicted of corruption would be ineligible to stand in such elections. Howard's statement that "I work with the elected Prime Minister" (O'Callaghan and Harvey, 2003, p. 2) would enable him to distance himself from Kemakeza should the latter be convicted and thus lose office.

Beyond the immediate issues of restoring law and order and ensuring probity in government finances and administration, there is the question of whether the root causes of the Solomons crisis can be dealt with through the



Australian-led intervention. Both the ASPI report and the Oxfam CAA report argue that it is important to address long-term development issues. Although clearly there are differences of emphasis between the two reports, they both give some attention to the need for appropriate forms of governance and for social and economic development that will facilitate the well-being of Solomon Islanders. On the first point clearly the match between the Westminster system and Solomons society has not worked particularly well; the demands of the *wantok* society have taken priority. In relation to the second point the major issue is that there is rapid population growth in Solomon Islands. Having experienced a population growth of about 150% between 1975 and 2001, the estimated growth for 1975–2015 is 200%; almost half the population is younger than 14 (AusAID, 2003: 4–5). Meeting health and education needs, even at a very basic level, is extremely difficult. Employment opportunities are very limited, and becoming worse as the economy slides with the unstable political situation.

On governance issues the ASPI report advocates “constitutional review and reform”. It canvasses federalism as an option, and discusses the strengthening of the institutions of government and civil society “to provide a robust and durable basis for open, effective and accountable government”; personnel development is one aspect of this. Oxfam CAA recommends identifying “appropriate models of governance that build on intrinsic Pacific processes of consensus, talking together, the power of the spoken word, personal pledges and commitment” (p. 17). It also sees community peace building as important; engagement with civil society, including women’s groups, churches and youth is a crucial part of this process (p. 20).

In relation to social and economic development, the ASPI recommendations are mostly more general than those of Oxfam CAA. The ASPI report argues for “a long-term plan for the development of key economic and social capabilities, including education and health services”. It regards support for primary and secondary education as particularly important, and also recommends encouragement for private enterprise as a means of promoting exports (gold, timber, fishing and tourism are mentioned) (p. 46). The Oxfam CAA recommendations reflect its experience as a non-governmental organization working in Solomon Islands. In dealing with the causes of the conflict the recommendations concerning rural opportunities, land, education and health are of particular interest. Rural opportunities relate particularly to the needs of rural youth, with programmes needed to overcome “the lack of rural employment, drug and alcohol use/abuse, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, unplanned pregnancies, family violence, polygamy, limited education opportunities, and loss of identity” (p. 16). Land policy should put more emphasis on the centrality of land in indigenous culture, including “formalizing customary land ownership and registration” (p. 16). Education should focus particularly on rural needs; health services needed to be developed to overcome the low levels of health reflected in indicators for Solomon Islands.

While APSI’s recommendations concerning the long-term development needs of Solomon Islands are at a very general level, those from Oxfam CAA reflect a more detailed knowledge of the local situation. In both cases there is the question of how much can be achieved through international intervention, and how much is a matter for Solomon Islanders themselves. RAMSI can undertake certain rôles in improving policing, law and order, and financial and public administration, at least in the short term. In the longer term it is a question of

whether RAMSI can facilitate those elements in Solomons Islands who wish to work together for the well-being of all its people. While the political elite and Solomon Islanders have been receptive to RAMSI in its early stages, will that goodwill last when some political leaders and other people find that intervention means a loss of status and of material benefits? It becomes a question of whether there are leaders and groups available that can be mobilized in support of the objectives of intervention as agreed to by the Solomons government and parliament in July 2003.

From an Australian perspective Paul Monk has sounded a more sceptical note in warning that it is far from clear whether RAMSI will be able to achieve its objectives (Monk, 2003). More than that he questions whether the attainment of the objectives warrants the cost, pointing out that the decade-long cost of A\$853 million estimated by ASPI (with half coming from Australia) "is roughly twice the Solomon Islands current annual GDP and almost 10 times the value of the annual trade between Australia and the Solomon Islands before the downward spiral precipitated by the coup on 5 June, 2000" (p. 22). Be that as it may, the Howard government has clearly made the judgement that the cost to Australia does warrant the commitment. Should the rôle of RAMSI become more difficult in the future, it will be interesting to see whether the bipartisan support that the intervention currently has in Australia will last.

In the meantime the Solomons commitment has presaged a more interventionist Australian approach to the South Pacific more generally. At the Pacific Islands Forum in Auckland in August 2003 Howard signalled support for the development of regionalist approaches to issues such as policing. Australia also indicated to Papua New Guinea in September 2003 that a condition of its aid package (annual value of over A\$300 million) would be the dispatch of 200–300 Australian police to address the deteriorating law and order situation in Papua New Guinea. Clearly Australia has concerns about Papua New Guinea and believes a more interventionist stance will 'nip the problem in the bud', thus forestalling any need for a larger-scale intervention along the lines of what has been undertaken in Solomon Islands.

## **Conclusion**

By early 2004 the military dimension of the Solomons intervention had been scaled down considerably. Following an announcement by Senator Robert Hill, the Australian Minister for Defence, on 28 October 2003, the number of Australian Defence Force personnel taking part in the Solomons mission had been reduced to 530 by the beginning of 2004.<sup>4</sup> The initial phase of the intervention could be judged a success. In terms of the wider debate about state failure and appropriate international responses the Solomons experience highlights certain points. Intervention has more prospects for retrieving the situation where the state is 'failing' rather than 'failed'. Widespread popular support gives legitimacy to an intervention. International support can be expressed at a regional level rather than necessarily through the United Nations. It is more difficult for an international intervention to deal with the underlying problems that led to a failing or failed state. In the Solomons context the long-term issues have been clarified by intervention but it is too early to attempt an assessment of outcomes in that respect. While there is pressure for greater international involvement (if not necessarily full-scale intervention) in other situations in the South Pacific, the

lessons learnt so far from the Solomons intervention, and the remaining quandaries, should be heeded. The same points apply in other parts of the world where international intervention might be contemplated as a means for dealing with state failure.

## Notes

1. For a further development of the argument, and an early assessment of the intervention see Wainwright (2003).
2. Outcome Statement, Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, Sydney, 30 June 2003, at [http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional\\_orgs/ffam\\_solomons\\_0306.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional_orgs/ffam_solomons_0306.html), accessed 11 August 2003; Forum Declaration on Solomon Islands, Thirty-Fourth Pacific Islands Forum, Auckland, 14–16 August 2003, at [http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional\\_orgs/pif34\\_communique.pdf](http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional_orgs/pif34_communique.pdf), accessed 17 October 2003; Biketawa Declaration, Thirty-First Pacific Islands Forum, Tarawa, Republic of Kiribati, 27–30 October 2000, at [http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional\\_orgs/pif31\\_communique.pdf](http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional_orgs/pif31_communique.pdf), accessed 17 October 2003; and Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security, Thirty-Third Pacific Islands Forum, Suva, 15–17 August 2002, at [http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional\\_orgs/pif33\\_communique.pdf](http://www.dftat.gov.au/geo/spacific/regional_orgs/pif33_communique.pdf), accessed 17 October 2003.
3. Information on RAMSI is from the following websites: Australian Federal Police, 'Solomon Islands Mission AFP and APS Commitment', <http://www.afp.gov.au/page.asp?ref=/News/solomons/home.xml>, accessed 11 August 2003; Australian Department of Defence, 'Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands: Operation Anode', <http://www.defence.gov.au/opanode/>, accessed 11 August 2003; and 'NZ assistance to Solomon Islands Government—joint statement', 15 July 2003, <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/PrintDocument.cfm?DocumentID=17308>, accessed 11 August 2003.
4. <http://www.defence.gov.au/opanode/>, accessed 16 January 2004.

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