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## **PEACE INTERVENTIONS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC: LESSONS FROM BOUGAINVILLE AND SOLOMON ISLANDS**

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## **“Peace Interventions in the South Pacific: Lessons from Bougainville and Solomon Islands”**

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### **Introduction**

Internal conflict has become the predominant threat to the security and stability of many of the small island nations of the Southwest Pacific and particularly in the countries of Melanesia.

Since the late 1980s, conflicts of varying causes and degrees of intensity have occurred in Papua New Guinea (Bougainville secession attempt)<sup>i</sup>, Fiji (coups and attempted coups), Vanuatu (police rebellion) and Solomon Islands (ethnic conflict and coup).

These events have seriously debilitated the already fragile national economies and polities of all countries, so much so in the Solomon Islands that that country is now being described by many analysts as a “failing”, if not “failed”, state.<sup>ii</sup>

While most of these countries have so far been able (not without difficulty) to maintain a measure of state integrity, the situation in Solomon Islands has become so precarious that Australia and New Zealand (with the support of most Pacific Island governments and anticipating a request from the Solomons’ parliament) are preparing to intervene in an attempt to restore the rule of law and rebuild administrative institutions. The form of that intervention is not yet clear - it is thought likely to include up to 2,000 armed military and police with a large team of civilian technical personnel – nor has a mandate been determined.

In this context a host of questions arises as to how best to resolve, contain, manage and/or transform these internal conflicts in the interest of the security, stability and well-being of the peoples of the countries concerned and of the region as a whole.

What are the “ways out” - or “ways through” - such conflicts? What are the appropriate domestic strategies, policies and mechanisms for resolving conflict and producing stability? Are they sufficient to the task? What roles can (and should) regional states play in helping

states manage, settle or ameliorate internal conflict? Is external intervention the answer? What is the likely impact of such intervention? Is there a regional security architecture that might be useful in these circumstances? Is there a role for NGOs? Is conflict *prevention* possible? And if so, how? Do the answers not lie in a holistic approach to improving the processes of economic development and governance? And if so what agencies and policies are most likely to bring this about? How has the region responded to date? These questions deserve serious consideration and doubtless many will have been explored in presentations and discussions at this conference.

The purpose of this paper is to consider one form of conflict management undertaken recently in the region; that is, the peace monitoring interventions by Australia, New Zealand and some Pacific Island Countries (PICs) in Bougainville and Solomon Islands. How useful have these exercises been in assisting peace processes and in conflict management/peace construction, and what lessons can be drawn from them for any future such operations - including perhaps for the more vigorous “co-operative intervention” currently in prospect?

From 1997 to 2003, the Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) and later the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG), consisting of unarmed Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Islands’ military and civilian personnel, provided support to and helped facilitate the peace process in Bougainville. These external groups, numbering from 250 to 300 personnel at various points in time, were agreed to by the parties to the Burnham and Lincoln peace conferences held in 1997 and 1998. In Solomon Islands, following the conclusion of the Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) in October 2000 to mid-2002, an International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) comprising 50 unarmed police and civilian personnel from Australia, New Zealand and other PICs, was established to work in support of the indigenous Peace Monitoring Council (PMC) that had also been set up by the parties to the TPA to advance the cause of peace.

While the specific mandates and responsibilities of the PMG and IPMT differed – and the resources available to the two operations also differed substantially – the expectation of the signatories to the peace agreements was that by providing a neutral, physical presence, by undertaking community confidence-building activities, and by facilitating contact between stakeholders in the respective peace processes, these interventions would help consolidate peace and reduce the prospect of renewed fighting.

Note that these were *not* “coercive interventions” or “humanitarian interventions” in which armed forces under, for example, United Nations’ or regional agency command are inserted into a civil conflict to stop fighting and bloodshed and to make or keep the peace. They were unarmed and neutral “monitoring” operations consisting of military, police and civilian personnel inserted *after* peace agreements had been reached between combatants and authorities. These were a type of intervention designed to assist in conflict management and amelioration – as part of the larger peace process – rather than as the prime mover of the process.<sup>iii</sup> (At times, however, the PMG saw it as its responsibility to help maintain, or re-start, the momentum of the process when it flagged).

Note also that in attempting to learn and apply “lessons” from one country’s conflict to another’s, methodological difficulties arise. Conflicts – and resolutions – are often context specific and the factors in play in one conflict/post-conflict situation do not always translate well to others. But while there are obvious limits to comparisons, it is nonetheless possible to generate at least some “rules of thumb”, particularly since there has been (a) such a large number of monitoring interventions of various kinds and (b) that the learning of lessons especially from UN operations has become something of an industry.<sup>iv</sup>

## Conflicts in Bougainville and Solomon Islands

*The origins of the Bougainville conflict* date back to before the 1970s, but intensified in that decade when the BCL copper and gold mine backed by the colonial Australian administration commenced operations at Panguna in central Bougainville and during the mid-1970s during PNG’s transition to independence when Bougainvilleans only reluctantly agreed to be a part of the new state. In late 1988, aggrieved landowners around the Panguna minesite took violent action against the mine and resisted efforts by the PNG police – and from May 1989 by the PNG Defence Force - to have them desist. Support grew for the landowners and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), fighting escalated and the conflict took on an “ethnic and separatist character”.<sup>v</sup> The security forces pulled out, a situation of anarchy developed after March 1990, and a kind of “ethnic cleansing” occurred whereby thousands of non-Bougainvilleans were chased out of the province. But the antagonism was not just against outsiders as Bougainvilleans fought each other often over disputes that had occurred long before the mine and the secession movement. A Bougainville Resistance Force formed in the north of the island opposed to the BRA thus allowing the security forces back into the island.

Regan describes the consequences of the fighting between then and 1997 as having had a “terrible impact” with widespread deaths (in his view several thousands of civilians and several hundreds of police and fighters), displaced people numbering 60,000 or more (i.e. a third of the population), severely damaged infrastructure, loss of all revenue from the mine, economic collapse and the destruction of what had been the most effective government of any kind in the Pacific Islands region.<sup>vi</sup>

In 1997 groups came together to attempt a peace settlement and in the Burnham (NZ) Truce of October 1997 committed themselves to peace and reconciliation and agreed to the emplacement of a regional truce monitoring team (TMG) led by New Zealand. Following the Lincoln (NZ) agreement in early 1998 the Peace Monitoring Group replaced the TMG led by an Australian army officer. Five team sites were established, regular patrolling throughout the province occurred, and the numbers of monitors reduced from 300 to 200 after year 2000. The mandate for the PMG included reporting on the compliance of parties with all aspects of the ceasefire agreement, instilling community confidence, providing information to the people about the peace process, and – in what became its most important role - facilitating the implementation of the Lincoln agreement. The PMG has only recently been wound up – end June 2003 – and replaced by a Transition Team of 17 unarmed civilians.

The peace process has thus moved over five years from a truce arrangement to a full peace agreement with PNG with autonomy arrangements guaranteed and the prospect of a referendum on independence in the future. Work has commenced on rebuilding the administration of Bougainville and although internal tensions remain and the potential for the process to come off the rails exists (partly because the instigator of it all, Francis Ona, refuses to join the process, and partly because revenue flows to re-build government services and infrastructure are uncertain), there is an air of confidence that the peace process has succeeded. The work of the PMG has been instrumental in much of this by providing what Regan describes as invaluable “political space” for the parties to sort themselves out. The monitoring process as a consequence can duly claim to have been successful.

*The ethnic tension and conflict that erupted in late 1998 in the Solomon Islands* was the product of an armed uprising by a group of young Guadalcanal men bent on intimidating and chasing non-Guadalcanal peoples off the hinterland and back into Honiara. The Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army which later became the Isatabu Freedom fighters then the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) drew some inspiration from the BRA and other Bougainvillean refugees who had made their way to Solomons in the 1990s, but their cause largely focused on the belief that settlers – mostly from the province of Malaita – had illegally acquired land, were denying them job opportunities and had been disrespectful of their culture.<sup>vii</sup> A number of attempts were made throughout 1999 to mediate the conflict but to no avail.

The Malaitans fought back and in early 2000 formed the Malaitan Eagle Force (MEF) which in June 2000 combined with a powerful section of the Police Force (in composition mostly Malaitan) to stage a coup against the SI government (SIG) led by Bartholomew Ulufa’alu (himself a Malaitan). Violence, killings and open confrontations continued as the MEF, augmented by police resources raided villages and coastal areas immediately outside Honiara. Representations by the Australian and New Zealand governments assisted in negotiating a ceasefire in August and when that failed further negotiations brought a response from the parties to participate in a peace conference in Townsville in October 2000.

The Townsville Peace Agreement (TPA) resulted and although the militant groups celebrated the end of fighting, their commitment to the peace process was never strong or genuine. The TPA was a flawed agreement (see below), but it did establish a framework for taking the peace process forward by establishing a Peace Monitoring Council (PMC) consisting of eminent, professional Solomon Islanders chaired by former Prime Minister, Sir Peter Kenilorea, a Malaitan, with Paul Tovua, a Guadalcanal man and at that time the Speaker of Parliament, as his deputy. The mandate of the PMC was to oversee the peace process, pursue the recommendations made in the TPA (from weapons, amnesties, stolen property, land claims, demilitarisation, rehabilitation, police restructuring, to infrastructure projects and reconciliation), and to enforce compliance. But it had no enforcement authority and was dependent on the SIG.

The TPA parties also agreed to the establishment of an International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) consisting of unarmed monitors from Australia, New Zealand (and later from Vanuatu, Tonga and the Cook Islands) that would work in support of the PMC with particular responsibility for collecting weapons from the militants and communities as well as conducting confidence-building activities in Guadalcanal and Malaita. The IPMT established six team sites and conducted patrols to all parts of the Guadalcanal and Malaita provinces. It worked in tandem with the PMC monitoring teams engaging with communities, visiting schools and churches, facilitating meetings, attempting initiatives such as ‘weapons-free villages’, making regular contact with militants, and assisting groups keen to reconcile.

The impact of the conflict was severe. More than 20,000 people were displaced; the number of conflict related deaths was well over 200; the police were compromised and hopelessly divided; the economy was bankrupted; the parliamentary and political system was abused and corrupted (not least through the resignation of the Prime Minister under duress; the public service was gutted; and service delivery to most parts of the country all but decimated).

The peace process worked reasonably well for perhaps six months or so. Many weapons were collected from villagers by the IPMT, but militant leaders and their gang members as well as the police refused to part with their modern high-powered guns. Some senior political figures who had also benefited from the raiding of the police armoury on June 5<sup>th</sup> were known to have weapons, but refused to turn them in. But the peace game was very quickly surpassed by the political game. For the politicians and militants alike the peace game was largely irrelevant. The SIG never seriously engaged in the peace process. Access to “compensation” and other resources of the state was the main game.<sup>viii</sup> Irregular politics displaced regular politics; the integrity of the state was very much in question. Those who had fomented the coup in June 2000 were still by and large in control.

What then was the verdict on the IPMT? I think it fair to say that it was a partially successful operation. It was certainly well received in the rural communities, it for a time established good rapport with militant leaders, it succeeded in collecting and later disposing over 2100 weapons, and it helped mobilise and give confidence to elements of civil society that remain active today. If the PMG had provided Bougainvilleans with some “political space”, the IPMT and PMC had provided Solomon Islanders some “breathing space”. But some fifteen months on from the TPA, it was clear that both monitoring organisations had become only marginally effective (although the continued existence of the PMC - later to become the National Peace Council - as a focal point for peace efforts was critical).

## **Lessons and Questions**

In this section I attempt to draw some of the lessons from the Peace Monitoring operations in Bougainville and Solomon Islands as a guide for those engaged in peace practice. They are more “rules of thumb” rather than “best practice”; some are unequivocal, others less so; most are interconnected. Many “lessons” are drawn as much from the peace processes themselves as from the specific operations of the monitoring teams. What follows is not a

blow-by-blow evaluation but observations drawn from my personal experience in Solomons and from the writing and conversations with others, especially from Anthony Regan, in Bougainville.

*1. Thorough, on-going analysis.* The first lesson is the need for thorough and on-going analysis. Peace practitioners (and policy makers) in my view can never learn enough about the cultural bases of Melanesian conflicts - about their origins, complexity, longevity, role in group cohesion, and in inter-group relations; about how “new” conflicts can re-ignite seemingly totally separate dormant ones; about leadership in fighting as distinct from politics; about retribution; and the processes of mediation and reconciliation.<sup>ix</sup>

In the same way as military generals study the history of warfare, peace practitioners need to be aware of the way combatants “do” their fighting. In addition, policy-makers and practitioners need an appreciation of what stage the fighting (conflict) has reached and be able to assess the viability of continued conflict at the time an intervention is to take place. The “hurting stalemate”, for example, that was thought to have been reached on Bougainville by the mid-to-late 1990’s and which made the agreement on peace more likely, contrasted with the situation in Solomons where clearly a situation of “conflict unresolved” applied even after the signing of the TPA in 2000.<sup>x</sup> Practitioners also need to be aware of the character of conflict and not fall into the easy trap of labeling such fighting as “ethnic” as if that was sufficient explanation in itself. There is of course an ethnic character to much of the conflict in Melanesia, but its roots – as in Solomons – are usually bound up with uneven development, perceived inequities or injustices and chronically poor governance. I suggest we look at ethnicity less as cause and more as “force multiplier” in the understanding of conflict. Inter-generational leadership struggles within groups also occur during periods of turmoil and complicate analysis.

In addition to an understanding of the “anthropology of conflict”, an analysis of contemporary political power balances and relationships – who has influence and clout both in the formal system and behind the scenes - is essential for external practitioners attempting to move the peace process forward. As well, recognition of the broader socio-political factors and trends that have precipitated conflicts elsewhere is important. Demographic stress, including the “youth bulge”, dysfunctional governance, increasing criminalisation, alienated and “rudderless” groups, susceptibility to “pyramid” get-rich-quick schemes, and external linkages to criminals or dissident elements are examples of such trends.

Rigorous analysis helps shape the nature and composition of the intervention and is essential for informing the work of those in the field.<sup>xi</sup> Not all of course can be absorbed in pre-intervention training – the stories of the TMG, PMG and IPMT monitors are replete with examples of the use of “cultural guides” from local communities that added to their effectiveness.<sup>xii</sup> (Two caveats – additional lessons if you like: care needs to be taken that analysis does not lead to paralysis; and “best-case” analysis / optimistic assumptions must be guarded against).

2. *“Being there”*. A positive lesson to be drawn from both monitoring operations is the immense value that a neutral “physical presence” of “outsiders” on the ground, amongst the communities in conditions of deep mistrust, adds to a peace process. The role of neutral outsiders in “being there” with team sites located in strategic rural and urban areas and with regular patrolling through communities reassuring frightened and traumatized groups, calming fears, conveying reliable information, helping create or re-create linkages and generally building confidence is perhaps the most vital action “monitoring” groups can take. That function was doubly rewarding in Solomons where external monitors were able to operate in tandem with indigenous monitoring teams.

3. *Realistic peace agreements*. The third lesson relates to Peace Agreements. Peace agreements arrived at by the parties to the conflict need to be carefully scrutinized by practitioners involved in intervention. Usually peace agreements favour those parties holding the leading hand at the time they are signed. This was particularly the case with the TPA - the text of which conformed basically to the draft prepared by the MEF; but not the case with the Burnham and Lincoln Agreements for Bougainville. The consequences of an unbalanced and unrealistic TPA soon became clear. The SIG had neither capacity nor will to meet its development or governance or peace making undertakings and it was still largely in thrall to those forces that had made and led the coup of 5 June 2000. The police and militants were absolved of responsibilities for their actions by receiving blanket amnesties. When the deadline for the return of stolen weapons (and stolen property) passed, the SIG and the police were unwilling (and/or unable) to act against (a) themselves – the police retained many weapons illegally, and (b) the militants, thus leaving the balance of modern weapons very obviously with the MEF and its supporters.

Could Australia and New Zealand have insisted at the TPA talks in Cairns in October 2000 that the Agreement be more balanced and prescriptive of a realistic and more direct way forward?<sup>xiii</sup> Probably not. Obvious intrusions into the substance of the agreement would likely have met resistance from one or other of the parties. (It appears from anecdotal evidence that the facilitators of the Bougainville agreements felt less constrained). The primary objective of the Australian and regional governments was to “stop the fighting”. Following that went the hope that all signatories would honour their commitments and undertakings. There are a number of lessons here apart from the need to secure a sound Agreement and to avoid hopeful or “best-case” thinking. In the event that a peace agreement is distorted and/or unrealistic, (in my view) it is incumbent upon external players to assess the likely consequences and course of events with a view to influencing the domestic peace process more vigorously through diplomatic and other means.

4. *Clear and adequate mandates*. All literature on peacekeeping operations make the important point that intervening forces need clear and adequate mandates. The mandates for the TMG and PMG were clear and according to the military leaders and their senior civilian negotiators, provided sound guidance. A civilian negotiator observed, however, that in view of the proactive remit for the PMG, the day-to-day duties of the group were not so obvious and required flexibility and initiative to handle the demands of facilitation and negotiation between the parties and, when necessary, to be inventive in keeping the momentum of the peace process moving forward.



The IPMT's mandate (reviewed after the TPA) was equally clear: it was tasked to build confidence in the peace process between the parties and within the community; to conduct the return of weapons from militants and communities (disarmament); to store such armaments securely; and to report to and to work in support of the PMC. An additional part of the IPMT leader's brief was to avoid "mission creep" and to keep an exit strategy under continuous review. But the IPMT's mandate was effectively constrained, firstly by it not having enforcement authority with which to pursue its disarmament function (persuasion and reliance on the good will of the communities being its only arsenal) and secondly, by it being tied to the policy approach pursued by the PMC. The IPMT was clearly under-mandated. But had it been mandated to enforce weapons return then a different sort of intervention involving armed personnel would have been required: a prospect not contemplated by Australia and New Zealand and one most unlikely to have been agreed to by the TPA parties.

5. *Focus on process as much as on outcomes.*<sup>xiv</sup> Perhaps the most important lesson to emerge from these two case studies is that the ending of conflict and the construction of peace be recognised and treated as a *process* with a focus on getting stakeholders and players to agree on positions if not on interests.<sup>xv</sup> This was clearly the case in Bougainville. The timeline of the conflict in *Accord* shows<sup>xvi</sup> a series of halting attempts at ceasefire, accords, negotiations from 1990, through to peace conferences and talks in the mid-90s, then peace forums prior to the important Burnham and Lincoln agreements resulting in the insertion of the TMG initially then the PMG. More intensive dialogue and negotiations then followed both internally and with the PNG government culminating in the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement with PNG in early 2001. As Bougainvillean groups divided along geographical and "ideological/political" lines (i.e. on positions of autonomy and independence) it was impossible to avoid a process.

Tony Regan recounts the step-by-step discussions, debates, position-building, consensus and compromise seeking within and between groups and the months of effort sorting out options so as to build a common position to put to the PNG Government. (The PNG government itself underwent shifts in position through the same period as it sought to satisfy its own constituent elements). Numerous groups had to be kept informed and persuaded of the course decided upon.<sup>xvii</sup> Throughout 1997-8 to 2002, the TMG/PMG played a pivotal facilitating and "lubricating" role – ensuring that talks went ahead, ferrying leaders and representatives to meetings and generally assisting the negotiating parties on Bougainville. In a sense this "process" reflected the text-book maxim of the necessity to get the process right if conflict resolution is to be successful.<sup>xviii</sup> But we should not overlook the importance of diplomatic interventions, for example, to break deadlocks as occurred with Alexander Downer's suggestion to both sides in late 2000 of the possibility of a deferred referendum which might include the issue of independence.

In contrast, there was a process of sorts in Solomons, but it was much shorter, it engaged the key players/stakeholders far less intensively, dialogue was severely limited and there was no opportunity to benefit at that stage from the facilitating role of monitors. Mediation attempts were made throughout 1999 to halt the fighting including a Commonwealth

initiative led by Fiji's General Rabuka; a multilateral team of police peace monitors; and peace accords were attempted (Panatina and Honiara) but were ignored. Following the coup in June 2000, ceasefire and preliminary peace talks facilitated by the Australian and New Zealand governments took place and ultimately the combatants were persuaded to travel to Townsville in October that year to negotiate a peace agreement. But there was little opportunity to develop and articulate positions – domestic resources available for that were skewed very heavily in favour of one side; and civil society was intimidated and warned against engagement.

Despite its shortcomings, the TPA did set up an innovative framework that would hopefully take the peace process forward. It was hoped that with the formation of the indigenous PMC, local ownership of the process would occur and, with the support of an external monitoring group (the IPMT) with a primary role of immediate weapons collection, the conflict could be settled within a reasonable time frame. One of the major missing ingredients here (alongside the lack of enforcement authority) – and a most important lesson – was the lack of intensive and sustained engagement with the parties and major players and more broadly with civil society and community groupings to build a constituency for peace.

In my view it was a strategic error not to engineer (or at least attempt) regular meetings of the parties, or of the peace monitors with the parties, to talk through issues and positions and to attempt to bring about a genuine dialogue on peace construction. Conflict resolution theory talks of the need for peacebuilding activities to be designed to encourage both vertical and horizontal links between and within conflicting parties.<sup>xix</sup> “Engage and engage – agreements are only milestones” is the entreaty we hear from NGO peace practitioners.<sup>xx</sup> Whether the parties were keen to do that is a moot point, and whether we could have avoided a return to fighting, is another. For many, the status quo suited their interests.

*6. Indigenous ownership.* This brings us to the question – rather than lesson – of indigenous ownership of the peace process. In Bougainville – there was no single “owner”, but it was clearly the Bougainvilleans who “owned” what was going on. There was no government to rely on, or to hold accountable, or to blame. They had to sort out their own affairs. In Solomons the PMC was the indigenous leader of the peace process, but it – and the peace process generally - occupied centre stage for only a year or so. The lesson is that indigenous ownership is essential; but it must have the resources, structure, composition, mandate and linkage strategy appropriate to the situation. Without resources the PMC wasn't able to drive the process. Without the SIG playing a role the PMC was powerless to oversee and enforce compliance. (The SIG, in fact, had not opened or read any of the PMC's reports to it for the first six months of the process!) Having ex-militant commanders from either side of the conflict represented on the PMC was an innovation; but it didn't work, largely because they carried only a watching brief and had variable authority in their own organisations.

*7. Multi-faceted role.* Post-conflict situations require multi-faceted action. Peace building operations, for example to restore the rule of law, require an integrated approach involving policing, legal institution-building, civil administration and the building of public support.

Peace monitors in Melanesia, on a much more limited scale, also need a multi-faceted role. They cannot simply hang about and “monitor”. To engage effectively, they need to be able to deliver something material to communities. Clearly they cannot and should not try to substitute as service delivery agencies; but by facilitating contacts and linkages with donors, assisting in the targeting of relief to communities as a form of peace dividend, and encouraging womens’ and other social and development organisations increases their effectiveness. It would appear that relief and reconstruction efforts in Bougainville were more integrated with the work of monitoring teams than was the case in Solomons.

An issue that arose in the course of both monitoring exercises was the extent to which monitors became involved in local dispute resolution. Orthodoxy says to stay out – yet informally the work of monitors in many occasions contributed to a satisfactory local outcome. I’m reminded of a critique of UN peace operations that too often timidity masquerades as neutrality (Malone and Thakur, 2001, 14)

8. *Communications strategy.* A frequent theme in the evaluations of peace operations is that better use should have been made of the media to explain what was happening in the peace process and of the outsiders’ role. This is no doubt true of both Bougainville and Solomons, but it is an infrastructure and media access problem rather than one of correct messages. Radio, television and print media access is woefully inadequate in Melanesian countries. There is absolutely no doubt that enhanced communications would lead to better local understanding of the state of play and enable peace groups to operate more effectively.

9. *Size, composition, mix of personnel, gender balance, training.* It is trite to say –as do many evaluations - that planners must get it right to suit local conditions. The civilian, military, police mix in the two case studies appears to have worked well. The IPMT and PMC were under-resourced to the extent that they were insufficiently mobile within and between provinces. The biggest lesson derived, however, was the value added by having Pacific Islander monitors as an integral part of the teams. Pre-deployment training is a universally recurring demand. This underscores a further lesson for regional governments and that is to develop a professional cadre of monitors. The continued use of mixed forces in peace building (and possibly state building) operations also has implications for the appropriate training of military and police personnel.

10. *“Brains trusts”?* A point on which to conclude this list of lessons, but by no means the final word, is the critique expressed by commanders and team leaders of many peace operations that they receive insufficient guidance from Headquarters. It was an opinion expressed, for example, by one of the army commanders of the PMG who reckoned that too much responsibility was left on his shoulders for carrying the peace process forward. It was not my experience during my time with the IPMT, but there were occasions in which being able to bounce ideas around on ways forward or on novel approaches (e.g. in methods of disarmament) with a group of interlocutors who had had comparative experience would have been valuable.

## Concluding Note

There are a bundle of issues that deserve attention including the question of disarmament strategies and timing (i.e. early in the peace process as attempted in Solomons or late as in Bougainville), dealing with spoilers, and exit strategies; but I will leave those for another occasion.

In summary, the peace monitoring interventions in Bougainville and Solomon Islands may be seen as useful external mechanisms for assisting in the amelioration of conflict and the construction of more peaceful situations; but they clearly offer no fix. The lessons outlined above may well be useful in the event that monitoring operations are required again in the region. They may also be useful to the more comprehensive intervention currently in prospect for Solomon Islands; but there are lessons of a higher order to do with state and nation building that will need to be applied in that circumstance.

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<sup>i</sup> Another virtually unknown conflict of serious proportions is occurring in the Southern Highlands Province of PNG in which more casualties have occurred than in, for example, the Solomon Islands conflict. See Abby McLeod et al: "Conflict, development & politics in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea -

Workshop Report", cited at <http://rspas.anu.edu/melanesia>.

<sup>ii</sup> Elsin Wainwright: Our Failing Neighbour – Australia and the Future of Solomon Islands, an ASPI Policy Report, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, June 2003.

<sup>iii</sup> This type of operation is well described by Trevor Findlay: Peace operations and the military dimensions of verification, Ch 9 in Trevor Findlay & Oliver Meier (2001)(eds): Verification Yearbook 2001, VERTIC, London, 2001, pp 159-164.

<sup>iv</sup> See Thomas G. Weiss: "Researching Humanitarian Intervention: Some Lessons", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2001; David M. Malone and Ramesh Thakur: "UN Peacekeeping: Lessons Learned?", *Global Governance*, 7 (1), 2001; Wilton Park Conference Report: "Monitoring and Verification of Peace Agreements", 597<sup>th</sup> Wilton Park Conference, March 2000, cited at <http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/conferences/reports/wp597report.html/>. The Wilton Park Report, after analysing monitoring and verification efforts in Peru and Ecuador, East Timor and Kosovo, concluded that "Monitoring and verification are best undertaken in peaceful environments with the

full co-operation of those being monitored. These conditions often do not prevail in an area where fighting and violence have taken place before a recent cease-fire or peace agreement. Dealing with hostile factions in a situation involving continued violence and intimidation and little consensus regarding the future of a society poses considerable difficulties for monitors and verifiers whose task is to support the process of deepening and maintaining a peace. For this work to be carried out effectively in the future, due attention must be given to the following factors: securing an adequate mandate; deploying sufficient trained personnel (police, military, specialist monitors); providing personnel with the right 'mix' of skills; early deployment to prevent a political and security vacuum; preparing in advance at the multilateral and national level (priorities to include: crisis management planning, databasing and documentation, pre-procuring relevant equipment); establishing which organisations are to undertake which tasks; liaising effectively with local populations and training locals to undertake monitoring and verification tasks; encouraging local tolerance of monitoring and verification activities; developing an effective media strategy to influence positively reporting; developing appropriate sanctions (political, military, economic) to deal with those opposing the peace agreement; promoting information-sharing between institutions with recent relevant experience; accepting a long-term commitment.” pp16-17.

<sup>v</sup> Regan, Anthony in Monica Wehner and Donald Denoon (eds): *Without a Gun: Australians' Experiences Monitoring Peace in Bougainville, 1997-2001*, Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 2001, pp 1-41.

<sup>vi</sup> *ibid*

<sup>vii</sup> See Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka; “*A Weak State and the Solomon Islands Peace Process*”, East-West Center Working Papers, Pacific Islands Development Series, No. 14, April 2002. Ruth Liloqula: “*Ethnic Tension*”: *Causes and Impact*, State, Society & Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) Discussion Paper 00/7, 2000; Judith Bennett: “*Roots of Conflict in Solomon Islands – though much is taken, much abides: Legacies of Tradition and Colonialism*”, SSGM Discussion Paper 2002/5, 2002.

<sup>viii</sup> Sinclair Dinnen: “Winners and losers: politics and disorder in the Solomon Islands 2000-2002”, *Journal of Pacific History*, Volume XXXVII:3, December 2002, pp 285-298. Sinclair Dinnen: “Guns, money and politics: disorder in the Solomon Islands”, in R.J.May et al: ‘*Arc of Instability?*’ *Melanesia in the early 2000s*, State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Project, Australian National University and Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, New Zealand (Occasional Paper No 4), 2003.

<sup>ix</sup> Small communities suffering killings, deaths, ambushes, murders, etc, in conflict will seek to straighten these wrongs in some cases by retribution, in others by compensation, and they will often take considerable time. Compensation ceremonies for the killings that occurred during World War II, for example, between Bougainvilleans who had taken different sides went on for up to 50 years. While outsiders may be active in facilitating peace settlements at the national level, peace settlements between Melanesians take place at the very local level.

<sup>x</sup> That this is an inexact science will be clear to all conflict analysts. Some observers reckoned a “ripe moment” for peace existed on Bougainville in early 1990, Peter Sohia: “Early Interventions”, in Andy Carl and Sr. Lorraine Garasu, CSN (eds); “Weaving Consensus: The Papua New Guinea – Bougainville Peace Process, *Accord*, Issue 12, 2002, p. 19)

<sup>xi</sup> Tidwell, Alan 2003: “Questions on Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding”, in *Perspectives on Conflict and Post Conflict*, State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Project Discussion Paper, 2003/2, p 6, suggests a needs survey to help tailor an intervention to local conditions.

<sup>xii</sup> See Wehner and Denoon, *op cit*, and papers from the Solomon Islands Peace Monitoring Conference, ANU, 2002, soon to be posted at <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/Melanesia>

<sup>xiii</sup> Greg Urwin: “Solomon Islands Crisis – An Australian Policy Perspective 2000-2002”, SSGM Project Working Paper, forthcoming, <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia>

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<sup>xiv</sup> This is a point not always appreciated by managers of external interventions whose performance assessment is often driven by achieving early results.

<sup>xv</sup> Some of the literature on conflict resolution recognises that identity-related conflicts do not readily lend themselves to interest-based negotiations, see for example, Patrick M. Regan: “Third Party Intervention and the Duration of Intrastate Conflict”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol 46, No 1, Feb 2002.

<sup>xvi</sup> Andy Carl and Sr. Lorraine Garasu, CSN (eds): op cit, p. 99

<sup>xvii</sup> Anthony J Regan: “Resolving Two Dimensions of Conflict: the dynamics of consent, consensus and compromise”, *Accord*, Issue 12, pp 36-43, 2002.

<sup>xviii</sup> Peter Harris and Ben Reilly (eds): *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, International IDEA, Stockholm, 1998.

<sup>xix</sup> Tidwell, Alan, op cit

<sup>xx</sup> Carl, Andy 2003: “Bridging the Practice-to-Policy Gap in Transforming Conflict in Asia, the Pacific and Beyond: an International NGO Perspective”, in *Perspectives on Conflict and Post Conflict*, State, Society & Governance in Melanesia Project Discussion Paper, 2003/02, p 12.