

Development Studies Centre
Monograph no.2

The role of the Papua New Guinea defence force

Paul Mench

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I must point out, however, that I alone remain responsible for the opinions expressed which may not necessarily represent those of the Australian Department of Defence and Armed Services, the PNG Defence Force or any other government or organisation.

Introduction

The intention of this study is to examine the development and role of indigenous military forces in Papua New Guinea. The study is based on a diversity of sources. In 1965-66 and 1971-72 I served with the Australian Army in Papua New Guinea and these two periods provide the background for some of the views that are expressed. During the preparation of the study in 1973-74, about three months were spent in PNG conducting field research which included visits to most parts of the country and discussions with members of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and with PNG government officials and politicians. In addition to drawing on material contained in previously published references and Australian and PNG Government Archives, I was granted limited access to the written records of the PNG Defence Force and its forerunner, the PNG Joint Force, and was permitted to conduct two attitude surveys involving serving members of the Defence Force and PNG Public Service.

In spite of the sources of information that were available to me there were, nonetheless, considerable problems in regard to access to other relevant material. Because the study deals with current events the complete public record was not open and this has entailed reliance, in places, on published material, press reports and oral evidence. Secondly, as the study discusses defence problems and contemporary relations between the Australian and PNG governments there are matters that still remain secret. For these reasons there are imposing difficulties in attempting to present a definitive account of more recent events. An associated difficulty is the documentation of sources of information. In cases where there might be possibilities of official or personal embarrassment, were the informants identified, they have been kept anonymous.

Furthermore, as this was written before Papua New Guinea became independent it is inevitable that aspects of the account are incomplete (events beyond May 1974 have not been included). Although it might have been better from the point of view of historical completeness to have undertaken the study after independence, advantages do exist in its present

timing. Many trends in Papua New Guinea's political and military affairs are unmistakable, if not actually irreversible and, accordingly, the study may provide a basis for the analysis of future events as well as having some predictive value. The material might also serve as a starting point for further research.¹

The study contains a number of unifying themes; it is also written against the background of the contemporary crisis in civil-military relations and the dominant political role of the military over a large part of the Third World. The principal theme of the study is the relationship of armed forces, in the past, present and future, to the Papua New Guinean polity. The existence of armed forces in PNG, as is the case in all new states, generates problems which extend beyond a consideration of their designated, formal roles. The existence of the PNG Defence Force may have quite unintended consequences in the future and it will almost certainly exhibit complex interrelationships with PNG's internal political system and its relations with other states. These interrelationships are discussed in the last two chapters in terms of civil-military relations, the political role of the PNG military and the implications for strategic policy and external relations. The Third World background is, at times, dealt with explicitly, especially in regard to Tropical Africa which seems to offer useful comparisons with PNG's status as a small developing country about to gain independence. But even where comparison with the Third World and African states is not explicit, my approach is influenced by comparative considerations. The study attempts to identify what is special to Papua New Guinea and what is common to the experience of other new states. Useful comparisons are identified in relation to colonial military policy, the devolution of military power, the problems of internal and external security and military politics.

The historical account of the development of military forces in PNG from the emergence of a 'constabulary tradition' to the establishment of national armed forces reveals a pattern of development in which Australian strategic imperatives have predominated. In spite of pre-World War II initiatives which aimed at the establishment under local ordinances of territorially-based forces on the British colonial pattern, the forces raised in PNG during

¹ Researchers should also consult P. Colebatch, 1974.

and after World War I were integral units of the Australian Army and Navy, raised, commanded and paid for from Australia. This linkage between Australian strategic objectives and military expansion in PNG was again highlighted in the 1960s during the period of Confrontation with Indonesia. Only when Australia embarked on an era of rapid decolonisation after 1969 and the Indonesia 'threat' was seen to recede did the nexus between Australian and PNG defence considerations weaken. Military policy in PNG then became increasingly directed towards the needs of an independent state. This process of the transfer of military power to PNG was also facilitated by strategic reappraisal and disengagement on the part of Australia.

Because of PNG's proximity to Australia, the traditional views that were held regarding PNG's strategic importance and a pattern of centralised rule from Canberra rather than a degree of colonial autonomy, military development in PNG, until very late in the day, suffered from a lack of policy direction and administrative control in PNG. The study argues that this pattern of military development, which is contrasted with British colonial practice favouring the establishment of colonial forces subject to local control, may have profound implications for post-independence civil-military relations.

Another theme that is developed in the first two chapters is the interaction between Australian and Papua New Guinean approaches to defence questions. The study concludes that for a variety of reasons the actual course since 1972 of military policy-making under a Papua New Guinean government has differed remarkably little from earlier Australian expectations. Radical defence options such as a single, combined police and defence force, a much smaller force, or a 'people's army' option were quickly discarded and, to that extent, the PNG defence policy-making process may be seen largely as a legitimisation of earlier Australian planning decisions.

An analysis of the composition and functioning of the Defence Force on the eve of independence shows that, whilst it is able to meet the roles foreseen by the PNG government, its military capability is limited, principally by a lack of certain types of air support and a shortage of infantry. It would, therefore, require external assistance in the event of other than quite minor security problems. Questions of rapid officer localisation, military professionalism and ethnic diversity within the Defence Force point to

organisational tensions which, if coupled with social instability in PNG, may have serious operational and political implications.

In regard to Papua New Guinea's national security, special problems are seen for PNG, as a small state, in relating its armed forces to external defence contingencies in the context of an asymmetric strategic environment in which its neighbours are either many times more powerful or inconsequentially small. For this reason diplomacy and the support of allies are seen as vital components in PNG's future national security. Although relations with Indonesia may provide an important source of concern, internal security problems are likely to be more important. Political instability, radical systemic change and a lack of political authority may give rise to violence as a means of articulating and achieving political demands in PNG. If this occurs the Defence Force may become deeply involved in maintaining domestic order. Short-term internal security problems may arise from tribal fighting and secession, whereas in the longer-term future the political problems generated by increased economic inequality, urban overpopulation and rising expectations as a result of western education and rapid social change may lead to the emergence of radical political movements committed to the use of violence.

In the concluding chapter on civil-military relations which draws on the experience of the Third World, and black Africa in particular, it is argued that the future involvement of the Defence Force in PNG politics may be largely inevitable. A pattern of civil-military relations is, therefore, prescribed which, by seeking to contain the political role of the Defence Force, might permit the survival of civilian-controlled government in Papua New Guinea. The integration of civil and military spheres of activity and the institutionalisation of a limited military involvement in PNG politics are recommended.

Chapter 1

The development of indigenous military forces in Papua New Guinea up to 1969

The beginnings

The constabulary tradition

The indigenous military forces in Papua New Guinea derive in a direct and continuous manner from the infantry units raised during World War II. It is, however, possible to discern an earlier tradition of bearing arms in the para-military native constabularies. Armed constabularies manned by Papua New Guineans were raised in the early colonial period in both Papua (then British New Guinea) and German New Guinea. These forces were quite unlike the so-called 'kin' police of western nations in both their role and method of operation.

The Constabulary in British New Guinea had been formed in 1890 on para-military lines and initially manned by twelve Solomon Islanders and two Fijians (Hastings, 1969:48). In German New Guinea under Hahl, the native Constabulary was modelled on the British para-military lines and trained in rifle shooting and drill (Biskup, 1969:83). The Constabularies in both colonies were armed with rifles and commanded by European officers and colonial officials and they performed vital roles in the colonial regimes. They assisted in the exploration of the interior and helped colonial field officers in the extension of administrative control and the enforcement of 'law and order', often by punitive means. Quite frequently their role, in the early days of 'pacification', involved the destruction of villages and armed clashes with natives (Hastings, 1969:48; Biskup, 1969).

In Australian-administered Papua during the long Lieutenant-Governorship of Sir Hubert Murray the Constabulary continued to be run on para-military lines, although the approach to pacification was, by then, less violent. In German New Guinea the para-military tradition was more

closely observed. At the time of the German capitulation to the Australian forces in 1914, the native Constabulary in New Guinea numbered about one thousand men and was commanded by a regular army captain. There was also a special unit, 125 men strong, known as the Expedition Troop, which was trained for bush warfare and commanded by an army lieutenant. Under the Australian military administration from 1914 to 1921 the Constabulary continued to be regarded and used as a military force. Rowley remarks that: 'Such an attitude was quite in accord with German precedent and with the traditions and training of the native police'.¹

In both territories, the roles which were allotted to the constabularies in defence planning in the inter-war period clearly showed the extent to which they were seen as para-military forces. By this time the Papua New Guinean members of these forces had proved themselves to be generally loyal and reliable coercive instruments of the colonial administration. They had, furthermore, demonstrated the ability of Papua New Guineans to absorb military training and operate in disciplined bodies. A 'constabulary tradition' had thus been born.

The raising of actual military units in PNG seems to have first been suggested by Murray in Papua in 1913. The idea was not, however, pursued by him or the Commonwealth Government during the war that followed. Further suggestions of raising PNG military units do not appear to have arisen until Australian defence contingency planning took place in the two territories during the 1930s. As will be seen later, this planning, although quite elaborate, foundered largely because of legal complications. The result was a lack of effective defence preparations, especially in regard to indigenous troops, when PNG was invaded by the Japanese in 1942.

Defence planning and indigenous military forces

Australian attitudes toward the island of New Guinea, even before Australia became a nation, had been influenced primarily by strategic and defence considerations. The strategic relationship of the island to the Australian continent had led to the Queensland Government's illegal annexation of Papua, resulting in its proclamation as a

¹Rowley, 1958:206-7. As examples of para-military employment during the war, Rowley cites the guarding of Bitu Paka radio station and garrison duty at Vanimo.

British Protectorate in 1884.² Later, after World War I, the Australian Prime Minister, W.M. Hughes, was able to consolidate Australia's 1914 conquest of German New Guinea under the provisions of a League of Nations Mandate. In Hughes's opinion New Guinea was vital to Australia's future security because 'any strong power controlling New Guinea controlled Australia and that if Australia did not control the territory she could not feel safe'.³ Nonetheless, because of the restrictive terms of the Mandate, Australia's defence powers in New Guinea were limited and she was forced to be content with a 'dog-in-the-manger' policy there, that is, one of merely keeping other powers out of New Guinea.

In spite of the perceived strategic importance of PNG it was not until some time after World War I, during 1928-29, that active defence planning for the Commonwealth War Book led to the consideration of local defence measures in Papua and New Guinea. Eventually, in 1930, the Administrator of New Guinea and the Lieutenant-Governor of Papua were charged with the preparation and execution of defence schemes for their territories.⁴ They were told that although it might be impossible for the territories effectively to resist an enemy attack because of their meagre defence resources there were fields in which valuable preparations could be made. These fields included intelligence, the protection of vulnerable points, censorship, control of aliens and detention of enemy shipping. In relation to New Guinea, which was administered under the League of Nations Mandate, it was noted that only local defence measures were permissible and military bases

² Mayo, 1969:17 and *passim*. At the time the Australian colonies were dissatisfied that the whole of eastern New Guinea had not been claimed, so leaving the way open for a German presence. No doubt Queenslanders were still impressed by Captain John Moresby's opinion of April 1873 (at Port Moresby) that 'occupation of this area by any foreign maritime power ... would be a standing menace to Queensland' (Van der Veur, 1966:15).

³ Cited by David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, Vol.1, London, 1938, pp.519-20, and quoted in Hudson, 1970:161.

⁴ Commonwealth Archives Office (CAO), MP729/6, Files 16/401/187 and 16/401/81.

could not be constructed.⁵

The Administrations in both territories were given no specific instructions about the military training of Europeans or natives as a part of the defence preparations. In relation to Papua New Guinean natives, this was probably owing to Australian scepticism concerning the reliability of native units. In 1924 a study of the defence of New Guinea by a sub-committee of the Australian Defence Council had recommended that the native constabularies should be given military training. Subsequently, however, the Council was advised that captured German documents had strongly criticised the stability of native units when under fire and therefore 'these troops do not seem to be worth the expense'.⁶ The proposal was then dropped.

Apart from scepticism in Australia concerning the value of native units, Australian defence policy in regard to New Guinea was seen to be severely restricted by the provision of the C Class League of Nations Mandate which Australia had been granted in 1920. Under Article 4 of the Mandate:

The military training of the natives, otherwise than for the purposes of internal police and the local defence of the Territory, shall be prohibited. Furthermore, no military or naval bases shall be established, or fortifications erected in the Territory.

Unlike the Territory of Papua, where Australia's defence powers were absolute, her defence powers in New Guinea were thus limited to local defence only. Australian Government sensitivity even in regard to her legitimate powers of local defence in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea inhibited realistic and effective local defence preparations right up to the onset of World War II. During the whole of the inter-war period Australia continued to interpret her rights in relation to local defence in an extremely restricted manner.

Paradoxically, there was at the same time considerable awareness of the strategic importance of New Guinea in

⁵ CAO, MP729/6, File 16/40/187, Commonwealth War Book, Paper No.2, Australian Territories Defence Schemes.

⁶ CAO, MP729/2, File 1851/2/211, Council of Defence Agenda No.13/1924.

relation to Australia and the potential of New Guinea to provide an enemy with an offensive 'springboard'. The 1924 Defence Council sub-committee's study of New Guinea defence had drawn attention, with considerable foresight, to the significance to New Guinea in enemy operations against Australia:

In the case of an overseas operation by the enemy it is essential that steps be taken to obtain safe anchorages for the troopships and an advanced base ... But in whatever form of attack that is being examined it is certain that the seizure by the enemy of a safe harbour among the islands is an essential preliminary step. Our possible enemy must be aware of this, and it is likely that he will occupy suitable islands early in the war ... It is likely that he will take advantage of the opening phase of the war, before our defensive measures are fully developed ...⁷

In 1928, there was further informed public discussion of the strategic importance of New Guinea and similar conclusions were reached as to New Guinea's strategic significance, again with amazing percipience. In a paper written by a 'Naval Expert' it was argued that:

The most vital and valuable part of Australia is its eastern seaboard (e.g. Newcastle, Sydney, etc.) and the nearest means of approach to that part of Australia from the north is via the islands ...

The proximity of the Japanese Mandated Islands - which can be used as an intermediate base - to the Australian Mandated Islands - is not generally realised. The distance from Truk in the Caroline Islands to Rabaul is only eight hundred miles (Eggleston, 1928:95).

In the light of these commonly held strategic assessments and since strategic defensive measures were not permitted under the Mandate provisions, there would seem to have been good grounds for, at least, taking realistic local defensive measures. Such local defensive measures in PNG might well have made it more difficult than it was in the event for the Japanese to occupy and control parts of New Guinea in 1942.

Although they were never to be realised, quite ambitious

⁷ CAO, MP729/2, File 1851/2/211, Report of sub-committee on New Guinea Defence, Agenda 13/1924.

plans were in fact laid in the Mandated Territory of New Guinea during 1930 for local defensive measures. These plans involved the establishment in the war stage of a proposed defence scheme of a European rifle battalion, eight companies of conscripted New Guinea native infantry, and a native labour battalion. The 1930 scheme had been drawn up by the New Guinea Superintendent of Police and District Inspector, Lieutenant-Colonel John Walstab. Walstab's plan was eventually forwarded to Canberra in January 1933 by the New Guinea Administrator, Brigadier General E.A. Wisdom.⁸

Administrator Wisdom enthusiastically endorsed Walstab's defence proposals and noted in a covering letter to the Australian Prime Minister that, apart from New Guinea's strategic value to Australia, its increasing economic significance (as a producer of gold, raw materials and foodstuffs) made it an attractive target to a potential

⁸ Lt-Col. John Walstab, DSO (1885-1957), was given the task of preparing the NG Defence Scheme because of both his military and New Guinea experience. A Gallipoli veteran and former AIF battalion commander, he evidently possessed an imaginative military mind. Walstab envisaged that it was necessary to plan beyond the passive defence measures originally called for in the Commonwealth War Book plans. Resistance to large-scale enemy attack should take the form of guerrilla operations with small mobile columns of native troops led and stiffened by European officers and machine gun teams. These columns would operate in the interior, live off the land and harass the invaders in control of the urban centres. They could only be defeated, he argued, 'when the enemy had so established himself in the country as to be able to enlist and use the armed natives against them'. Walstab's concept of military operations in PNG was influenced by two things: his own extensive knowledge of the country's terrain as a result of leading police patrols and his appraisal of the successful guerrilla campaigns in East Africa of the German general, Von Lettow Vorbeck, during World War I. Vorbeck had very successfully employed native troops led by German officers. (CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/187, Letter by Walstab to the Administrator, 11 April 1930.)

enemy.⁹ By September 1934 the Australian Defence Department had completed its review of the Wisdom/Walstab scheme and decided that the measures for the raising of native and European military forces would be omitted from the basic defence scheme, but included in a further separate scheme to be known as the Z Scheme which would cover defensive measures and armed resistance in time of war. The revised New Guinea Defence Scheme of 1934 was eventually promulgated in 1937 in the form of a Blue Book entitled 'The Mandated Territory of New Guinea Defence Scheme'.

It was not until May 1939, after another lengthy delay indicating the pace of tropical administration, that the Z Scheme proposals were forwarded to Canberra by the Administrator (then Brigadier-General Sir Walter McNicoll). It was proposed that two small European militia battalions should be raised and, together with the native Constabulary, should form the peacetime organisational basis of a New Guinea Field Force.¹⁰ In the second phase of the Z Scheme, it was planned that in time of war this force would be increased to some 4,700 combatant native and European troops. The full-sized Field Force was to consist of a New Guinea Native Infantry Regiment of three battalions, a headquarters battalion of guerrilla warfare parties and mobile wireless observation units. The first native battalion would be formed from NG Constabulary personnel. A NG Native Labour Corps of four battalions was also planned. It was intended that the Field Force would be raised initially from volunteers and then, if necessary, by conscription. Legislation to enact the scheme was to be provided for by a 'New Guinea (Local Defence) Native Forces' Ordinance, which would permit the raising of native military forces for the local defence of New Guinea. Amendment to the Australian Defence Act was also envisaged. The scheme also provided that a third European specialist/headquarters

⁹ CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/187, Wisdom to the Prime Minister, Jan. 1933; Secretary, Defence Department to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 7 Sept. 1934; File 16/401/81, Secretary, Defence Department to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 6 Feb. 1935.

¹⁰ CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/187, McNicoll to Secretary, Prime Minister's Department, 20 April 1939, enclosing Walstab's Z Scheme proposals; and CAO, CRS A518, CF 16/2/1, File Summary, Territory of New Guinea, Defence Scheme dated 8 May 1941.

battalion would be raised in wartime. Of the two peacetime militia battalions one was to be based on Rabaul, and the second on Wau, which had been accepted as the pivotal point of NG defence because of the strategic vulnerability of the New Guinea Islands.

Although the European volunteer battalion (the New Guinea Volunteer Rifles - NGVR) was eventually authorised in September 1939, the proposals contained in the Z Scheme for the development of native units were not implemented. The scheme suffered a lingering demise. Clouded by legal uncertainties and legislative problems, it was neither accepted nor rejected at the outbreak of war and the great local defence potential of the Z Scheme was thus never realised.¹¹

The legal uncertainties which hampered the implementation of the Z Scheme in New Guinea applied to Papua as well as challenging the operation of the basic defence schemes in both territories in relation to the use of the Constabularies in a military role in times of emergency. In November 1940 the Australian Attorney-General argued that the projected use of the Papuan and New Guinean native Constabularies for defence purposes was illegal in view of the extension of the Defence Act to both territories from July 1939. This decision created a further measure of uncertainty in the defence schemes and, as the legal issues were not resolved before the Japanese invasion, reduced their viability in a way which revealed an extraordinary degree of administrative ineptitude.¹²

Turning to the Papuan defence plans, its 1937 Defence Scheme provided for a guerrilla defence role for the Constabulary. Port Moresby was seen by the Lieutenant-Governor, Murray, as both the key to the domination of Papua and the most suitable invasion base for operations against Australia and was, therefore, the focus of the defence preparations. It was intended, however, that if Moresby did fall, resistance would be continued against the enemy by the Constabulary acting in a guerrilla role. District rosters

¹¹ See McNicoll, 1969:129 also CAO, CRS, A518, File CF 16/2/1, Prime Minister's Department Summary, 8 May 1941, and Australian War Memorial (AWM) File 243/5/25.

¹² CAO, CRS 2663, File 243/5/25, Letter of 7 Aug. 1941 from 8th Military District; and CAO, CRS A518, File 16/2/1, Letter of 16 Dec. 1941 from Secretary, Department of Defence Co-ordination.

of Europeans and Papuans suitable for military service were maintained after April 1937 but there were then no actual plans, as in New Guinea, for the formation of native military units.¹³

As the prospect of war appeared more imminent the Papuan Lieutenant-Governor, in July 1939, proposed the formation of a Volunteer Defence Corps which might have included both Europeans and Papuans. A special Papuan ordinance to establish this force was prepared but Murray was informed that the extension of the provisions of the Defence Act to Papua, from July 1939, removed the prerogative of the Papuan Legislative Council to legislate for a Defence Force. The plans for the Volunteer Defence Corps were shelved and the initiative for further defence preparations passed to the Australian Government.¹⁴

World War II

The prelude to the development of indigenous military units

Although the planning for indigenous military units appeared more advanced in New Guinea, it was in Papua that the first unit - the Papuan Infantry Battalion (PIB) - was actually raised in June 1940. PIB was raised with an initial establishment of 2 officers, 5 warrant officers and 128 Papuan other rank. This establishment was expanded to a full battalion in February 1941. The first Commanding Officer was seconded from the Papuan Constabulary and most of the first recruits were Constabulary members. Prior service in the Constabulary counted for pay purposes and NCOs were appointed from amongst former senior policemen. Platoon Commanders in PIB were at first European warrant officers though the appointments were upgraded to lieutenant rank in October 1941. Conditions of service were initially aligned with those of the Constabulary but the troops were subject to Australian Military Law.¹⁵

¹³ CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/206, Secret Despatch, Murray to the Minister in charge of Territories, 27 April 1937.

¹⁴ CAO, CRS A518, File CF 16/2/1, Territory of Papua, Defence Units Memo 24 Oct. 1939.

¹⁵ CAO, MP729, File 1/121 and File 6/129, Letter from Commandant 8th Military District of 30 Oct. 1941.

The proposal to form the unit initially came from the Australian Defence Department and the suggestion was enthusiastically taken up by the Papuan Lieutenant-Governor. Murray saw that a military unit would enable him to release numbers of the Constabulary from the growing number of security and guard duties around Port Moresby, thus allowing them to be reassigned to normal police duties which were being neglected.¹⁶ The formation of PIB at this time coincided with gathering concern at the unsatisfactory state of Port Moresby's defences and, in particular, the lack of any infantry troops for local defensive tasks.

As the training and expansion of the PIB in Port Moresby proceeded and the risk of war increased, there was, rather strangely, no gathering enthusiasm in New Guinea for the establishment of a native military unit. In February 1941, the Australian War Cabinet did direct that the question of raising a native infantry battalion in New Guinea was to be examined, at the same time agreeing to the dispatch of an AIF battalion to Rabaul to strengthen the defences there against the possibility of Japanese or German attack.¹⁷ Emphasising the distinctly separate characters of the two pre-1942 territories, the New Guinea Administration, after protracted consideration, rejected the Australian proposal for the formation of a native battalion, even though the PIB had by then been in existence in Papua for over six months, contained more than three hundred men and was operating successfully.

Administrator McNicoll, no longer influenced by Lieutenant-Colonel Walstab's advocacy of indigenous forces (Walstab had left New Guinea in May 1940),¹⁸ accepted the advice of his 'experienced Director of Native Affairs, Mr R. Melrose'. Melrose recommended against the formation of native units essentially because they would be of dubious loyalty, not having 'the slightest concept of patriotism in its wider sense'. The Administrator's opinion was supported by the military commander in Port Moresby, Brigadier Basil Morris. The matter was finally closed in September 1941 when the Director of Military Operations at Army

¹⁶ CAO, CRS A518, File CF 16/2/1, Murray to the Minister in charge of Territories, 13 Oct. 1939 and 7 Nov. 1939.

¹⁷ Hasluck, 1970:670; War Cabinet Minute 816 of 18 Feb. 1941. The attack by German raiders on Nauru in December 1940 probably prompted this concern for Rabaul's security.

¹⁸ Military Secretary Records, Army Headquarters, Canberra.

Headquarters noted that the question of training a native battalion in New Guinea had been examined and rejected and the Cabinet had been advised accordingly.¹⁹

The failure to form native military units in New Guinea during 1941 was to prove crucial. The swift onset of the Japanese invasion early in 1942, the subsequent loss of control over the areas of recruitment in New Guinea and the confusion generated by the invasion removed the opportunity of forming a New Guinea battalion for some time and it was not until March 1944 that one was eventually raised. By that time, the worth of the PIB which by then contained both Papuans and New Guineans had been demonstrated in several campaigns.

With the benefit of hindsight the history of defence planning in regard to indigenous forces in both Papua and New Guinea may be seen as a combination of quite notable foresight and imagination on the one hand and on the other, administrative sloth and, until very late in the day, a lack of any sense of urgency. In New Guinea the involvement of New Guineans in defence preparation had been prevented not only by fears of violating the League of Nations Mandate²⁰ but also by deep-seated suspicion about the loyalty of the indigenous inhabitants, a suspicion which was quite clearly

¹⁹ CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/485, Letter from GOC Northern Command to Military Board, 15 Sept. 1941; *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH), 26 Oct. 1972, article by Peter Hastings; and CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/202.

²⁰ The question of the legality of defence preparations under the Mandate should have been, but was not, finally settled in September/October 1938. At that time the Prime Minister sought the legal opinion of the Solicitor-General as to the legality of existing defence preparations in New Guinea and Nauru. The Solicitor-General affirmed the right to provide for local defence, which in the case of Nauru included the formation of a peacetime defence force. It would seem to follow logically that a native-manned local defence force in NG could have been raised without breaching the terms of the Mandate (a further parallel already existed in terms of the defence force established by the British in the mandated ex-German colony of Tanganyika). (CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/206, Solicitor-General to Attorney-General's Department, 29 Sept. 1938 and Acting Prime Minister to Minister for Defence, 12 Oct. 1938.)

based on ethnic prejudice.²¹

Pre-war planning had identified the likely objectives of an enemy campaign in PNG - the seizing of ports and population centres - as well as proposing the most effective local defence strategy of withdrawal into the interior and waging guerrilla warfare. But because of the failure to organise the indigenous population for self-defence, both territories were unprepared when the attacks came. The potential military contribution of a properly organised, well-led force of indigenous troops at this time was suggested by incidents at Rabaul after the Japanese landings when several hundred NG police had to be prevented by the European officers from attacking the Japanese.²² It might be argued in retrospect that the Australian failure to provide for the adequate local defence of New Guinea and her protection against invasion was as much a dereliction of the Mandate responsibilities as that posed by a hypothetical charge that Australia had incorporated New Guinea into her strategic defence system.

Expansion and disbandment of the wartime Pacific Islands Regiment

It is not intended to recount here the military record of the PNG military units during the war period. Only the more important aspects of that period are discussed, those which relate to the decisions taken at the end of the war to disband the units.²³ The wartime period of the native military units was marked by a growing acceptance, after an uncertain start, of the value of the Papua New Guinean infantryman in the specialised military roles of

²¹CAO, MP729/6, File 16/401/202.

²²Hasluck, 1970:676. European officers reported that they had 'a devil of a job stopping the native police from making an attack' on the Japanese. There were 300 in the group. Instead, the police were ordered to bury their rifles and ammunition and disperse. (Evidence of Warrant Officer A.M. Sinclair before the Army Court of Inquiry convened to report on the Japanese landings.)

²³A history of the wartime PIB and New Guinea Infantry Battalions (NGIB) of the PIR has been written by Captain Trevor McQuinn, Royal Australian Army Education Corps (unpublished MS). For a summary of the wartime period see Granter, 1970.

reconnaissance and long-range patrolling, roles for which European troops were not well suited. There was also a belief that the increasing use of natives in these roles would save Australian manpower and casualties. On the other hand, problems experienced in the control and discipline of native units led to steadily mounting criticism of them, criticism which was finally to result in their postwar disbandment. In fact the controversy which arose over the value of native units was initiated in the early Papuan campaigns of 1942.

The operational performance of the PIB in the Kokoda campaign was uneven. Whilst elements of the battalion provided useful early warning of the Japanese and delayed them, other groups of the PIB had 'gone bush' at crucial moments.²⁴ In particular, elements of the PIB that had been cut off in the Kumusi River area were for a time without adequate European leadership and 'many discreditable incidents had occurred'.²⁵ As a result of the PIB conduct in this campaign, Australian Land Headquarters ordered the PIB to be disbanded. On this occasion, Major-General Morris, then Commander NG Force, later one of the PIB and PIR's sternest critics, wrote to General Blamey at Land Headquarters and argued that instead of being disbanded, the unit should be withdrawn from operations, retrained and reorganised. Blamey agreed to Morris's proposal.²⁶ The uneven showing of the unit was to be explained in terms of a lack of thorough and realistic training before being

²⁴ PIB was deployed to the north coast of Papua in June 1942 after several months of prosaic labouring and quarrying duties in Port Moresby, during which time little military training could be conducted. Elements of PIB made first contact with the Japanese on 23 July 1942 and, after a series of skirmishes, the major part of the unit withdrew over the Kokoda trail to Port Moresby. Large elements of the force were, however, 'cut off' in the Kumusi and Waria River areas. (PIB War Diary, August 1940-April 1945. AWM, A2663, File 8/4/4.)

²⁵ AWM, A2663, File 419/5/22, Letter by Major General B. Morris, General Officer Commanding (GOC) ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) to HQ NG Force, 11 Aug. 1943. Morris had been Commander NG Force at the time of the incidents. Also, personal interview with General Morris, October 1974.

²⁶ Interview with General Morris, September 1973.

committed to action and a lack of sound officer leadership in some quarters. In short, the unit was untrained and unprepared, rather than the soldiers being in some way racially unsuited to the job of infantry soldiering. Although initially formed two years before it went into action, the greater part of this time had been spent either in the preparation and manning of static defensive positions in Port Moresby, or in providing labouring parties. The Commanding Officer frequently complained in his War Diary during this period that there was inadequate scope for carrying on with essential military training.²⁷

After a period of consolidation and experience of more successful military employment of the PIB in subsequent campaigns, it was eventually decided to form a New Guinea battalion in November 1943. Training of PIB recruits was further improved by the establishment of a PIB training depot at Bisiatabu on the Sogeri plateau east of Port Moresby in April 1943. The words of the raising instruction were reminiscent of the years of prewar defence planning:

The Constabulary of the Territory of New Guinea received military training in peace time and it is considered that many natives from this service should be available.²⁸

The new unit, known as First Battalion, New Guinea Infantry Battalion (1NGIB), was finally raised in March 1944 from a cadre of experienced New Guinean soldiers who had been serving with the PIB.²⁹ At this time it was decided that Papuans and New Guineans would henceforth serve in separate units. This policy was short-sighted and turned out to be both unpopular and disruptive, leading to disciplinary problems in the new units that were formed. The decision to detach the New Guineans from the PIB was not only sad news to officers and men, but in the new NGIB units former PIB soldiers rebelled against new customs such as the order that NCO rank would be worn on lap-laps rather than shirts (as in PIB) and the policy of splitting up men from the same village (Barrett, 1969:495).

After the formation of 1NGIB, the expansion of the native

²⁷AWM, A2663, File 8/4/4.

²⁸AWM, HQ NG Force War Diary, Instruction G.5343 SD of 9 Nov. 1943.

²⁹The unit was raised at Wampit in the Markham Valley.

units took place as rapidly as decisions could be taken and recruits gained from recaptured territory. 2NGIB was raised in September 1944 and in November 1944 a special regimental headquarters, known as Headquarters Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR), was raised to administer the native infantry battalions. This headquarters had administrative, but no operational, control over the battalions.³⁰ A PIR training depot was established at Lae in March 1945 and 3NGIB was raised in August 1945 - too late to take part in the war. 4NGIB was authorised in May 1945 but plans for its establishment were cancelled with the Japanese collapse.³¹ General Blamey had also approved the formation of another native unit, a Papuan Maintenance Company, Royal Australian Engineers, in order to save Australian manpower, but these plans were scrapped with the cessation of hostilities.³² Actual recruitment for the NGIB battalions during this period of rapid expansion was greatly slowed by an acute shortage of native labour. This was caused by the heavy manpower demands of ANGAU, wartime dislocation and the inaccessibility to recruitment of the populous highlands region of the country.³³

By the time of the Japanese surrender the units of PIR that had been actually engaged in operations - PIB, 1NGIB and 2NGIB - had gained a considerable military reputation. They had taken part in every major campaign in PNG with the exception of Milne Bay and had accounted for an impressive total of enemy dead at slight cost to themselves.³⁴ This performance won for the Papua New Guinean soldier a generally high regard as a brave and skilful jungle fighter, especially adept in reconnaissance of enemy positions, ambushing and aggressive long-range patrolling. For example the Commander of US 167 Infantry Regiment after the Tambu Bay/Salamaua operations in 1943 wrote:

³⁰AWM, Blamey Papers, File 32-31.

³¹AWM, Blamey Papers, File 32-31

³²AWM, Blamey Papers, File 32-3. Approved in July 1945.

³³AWM, Blamey Papers, File 32-31.

³⁴PIR units were responsible for a total of 2209 enemy dead for the loss of only 63 Australian and PNG servicemen. That is for each member of PIR killed, PNG soldiers had killed 35 enemy soldiers. 23 individual decorations for bravery were awarded to PIR units during the war. See Granter, 1970:13.

The troops of our regiment ... have developed an unusual respect and admiration for their [PIB] prowess and soldierly qualities ... Operating in twos and threes with our patrols and leading small units along the tracks, I feel that the PIB saved us many casualties and enabled us to move and obtain information in places which would have otherwise been inaccessible to European troops.

The contribution of the PIR in the Bougainville campaign in 1945 was described as follows:

The PIR contributed in no small way to the success of operations ... these native soldiers employed their intimate knowledge of the jungle to surprise and outwit the Japanese and, using modern weapons, fought with characteristic bravery and inflicted many casualties on the enemy (McQuinn, unpublished MS.).

There were, nonetheless, some senior Australian commanders who were critical of PIR operational performance and who believed that native units were afraid of artillery and, generally, racially unsuited to set-piece types of military operations, as opposed to patrolling tasks.³⁵ These views appear to have been effectively countered by the successful use of the NGIB troops in the Maprik area during 1945 in set-piece attacks employing artillery and mortar fire support (McQuinn, MS.). It was argued by supporters of native troops that most incidents of unsatisfactory performance by the PIR units could usually be attributed to poor European leadership and, more importantly, the tactical misemployment of the native units in 'drips and drabs' in support of Australian units, rather than as complete units under the control of their own regimental officers.

Whilst the operational capabilities and performance of PIR were the primary interest of the Australian field headquarters, it was the ill-discipline when out of the line and the relationship of the PNG soldier to the native population that commanded the attention of ANGAU. ANGAU was responsible for the administration of the civil population in PNG and it was principally staffed by the native affairs officers of the prewar administrations. It was, therefore, closely involved with the impact of the PIR on the population and

³⁵ During the Bougainville campaign 13 Brigade alleged that PIR troops feared artillery and would not accompany artillery forward observation officers on patrols (McQuinn, unpublished MS.).

more concerned with the longer-term effects of the war on the postwar government of PNG than were other elements of the Australian Army in PNG.

It appears that ANGAU viewed the development of native military units with disquiet only until the formation of 3NGIB was mooted in early 1945. This attitude changed in March 1945 when the GOC ANGAU, Major-General Morris, wrote to the GOC First Australian Army, Lieutenant-General Sturdee, strongly criticising the system of recruitment and inadequate training of PIR troops. To the letter, Morris appended a damaging report by his principal Native Affairs Adviser which called for the disbandment of PIR units.³⁶ This report, by Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Jones, listed numerous incidents of civil misbehaviour by PIR troops. Jones argued that it was ANGAU's responsibility to point out the postwar implications of training natives as soldiers. 'The maintenance of native battalions is wrong in principle ... natives were not sufficiently developed mentally to be entrusted with a knowledge of modern weapons ... Australia's task was not just to win the war but ensure the future welfare and advancement of Papua New Guineans'. Jones believed that the native units jeopardised these objectives. Unless disbanded, the PIR would encourage antagonism between the civil population and soldiers. This would lead to a loss of respect for law and order and serious postwar consequences for orderly government.³⁷

Jones was able to substantiate these charges with considerable evidence of conflict between the PIR and the Police at Annanberg in the Sepik district in February 1945³⁸ and numerous incidents of rape and pillage by PIR troops in the Madang³⁹ and Huon Gulf areas. An ANGAU investigation of complaints of PIB misbehaviour in the Madang area during the

³⁶ AWM A2663, File 419/5/6, Report by Major-General Morris to GOC First Australian Army, March 1945.

³⁷ Ibid. Report by Lieutenant-Colonel J.H. Jones.

³⁸ Ibid. An Annanberg a platoon of 1NGIB had fired on a detachment of PNG police after a soldier had been arrested for allegedly raping the wife of a policeman. The soldier was 'released' and the police did not return the army fire. It was alleged that NGIB Europeans in the area took no action to intervene in the affray.

³⁹ Ibid. Report by Major J.H. McDonald, Legal Officer, HQ ANGAU.

Lae-Ramu campaign (21 June - 4 August 1944) found that natives in the district were terrified of PIB men and several whole villages were afraid to sleep in their villages at night because of the numerous acts of rape, looting and assault committed by the PIR'. 52 complaints of alleged rape were recorded. The investigating officer was informed by PIB that four soldiers had each been fined £1 by their Officer Commanding for the offence of rape and that no further action had been taken because the money had been given to the husbands of the raped women and all were satisfied! In the Huon Gulf area Jones cited Major H.L.R. Niall who observed that the PIR had terrified villages and molested women in the Lae area in the latter half of 1943. Niall remarked 'The natives must [sic] prefer to have the enemy in occupation as the women folk were then safe'.

General Sturdee replied in April 1945 to these allegations and Morris's recommendations for the PIR in terms which indicated a rather ruthless approach to questions of native welfare.⁴⁰ Sturdee conceded that the arming of natives would create postwar problems for PNG but he considered that this burden would have to be borne in PNG, as it would be in other countries where fighting had taken place. PIR units had saved Australian lives and would prove economical for mopping-up operations. Sturdee observed, cynically, that rape was not peculiar to native soldiers and besides, in his view the allegations of misconduct were largely unproven. He did 'not regard the incidence of misbehaviour in PIR as unsatisfactory'.⁴¹

This exchange between ANGAU and First Army clearly showed that ANGAU's concern was based on the long-term postwar implications of the PIR, whereas Sturdee and his staff were primarily occupied, as might be expected in the case of a fighting formation, with the job-at-hand of defeating the Japanese. In 1973, it was Major-General Morris's recollection that 'First Army would have preferred to see fifty native casualties in order to save an Australian life'. Consequently, ANGAU disagreed with First Army on the employment of native troops (personal communication, Sept. 1973). Lieutenant-General Sturdee was apparently not concerned that a reputation amongst the local people for rape, pillage and disorder might be a dangerous basis on which to develop

⁴⁰ AWM, A2663, File 419/5/6, Letter to GOC ANGAU from GOC First Australian Army, 2 April 1945.

⁴¹ Ibid.

postwar indigenous PNG military forces, nor was he concerned that PIR regimental officers appeared to treat the 'indiscretions' of their troops with a considerable measure of indulgence. To First Army, PIR troops were merely a useful resource in defeating the enemy.

At the end of hostilities, Major-General Morris and ANGAU returned once again to the question of the disbandment of the PIR. During June/July 1945 there had been further serious problems of PIR ill-discipline and Morris believed that there were no longer operational imperatives which justified the maintenance of the Regiment. After one serious incident at Jacquinot Bay, New Britain, elements of an NGIB battalion were disarmed. A subsequent inquiry revealed that the PIR did not respect the police and held scant regard for the native population. Morris drew attention to the adverse effect 'many hundreds of untrained native soldiery were having [sic] on the economic development and life of PNG ... native members of the NGIB continue to be a source of trouble and are becoming more and more arrogant in their bearing and behaviour'. The existing PIR units had 'got off on the wrong foot'. If native units were required in peace time then the correct course was for the units to be formed *de novo*. Morris believed that native units could be successfully raised, provided that they received suitable training and were commanded by European officers who were able to inculcate adequate standards of discipline.⁴²

In mitigation of PIR behaviour at this time it may be said that the PIR were gravely dissatisfied with their pay and conditions which compared invidiously with those of Australian servicemen. The disparity was seen to be unfair because PIR fought alongside Australian units and bore the same risks. Because they had fought alongside Europeans Papua New Guinean soldiers were less impressed by claims of European 'superiority'. They wanted a better deal from their 'masters'. In addition, PIR troops during this period were at times poorly led by a fatigued and understrength European contingent in the battalions.⁴³

⁴² AWM, A2663, File 419/5/6, Letter to GOC First Army from GOC ANGAU, 15 Sept. 1945.

⁴³ ANGAU War Diary, July 1945, AWM, A2663, File 419/5/6, McQuinn, ms. and Long, 1963:262-5.

General Morris's arguments for the disbandment of the PIR finally won the day. Morris was informed by Sturdee, after consultation with General Blamey, that the postwar demobilisation of the PIR units would be delayed so that the standard of discipline and civic responsibility in the PIR could first be raised to a satisfactory level before the soldiers were returned to village life. It was argued that prompt disbandment on the other hand would be likely to lead to the unrest which ANGAU feared. In this way, the ultimate disbandment of the PIR was accepted.⁴⁴ In January 1946 there was still a total of some 2300 Papua New Guineans serving in the PIR, only slightly less than its peak strength of 2459 in April 1945, but demobilisation did take place later in 1946. HQ PIR was disbanded in June 1946 and the last native troops had been demobilised and returned to their villages by the end of that year.

The decision by the Army to disband these units was strongly supported by the first postwar civil Administrator, Colonel J.K. Murray. In May 1946, Murray wrote to the Minister for Territories referring to rumours that the PIR would, after all, not be disbanded and sought his assurance that the decision to disband the PIR had not been reversed. Murray was told that there had been no change of policy. Disbandment of the native military units was a victory for those in ANGAU and elsewhere who saw native troops as a potentially dangerous, destabilising and unruly element within indigenous PNG society.⁴⁵ The worrying record of PIR misbehaviour had made the ANGAU case for disbandment a persuasive one in the postwar period and furthermore, apart from the need to achieve postwar defence economies, there was no apparent defence threat to justify the maintenance of the force.⁴⁶ If the need were to arise in the future it might be best if a fresh start were to be made, as had been recommended by Major-General Morris.

⁴⁴AWM, A2663, File 419/5/6.

⁴⁵Morris believed that most of the ANGAU Native Affairs officers he spoke to during the war were opposed to the concept of native military units (personal communication, Sept. 1973).

⁴⁶Although there may not have been a defence 'threat' at

This review of the wartime PIR experience raises the question of the contribution native units made to the total war effort as well as the impact which these units had on the nation's future. The military contribution to the Allied war effort by the PIR was minor but not insignificant. Taken with the contributions of those Papua New Guineans who served with the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB), the Police and as ANGAU workers, it forms the basis of a considerable tradition of national defence.⁴⁷ The war was, in effect, the first time that the people of Papua New Guinea had been organised and had reacted as a single nation. To some extent the PIR may be seen as a symbol of an incipient nationalism and an early demonstration of cultural integration in PNG. The potential benefits of the integration which might have been obtained were limited during the war by the decision to segregate Papuan from New Guinean within the PIR and later by the decision to disband the force. The integration of Papuan and New Guinean within the same unit in the early days of the PIB had been seen as a pioneering success. A former European member of the PIR

46 (continued)

this time, Britain had suggested a postwar role for indigenous Pacific Islands military and naval forces during 1944-45. It was argued by the British that indigenous garrison troops would be able to contribute to their own territorial integrity and at the same time reduce British, Australian and New Zealand defence costs and manpower burdens. The British suggestion received a lukewarm response in Canberra and the issue was dropped (CAO, A989, File 735/321/7).

⁴⁷ A total of 4409 Papua New Guineans served in the military units of the PIR and AIB (131 were killed and 201 wounded). A total of 1100 were serving with the AIB in March 1945 and it was estimated that this organisation had killed over 5000 enemy soldiers in the course of its operations behind the enemy's lines and in contested areas. In all categories of assistance it was estimated that 49,500 Papua New Guineans had directly helped the Australian and Allied war effort in PNG. (CAO, MP729, File 251/1/1889, Department of Army to Department of External Territories, 8 Jan. 1946 and AWM Blamey Papers, File 56:2, Allied Intelligence Bureau.)

has written:

An outstanding feature of the PIB had been the way in which men from all parts of Papua and New Guinea had fought side by side ... Many of those who found themselves in action together had scarcely heard of one another's places. Here was the earliest example of a unity which is today sought after and talked about, but not yet achieved to the extent that it was by the soldiers of PIB (Barrett, 1969:495).

It is of course true that even in the PIB and NGIB units later in the war, which segregated Papuan from New Guinean, there was considerable intermixing of men from many Districts within each of the PIR units. In April 1945 the ethnic composition of PIR was reported to be as follows:

<u>Papua</u>		<u>New Guinea</u>	
Fly	128	Manus	22
Moresby	58	Bougainville	39
Tufi	27	Madang	210
Purari	47	New Britain	618
Samarai	95	Morobe	65
Mambare	188	Sepik	517
Lakekamu	253	New Ireland	18
Trobriand Islands	31	Huon	146

(McQuinn, ms.)

Apart from the nationalist tradition which the PIR helped to establish during the war period, the PIR units also provided a cadre of experienced soldiers and NCOs which formed the basis of the postwar PIR battalion when it was re-established. This group was able to pass on some of the military traditions which Papua New Guinean soldiers had established in war. In this way they formed a perhaps vital ingredient in the ethos of the postwar force. It is true nonetheless that the Papua New Guinean experience in the wartime PIR was closely linked with the Australians who served with them. The PIR was a typical colonial military force in which the 'black' bayonets were led and controlled by Europeans and there were limits therefore to what Papua New Guinean soldiers could claim as their 'own' tradition even within PIR. Both in training and operations considerable reliance was placed on the role of Australian officers and NCOs. There were PNG section commanders, platoon sergeants and company warrant officers; however, there was a 'counterpart system' with both Australian and PNG NCOs sharing responsibilities at platoon level and above. All-

Papua New Guinean sub-unit patrols were certainly sent out on operations and were often very successful. The PIR had at least shown the ability of men from the different areas of Papua and New Guinea to live and work together in a relatively harmonious manner.

The wartime period of the PIR was to prove significant in a further respect in the future development of indigenous forces. The wartime units had been an integral part of the Australian Army and their native members were subject to Australian Military Regulations and Orders.⁴⁸ This precedent was followed in 1951 when the force was re-established, leading to later problems in PNG civil-military relations. An alternative pattern of development might have been found in the prewar proposals for locally-raised forces and, in particular, the proposal for the establishment of a Territories of Papua and New Guinea Defence Force. As it turned out, the postwar pattern of military development in PNG was to be largely determined by the past. Another aspect of the history of wartime PIR units to reoccur later was the opposition to native military units on the part of ANGAU officers which would re-emerge within both the Civil Administration in PNG and the Department of Territories. This postwar opposition to the PIR was, in large measure, based on the experience of the wartime PIR and its disciplinary troubles.

The postwar re-establishment
and development of the PIR,
1951-62

In November 1950 Army Headquarters in Melbourne ordered the reactivation of the Pacific Islands Regiment as a single battalion force of the Australian Army. The first Papua New Guinean troops were enlisted in early 1951 and by August 1952 the unit was up to its full strength with a headquarters

⁴⁸ This issue was raised by GOC ANGAU in June 1944. General Morris strongly represented to General Blamey that the PIR should be placed under local regulations similar to those controlling the constabulary, rather than remain under Australian Military Regulations. Blamey referred the matter to the Adjutant General but there was no change to the status of the PIR (AWM, Blamey Papers, File 32-31, June 1944).

and principal base at Taurama Barracks, Port Moresby on the former site of an Australian wartime General Hospital previously known as Eggys' Corner. Company outstations were later to be established in 1952 at Vanimo on the north coast adjacent to the Dutch/PNG border and in 1954 on Manus Island. The Manus Island outstation was later moved to Wewak in 1962.

Background to the re-establishment

The Australian government's decision to re-establish an indigenous military force in PNG was the result of increasing interest in the external and internal security of the region. There was concern at the time about the prospects of internal subversion within PNG and, within some quarters, a fear of PNG becoming a 'second Malaya'.⁴⁹ Australia was also influenced by heightened tension between a recently-independent Indonesia and the Netherlands over the future of Dutch New Guinea (now Irian Jaya). The problems of Indonesian/Dutch relations had apparently led to a fear of communist-, or Indonesian nationalist-inspired, subversion in PNG emanating from Dutch New Guinea. These views were to be seen in contemporary newspaper reports and articles and reflected in ministerial statements.

An article written in 1950 by Lieutenant-Colonel F.P. Serong (later Brigadier and an acknowledged counter-insurgency warfare expert of the Vietnam war) provides an indication of the military view of the problem. Serong wrote: 'The weakness of the Dutch in New Guinea, the Communist boil-over in Asia and the all too apparent instability of the Indonesian Government have caused grave concern among the residents of Australian New Guinea'. He saw two dangers: the likelihood of communist infiltration from an Indonesian-held West New Guinea and the dangers of subversion of the native population by the Chinese community within PNG, many elements of which, he claimed, were 'strongly communist'. The colonel proposed a battalion-strong force of native troops to seal the land border:

We visualise an enemy whose immediate object is, by entering across the land frontier or in small coastal vessels, to contact and spread political disaffection among the native peoples, with the

⁴⁹ See front page articles in the *SMH* on 14 May and 6 August 1950.

ultimate aim of precipitating an uprising against the white population ...

Colonel Serong concluded, however, that 'the first line of defence of Australian New Guinea lies at the western end of Dutch New Guinea and the maintenance of the Dutch in their position by political action should be one of our major strategic aims' (Serong, 1950:7,9,15).

The view of the Australian government at this time was that PNG and indeed the whole of the New Guinea island was vital to Australian security and was the last ring of defence against aggression. The memory of the Japanese invasion of PNG was still fresh in Australian minds. The strategically vital nexus between PNG and Australia, in the wake of World War II, was moreover common ground between the major Australian political parties. Speaking in relation to the United Nations Trusteeship granted to Australia over New Guinea, Labor Prime Minister Chifley had observed in August 1946 that: 'The territory of New Guinea ... is of such importance to the safety of this country that nothing but absolute control could be accepted by any Australian government' (Tomasetti, 1970:5, quoting from *CPD* Vol.188, 7 Aug. 1946, p.3853).

In March 1950, Sir Percy Spender in a ministerial statement on foreign policy reaffirmed this view of New Guinea's strategic importance. He told the House of Representatives that the Liberal-Country Party government believed that New Guinea was an absolutely essential link in the chain of Australian defence and defence preparations in PNG would serve Australian security interests as well as those of the people of PNG (see Spender, 1972:320).

In this environment of fear of subversion and a belief in the nexus between the defence of PNG and the Australian mainland the government on 1 June 1950 announced its defence plans for PNG. Approval had been given for the formation of a PNG Division of the RAN, A European unit, open to volunteers of both territories, would be re-formed as the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles (PNGVR) and the establishment of a native regiment as a part of the Australian Military Forces was also under consideration. The Minister for Territories added: 'It is most important that the Territories should be kept free of subversive influences, and steps will be taken by legislation and otherwise to see

that they are not exposed to this menace'.⁵⁰

The PIR battalion was reactivated without a subsequent announcement in Parliament. In PNG the decision to form the battalion was generally welcomed by the Civil Administration and the expatriate community, although with some reservations. Some leading Europeans in PNG were still sceptical about the value of native troops and the memories of the disciplinary problems in the PIB and NGIB were still fresh in the minds of old Papua New Guinea hands. In particular there was concern that the PIR would foster dangerously liberal and disruptive racial relationships between Papua New Guinean and Australian soldiers. Some expatriates saw the wartime spirit of mateship and the 'elder brother/younger brother' type of relationship which suffused dealings between Australian and PNG servicemen as seriously undermining the traditional *masta/boi* relationship of the postwar period - which many believed could now be re-established. There was also local concern that, because the PIR would be officered by Australian Army officers, they would not be sufficiently expert in what was seen as the highly esoteric business of 'handling natives'.⁵¹

Problems of development

With the re-establishment of the PIR there appears to have been no consideration of its forming the nucleus of the defence force of a future independent nation. Rather, the PIR was seen as an adjunct to Australia's defence capacity and as the first line of Australian defence in PNG. It was of course unlikely at that time that the PIR would have been seen in any other terms. The ultimate future of the territories had not been determined and political independence lay in the far distant future, if at all.

⁵⁰ P.C. Spender, in *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (CPD)*, Vol.208, 1 June 1950, p.3652.

⁵¹ The first Officer Commanding of the new unit was thoroughly briefed by the PNG Administration and expatriate civilians on the need to maintain 'correct' racial relationships. For example, he was advised not to allow his European NCOs to unload stores at the wharf because of the 'poor' example it would create in front of black Papua New Guineans (personal communication, Lieutenant-Colonel W.R.J. Shields, 4 Dec. 1973).

The roles allocated to the reactivated PIR battalion reflected the experience that had been gained from the employment of PIR units during war, as well as reflecting the belief that PIR would, as before, operate as part of a larger Australian force. One of the peacetime roles listed for the PIR battalion clearly did take account of the contemporary fear of subversion and internal disorder. The PIR was to assist the civil administration to maintain law and order if it became necessary.⁵²

During the 1950s and until 1962, the PIR underwent a gradual process of consolidation. Younger and better educated soldiers were trained for more specialised jobs within the battalion such as clerks, storemen and signallers. At the same time PNG NCOs developed in experience and ability and the unit slowly improved its standard of training and efficiency as a military organisation. The number of Papua New Guineans in it gradually increased from 390 in June 1952 to 695 by June 1963.⁵³

There were, however, serious setbacks to this development caused by ill-discipline. Significant incidents of disorder took place within PIR in 1952, 1957 and 1961 which involved questions concerning the degree of tribal integration within PIR and the extent to which PNG soldiers were amenable to military discipline under the conditions of peacetime soldiering.

In December 1952 about twenty Kerema soldiers were discharged from the Army after brawling with New Guinean soldiers at Taurama Barracks. Iron bars, sharpened stakes, bayonets and barbed wire 'whips' were confiscated after the fighting. The Keremas believed that they were being treated

⁵² See *To Find a Path, The History of the PIR*, no author, unpublished 1PIR unit precis. The roles of the units were listed as follows:

In Peace. Patrolling. To provide a basis on which other units could be formed. If required, to assist the civil administration to maintain law and order.

In War. Garrison duty and advisory unit to units from the mainland of Australia. Fighting as a unit to delay the enemy. Medium range reconnaissance fighting in Company sub-units in all phases of war.

⁵³ See *Defence Report 1973*, Table 1. By 1962 the Australian component of PIR was 74 officers and NCOs.

unfairly by the Europeans within the unit and, in turn, some Europeans who had wartime New Guinea Infantry Battalion experience believed that the Kerema soldiers (Papuan) were arrogant, untrustworthy troublemakers. In another view the origin of the disorder lay in the divisions amongst the European staff between the old PIB and NGIB hands and the younger officers (personal communication, Dec. 1972). A report completed after the incident observed that further disturbances would continue to occur until discipline and *esprit de corps* overcame tribal affiliations. The report rejected the idea of banning Keremas from PIR in the future.⁵⁴

Kerema soldiers were again the principal participants in another serious incident of ill-discipline in 1957. On Sunday, 15 December, two hundred soldiers marched on Koki market from Taurama. The raid, which had been launched without the knowledge of any of the European staff, was intended as a reprisal by Kerema soldiers and others on a group of civilian Keremas who had beaten up PIR soldiers (and the Australian Regimental Sergeant Major who had gone to their assistance) the previous afternoon at the market. The soldiers' rampage through Koki and adjoining Badili villages was eventually quelled by Australian officers and NCOs and loyal PNG NCOs. In the sequel to this incident, a civil court convened at Taurama Barracks the following day to try the offenders was overturned in uproar by soldiers outraged at the severity of a sentence handed down by the magistrate. Eventually, 154 soldiers were punished, 15 were discharged from the Army, whilst only 4 were subsequently convicted of rioting and imprisoned by the PNG Supreme Court.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ IPIR Archive Files, 1953.

⁵⁵ IPIR Unit Archive File. The decision to hold the civil trial at Taurama was unwise. Inadequate precautions were taken to maintain order and, in addition, the proceedings were a travesty of justice which incited the soldiers to take action. Charges were not read out, defendants were tried in groups of twenty and the court proceedings were conducted in the English language which was not fully understood. Following the overthrowing of the magistrate's court, 71 soldiers were tried for contempt of court; of these, 60 were committed for trial before the Supreme Court for rioting. In the trial before Justice Gore, only 4 were subsequently convicted. Justice Gore commented that the incident was an outrageous and

In January 1961, after a series of incidents concerned with dissatisfaction over pay and other rumours, some eighty soldiers left Taurama in order to march to Bomana civil gaol, to demonstrate for the release of seven ring leaders in a pay dispute who had been arrested earlier, or be gaoled with them. The military demonstrators broke through a force of one hundred police en route, at Boroko. The disturbance was eventually quelled and a number of soldiers were sent to Bomana to join those previously arrested. Forty-five soldiers, mainly younger men from the New Guinea Islands districts, were later discharged from the Army as a result of this incident.⁵⁶

The 1957 and 1961 incidents both generated considerable reaction in PNG amongst the Administration and European population, and in Australia at the political and defence planning levels. After the 1957 riot the PNG Administration called for closer liaison between the civil administration and the PIR, and the lengthening of the tours of duty of Australian officers with the PIR.⁵⁷

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alarming affair and the soldiers had arrogated to themselves a position above the civil authority. The Judge testily observed that 'the Crown had not been fortified in its efforts to get convictions by the Army'.

⁵⁶ IPIR Unit Archive File. A pay rise had been promised and long awaited. At this time a new civilian labour award of twenty shillings per week was announced. In the soldiers' view their own seven shillings per week compared very unfavourably. Besides this aspect, there was discontent over inequality with Australian rates of pay, pay being received monthly rather than fortnightly, the absence of a pension scheme, and a rumour of opposition, led by padres, to the introduction of soft mattresses for the indigenous troops. The discontent smouldered during the normally inactive New Year period; the commanding officer learnt of 'strike' planning and incarcerated seven of the leaders in an attempt to prevent such action.

⁵⁷ PNG National Archives, AD8, File 1/17/1. At the time of the riot the Acting Administrator (Mr J.T. Gunther) recommended that an experienced PNG Administration officer be appointed to command the PIR. (This proposal was not pursued.) Gunther considered that the PNG Administration should be given a larger responsibility in regard to the Force's development.

The non-official European reaction in PNG to the 1957 and 1961 incidents was alarmist and hostile to the PIR. In 1957 the Port Moresby Advisory Councillors called for the removal of PIR from the Port Moresby town area and salutary 'showing-the-flag' visits by Australian troops. Another proposal, which was subsequently rejected by the Council, called for the matching of PIR, man for man, by Australian troops, 'based on the British experience in India' (*Courier*, 30 Dec. 1957). In 1961 there was another call for the matching of indigenous units with Australian troops whilst another group of expatriates called for the disbandment of PIR and the strengthening of the Police.⁵⁸

After the 1961 incident which was viewed more seriously by the Administration because of the public conflict with the Police, Mr J.T. Gunther, as Acting Administrator, again called for the appointment of an experienced Native Affairs officer as Commanding Officer of the PIR. Gunther informed the Army that 'some senior, experienced Administration officers recommend that the unit be disbanded and started anew'.⁵⁹ The Army agreed to the appointment of a Civil Administration official as temporary liaison officer to the PIR and his report of the incident was strongly critical of the Australian Army's administration of the PIR.

Many people have been living in a 'fools paradise' by thinking that the troops of PIR have been fully and completely indoctrinated with that vital soldierly quality of complete and instant obedience to the orders of a superior officer.

That sort of discipline which is mental discipline rather than a physical one can only be achieved in troops whose background and environment makes them susceptible to such restraints ...

Within the PIR we are dealing with men who have no warrior tradition whatever. The extent of their fighting lay in the treacherous sneak attack, or

⁵⁸*South Pacific Post*, 6 Jan. 1961 and Radio 9PA News Transcript 13 Jan. 1961 on 1PIR Unit Archive File. The Kokopo Town Advisory Council, on the Gazelle Peninsula, moved a motion suggesting to the Administrator that the PIR be disbanded.

⁵⁹PNG National Archives, AD8, File 1/17/1, Acting Administrator to Secretary, Department of Territories, 7 Dec. 1961.

in some simulated battle in connection with tribal or clan ceremonial ...

Many of the present European members of PIR have had little or no experience of Native conditions here, nor of the men whom they have to control ...

The above adds to the urgent necessity of re-evaluating the disciplinary and training methods that are used with the PIR ...

Their proficiency and skill at arms, drill and jungle craft is not in doubt. It is in the civil responsibilities and disciplines of a soldier that they will require the most careful and concentrated instruction.⁶⁰

Both these incidents exposed a serious lack of professionalism in the military administration of the PIR. As a result of the 1957 affair certain policy changes were instituted. In future greater emphasis was to be placed on contact between officers and men, native customs were more keenly studied by European officers and Europeans in the battalion were required to master Pidgin, the unit lingua franca. A new policy of selecting younger, better suited officers for service with PIR was also adopted.⁶¹

The 1961 incident led to a more wide-ranging review of the future of the PIR. The Commanding Officer of the battalion reported that independence for PNG was now being discussed and he called for the commissioning of PNG officers who could contribute to a stable PNG that was well disposed towards Australia. He argued that it would be wrong to consider the PIR purely as a military unit without recognising the wide political and social ramifications of armed forces in newly independent states.

This view of the future importance of the PIR evoked a sympathetic response in Australian defence circles. It was believed that it was now time to take stock of military policy in PNG. PIR would be a vital element in the future of the country with a tremendous potential for good and a stable influence in a young country struggling with the problems of self-government. The PIR could become a training ground for national leaders in PNG and the country

⁶⁰ Ibid. Report by Mr M.B.B. Orken, Acting District Officer, Rabaul and Liaison Officer to PIR, 24 Dec. 1961.

⁶¹ PIR Archive File.

would benefit from the influence of former soldiers when they returned to their village homes.

This rather uncritical attitude towards the contribution of the PIR and a future 'PNG Army' to the stability of PNG begged questions about the potentially negative contributions of any army to political stability through interference in the political system. This issue was not taken up by the Army which believed that the PIR's previous disciplinary problems had largely been the result of poor conditions of service and inevitable 'growing pains'. It was believed that sound development policies in the future would ensure that the Army in PNG made a positive contribution to the nation's stability.⁶² For this reason there is an increasing emphasis by the Army after 1961 on improving all aspects of service conditions in the PIR, ranging from pay to dress, equipment and rations. These improvements in conditions of service were to occur within the Army in PNG at a tempo which outpaced improvements in the conditions of the PNG Police. This pattern of development, which was accentuated with the rapid infusion of defence funds during the 'Confrontation build-up', conflicted with the understanding reached at the time of the re-establishment of the PIR that there would be parity between Police and Army conditions in order 'to preserve the economic balance of the native community', and produced disparities which exist to this day.

The considerable professional interest of the Australian Army leadership in the PIR's development, more pronounced in certain officers, was probably the result of the personal experience which many officers had in PNG during the war. The years of military service which most senior officers had spent in PNG during war with Japan generated a greater degree of interest than in many other sections of the Australian community in the future of PNG as a nation. The interest in PNG's future was complemented by a professional interest in contemporary political events of Africa, as seen from a military perspective. It was understandable that the military, who have been seen as a professional group who traditionally emphasise the repetitive nature of history and what can be learnt from it, would turn to the contemporary examples of decolonisation in Africa (see Huntington, 1957:79). It might be said, therefore, that whilst many Australians involved in the development of PNG still saw the

⁶² Army Headquarters Memorandum of 2 Feb. 1961.

country's pattern of future development as *sui generis*, it was in the nature of the military's approach to see PNG's future in terms of the political change in Africa and elsewhere.

It is not surprising therefore that Army planning for the future in PNG tended to outstrip the tempo of change in other government sectors and anticipated the actual course of development of the Force in PNG after 1962 as a result of Indonesian Confrontation policies. In 1960 the newly appointed Commander of the PNG Military District was invited to prepare plans for the future development of his Force and he was later given the task of designing the shape of an eventual PNG Army based on a three-battalion force. The resultant plans called for a brigade group force to be developed from the PIR nucleus within either five or eight years from the commencement of expansion. It was envisaged that the 'PNG Army' would be based on austere scales of equipment and accommodation suited to the economic resources and stage of development of the country. These 1962 proposals went forward to Army Headquarters and provided a basis for subsequent defence planning in PNG, but in the rapid expansion of PNG's defence forces after 1963 it is evident that the thrust of this early report towards simplicity, economy and military austerity was overlooked (personal communication, 25 Nov. 1973).

Although Army planning for the long-term future of the Army in PNG awaited strategic imperatives before it was implemented, other practical development measures were initiated. In particular, there was increased emphasis placed on the training of Papua New Guineans to replace Australian servicemen. After 1961 it was decided to pursue the localisation of senior NCOs within PIR with greater vigour. Even so this took time and it was not until 1965 that the first PNG warrant officers were appointed.⁶³ Progress was also slow in the training of PNG officers. In August 1960 the Military Board decided that suitably qualified Papua New Guineans should be commissioned as Australian Army officers for service in the PIR, but it was not until January 1963 that the first two PNG candidates commenced training at the Officer Cadet School, Portsea in

⁶³ Until 1965 the senior NCOs served as Top Sergeant understudies to Australian warrant officers.

Victoria.⁶⁴ This delay was due to the lack of educationally qualified volunteers as well as some measure of administrative inaction. As will be seen later, the failure to produce adequate numbers of officers in these early years led to a shortage of experienced local officers able to replace Australians at the senior level in the present day PNG Defence Force.

Although the Army's attitude to the prospects of change in PNG and the need to plan for the future might be described as 'realistic', it also seems clear that the Army continued to see the PIR as very much an adjunct to Australia's military capability, in both peace and war. The Australian military's postwar experience with the PIR had confirmed its earlier respect for the effectiveness of PNG troops in certain roles. At the same time this experience tended to confirm some of the earlier cultural prejudices. In 1962 the PIR Commanding Officer was ordered by Army Headquarters to report on the capabilities of the PIR soldier for a study which was being conducted by the Department of Defence on the future role of the PIR. His report highlighted the problems within the Army of the transition from a traditional to a westernised society. Australian praise of the military skills of the PIR soldier as a jungle fighter was unstinting; the limitations of the PNG soldier were seen, principally, in cultural terms:

In his present stage of development, the Pacific Islander is a simple soldier. With a few exceptions in the unit at present, he is close to his primitive traditions. Because of the limited service of the native only a thin veneer separates the soldier and the villager in him. He requires leadership at all times ... Soldiers are still apprehensive of the local witchdoctor or spiritman even after 15 years service ...

[In terms of] fighting ability ... It would be in these types of operations - harassing operations, guerrilla type operations and delaying operations -

⁶⁴ *Australia in Facts and Figures*, No.72, Dec. 1961. These two, E.R. Diro and B.P. Lowa, later became the two most senior PNG officers in the PNG Defence Force, having graduated as Second Lieutenants in December 1963. In September 1975 Diro was appointed Defence Force Commander in the rank of brigadier-general. Lowa resigned from the Defence Force earlier in 1975 as a colonel.

that the maximum value of the PI as a soldier would be obtained. His skill at swift movement over long distances, over rugged country, concealment, sense of direction and self-sufficiency would be best brought out in these operations. His ability to live off the land and endure hardships of exposure and a long time in the jungle gives him a decided advantage over the European soldier.⁶⁵

The observation of the Papua New Guinean soldier during training and especially during arduous 'showing-the-flag' patrolling of the PNG interior produced a considerable measure of professional respect amongst Australian officers for the PNG soldier. At this time the PIR maintained a busy program of patrolling in addition to its routine training activities. These patrols frequently involved feats of physical hardship and endurance. In 1962 the PIR reported that a total of twelve patrols, each of platoon strength and not less than one month's duration, had been mounted during the previous twelve-month period. Four of these patrols had been along the PNG/Dutch border. The growing military repute of the PIR also seems to have led to incipient notions amongst the military and others that, at least for the present, the PIR was the 'Australian Gurkha', guarding Australia's strategic frontier. This attitude may even have been an underlying factor in the decisions taken to expand the PNG forces in 1963 as a result of Confrontation. PNG forces were, after all, economical to maintain as well as being conveniently located. At least this approach to PNG defence forces may be seen to be symbolically represented in the regimental affiliation which took place between the PIR and a British Gurkha regiment during the early part of the period.⁶⁶ Arguments for the expansion of the PIR were, however, soon to be effectively reinforced by the events in Indonesia and the consequent defence threat which was seen to both PNG and Australia.

⁶⁵ Letter of 4 April 1962. Pacific Islander (PI) is (and was still in January 1974) official Defence terminology for indigenous Papua New Guinean servicemen.

⁶⁶ The PIR became 'affiliated' with 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles in November 1954. Exchanges of officers for tours of duty with the affiliated regiment have taken place since 1962.

Indonesian confrontation and the expansion
of the PNG Army, 1962-69

In December 1961 Indonesia intensified its long-standing campaign to gain Dutch West New Guinea when President Sukarno issued his command for the liberation of West Irian by force. The Indonesian military and diplomatic offensive, assisted by American diplomatic intervention, was eventually to lead to success for the Indonesian claims. In August 1962 an agreement between the Dutch and Indonesians provided for the transfer of West Irian to Indonesian administrative control by May 1963 after a brief period of United Nations interregnum.⁶⁷

Indonesian success and Dutch capitulation in this issue produced concern in Australia and in greater measure within PNG about future Indonesian military intentions towards Papua New Guinea. Indonesia's apparent appetite for territorial expansion and a generally bellicose foreign policy generated anxiety amongst both Australian residents in PNG and those Papua New Guineans who took an interest in such matters. There was thus a gathering interest within PNG about Australia's future plans for PNG and especially about arrangements for the defence of PNG against the possibility of Indonesian aggression.

In an attempt to dispel the unease about security matters in PNG the Minister for Territories, Mr P.M.C. Hasluck, in a speech delivered in Port Moresby in September 1962, assured PNG residents that PNG would be defended as if it were part of the Australian mainland. Hasluck emphasised that this undertaking had been cleared by Prime Minister Menzies personally. He added that PNG was included within the scope of the ANZUS treaty which guaranteed Australia powerful allies in the event of aggression.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ See Hastings, 1969:221-39. Indonesian sovereignty over West Irian under the terms of the 1962 Agreement was to be finally determined by an 'Act of Free Choice' to be supervised by the United Nations before the end of 1969.

⁶⁸ Hasluck, 1962. The ANZUS treaty, concluded in September 1951, specifically included Papua and New Guinea and unlike SEATO, was not limited to 'Communist Aggression' in its coverage. In 1963 the US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr Averell Harriman was to publicly affirm that PNG was included under the terms of ANZUS (Watt, 1967:134).

The Minister's speech had been designed to allay fears within PNG and demonstrate Australian preparedness to meet with force any Indonesian military activities directed against PNG. The military preparations by which Australia might actually fulfil such a commitment were rather slower in eventuating. The decision to increase the size of military forces deployed within PNG was not announced until mid-1963.

The expansion of indigenous military forces in PNG

In May 1963 the Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, announced that the size of the PIR would be doubled from its strength of about seven hundred, consistent with adequate training and equipment. He added that when this had been implemented, further developments would be considered. Menzies noted earlier in his speech:

It certainly cannot be stated that we have entered a period of stability in the area of immediate strategic concern to Australia ... We have made this recent review in the light of our treaty arrangements, but particularly in reference to the security of our own country and of the territories of Papua and New Guinea. We will defend these territories as if they were part of our mainland; there must be no mistaken ideas about that.⁶⁹

In an election-eve speech in the House of Representatives in October of the same year, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr A.A. Calwell, announced Labor's defence policy for Papua New Guinea if it were to win the election. Labor's policy indicated a willingness to more than match the government's defence expansion plans for PNG:

We will raise the strength of the Pacific Islands Regiment in New Guinea, which the government estimates to be only seven hundred strong. I have been asking the Minister for the Army for the last ten years to raise the strength of this Regiment to at least two battalions. We will raise it to brigade strength and later to a battle group of six thousand men. We will guarantee the territorial integrity of Papua and New Guinea with something

⁶⁹ Sir Robert Menzies, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.38, 22 May 1963, pp. 1669-71, Ministerial Statement: Defence Review. The Prime Minister also announced plans to develop Boram airfield, Wewak, for defence purposes.

more than words.⁷⁰

By November 1964, the Menzies government had virtually accepted Labor's plans for a brigade-size force in PNG. In a ministerial statement the Prime Minister argued that there had been a deterioration in Australia's strategic position - partly as a consequence of recent Indonesian policies. The government believed that, in regard to Indonesia, Australia must prepare for all eventualities including the control and, if necessary, defence of the frontier between West New Guinea and PNG. Menzies stated that in the existing strategic situation the government attached a high priority to the strengthening of PIR. Accordingly, the government would proceed with a plan to increase the strength of the PIR to three battalions and supporting units - a total approaching 3500 men - by June 1968. At the same time a £12 million building program was announced for the construction of barracks, workshops, engineering services and married quarters.⁷¹ Apart from the Army build-up, the formation of a PNG coastal security force was announced. The force was to consist of five patrol boats and its role would be the surveillance of PNG's shores and rivers. In addition there would be an airfield building and upgrading program designed to improve PIR mobility in the border area and permit the use of Mirage type aircraft in PNG.⁷²

The implementation of this ambitious program of defence expansion, which was explained largely in terms of Australian security interests, proceeded gradually over the next several years. Practical limits to manpower expansion within the Army were experienced. There were limitations on training resources, a lack of barracks and a shortage of Papua New Guinean leadership as a result of the expansion of what had been a small force. This problem was compounded by the loss, at about this time, of many of the older experienced wartime PNG NCOs and this may have contributed to several further incidents of group disobedience by PNG servicemen during the period between 1966 and 1969. These incidents were principally concerned with pay and were non-

⁷⁰ A.A. Calwell, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.40, 22 Oct. 1963, p.2071.

⁷¹ Sir Robert Menzies, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.44, 10 Nov. 1964, pp.2715-24, Ministerial Statement: Defence Review. Nadzab was to be extended for Mirage use, Daru was to be extended and 'smaller airstrips between Boram and Daru brought to a higher standard'.

⁷² *Ibid.*

violent, having more the character of 'industrial action'. Nonetheless they provided further grounds for the criticism of the force by its opponents in PNG. There were sit-down strikes over pay in December 1966 at Murray Barracks and in April 1966 at 1PIR. In 1967 a company of 2PIR 'sat down' over a dispute with their officers. In September 1969 270 soldiers failed to parade for work at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby, because of long-standing complaints over pay. In this incident there were some attempts by the strike ring leaders to co-ordinate their activities with soldiers in other locations but they were unsuccessful. Sixty-two soldiers were dismissed from the Army as a result of the incident. In the aftermath it was evident that many of those involved had not been aware of the seriousness and inappropriateness of a military strike compared to an industrial strike.

There was also the problem of generating a more complex infrastructure of technical and support units for the force. This required new skills and higher levels of education amongst the PNG soldiers. Previously the technical and support needs of the one battalion of PIR had been relatively simple and they had generally been met either from within the unit's resources or from Australia.

By 1968 the strength of the Army in PNG had risen from a strength of 695 in 1963 when the original decision had been made to double the Force to a total of 2406 officers and men (Defence Report, 1973). Some \$40 million dollars had been spent on the construction of five self-contained modern barrack areas: Taurama, Murray and Goldie River Barracks in the Port Moresby area, Igam Barracks in Lae and Moem Barracks in Wewak. \$3 million had also been spent on the upgrading of refuelling and support facilities at the RAN base at Manus Island which had been developed as the PNG patrol boat base (see Lynch, 1969:22, and Mediansky, 1970:38).

The Army in PNG in 1969 was organised as follows. The force was controlled by Headquarters PNG Command located at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby. The commander of the force was a brigadier, responsible directly to the Military Board in Canberra.⁷³ The major units were: 1PIR located at

⁷³ PNG Command was formed in 1965. Up until 1963, PNG was known as 8 Military District and commanded by a

Taurama Barracks; 2PIR at Moem Barracks Wewak, with one company outstation at Vanimo; a training depot at Goldie River Barracks, near Port Moresby; the PNGVR battalion (open to PNG volunteers as well as Europeans since 1964, it was about five hundred strong and had six major training centres); a battalion of school cadets; an engineer construction squadron; a signals squadron; and various administrative, supply, ordnance and repair units necessary to support the force.

In regard to naval development, the PNG Division of the RAN by June 1969 consisted of 7 Papua New Guinean officers and 130 sailors at the Manus Island base and under training in Australia. There were in addition 48 PNG sailors who had been enlisted in an earlier period with lower educational standards. There was a total of 33 PNG sailors serving at sea with the patrol boat squadron. These boats were all commanded by Australian officers and they also had Australian sailors filling specialist and senior billets.⁷⁴

The expansion of the force in PNG sharply increased the requirement for Papua New Guinean officers and this subject received considerable attention.⁷⁵ By October 1968, although defence planning had shown a requirement for over 300 PNG officers by 1984, there were still only six PNG officers serving with the PIR and a further six cadets undergoing training in Australia. The principal reason for

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lieutenant-colonel. In that year the command was upgraded to a Military Area Headquarters. Both the Military District and Military Area commanders were responsible to the General Officer Commanding, Northern Command, located in Brisbane. The new command arrangement from 1965, giving the PNG Commander direct access to the Military Board, indicated the increased importance of the PNG forces.

⁷⁴ *Defence Report* 1968, p.24. The first PNG Division patrol boat, HMAS Aitape, was commissioned in November 1967; the fifth boat arrived in March 1969 to complete the Squadron. (*Australia in Facts and Figures*, No.96, Dec. 1967 and No.101, Mar. 1969.)

⁷⁵ PNG National Archives, A82, File 8-1-8, Letter from Department of the Army to Secretary, Department of Territories, 15 May 1967.

this lack of progress was the shortage of educationally qualified volunteers able successfully to complete the Portsea training. In an attempt to solve this problem the Army established a Military Cadet School (MCS) in mid-1968 to prepare candidates educationally for officer training in Australia.⁷⁶ It was not until the period 1970-72, however, that the numbers of PNG officers began to increase significantly.

The Army's efforts during the later half of the 1960s to recruit a larger number of PNG officer cadets led to conflict between the Army and the Civil Administration over manpower priorities. The Army believed that it was necessary to produce high quality officers, both well educated and well trained. In so far as this was possible it was thought that entry and training standards should, therefore, correspond to Australian levels. Whilst this general approach was accepted by the Civil Administration there was also a strong competitive demand by them for the still small educated PNG elite:

Senior Army officers here have maintained that the Army should not only have the best available young men but also the numbers required as a priority. The Administration needs are such that this priority is not acceptable ...⁷⁷

Because of the shortage of suitable recruits the Administration suggested that the Army should upgrade the educational standards of its officer cadets in PNG before sending them to Australia and thereby help to remove some of the shortfall in educated PNG manpower.⁷⁸ This proposal

⁷⁶ P.R. Lynch, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.61, 23 Oct. 1968, p.2224, Statement by the Minister for the Army. MCS was established at Igam Barracks, Lae. The course was eighteen months long and was designed to prepare PNG students academically and militarily for the OCS Portsea course.

⁷⁷ PNG National Archives, A82, File 8/1/8, Administrator to the Department of Territories, Aug. 1967. The Administrator was also invited to comment on the desirability of establishing an Officer Cadet School in PNG to replace the Portsea course. The Administrator replied that there was merit in PNG officers being closely associated with Australian officers and this was best achieved by the training of PNG officers in Australia.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

encouraged the Army to establish the Military Cadet School.

By the end of 1969 the plans for the expansion of the Army to a three-battalion force, as announced, remained unfulfilled. Although the barracks for the projected 3PIR had been built at Lae, the third battalion had not been raised.⁷⁹ The Minister for the Army, Lynch, in answer to a question from Labor's shadow Defence Minister, Barnard, in October 1968, had referred to reports of the raising of 3PIR as merely 'speculative and uninformed', although the previous Defence Review placed before the Parliament had retained the original proposal for a three-battalion force. The Minister then hedged in his reply as follows:

the government has not decided not to raise a third battalion ... The forward role and composition of the PIR, as with all aspects of the government's defence program will of course be included in the formulation of the new three-year defence program ...⁸⁰

There was however a new and significant emphasis in what followed:

In the meantime, the Army in the Territory is continuing to service a dual purpose. I refer in the first instance to the development of a national army constituted of indigenes and capable of playing a vital part in the defence of the Territory, and secondly to the provision in the future of a well-trained, well disciplined loyal and effective force which will be completely subservient to the legally constituted authority.⁸¹

There were indications of a developing awareness at the political level in Canberra that the Australian forces in PNG would comprise the future armed forces of an independent nation. The emphasis placed on the future loyalty and subservience of this force to the civil government also indicated an awareness that the relationship between the civil and military leadership was likely to be of crucial importance in a new state. As to the hesitancy in the further expansion of the PNG Force to the previously planned

⁷⁹ P.R. Lynch, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.61, 28 Nov. 1968, pp.3496-7. The barracks were completed in August 1968 at a cost of some \$8.5 million.

⁸⁰ *CPD*, H of R, Vol.61, 23 Oct. 1968, p.2227.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

level of three battalions, it may be attributed, firstly, to a greatly diminished military threat from Indonesia and secondly and more importantly, to the need to proceed with defence planning in PNG on the basis of the country's future as an independent nation and not principally as an adjunct to Australian defence needs. There was by 1969 on the one hand less strategic urgency for further development and on the other a lack of policy direction. The development of this policy, involving consultation with Papua New Guineans in the evolution of a defence force for an independent Papua New Guinea, was to come later. Once again, however, Australian military planning seems to have to some extent anticipated this process of change.

The Army had apparently already developed another blueprint for a PNG National Army based on a three-battalion force with supporting naval and air elements and this plan, produced during 1969 by a special project team, was to contribute to subsequent planning in PNG in much the same way as the earlier 1962 proposals had influenced the post-1963 expansion.

The Papua New Guinean response to defence expansion

At this stage of development some contemporary attitudes of Papua New Guineans towards questions of national defence and indigenous military units may be identified, although there is a difficulty in regard to the scarcity of articulated Papua New Guinean opinion on defence during the period. A review of the debates of the Legislative Council and of the House of Assembly after 1964 indicates that, with one important exception, the Australian policy of developing PNG defence capacity in response to an 'Indonesian threat' was enthusiastically supported by expatriates and indigenous members alike - at least in their public utterances. With the exception of the criticism of Australian defence policy in PNG delivered by Gaudi Mirau in June 1966 (see below), indigenous political opinion supported Australian policy. Papua New Guinean attitudes in security matters appear to have been conditioned by two factors. Firstly, Papua New Guineans had in recent living memory experienced invasion and modern warfare within their own country. The need for defence forces and military preparedness, for many Papua New Guineans, especially those who had fought or otherwise been caught up in military operations, was not a philosophical abstraction but what seemed to be a fact of life. Besides, the need for self-defence against the 'foreigner' was a

basic reality of their traditional society. Secondly, there appears to have been a quite general and pervasive suspicion, perhaps even fear, of Indonesia and its intentions in regard to PNG. This dislike of Indonesians may have been reinforced by a vague concept of brotherhood felt by some Papua New Guineans towards the West Irianese, perhaps derived from the manner in which West Irian had been acquired by the Indonesians. It may also have been fuelled by the generally anti-Indonesian attitudes of many Australians and of the media within PNG at the time.⁸²

Although Australia throughout this period retained control over PNG's defence and foreign affairs, speakers both in the Legislative Council and later the House of Assembly did discuss these topics, albeit infrequently. During the period from 1960 to 1969 there was in fact only one debate involving several speakers on defence matters. Nonetheless there was a significant number of individual speeches and questions in relation to Indonesia and PNG security which provided keys to indigenous and expatriate opinion on these subjects.

Following Hasluck's declaration on defence in September 1962 several members in the Legislative Council spoke, warmly accepting the position taken by the Australian government. One nominated member in touch with indigenous views, the Anglican Bishop of New Guinea, observed in relation to Indonesian actions in Dutch West New Guinea:

All this I think naturally perturbed the peoples of the Territory, not only the expatriate people, but also the indigenous people. The Minister's clear, strong and firm statement that Australia will defend this Territory as it would the Australian mainland ... has now removed all doubts ... and given a stronger sense of security to the peoples of this Territory, whether expatriate or indigenous, than they have had for many years past.⁸³

⁸² See Hastings, 1969:244-6. Hastings considered the pan-Papuan sentiment should not be underestimated in relation to PNG attitudes towards Indonesia.

⁸³ Anglican Bishop of New Guinea, *Legislative Council Debates (LCD)*, 6-10, 7 Sept. 1962, pp.606-7.

The following year, in June 1963, an elected European member of the Council again called attention to the Indonesian military threat to PNG, claiming that PNG was inadequately defended and faced a nation which possessed formidable armed forces and had territorial ambitions.⁸⁴ In September 1963 a Papuan member rose to support several other Papua New Guinean speakers who were calling for the inclusion of indigenous recruits in the then all-white PNGVR. He argued that it was important that Papuans and New Guineans be trained in military techniques - he was sure there would be no shortage of volunteers.⁸⁵

With the election of the first House of Assembly in 1964, indigenous members, on the infrequent occasions on which defence was discussed, continued to support Australia's policy of developing forces within PNG. There were also calls for an increased defence effort. In the June 1964 sittings of the House, Zure Zurecnuoc, Member for Finschhafen, recalled the tradition which Papua New Guineans had established during World War II, fighting alongside Australian troops in defeating the Japanese invaders. He observed that the country's defences were presently inadequate:

There are not enough Army personnel, the Naval Base at Manus has become just a small depot and we do not have an Air Force at all. I think that much work should be done to build up the defences of Papua and New Guinea ... It also concerns Australia because if this Territory is safe then Australia will be safe also ... We cannot escape war if it starts. Our name is known throughout the world. Remember what the Papuans and New Guineans did during the war ...⁸⁶

Zurecnuoc was supported in the same debate by a Papuan member, Dirona Abe, who agreed that it was a good thing for the people of PNG to know that Australia was willing to assist in PNG's defence.⁸⁷

⁸⁴R. Slaughter, *LCD*, 6-10, 3 June 1963, pp.734-5.

⁸⁵R. Taureka, *LCD*, 6-10, 19 Sept. 1963, pp.925-6. Taureka later became a medical practitioner and Minister for Health in the Somare Government. (This change to the PNGVR was made in 1964.)

⁸⁶*House of Assembly Debates (HAD)*, Vol.1, No.1, 16 June 1964, p.118.

⁸⁷*HAD*, Vol.1, No.1, 16 June 1964, p.119.

In February 1965, a prominent Highlands member, Tei Abal, reported the fear of Indonesian invasion felt by the people in his electorate in the Wabag area of the Western Highlands. Abal called for the PIR to be prepared for action and told the House that thirty-four councillors and seven thousand village people gathered at Wabag had called for an army training school to be established in the area so that the people could be trained to fight. 'The people asked me to bring this matter up in the House and said that this school should be set up in Wabag because Wabag is close to the Indonesian border.'⁸⁸

Papua New Guinean political opinion opposed to Australia's defence policies in relation to PNG was heard for the first time in June 1966. In a speech which generated the first full-scale defence debate within the House of Assembly, Gaudi Mirau, a Papuan member and supporter of the Pangu party, claimed that Australian defence development in PNG was involving the country in issues which could make it difficult in the future for PNG to live with her Asian neighbours. Mirau protested that the House of Assembly had not been consulted on defence issues - including the construction of bases in PNG which could be used to attack 'our next-door neighbours'.

We are the ones who should decide whether to be friends or enemies of Indonesia. We should be able to think and decide for ourselves. This House should decide whether we are Indonesia's allies or enemies. But it is Australia that is deciding this for us today.⁸⁹

Mirau argued that the development of expensive bases in PNG by Australia indicated that she intended to retain the bases for her own use after independence. Australia was thus seeking to provide for her own long-term strategic interests. These interests, Mirau pointed out, might not necessarily accord with those of PNG which would have to live in the Asian region.

Mirau's views drew heated and unanimous opposition in the debate that ensued. Opposition by indigenous members indicated the extent to which the need for defence preparedness and fear of Indonesia were entrenched attitudes, although this opposition may well have been intensified by

⁸⁸HAD, Vol.1, No.4, 26 Feb. 1965, p.594.

⁸⁹HAD, Vol.1, No.9, 7 June 1966, p.1393.

European members mobilising support against Mirau's case. Mirau was accused of having been duped by academics and presenting the views of others - and by one European member, of having acted as the mouthpiece of a communist or draft-dodger seeking to embarrass Australia at the United Nations.⁹⁰ Several Papua New Guinean members averred that Mirau's speech could not possibly represent the views of his electorate and his attempt to question the benefit of Australia's defence shield in PNG and her motives was 'spoiling' the work of the House of Assembly. Pita Simogun, a PNG war hero representing the border electorate of the Sepik, told the House that he was concerned about border matters because of the location of his electorate and it was as necessary for PNG to prepare to defend itself as it was for other nations.⁹¹ Another member recalled that in 1942 Australia had not adequately provided for PNG's security. He was now happy 'because Australia is establishing defence bases and I want this work to continue'.⁹²

Mirau's criticism of Australian policy evoked no manifest support from his fellow members in the House of Assembly. It did, however, result in a resolution moved by a Bougainvillean member, Mr (now Sir) Paul Lapun, and passed by the House of Assembly on 10 June 1966, recording appreciation of Australia's defence effort in PNG and satisfaction with the Australian defence policy in PNG.⁹³ This manoeuvre was clearly designed to destroy the credibility of Mirau's arguments. While Mirau's attack on Australian policies may have been ill-conceived and ill-timed as a political tactic and susceptible to charges of outside influence, it did nonetheless raise several important defence and foreign relations issues which would need to be faced by a Papua New Guinean government at some future time. If there was almost unanimity amongst Papua New Guineans up until 1966 on the defence policies which the Australian government was pursuing in PNG, from 1967 onwards a measure of disquiet was occurring in the minds of both Papua New Guineans and Australians in PNG, about the consequence of these policies for the future of PNG.

⁹⁰ O.I. Ashton, *HAD*, Vol.1, No.9, 8 June 1966, p.1423.

⁹¹ *HAD*, Vol.1, No.9, 8 June 1966, p.1421.

⁹² Ehava Karava, *HAD*, Vol.1, No.9, 8 June 1966, p.1421.

⁹³ *HAD*, Vol.1, No.9, 10 June 1966, p.1468 and Sir John McLeay, *CPD*, H of R, Vol.52, 17 Aug. 1966, p.105.

In May 1967 an Australian Army major serving with the Pacific Islands Regiment argued, in a paper delivered at the University of Papua New Guinea, that in his view, the PIR was not only heading in the direction of what he termed rapid detribalisation but, in destroying the links with the soldiers' cultural heritage, the Army might be in danger of creating a new and elite tribe - the PIR. This new tribe, he considered, might constitute a greater social gulf between the soldier and his village relatives than that which had existed in pre-contact days between tribes (Bell, 1967a). The officer did not explain what the political and social consequences of this gulf might be.

This concern about the elitist nature of the Army in PNG was taken up from another aspect by two European members in the House of Assembly later the same year. One member (Mr John Pasquarelli, representing the Sepik District) argued that the lavish scale on which PIR barracks had been constructed by the Commonwealth government in PNG would create a rift between the peoples of PNG. The bases, in his view, were '[a] huge complex of modern buildings of aluminium, concrete and stainless steel, with amenities which village people in the Sepik District will never be able to enjoy'.⁹⁴

Pasquarelli went on to argue that in his experience soldiers within the PIR tended to forget about their village life and become a separate part of the community. What should be done, he felt, was divert some of the funds and manpower into a form of civil construction corps so that the village community could benefit directly from the training which Army men had received. Pasquarelli also called attention to the problem which an independent PNG government would, in due course, face in maintaining the PIR and its installations from within its own internal revenue resources. Whilst Pasquarelli did not deny that PNG should have an Army, he did doubt the wisdom of establishing it on what he called 'such a magnificent scale'.

Pasquarelli was supported by another European member, Mr J. Stuntz. Stuntz, an experienced former district administration officer, saw the problem of the Army as part of a growing disparity between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' within Papua New Guinean society. Stuntz argued that there were, however, graver problems associated with the development of a PNG Army:

⁹⁴ *HAD*, Vol.1, No.15, 17 Nov. 1967, p.2968.

I realise the need for an efficient Army, but I think we must also bear in mind that we should endeavour to keep standards of that Army, somehow or other, relative to the standards that could be sustained and maintained by a future government of this Territory. Otherwise, we could be creating a considerable problem for that future government when it takes over, as has been seen in other parts of the world. It is quite possible that here, should there be an occasion in the future when funds were not available to maintain the standards that we are setting in our fighting services, then these very fighting services may also be quite unwilling to surrender what they consider to be their right, and that is when one creates the conditions that lead to the troubles that we read about in parts of Africa and other countries.⁹⁵

In September 1967 there was further public questioning by a Papua New Guinean of the relevance of an Army to a developing nation such as PNG. Writing under the pseudonym of Basita Heatu in the journal *New Guinea*, a PNG school teacher saw a PNG Army as merely 'one of the many expensive activities that seem to be regarded as necessary to prove one's independence - such as a national airline ...' (Basita Heatu, 1967:32-3). Basita Heatu was unimpressed with the conventional arguments justifying an army, arguing that internal security was the job of the police and if the army was to fight enemies, where were the enemies? In his view PNG was too small to defend itself effectively. He concluded that the army was 'probably the biggest single threat to the peace, security and development of our country' (ibid.).

These doubts about the future were reinforced by another Papua New Guinean contributor to *New Guinea* in June 1968. In Kokou Warubu's view (1968:8-10), the cost of such an expensive organisation as the army should be justified in terms of PNG's needs - and PNG's problem was one of under-development rather than defence. Warubu argued that the PIR, which was based on elitist lines, would be likely to be more a divisive force in PNG society than a unifying one and it was likely to place itself above the law in its attempts to create *esprit de corps* within the ranks. Warubu's solution was for a PNG army like the armies found elsewhere

⁹⁵ HAD, Vol.1, No.15, 17 Nov. 1967, p.2971.

in developing countries rather than an army based on an Australian model - 'armies of youth or [those] aimed at realistic national development'. Such an army, he believed, would serve the interests of PNG rather than Australia. He was not optimistic about the prospect of such changes being implemented:

Whichever way you look at it it seems that self-government, independence, call it what you will is necessary before we gain an opportunity to use the imagination, skill and experience of others elsewhere in the development of our country (Warubu, 1968:10).

Conclusion

By 1969 the era of defence force policy in PNG extending from World War II that had placed broader Australian strategic interests first was rapidly drawing to a close. It was becoming evident that the military forces in PNG would form the basis of a defence force of a nation which Australia had by now irrevocably accepted was bound for self-government and independence (see Hastings, 1969:267). The military forces in PNG would therefore not only be required to provide for PNG's territorial security as in the past but would also need to become fully integrated within the Papua New Guinean political system and society.

This fundamental change in the perspective from which military forces in PNG were to be seen raised new sets of political as well as military issues for both Papua New Guineans and Australians - both for politicians and defence planners. It was now necessary to take account of the impact and wider social and political role of an elite military organisation on the politics of an independent PNG. Until then, civil-military relations had existed in a virtual political vacuum in PNG. The indigenous military units in PNG were raised as units of the Australian armed forces, financed, administered and commanded directly from Australia. The civil administration - the civil power in PNG - exercised no powers of control or financial management over these forces. The transition from colony to independent nation in the matter of defence would, therefore, involve the transfer of the complete range of civilian powers over the military establishment from Australia to PNG. This transfer could not build on any existing tradition of domestic defence responsibilities in PNG, as had been the case in former British colonies in Africa.

Chapter 2

The transfer of military power: from 1969 to the eve of independence

Defence development after 1969 has to be placed in the wider context of political change in PNG. Before 1969 political change in PNG was characterised by policies of 'gradualism', emphasis on economic rather than political development and, at the same time, the granting of increased legislative and executive powers. After 1969, however, Australian policies were those of quite rapid decolonisation and disengagement from PNG (see also Parker, 1974, and Hegarty, 1972:5-8).

In the pre-1969 era of gradual development, the House of Assembly had evolved as a 'national' parliament with an embryo ministerial system in which proto-ministers exercised power jointly with officials over a limited range of subjects. At the same time the Administrator's Executive Council was developing as a 'cabinet' for the exercise of executive ministerial functions.

The accelerated tempo of political change after 1969 may be attributed to factors at work both in PNG and Australia. In January 1970 Australia's then Leader of the Opposition, Mr E.G. Whitlam, visited PNG and, breaking with the previously bipartisan approach in Australian politics to PNG matters, called for 'home rule' as soon as possible after the 1972 House of Assembly elections. Whitlam argued that the fact of independence was not negotiable; the decision for independence was not one for the people of PNG alone but involved the responsibilities of the Australian Parliament and people as well (Whitlam, 1970). By the time of Prime Minister J.G. Gorton's visit to PNG in mid-1970 and the further devolution of power that he announced it was clear that both major political groupings in Australia were intent on rapidly disengaging from PNG. In PNG there was also increasing evidence of pressure for political change marked by the turbulence and political activism on the Gazelle Peninsula generated by the Mataungan Association and conflict on Bougainville between Bougainvilleans and the PNG Administration (Parker, 1974).

By 1971 the Australian Liberal-Country Party Government had accepted the recommendation of the PNG Select Committee on Constitutional Development that full internal self-government should be sought during the life of the Third House of Assembly (1972-76). The Australian government announced its willingness to negotiate on the timing of this change with the leader of any cohesive group that might emerge from the 1972 election (Hegarty, 1972:5). Subsequently these House of Assembly elections resulted in the country's first independently-formed government in April 1972 - a national coalition of members from several parties and independents led by the Pangu Party leader, Mr Michael Somare (ibid.).

Soon after being elected to office, Somare announced that he would seek self-government within nine to eighteen months and, following negotiations in May 1973 between PNG and the newly elected Australian Labor administration, PNG was granted self-government on 1 December 1973.¹ After the trouble-free introduction of self-government, which had confounded many expatriate 'prophets of doom', Mr Somare announced to the House of Assembly in March 1974 that his government would seek full independence by December 1974. During this period the Australian government remained committed to a policy of early independence for PNG on the basis that the difference between independence and self-government was of little practical significance to PNG and independence flowed readily from self-government. Australia was also concerned to speed the transition to independence because of what the Australian Minister responsible for PNG affairs termed the 'anomalous position which can only be resolved at independence' of Australia being formally responsible for PNG's law, order and good government whilst these responsibilities had been, in part, conferred on the PNG government by the act of self-government (Morrison, 1973). Notwithstanding the declaration of the PNG Chief Minister on the timing of independence, doubt as to the prospective independence date persisted in mid-1974. There was opposition from PNG groups to independence during 1974 and the program for the introduction of a 'homegrown' constitution for PNG lagged behind the schedule agreed to by the PNG and Australian governments in May 1973 and behind

¹*Post-Courier*, 9 May 1972 and *Australian Foreign Affairs Record*, May 1973, text of a communique released on 22 May 1972.

subsequently amended schedules.² By 1974, however, it was recognised that early independence was inevitable. (PNG became independent on 16 September 1975.)

In the defence sphere the first transfer of limited functions to local political authority took place in August 1972 with the appointment of a Ministerial Spokesman for Defence. Mr Somare assumed this function in addition to his other duties as Chief Minister, announcing that the introduction of the office would permit effective defence consultation between PNG and Australia in the development of PNG forces.³ In August 1973 these limited defence responsibilities were assumed by Mr A.M. (now Sir Maori) Kiki in a combined portfolio of Defence, Foreign Relations and Trade. The introduction of a measure of local political responsibility for defence matters from August 1972 onwards thus marked the first stage in the transfer of political control over the defence power. With these changes defence was now to be seen as an important facet of the decolonisation process.

The transfer of defence and foreign affairs powers is almost always the hallmark of independence for former colonies and this was particularly true in the case of PNG whose colonial relationship to Australia had largely grown out of defence considerations. Because strategic matters were an important underlying basis of the relationship between PNG and Australia, defence disengagement was also likely to reflect the complexities of post-independence relations between the two countries.⁴ The transfer of military power in PNG may be viewed in terms of three distinct processes: first, strategic reappraisal of PNG's defence significance to Australia; second, the development of an indigenous military organisation adapted to the defence needs and budgetary resources of PNG; and third, the process by which the colonial military heritage is adapted to the

² Communique of 22 May 1973, and *Canberra Times*, 24 June 1974.

³ Statement in the House of Assembly by the Chief Minister, Mr M. Somare, on the constitutional talks of July-August 1972, 31 Aug. 1972, pp.163-5.

⁴ See Crocker, 1969. He makes a similar point in relation to the African states: 'The Military transfer reflects the weight of colonial history more clearly and for a longer period of time than do most other aspects of the transfer of power' (p.2).

PNG political system.⁵ These three processes may be seen in relation to two identifiable periods after 1969. The first period extends from 1969 until the assumption of office by Mr Somare's government in April 1972. Until then PNG defence planning and development had been conducted by Australia on a proxy basis without consultation with PNG's political leaders. The second period extending from April 1972 up to and beyond independence is characterised by increasing consultation between Australia and PNG and the actual transfer of defence responsibilities and initiative from the metropole to the colony.⁶

A number of general issues emerge from a discussion of the transfer of defence power in PNG between 1969 and 1974. These issues concern the changing strategic relationship between Australia and PNG, the effect of the Australian style of colonial rule on defence administration and the relationship between Australian and Papua New Guinean approaches to defence force development in PNG.

The close strategic link between PNG and Australia described in Chapter 1 has been an important determinant in the transfer of military power in PNG. Post-World War II defence arrangements in PNG (to describe them in terms of a policy would imply a status they probably never had) bore evidence of this defence nexus. The defence units in PNG, principally the PIR, were integral units of the Australian Services, under direct mainland command and paid for, totally, from the Australian defence budget. There was, therefore, no tradition in PNG similar to that in British colonies where indigenous military units were under some measure of local political control and in which military development was

⁵ These three aspects of the transfer of military power have been adapted from the three stages suggested by Crocker (1969) in the transfer of military power to black African states.

⁶ Because the PNG defence planning process has been shrouded in secrecy and only occasionally illuminated by brief official statements and terse press releases, it is difficult to discuss the process critically or in detail. Even in a supposed era of 'open government' after December 1972 there was no observable increase in Australian Government candour in relation to PNG defence, although PNG officials and politicians were often prepared to discuss these matters in university seminars and in interviews.

connected with the notion of colonial self-defence as a necessary pre-condition for self-government.

Although the close strategic link between Australia and her colony was prolonged into the 1960s by Indonesian confrontation, by 1969 changes in Indonesia as well as fundamental global trends had weakened this linkage; by 1974 these trends were even more clearly evident. There was a realisation that technological changes in a nuclear age, as well as changes in the character of international relations, had reduced the likelihood of conventional military invasion via PNG. Furthermore, the era of decolonisation and later the Vietnam war, which demonstrated the political costs of strategies of 'Forward Defence', forced change on Australian governments in their attitude towards PNG. Political and strategic disengagement from PNG had been largely accepted by the end of the Liberal-Country Party tenure in office but these changes were represented in a far more dramatic way by the coming to office of the Whitlam government in December 1972 and its disavowal of many of the old foreign and defence policy stances. The fundamental change in Australia's strategic perspective, from that which saw PNG as a vital forward bastion to one which, perhaps out of necessity, saw PNG as no more than of 'abiding importance', allowed defence devolution to take place in PNG.

A second important issue in the PNG-Australian defence relationship has been the pattern of post-World War II colonial rule in PNG which was marked by strong political control from Canberra and, for a colonial situation, remarkably little local political and administrative autonomy in PNG. The centralised system of Australian government control in PNG naturally extended to the realm of defence administration also, thereby impeding the growth of local political and administrative control over defence in PNG. In consequence of the colonial tradition of control from Canberra, when the time came from 1972 onwards to transfer defence responsibilities to PNG there was no local expertise in defence administration, policy making or financial control. This not only compounded the problems of the transfer process but also reduced the ability of PNG leaders to influence the pattern of defence force development.

The third issue that surrounds the transfer of defence power in PNG is the relationship between Australian and Papua New Guinean defence orientations. Although this issue is clouded by a lack of public comment the trend is reasonably clear. From the outset of the defence planning

exercise in the early 1960s Papua New Guineans, with few exceptions as shown in Chapter 1, accepted Australian defence assumptions which were based on PNG defending itself in a conventional manner against an Indonesian border incursion contingency. These assumptions led to force level prescriptions that were logically based on a military appreciation of the defence forces required to defend the PNG border. Australian government statements up to 1969 show that this force was thought to be of brigade strength with naval and air forces amounting to a total of about five thousand men. Australian planning for PNG defence forces up to 1972 appears deficient in two respects. It suffered from the absence of any consultation with PNG politicians and, as a result of its Australian military bias, it placed inadequate emphasis on the likely political, economic and social consequences of a defence force of this size on PNG.

After 1972 the 'Australian-centredness' of defence planning was challenged and, under the Somare government and as a result of the defence consultations process in PNG, the Australian defence assumptions regarding role and size were re-examined and criticised. Nonetheless and in spite of this Papua New Guinean reassessment, by April 1974 it was evident that PNG defence solutions differed remarkably little from what Australia had planned and in some cases already developed and Australian defence planning had therefore, in great measure, been accepted by Papua New Guinean leaders. This cycle of acceptance, questioning and then ultimate acceptance of Australian planning may be seen as a result of the rapid onset of independence which reduced the scope for radical defence changes, the constraints posed by the virtual Australian monopoly on specialist defence advice, the political decision-making process in PNG which tended to result in minimum change and, finally, the cold reality that PNG's defence forces would depend initially on what Australia was prepared to support with manpower and finance.

The conclusion that is reached is that PNG's defence forces at independence end up pretty much as if they had been designed completely by Australia and, therefore, the elaborate processes of planning and consultation in PNG may be seen essentially as a legitimisation of the Australian-developed defence forces.

Defence devolution in PNG

Australian initiatives

In the period between the ending of the Indonesian Confrontation threat with the slowdown in PNG defence development and the election of the Somare government in 1972, little is known publicly of Australian defence planning in relation to PNG. Although the Vietnam war almost certainly dominated the attention of the Australian defence community throughout the period from 1969 to 1972, it may be assumed that the development of PNG forces received considerable attention within the defence group of departments. Probably connected with this activity was the visit to PNG of the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Sir Henry Bland, from 16 to 22 March 1969. His visit was followed by the establishment, in August 1969, of an Army planning cell in PNG Command which had the task of studying the future requirements of the Army in PNG.

Although it was recognised that fundamental issues about defence force size and roles could not be determined in the absence of consultation with PNG leaders, there was scope before 1972 for further administrative development in preparation for the ultimate establishment of separate PNG forces at independence. To this end the command arrangements in PNG were evidently reviewed towards the end of 1971. As soon as Army planning for a future force for an independent PNG commenced in earnest it would have been evident that the future of naval and air elements would need to be considered concurrently. Although Australian military tradition and practice had been one of separate service organisations, it would be unlikely that a country such as PNG with only very small forces could afford the organisational luxury of separate defence services and command structures. Nonetheless there may have been doubts about the wisdom of a single unified defence force. Dangers of a *coup d'état* might have been seen in a monolithic defence organisation and, in terms of compatibility with Australian single service procedures and systems, it might have been thought preferable for Australia to train and support forces in PNG which organisationally and procedurally resembled her own services.

In the probable absence of service consensus on integration and as a conservative preparatory step it was decided, in 1972, to establish a Joint Force Headquarters located at Port Moresby and based on the Army Command

Headquarters.⁷ Under the joint force concept the commander - an Army brigadier - would, with several minor exceptions, command the Army, Navy and Air Force units located in PNG. Command of the individual service elements was to be exercised through Service Component Commanders. It was expected that the new command arrangements would lead to the better co-ordination of the activities and the future development of the three services in PNG. The Commander would report directly to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and this relationship would facilitate more effective communication between the Commander of the Joint Force in PNG and the Department of Defence in Canberra which would, henceforth, exercise a principal and controlling interest in the development of PNG forces. Previously effective control had, in the first instance, resided with individual services. By this change it was, however, still not evident whether there would ultimately be an integrated defence force in PNG, or three forces operating under joint command arrangements. Nor did the new arrangement apparently place the Commander under any form of local civilian control in PNG although there may have been some strengthening of the consultative and liaison relationship between the Military Commander and the Administrator.

Events during 1970 had certainly called for closer co-operation between the civil and military authorities in PNG. Confrontation between the Mataungan Association and the PNG Administration and Police on the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain had involved preparations for the use of PNG forces, especially the PIR, to assist the Police in the maintenance of order. A call out order had been issued by the Governor-General (on the recommendation of the Administrator and advice of the Australian government) and PNG troops were for a time held at a high degree of readiness. In the event they were not employed and the call out order was subsequently revoked.⁸ This crisis may also have led to the reassessment of the future relationship of the indigenous military units in PNG to the civil administration. The Army in PNG had embarked on a crash program of 'aid to the civil power' training in riot control techniques and the possibilities of Army involvement in aid to the civil power in some

⁷ Department of Defence Press Release 493/72 of 1 Feb. 1972, Formation of Joint Forces Headquarters, Papua New Guinea (Statement by the Minister for Defence, the Hon. David Fairbairn, D.F.C., M.P.).

⁸ For a fuller account of these events, see O'Neill, 1971.

future situation, which might prove beyond the capabilities of the Police to control, no doubt led to a fuller realisation that the PNG Army would henceforth need to be seen as an integral part of the security resources available to the PNG Administration. The need for a closer working relationship in PNG between the Administration and the military force was apparent and the likelihood of further incidents requiring military assistance to the civil administration would have made it advisable to specify the internal security role of the force in greater detail.

Nevertheless there appears to have been no attempt, even at this comparatively late stage to place the Joint Force and the Commander in any way under the command of, or in some other form of subordination to, the head of the civil administration. There was, therefore, a continuation of the direct control of the military forces in PNG through exclusively military channels of authority to Canberra. Better liaison between the military and civil administration would have done nothing, either, to change the visible system of command, or to establish a tradition of working civil-military relationships within PNG involving precepts of local civil control over the military. The introduction of a routine process of interaction between the military and local civil authorities in PNG which might have promoted a constitutional tradition of civil supremacy over the military was, therefore, further delayed.

Changes under a PNG government

To some extent the post-1969 pause in the development of policies for the structure and role of forces for an independent PNG ended with the formation of the Somare National Coalition government in April 1972. Before April 1972 attempts to involve Papua New Guineans in defence planning and to devolve defence responsibilities had almost certainly been impeded by the absence of a truly responsible form of ministerial national government from which authoritative views on PNG's future defence orientation and policies could be derived. There may also have been an Australian government inhibition, possibly involving security considerations, about discussing defence development proposals with PNG politicians when it was doubtful whether they would have national leadership responsibility in the future. After the formation of the Somare government, however, the way was cleared for a process of government-to-government defence consultation and planning to be initiated. In August 1972,

some four months after the formation of the Somare government, a significant step in the transfer of military power was taken with the appointment of a Ministerial Spokesman for Defence. At the same time it was announced that a Defence Section would be established to support the Spokesman for Defence.

Although several commentators before 1972 had called on the Australian government to devise the means whereby PNG leaders could become more actively associated with defence matters, this demand was not strongly taken up in PNG by the principal political parties until the 1972 elections. Though none of the major political parties - the United, Pangu, and Peoples' Progress Parties - initially called for the appointment of a defence spokesman in their party policy statements published before the election, Pangu did, during the course of the campaign, subsequently call for the appointment of a Defence Spokesman.⁹

The appointment of a Spokesman was formally proposed to the PNG government by the Australian Defence Minister, Mr D.E. Fairbairn, during a visit to PNG in June 1972. Fairbairn proposed that a Defence Spokesman be appointed to represent the PNG defence forces in the House of Assembly, where he would answer questions and deliver statements on behalf of the Australian government to the House. He would be consulted by the Australian government on all matters affecting the development of PNG's defence forces. Fairbairn proposed that the Defence Spokesman would be serviced by a small section within the Department of the Administrator, to be known as the Advisory Defence Section and headed by a seconded senior officer of the Australian Defence Department (see *SMH*, 16 June 1972).

Whilst the Spokesman's role was seen by the Australian government to be initially educative and consultative, it was envisaged that, progressively, the defence views of the PNG leaders would be incorporated in further development of the forces. The Spokesman's role would therefore develop into that of *de facto* defence minister prior to independence even though the formal exercise of defence powers (together with foreign affairs) would remain with the Australian government until the moment of independence. The Somare government agreed in outline to the Fairbairn proposals and Mr Somare became the Defence Spokesman in

⁹ See *House of Assembly Elections 1972. What Do Political Parties Want for Papua New Guinea?*, Department of Information and Extension Services, Port Moresby, January 1972.

August 1972. In September 1972, Mr N.L. Webb was seconded as the head of the 'Defence Branch'.

The appointment of the Chief Minister himself as Defence Spokesman may be interpreted as an indication of Somare's view of the importance of the PNG Defence Force as posing either a potential source of power to a future independent government, or, if mishandled, a threat to democracy. It may also have indicated the Australian government's keenness to have Somare as the Defence Spokesman and negotiator because of his authoritative position within the government as Chief Minister and party leader and hence his powerful decision-making role in government. The appointment of the Chief Minister himself to the office of Defence Spokesman no doubt also served to accelerate the process by which the office of Defence Spokesman grew in authority and prestige, perhaps more rapidly than the Australian Liberal-Country Party government may have anticipated.¹⁰ By the end of 1972 it had become evident that Somare's defence power extended beyond the right to be consulted to one of veto over new proposals for the development of the PNG defence forces and an influential 'watching brief' over routine defence activities. Nevertheless PNG government influence over defence throughout 1972 was significantly hampered by a complete lack of thought-out policies.

It seems that it was initially envisaged by the Australian Defence Department that Webb, as civilian defence adviser, would operate within the Administrator's Department, providing policy advice through the Administrator, to the Chief Minister.¹¹ Webb's appointment within the Administrator's Department was, however, overtaken by the

¹⁰ It was initially announced that the Defence Spokesman would be limited to the following functions (Bayne and Colebatch, 1973:163):

- (a) answer parliamentary questions and make statements on defence matters;
- (b) consult the Administrator, present submissions to the Administrator's Executive Council (AEC), in regard to the development of the PNG forces and defence policies, and
- (c) undertake ceremonial duties.

¹¹ See *Financial Review*, 27 April 1973: Christopher Ashton, 'PNG's Armed Dilemma' and Department of Defence Press Release 581/72 of 4 Oct. 1972.

tempo of developments in PNG, especially by the formation of the Chief Minister's Office which was seen as a PNG-oriented structure to some extent insulated from entrenched Australian Public Service influence within other parts of the PNG Administration. It was later agreed that Mr Webb and the Defence Branch would be located in the Chief Minister's Office. Clearly this change was required in order to secure the confidence of the Chief Minister and the PNG government in Webb's task of defence planning for PNG. Any direct responsibilities to the Administrator and the Australian Department of Defence could easily have confronted Webb (whose appointment was designated Assistant Secretary Defence) with irresolvable conflicts of interest, and this problem should have been anticipated by the Australian government when his appointment was first suggested.

Besides supporting the Defence Spokesman, the Assistant Secretary Defence was responsible for advice to, and liaison with, the Joint Force Commander and it was apparently envisaged that, based on Australian traditions of civil-military relations, the Force Commander would only tender professional military advice to the Defence Spokesman whilst the civilian adviser would advise in regard to policy. In fact the Joint Force (and later Defence Force) Commander continued to have free access to the Defence Spokesman across the range of defence policy and administrative matters, especially in so far as they affected developmental issues. This was facilitated by the Force Commander's excellent social relations with the Chief Minister (and Defence Spokesman); whereas the relationship of the civilian defence adviser to the Chief Minister may have been more formal.¹²

Australian approaches to colonial military policy

The eventual introduction of the "Defence Spokesman" formula raises the question as to why the change was not introduced earlier. Although the demand for some form of Defence Force representation within PNG may not have been forcefully articulated, the matter was raised by indigenous

¹² *Age*, 6 July 1973 and personal communication, May 1973.

members in the House of Assembly as early as 1969¹³ and the importance of representation as a means of 'indigenising' the loyalties of PNG servicemen had been emphasised by several observers of PNG affairs.¹⁴ It therefore appears that there was a reluctance based on Australian colonial policy to devolve defence responsibilities on PNG authorities in advance of political development in other sectors of PNG government.

Australian approaches to colonial military policy may, however, be distinctively contrasted with the practice in British colonies where powers of command, control and

¹³In March 1969, Mr Traimya Kambipi, a member of the House of Assembly, asked why it was that the PNG Administration had no control over the Army. He was informed that: 'The Administration does not control the Army here simply because all Army units in the Territory, including Papua and New Guinea Command, are part of the Australian Commonwealth Military Forces, and their costs are borne directly by the Australian Commonwealth Government'. The member was not satisfied with the reply and on 24 June 1969 asked if the Army was represented within the House by an official member, and what were the plans for the Army in PNG. He was told that the Army was not represented and the Army's future was a matter for the Australian Government.

On 27 June 1969 Mr Yakob Talis sought the appointment of an additional official member to the House to represent the Army. Talis was informed that: 'The Army in Papua and New Guinea is at present part of the Australian Army and it would not be appropriate for an officer of the Australian Army to sit in this House. Questions relating to the Army are answered by the Senior Official Member after consultation with responsible army officers'.

These replies gave little encouragement to indigenous politicians who sought to bring the Army in PNG under some form of local accountability. (See *HAD*, Vol.2, No.4, 12 Mar. 1969, p.1020; No.5, 23 June 1969, p.1248; 24 June 1969, p.1287; and 27 June 1969, p.1404.)

¹⁴See Mediansky, 1970, and Parker, 1972. Before the introduction of responsible ministerial government in April 1972, it would have been possible only for the Administrator or a senior official, rather than an elected politician, to have exercised any defence function.

recruitment and financial responsibilities in regard to military forces usually resided with the colonial government. This policy was very different to the close metropolitan control which, as shown in Chapter 1, Australia exercised over the indigenous forces in PNG. British colonial military policy was, moreover, not an accident of administration but, instead, flowed from the British pattern of colonial rule, which was quite different from the Australian pattern in PNG. The British way of doing things was that 'each territory, large or small, should constitute, in form, a separate kingdom of the British Crown, with its own laws, its own finances and its own public service' (Jeffries, 1960:42). It was therefore normal British colonial practice, dating from before World War I, that colonial military forces were, in peacetime, paid for, either wholly or in part, by the colonial authorities under whose ordinances they were raised and commanded (Crocker, 1969:4 and 151-2). In contrast to the command situation in PNG, the civil head of government in the former British colonies usually possessed the powers of commander-in-chief over local military forces - this power being exercised primarily for internal security functions (Crocker, 1969; O'Neill, 1971; Jeffries, 1969:34).

Crocker has argued that the British approach to colonial military policy was founded on reasons of both expediency and doctrine. Colonial military self-reliance for local defence relieved the British treasury of heavy colonial defence burdens although in practice, in the post-World War II period, Britain did contribute to colonial internal security costs as well as paying for the defence forces maintained for strategic purposes. Colonial self-reliance was, however, also connected to Gladstonian colonial doctrine that self-government entailed self-reliance and, accordingly, political development required that colonial governments also assume responsibilities for their defence forces (Crocker, 1969:53,151,191,244). Defence devolution of this kind, however, to a PNG Administrator would always have been difficult in the post-World War II period and it may be doubted whether any scheme of relations between the civil administration and the military, which amounted to more than consultation and liaison, could have been devised which was at once practical, legal and acceptable to the Australian government of the day in terms of Australian colonial practice in PNG.

Under the Liberal-Country Party Government's longstanding policy from 1949 onwards of centralising decision-making in

regard to PNG in the responsible Minister and his Department, the consequent role of the Administrator was, unlike his British colonial counterpart, little more than that of 'delegate' (rather than a more powerful 'representative') of the Australian government. This policy, which was clearly enunciated by the Australian Minister for Territories, Mr P.M.C. Hasluck, in 1951, remained in force until the post-1969 era of rapid decolonisation. Hasluck's policy of centralisation, which also had unmistakeable implications for colonial military arrangements, was justified as follows:

For some years to come, it is inevitable that Papua and New Guinea will be administered as a territory and that the administration will become increasingly centralised in Australia. This is due to the fact of the constitutional superiority of the Commonwealth Parliament, to the fact that the expenditure in the Territory will be financed by the Commonwealth, to the fact that the Commonwealth government alone holds the responsibility before the world and (in the case of New Guinea) to the United Nations for administering the Territory according to certain standards and cannot delegate that responsibility to anyone else, and to the fact that the Commonwealth government must of necessity maintain the security of the Territory and the observance in the Territory of the fundamental principles of national policy. This centralisation of administration will also be promoted and facilitated by the improvement of communications... (Hasluck, 1952).

In the light of this policy regarding civil government in PNG it was unlikely in the extreme that a proposal for the Administrator to assume significant defence responsibilities would have received Australian political support. There were, besides, other reasons why devolution of defence powers had not taken place on the British colonial model.

As previously argued, the defence of PNG had been seen, especially since the war with Japan, as integral to the defence of Australia. The forces in PNG, expanded in the mid-1960s in response to the perceived military threat from Indonesia, were an integral component of Australian defence forces and it would not have made sound military sense at the time for civilian layers of control in PNG to be inserted between elements of these forces. Furthermore, it could have been argued that, in regard to Papua, it was a Territory of Australia and, therefore, a special defence

relationship between the civil and the military powers was as inappropriate as such an arrangement would have been, say, in the Northern Territory. Until PNG's constitutional future, including the possibility of some form of statehood, had been finally clarified in the late 1960s there was therefore a weak and rather theoretical argument for preserving the same military command relationships in PNG as applied elsewhere in Australia.

Nonetheless, by 1969-70 the obstacles to a measure of defence devolution would seem to have significantly diminished. The 'threat' from Indonesia was no longer relevant as a result of political change and the PNG forces were to be seen increasingly in an internal security context. As for the Australia-PNG strategic nexus, the long-established view that the security of PNG was vital to Australian security was now considerably weakened, if not actually discredited. The reasons for this change in the Australian assessment of PNG's strategic relationship to Australia's own security were to be found both in revolutionary advances in military technology, such as the advent of land and submarine launched nuclear ballistic missiles, and changes in world politics, including the protection afforded by the ANZUS alliance. The first factor appeared to reduce the potential military importance of 'invasion springboard' bases such as PNG and the second seemed to reduce the probability of a conventional military invasion of Australia. The gradual process of strategic reappraisal which Australia had experienced in relation to PNG during the fifties and sixties was later to be accelerated and confirmed by the course of military intervention in Vietnam. The 'failure' of forward defence concepts in this conflict served to further diminish the credibility of similar notions of 'forward defence' or 'defence shield' arguments in respect of PNG.¹⁵ This new strategic assessment fundamentally differed from the Australian government and Opposition views in the immediate postwar period when it had been argued that PNG was vital, and hence indispensable, to Australia's future defence.¹⁶ Strategic reappraisal facilitated the process of colonial disengagement by greatly

¹⁵ For an interesting discussion of postwar changes in the Australian perception of PNG's strategic significance, see Harries, 1973:34-42.

¹⁶ Even in the period associated with Indonesian

reducing the 'apparent' costs to Australian national interests by withdrawal from PNG. Furthermore, by 1970 PNG's future as an independent nation had been sealed and this fact alone should have accelerated the devolution of defence responsibilities.

The failure to devolve at least some defence powers before August 1972 had several potentially far-reaching consequences. Firstly, it still further delayed the development of a tradition of civil control over the PNG forces in PNG which might have provided a more sound basis on which Papua New Guinean political, bureaucratic and military leaders would conduct their civil military affairs after independence. Secondly, the absence of a working interaction

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Confrontation the authoritative Australian defence analyst, Dr T.B. Miller, was arguing that in military terminology PNG was only essential rather than vital to Australian security, thus implying a significant downgrading of its importance (Miller, 1965). By 1970, another writer, Peter Hastings, argued that PNG could not be considered as even essential to Australia's continental security in any of the principal security contingencies that he could envisage, namely, nuclear war, conventional war in South-East Asia, subversion, or internal rebellion in PNG (Hastings, 1970). In official defence papers the term abiding now generally replaced that of vital in relation to PNG's strategic importance to Australia and in the comprehensive Australian government's *Defence Review* of 1972 the importance of PNG was even less precisely stated:

It may be assumed ... that, for historical as well as strategic reasons, Australia will always be closely concerned that its near neighbours in the North East are independent and secure from external threats ... It is to be hoped that it will share the interest of Australia and its other neighbours in co-operating to safeguard mutual interests (p.5). If an option of strategic importance is not to be foreclosed, Australia will also need to sustain the ability of its forces to assist in the external defence of Papua New Guinea ... (p.21). (*Australian Defence Review*, Department of Defence, March 1972.)

between the civil and military in PNG resulted in the failure of the PNG forces to be effectively identified and accepted by the local people as an integral aspect of PNG government. The force was, instead, widely seen as an Australian institution, operated, paid for, and controlled by Australia.¹⁷ Thirdly, because there was no interaction between the military and the civil administration there had been no development of defence administration and policy expertise within the PNG bureaucracy. Consequently, when there was eventually the need for it after August 1972 with the appointment of a Defence Spokesman, it had to be hurriedly exported from within the Australian defence organisation, with the result that defence policy development was to take place at the official level in PNG without the background experience derived from working within the PNG Public Service and socio-political environment.

One may speculate that, if the prewar proposals in both territories to establish defence forces under local ordinances (see Chapter 1) had been implemented, a quite different relationship between the indigenous PNG military forces and the Australian government might have emerged. A postwar force established under its own ordinance with, say, arrangements for the secondment of Australian servicemen and subject to financial management by the PNG Administration might have had a relationship closely resembling that of the PNG Police and the Civil Administration, rather than that which grew up between the Army in PNG, the Australian Services and the PNG Administration. The organisational identification of the indigenous military units with the Australian Army and command structure prevented the full adaptation to PNG conditions, whilst providing inadequate

¹⁷ All defence costs incurred in PNG were included in the Australian defence budget and indistinguishable from other defence costs. Even by 1973 it was still not possible for officials to determine accurately the cost of PNG defence activities, partly because of invisible costs such as the training of PNG personnel in Australia and logistic support for the PNG forces from Australian ordnance depots. During 1973 there was still no effective official liaison permitted between the Defence Force Secretary (the official responsible for financial administration) and the PNG Department of Finance in regard to the adoption of common financial procedures. (See Defence Report 1973, pp.33-43, and personal communication, Jan. 1974.)

insulation from Australian procedures and political imperatives - especially those associated with the employment of military units on internal security.¹⁸

Initial public discussion of PNG's defence policies

Although by the appointment of the Defence Spokesman it had now been accepted that the PNG government would henceforth play a major role in initiating, in consultation with Australia, new emphasis and directions in defence force development, PNG was handicapped in two respects. Firstly, no clear defence policy had been evolved by PNG's political leaders as a basis for this development and, secondly, the Somare government was serviced by a small, newly formed, civilian defence staff which had not yet developed policy alternatives on which the PNG political leadership might base policy decisions. This lack of defence policy is reflected in PNG government pronouncements on defence matters during the early months of the coalition government.

Immediately before coming to office and assuming his Defence Spokesman role, Somare had argued publicly that the PNG Army was already sufficiently large (with the implication that the establishment of a third battalion of the PIR, suggested by the departing Army Commander, Brigadier R.T. Eldridge, should not go ahead) and that the Army was too expensive to maintain.¹⁹ By December of 1972, however, Somare was discounting rumours of reducing the

¹⁸ Attitudes to the use of military units in PNG to assist the civil authorities in the maintenance of security were largely determined in accordance with Australian practice rather than PNG conditions and bore little relevance to PNG's political future. Had PNG's military forces been subject to a measure of domestic control in PNG, Australia might have seen its law and order responsibilities, as PNG approached independence, as less politically onerous. This may have produced less pressure for precipitate independence by the Whitlam government after December 1972 and may have altered the prospects for post-independence political stability.

¹⁹ *Post-Courier*, 20 April 1972. Mr Somare made these comments on 17 April 1972, the same day that he announced

Army's size although there was still no policy on the role, size and shape of the PNG Defence Force (see Sundhaussen, 1973b, and updated version, 1973c). The staff studies within the PNG government's defence section had only just got under way, the views of his Cabinet had not been canvassed and because of Australia's crucial supporting role, PNG's future defence policy could only really be determined after extensive joint defence consultations which had yet to take place. A new factor was introduced with the election of an Australian Labor government in December 1972.

The Somare government's new defence influence was, at best, largely exercised in terms of initiating public debate in PNG about defence, questioning existing policies and lines of development and exploring what might be the nature of the role of the Army in PNG after independence. These issues were discussed in a two-part program entitled 'The Sword and the State' broadcast on ABC Radio in PNG during November 1972. The Chief Minister, the PNG Joint Force Commander (Brigadier J.W. Norrie) and other politicians and servicemen participated in these programs. In them Somare argued that the PNG Army should not change in size, admitting that he had previously argued whilst in opposition during 1971 that the Army should be much smaller. Somare also discussed the likely role of the Army in internal security and the relationship of the Army to politics. He conceded that in a 'real national emergency' the government would have to consider calling in the Army if the Police could not maintain law and order. In relation to civil-military affairs, whilst he agreed that the Police and Army would be kept out of politics, he said it would not be good to isolate the Army from the rest of the community.²⁰

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that Pangu would be able to form a coalition government. His comments were based on a belief that the Army in PNG was 5000 men-strong and that the Army budget was \$30 million per annum, whereas in fact there were only 3200 men in the Army and the \$30 million figure was likely to have been a considerable over-estimate.

²⁰ *Post-Courier*, 10 Nov. 1972. As reported by Sundhaussen, 1973b and c, Mr Somare had presumably sensed some 'simmering disenchantment' among local officers as a

In an address to PNG officer cadets at the Military Cadet School, Lae, in December 1972, Mr Somare argued that PNG would require a defence force able to defend itself against aggression until help arrived.²¹ In the ABC program in November he had already suggested that this help would come from Australia if required, thus introducing the issue of post-independence treaty arrangements between the two countries. At the address to the officer cadets and again on 15 December 1972 Somare saw the Army making a major impact on development and nation building through rural development projects. In the same month Mr Somare rejected a proposal for the PNG Army to become part of a United Nations force within the South Pacific and placed under UN control. Mr Somare argued that if PNG was to be an independent nation it would need its own defence force in order to protect its national interests.²²

By the end of 1972, therefore, Somare had presented views, if not policy, on the size, role, and civil-military relations of PNG's forces - views which were in varying degrees demonstrably Papua New Guinean in origin. These first months of the Somare government which had witnessed the appointment of the Defence Spokesman and increasing public discussion of PNG defence issues represented an

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result of his early defence statements and, consequently, during the later half of 1972, placed emphasis on improving relations between the government and the military. He did this most effectively in his role as Defence Spokesman by meeting with senior local officers both officially and socially. Somare's statements on defence in early 1972 and the imputed defence views of the Pangu-led government had created considerable unease and mistrust amongst PNG officers and men in early 1972; this had dissipated by the end of the year (personal communication, May 1973).

²¹ PNG Government Press Release, No.3438, 4 Dec. 1972. At this address Somare again discounted rumours that his government intended to reduce the size of PNG's forces.

²² *Post-Courier*, 13 Dec. 1972. The proposal had been put forward by ALP Federal Parliamentarian Dr D.N. Everingham.

initial politicisation of defence as a PNG matter rather than an administrative function of the metropolitan power as it had been seen in the past. Although defence had been discussed by PNG politicians and others in a critical manner, there was as yet no actual policy development.

The formation of the PNG defence force
and the emergence of a PNG defence policy,
1973-74

Whilst the first months of the Somare government saw public discussions of PNG defence issues but little evidence of government policy, two events in early 1973 clarified PNG's future defence arrangements and cleared the way for further decision-making. These were the formation of a single Defence Force and the visit of the Australian Minister for Defence to PNG during which Labor government policy in relation to PNG's Defence Force was discussed.

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) came into being on 26 January 1973 by the act of redesignating its forerunner, the PNG Joint Force.²³ The formation of the PNGDF, which was later described as 'a logical step in the development of a local force and the closer identification of the force with PNG', finally resolved the issue of defence integration.²⁴ The decision to form an integrated single Defence Force, rather than persevere with three separate service components under some form of unified command, recognised the benefits of rationalisation and economy which might be obtained in a country with meagre economic resources. This decision was in a way a bold one in recognising PNG's own particular defence needs and in moving away from Australian defence practice.

The formation of the PNGDF was initially, however, an act of redesignation, not far-reaching change. The subsequent implementation of change occurred progressively and gradually

²³ Notified in the *Commonwealth Gazette*, 22 Feb. 1973. Brigadier J.W. Norrie, OBE, the Joint Force Commander, was appointed to command the newly designated force. As under the former Joint Force Command arrangement, Brigadier Norrie, the Commander of the PNGDF, was responsible directly to the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee.

²⁴ *Defence Report 1973*, pp.8 and 9.

through 1973 and 1974. Development of the new force was supervised by a significantly enlarged headquarters organisation. Paradoxically, the establishment of the PNGDF, although designed as a step forward in the development of a self-reliant local defence force, resulted in a very significant increase in senior and middle level Australian officers serving on the headquarters of the PNGDF. The new expanded headquarters organisation had been designed during 1972 by the PNG Joint Force Commander and his staff and subsequently approved by the Australian Department of Defence. The responsibility for the development of the new organisation was primarily left in the hands of the 'men-on-the-spot' so that it would be in harmony with local developments. Based on the pre-existing headquarters organisation, the new HQ PNGDF appeared to be a dramatic expansion in both the number of officers on the establishment and the escalation of rank levels. The development of what might have been seen as a top-heavy structure was justified on the grounds that the new rank levels bore comparison with other PNG government departments and, secondly, expansion was warranted in order to develop new spheres of administrative and planning capability now required because of the PNGDF's imminent status independent from the Australian defence organisation.

During the January 1973 visit of the Australian Defence Minister, Mr L.H. Barnard, to inaugurate the PNGDF, the Minister served notice of the newly elected Labor government's policy in relation to PNG's Defence Force. He announced that henceforth PNG would be expected to make the decisions on the role and future of her own Defence Force - PNG's own view of the roles and functions of this force would be paramount. PNG would be expected to exercise foresight to develop a defence force properly attuned to PNG's needs as an independent nation. The Australian Defence Minister also indicated the general course of future Australian-PNG defence relations. Australia would be prepared, after PNG's independence, to contribute to the maintenance of the PNGDF in such fields as 'staff, facilities, and courses for training; operational and technical assistance; supply of equipment'. This assistance would not be completely open-ended. Barnard explained that he expected that PNG would wish to take on a gradually increasing share of her own defence burden. The Australian Minister suggested that a start could be made by PNG paying the day-to-day defence

costs such as the pay and allowances of her own personnel.²⁵ Mr Barnard suggested the maximum financial contribution that PNG could afford would be \$A4 million - the current estimate of the indigenous personnel wages and allowances bill. It was apparently not spelt out in negotiations whether the \$4 million figure was a target to be reached at once or over a number of years. Not long after the Barnard visit the indigenous wages and allowances bill was assessed to have risen to \$A6 million - a more difficult figure to reach.

In regard to ALP policy on PNG defence, by which the Minister was bound, the December 1972 election won by Labor had been contested on the basis of the platform approved by the 1971 Federal Conference. In this document, Labor undertook to second and support skilled personnel as requested by PNG for her defence force. In addition the Party undertook to seek a defence treaty with PNG. This commitment was, however, later revoked at the 1973 Federal Conference after Labor came into office. The clause relating to a defence treaty was removed following the recommendations of the ALP Foreign Affairs and Defence Policy Committee. The Committee Report did, however, restate the Party's commitment to financial and personnel support for PNG's Defence Force. It seems that the treaty provision was removed because of fears that a rigid treaty arrangement might possibly lead to Australian military intervention in PNG's internal affairs. A looser more informal type of defence arrangement was now preferred. This preference may have been shared by the Department of Defence. In more general terms, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, in his policy speech opening the 1972 election campaign had listed the achievement of 'a secure, united and friendly Papua New Guinea' as the second of four principal foreign policy commitments (Clark, 1973:204,211-12).

The Australian Defence Minister's public commitment in January 1973 to provide support for the PNGDF was, therefore, consonant with ALP policy. In recognising the continued necessity of reliance by the PNGDF on Australian resources, the Barnard policy was, furthermore, largely a continuation of policies enunciated by the previous Liberal-Country Party government. The March 1972 *Defence Review* prepared under that government, in foreshadowing the formation of the PNGDF,

²⁵ For Barnard's PNG defence statements see *Post-Courier*, 26, 27, 29 Jan. 1973.

had observed that until independence 'emphasis will need to be placed on the training and equipment of local forces, and arrangements for their administrative support in PNG, in order to provide a basic national force for defence and internal security' (p.21). And in the period after independence, defence assistance to PNG might be required to continue at significant levels in the areas of 'training, organisation and support of local forces, secondment of personnel to staff and technical appointments, and the supply of equipment and the development of technical infrastructure' (p.29).

Despite the change of name, the introduction of the Bird of Paradise national emblem as the dress insignia of the PNGDF and the indications of Australian policy in relation to PNG defence, many questions about the PNGDF had yet to be decided; important among them were those of the size and shape, role, and function of the PNGDF within the PNG polity. As planning got under way during 1973 it became apparent that there was less scope for innovation than had been realised at the outset. Although Barnard had sought to encourage PNG to attune her defence forces to her own needs, defence was not a *tabula rasa*.

There were already forces and systems in existence in PNG and a small indigenous officer corps with entrenched professional attitudes. There was the matter of what changes Australia would be prepared to underwrite in financial and manpower terms in the future. There was also the constraint on change posed by the rapid onset of independence. Besides the practical limitations of what could be achieved in the time remaining under Australian rule, there were indigenous political constraints to change. The PNG decision-making process at both the bureaucratic and political levels, based on a concept of Melanesian Consensus, in relation to defence matters frequently meant the politics of 'minimum change'. Wider defence options were probably already foreclosed and radical defence restructuring had been pre-empted by the forces in existence. In that sense, therefore, many of the options which may have been thought to be available to PNG politicians and defence planners, including some form of 'Peoples Army' model, drastically reducing the size of the defence force, or forming a single security force - with integrated police and defence components - were largely illusory. For instance in early 1973 the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Mr B.B. Holloway, proposed that the PNGDF should be disbanded and replaced by a 250-man Special

Services unit. This suggestion seems to have been effectively countered in discussions with indigenous leaders principally on the grounds that such radical changes close to independence might have disastrous destabilising effects. Mr Holloway later dropped the proposal. Similarly the reported suggestion by the Minister for External Territories (Mr W.L. Morrison) of converting one of the PIR battalions into a Police Field Force unit was not pursued, partly for the same reason. The concept of a single security force may have been considered by the Department of Defence during 1972 and appears to have had considerable civilian support, especially within the Department of External Territories. The concept was strongly opposed by the military in PNG which emphasised the discrete external defence function of a military force compared to that of the police. The proposal was finally scotched in May 1973 when the PNG cabinet agreed that a separate defence force would be needed in PNG. Radical reorganisation proposals for the PNG Public Service were also dropped. The prospects of early independence had tended to focus planning and problem solving on the practical issues of administrative development, localisation and the transfer of formal responsibilities.²⁶ Much of the consultation and planning which subsequently took place was, in a way, an exercise in politically legitimating the force which Australia had established.

The defence planning and policy development process in both PNG and Australia intensified from late 1972 onwards with the commencement of defence consultations between PNG and Australia at the official and ministerial level.²⁷ These initial discussions seem to have been primarily exploratory in character and allowed for the exchange of planning information. The planning process as it developed appears to have been conducted on the basis of co-ordinated and parallel studies in Canberra and Port Moresby and marked by a continual exchange of conferences, visits and exchange of documents. To support these consultations and to develop policy options on both sides, a quite elaborate committee structure evolved. Routine co-ordination of PNG defence matters within the Australian Defence Department was the responsibility of a small secretariat of civilian and military officers. Matters were referred by this staff, as

²⁶ See *SMH*, 12, 19 Mar., 27, 30 April 1973; *Canberra Times* 31 Mar. 1973; *Age*, 6 July 1973.

²⁷ Department of Defence Press Release, 85/73 of 17 May 1973 and 248/74 of 5 April 1974.

necessary, to the Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Defence Committee and the Minister for consideration. Because of the increasing tempo of events in PNG it was evidently necessary late in 1972 to establish an inter-departmental committee on PNG defence matters so as to ensure proper co-ordination between the Service Departments on PNG defence planning and allow for consultation with the Departments of Foreign Affairs and External Territories which also had an interest in PNG defence arrangements.²⁸

Whilst the Australian defence group involved with PNG matters consisted of a relatively homogeneous team (essentially the Service Departments with a Foreign Affairs input) the PNG side consisted of two semi-autonomous groups - the PNGDF (primarily a military group) and the Department of the Chief Minister, which included the Assistant Secretary Defence and his Defence Branch staff (a civilian group). Because of this and the need to take account of an increasing Papua New Guinean contribution to the policy-making process, the PNG defence planning environment was probably more complex than Australia's.

Within the Defence Force and the Joint Force before January 1973, development planning appears to have been the responsibility of a Director of Plans (colonel) and a small military planning staff.²⁹ Headquarters officers and unit commanders were also routinely consulted and involved in planning project teams; planning was not conducted in isolation by the planning group alone. In addition, the PNGDF Commander (Brigadier Norrie) and his predecessor (Brigadier Eldridge) devoted a considerable proportion of their time to development issues. The manner in which planning was conducted within the PNGDF, by the thorough

²⁸ A further organisational change was the appointment in January 1974 of a senior civilian defence official, Mr J. Bennetts, as Australian Defence Representative in Port Moresby. This official was responsible for representing Australian defence policy to the PNG government as well as tendering Australian defence advice to the PNG High Commissioner (formerly Administrator), relieving the PNGDF Commander of this function which was no longer appropriate to his role as Commander of a PNG-oriented organisation.

²⁹ This organisation, which grew out of the Army Planning Cell established in 1969 contained land, air and maritime planning officers of the rank of major or equivalent.

'staffing' of papers and frequent planning conferences, meant that it was usual for a Defence Force 'party line' to emerge on each issue, before discussions with PNG government officials.

On the side of the PNG government, defence planning was primarily the responsibility of the small Defence Branch which operated through 1973 with between two and four civilian officers.³⁰ The planning resources of this group were clearly limited in comparison to the large Defence Force headquarters staff. To augment this policy group and provide a forum for the discussions of issues, an inter-departmental committee, the PNG Defence Policy Working Group (DPWG), was established in December 1972 in preparation for the first official defence talks between PNG and Australia. This committee appears to have been an important body throughout 1973-74 for the discussions of policy and for the establishment of the official PNG defence view, integrating civilian and Defence Force contributions.

In a similar way to that in which the Defence Force established its policy position, the Defence Branch produced its own working papers for DPWG sessions. The Defence Branch position seems, usually, to have been established after consultation, much of it of an informal kind, with the Chief Minister's advisers. In spite of this pattern of consultation some tension was evident between expatriate and Papua New Guinean officials, as yet in the minority, who were keen to approach defence issues with a more sceptical, if not antagonistic, frame of mind. There were also indications that senior local officers of the PNGDF, when they became more actively engaged in planning discussions, were sometimes willing to depart from the PNGDF positions and express views closer to those of local PNG public servants - perhaps in a spirit of Melanesian Consensus. Selected Papua New Guinean officers had, by direction of the Force Commander, been actively consulted on defence planning matters from 1972 onwards and in 1973 there was a PNG officer posted to the planning staff.

In April 1973 a Local Officers Group (civilian and

³⁰ These were: the Assistant Secretary, another Australian member of the PNG Public Service (formerly an Australian Intelligence Corps colonel) and two indigenous public servants. In early 1974, Mr Webb was replaced as Assistant Secretary by Mr Noel Levi, the senior of the PNG public servants, but Webb remained as his adviser.

military officers) of the DPWG was formed to reconsider the draft Cabinet submission on the proposed guidelines for the PNGDF because of inadequate indigenous participation in the formulation of the document. After several meetings it was not necessary for it to be reconvened because of increased indigenous representation on the DPWG itself. At these early meetings, however, common military and civilian Papua New Guinean views emerged in relation to support for the concept of a separate PNG Defence Force with the primary function of external defence, increased emphasis being placed on the nation-building potential of the Defence Force and the view that the Defence Force should not be isolated from the rest of PNG society merely in pursuit of a particular Australian formula of civil-military relations. A local military officer is said to have complained at a meeting in April 1973 that 'Australians working on Defence Policy are trying to dump an Australian model on PNG' (personal communication, Port Moresby, Jan. 1974).

Both the military and civilian defence planning groups in PNG appear to have been willing to apply techniques of informal advocacy in order to advance their interests with the PNG political leadership and Cabinet. On the military side it was evident that Australian officers claimed to represent the views of the indigenous officer corps and in so doing were, by implication, suggesting that the PNG government would not want lightly to override these views. Social contacts were also exploited as much as possible in a society which, after 1972, had become intensely political even in official circles. In this context also, two semi-private defence 'round table' seminars may be mentioned. These seminars were conducted at the University of PNG, Port Moresby, in May and August 1973 and they were attended by PNG politicians, public service advisers, military officers and academics. The seminars ostensibly provided a forum for the exchange of views and information on PNG defence matters but they were also excellent platforms for the Defence Force to express and attempt to gain support for its own special interests; namely, a wider public and official acceptance of its role in the PNG socio-political system. The seminars, in particular, provided a platform for advocating the integration of the military into the PNG political system, a policy favoured by the joint convenor of the seminars, Dr Ulf Sundhaussen, who had also publicly advocated this policy in order to avoid the excesses of military intervention in politics, as experienced elsewhere in the Third World (Sundhaussen, 1973a,b,c).

The emergence of a PNG defence policy

The first official defence consultations between Australia and PNG took place in December 1972 and following them it was decided to seek the political guidance of the PNG Cabinet on such fundamental questions as whether PNG was to have a separate defence force, what were to be its roles and how much could be spent on it. It was envisaged that after this initial direction from the Cabinet, detailed proposals would then be submitted to Cabinet and they would form the basis for later defence negotiations with Australia. Following consideration by the PNG inter-departmental committee on defence this initial 'Defence Submission' went before the PNG cabinet in May 1973.³¹

After this preliminary Cabinet submission further defence decisions appear to have been made by the PNG cabinet in August 1973 when the basic structure of the Defence Force based on a 3500-man force was resolved and it was determined that PNG civil-military relations would be based on a formula of co-equal status between the Defence Force Commander and the senior public servant in the Defence Department, who would both work to a Defence Minister.³²

The results of the extensive period of planning, policy making and consultations since late 1972 finally became public on 25 April 1974 when the PNG Minister for Defence, Mr Kiki, made the PNG government's first comprehensive defence statement.³³ Kiki informed the House of Assembly of the government's policy decisions and preparations for PNG to take over the defence function at independence and, at the time of writing, this statement provided the best public evidence of PNG government defence policy. It therefore merits being quoted at length.

The Minister's statement commenced by justifying the need to maintain separate defence and police forces in PNG,

³¹ Personal communication, Dr Ulf Sundhaussen and Mr N.L. Webb, Dec. 1972 and Aug. 1973.

³² These planning decisions were evidently leaked to the press in PNG. See *Age*, 6 July 1973, 'Mosquito Force Planned for PNG'.

³³ Mr A.M. Kiki, *HAD*, 25 April 1974, Ministerial Statement on Defence. See also the corresponding statement by the Australian Minister for Defence, Mr L.H. Barbard, Defence Press Release, 258/74 of 26 April 1974.

thereby rejecting the view that had been put from time to time that PNG required only one security force. Kiki argued as follows:

The country's security is at present guarded by two separate security forces with very distinctive and different roles - the Police Force and the Defence Force. One of the first questions the government asked itself was whether Papua New Guinea should continue to maintain two separate forces or whether they should be combined into a single security force.

The Government decided that the roles of the two forces, their organisation, equipment and training and outlook were so different that the nation would be best served by keeping the two forces separate. We did not want policemen acting like soldiers or sailors, or vice versa.

The police operate for the most part as individuals dealing with individuals, whereas a defence force operates in groups and against groups of people ... Both are trained to use controlled force and are responsible individually and collectively for their actions, but Defence Force training gives greater emphasis to the more serious situations in which there is a greater likelihood of having to use lethal force. And whereas it must be the government's constant endeavour to avoid these very serious situations for which the Defence Force is required to train, the Police Force is constantly engaged in the role of community law preservation and enforcement, for which it is trained.

Another distinctive characteristic of a defence force is its relative self-sufficiency in supporting services such as transport, communications, repair workshops, medical assistance and the feeding and quartering of its members. These services are expensive, but indispensable if the Force is to be able to deal with situations in which normal community services may be disrupted, or in areas remote from community facilities. Nevertheless the government has had to look very critically at what this country can afford in this regard ... Many of the arrangements and systems which were appropriate while the PNG Defence Force was an Australian Force are quite inappropriate for Papua New Guinea and are being changed (HAD, 25 April 1974).

The PNG Defence Minister went on to specify the roles of the Defence Force:

In traditional terms, the Defence Force has three broad responsibilities:

1. To be able to defend the nation against external attack.
2. To be able to assist the police in the maintenance of public order and security as a last resort if the police cannot reasonably be expected to cope.
3. To contribute as required to economic development and the promotion of national administration and unity.

In the first two, it is always the hope that the presence of defence forces, and the ability to expand them if necessary, will be sufficient to deter, or frighten away, any threat to the nation. The third function can be performed as a normal activity when the force is not active in its first two functions, as additional permanent responsibilities using skills and facilities similar to those needed for the first two functions, or as incidental by-products of fulfilling the first two functions.

As to the size and composition of the Defence Force Mr Kiki told the House of Assembly that:

The government considered a variety of possible ways of structuring the future Defence Force. It decided that it should have a ceiling strength of 3500 uniformed men with two battalions, an engineer company, the patrol boat squadron and a landing craft squadron together with appropriate support.³⁵

³⁴ *HAD*, 25 April 1974; see also Chapter 3. Although PNG formally emphasised external defence rather than internal security, largely for domestic political reasons, the potential internal security application of the PNGDF was freely acknowledged by PNG officials in discussions.

³⁵ Mr Kiki also informed the House that the PNG government was considering the Australian offer of four Dakota aircraft, instead of the Caribou in service with the RAAF in PNG, as the basis of a PNGDF Air Element. (See also Department of Defence Press Release, 258/74 of 26 April 1974.) The Minister implied a preference for the more versatile Caribou but appeared to accept the Dakota offer subject to Cabinet approval. In fact PNG could do nothing else if it

In this way the Minister settled the issue of the various Defence Force structural options that had occupied the attention of civilian and military planners since early 1973. It was apparent that the Defence Force's public advocacy of a somewhat larger force of four thousand men had been unsuccessful, although the Cabinet had selected a middle range option between the PNGDF solution and other smaller options.³⁶ It was likely that the Cabinet had been influenced in this decision by a concern to hold down PNG defence costs as well as a general unease about the political consequences of a larger defence force. The 3500-man force approved by the Cabinet nonetheless did not differ markedly, in terms of capability, from the larger options considered and, only in the absence of a third battalion, did it significantly differ from earlier Australian blueprints.

Although not announced by Mr Kiki in April 1974 two quite important decisions on the future structure of the PNG Defence Force had already been taken in September 1973 after consultation between the PNG and Australian governments. It had then been decided to disband the part-time, volunteer PNGVR battalion and the high school military cadet system.³⁷ In spite of the strenuous lobbying of senior Australian CMF officers attempting to save the PNGVR, the PNG government evidently believed that this type of unit was not suited to the defence needs of an independent PNG.

Besides the officially stated reasons for the disbandment of the PNGVR on the grounds of economy and effectiveness, there were also problems of security and a shortage of suitable personnel. There were fears that the CMF battalion's widely dispersed sub-units (ten training depots in seven centres), weapons, ammunition and equipment might provide a security hazard in the future - by falling into the wrong hands. Secondly, the exodus of expatriate residents from PNG had led to a shortage of trained and experienced officers and NCOs in the unit and there were insufficient numbers of suitably educated Papua New Guinean

35 (continued)

wanted an air element at independence.

36 A 4000-man force was advocated by Defence Force spokesmen at the University 'round table' seminar in August 1973.

37 See Department of Defence Press Release, 141/1973 of 10 Sept. 1973.

volunteers available to replace them.³⁸

The disbandment of the PNGVR appears to have foreclosed, at least temporarily, the option of a militia component in the PNG Defence Force which might have been seen in terms of a countervailing force to the PIR battalions or even the Police, or as a means of more directly associating the Defence Force with the civilian population by providing an avenue of civilian service. Both these points had been argued in support of the former PNGVR's role. More realistically, however, it was extremely unlikely that a highly dispersed unit of fewer than four hundred men would effectively resist any acts of sudden political violence by the regular Defence Force or the Police. It was also doubtful whether the part-time members of the former CMF battalion, who were largely recruited from an educated, urban base and who were thus unrepresentative of the PNG population at large, drew the Defence Force any closer to the PNG nation. Finally there was the danger that political leaders might have attempted to 'play off' one security force against another by various forms of preferment in order to neutralise them. Where this has been attempted, as for example in Ghana under Nkrumah, the results have usually been counter-productive, leading to violence and political conflict (see First, 1972:197-200). For these reasons the decision to disband the PNGVR was sound.

The disbandment of the school cadet system in PNG (which had been modelled on that operating in Australia) may also have been justified in terms of the considerable costs involved in maintaining and supervising widely scattered and small school cadet units. Such units were first established in PNG in 1959. By 1973 there were about 1000 cadets in 15 schools (interview Officer Commanding 35 Cadet Battalion, Lae, May 1973). Although they may have performed valuable integrative social functions within the limited number of high schools in which they operated, they did nothing for the majority of PNG youth outside the high school system who were not exposed to citizenship-building influences and it would seem preferable to direct military training benefits to this group (of non-high school attenders and high school drop-outs) in the future (see Chapter 3).

³⁸ In May 1973 there was still only one indigenous officer in the PNGVR out of a unit total of thirty-two. Nearly all expatriates serving in the battalion were officers or NCOs and they accounted for 25 per cent of the total strength of about 350.

The higher defence organisation

In the April 1974 statement the PNG Defence Minister also publicly outlined the structure of civil-military relations that the cabinet had agreed to in August 1973. In a justification of the co-equal status of civilian and military heads within the defence organisation, he argued that because military action was related to other spheres of government activity the government must have access to both civilian and military defence advice:

Expenditure on defence has to be related to other financial priorities. Account must be taken of the whole range of considerations bearing on the national interest - such matters as intelligence, international and domestic political interests, military aspects such as the capabilities of the forces, technical, economic and financial consideration. Both civilian and military abilities, training and backgrounds are essential for the proper moulding of such elements into coherent and consistent policies. Military officers are trained primarily for a military role. Formulation of defence policy demands a deep examination of the possible alternatives and their wider implications for the national good. Only if the Minister can tap directly both civil and military advice can he be properly equipped to control the nation's defence effort.

Accordingly the government has decided that the Minister responsible for defence, that is I, should be advised directly by both the force commander and the senior civilian defence administrator, who should be of equal status, each having defined functions, and being required to work in a manner which brings together both the civilian and the military contributions to the development of defence policy (HAD, 25 April 1974).

Mr Kiki explained that it was intended to combine the PNG Defence Branch and the PNGDF Headquarters in order to form the future PNG Defence Department. It was clear at this point that PNG defence planners had placed considerable emphasis on the formal relationship between Minister, Secretary and military head, presumably because it was believed that the relationship at this level would set the general pattern of PNG civil-military relations. This

decision indicated, further, that whilst it was the policy of the Somare government not to isolate indigenous officers from the national leadership group, it did not intend to give the military the degree of corporate independence that they may have sought by means of military dominance of the defence organisation. On this issue politicians were encouraged by Australian officials who could be expected to advance arguments for strong civilian control in defence administration, based on the Australian practice.

It is of course arguable whether decisions settling the formal structure would necessarily have much bearing on the way the PNG higher defence organisation might actually operate and the manner in which power would be distributed. The PNG Cabinet may see dangers in the future in alienating the PNG Defence Force and its officer corps from the government leadership, even though retaining the allegiance of civilians within the Force. It will be the officer corps and its senior officers which command the Defence Force and its loyalties, not the civilian secretary, and the government might ultimately see it as more important to retain the political support of officers, rather than that of civilians working within the Defence Force.

There is a further reason why the defence public servant in future may not function as a countervailing influence to the military. In the same way that ministers are sometimes 'captured' by their public service advisers, neutralising their independence and critical approach to policy matters, it is possible that the military in PNG may be able to 'capture' the loyalties of civilians operating within the defence organisation - and perhaps the minister as well. Further, it is not unlikely that public servants will perceive their own career interests in regard to prestige and affluence as complementary to those of the officer corps - both groups forming part of an urban elite. The prospect of defence civil servants being either 'captured' or impotent may be enhanced because of the lack of a tradition of strong civilian influence in PNG defence matters and because of a dearth of experienced public servants who might be effective in limiting military influence in quasi-civilian areas of defence policy and administration.

Although the integration of the Defence Branch and Defence Force Headquarters had been announced there was, as yet, no decision in regard to the establishment of a formal body for the collective management of defence, such as by a

board or council. It is likely, nonetheless, that a collegiate defence body, involving at least the Minister, Defence Force Commander and civilian head, will become the future basis for executive decision-making, whether arising out of convention or formal statute.

Unresolved defence issues

In April 1974 there were several important defence issues which had yet to be finalised; these included PNG's post-independence defence relationship with Australia, the transfer of financial responsibility to PNG and defence aid arrangements.

It has long been evident that there would be the need for post-independence defence arrangements between PNG and Australia, either embodied in a treaty or within a less formal framework, to cover a range of operational, training, personnel, logistic and financial matters (see O'Neill, 1972: 193-203, and Sundhaussen, 1973a). But by April 1974 consultations were still only at a preliminary and exploratory stage. This lack of progress relative to developments in other areas was understandable. Post-independence defence relations involved complex and sensitive issues of internal as well as foreign politics in both PNG and Australia and settled PNG defence policy in other areas was a prerequisite for determining post-independence relations between PNG and Australia. Post-independence relations were to be seen therefore as the keystone of the PNG defence policy-making process.

Although a formal defence treaty between PNG and Australia, once in some favour, was apparently no longer a public policy objective of either the Australian or PNG governments, the likely extent of Australian personnel, logistic, and financial assistance to the PNGDF at independence pointed to considerable Australian defence involvement regardless of the formal basis under which it was to be sanctioned. Here, Australian defence planners have had to chart a difficult course between the basic policy and ideological position of the Australian Labor government that Australia should not become militarily involved in an independent PNG, and the ensurance of the continued viability of the PNGDF. It was apparent that the most sensitive issue of future PNG-Australian defence relations would be the circumstances and conditions under which Australian service personnel might take part in PNGDF operations. Broadly speaking, two types of operations and three sorts of Australian roles might be

envisaged. Australians might conceivably be involved, in operational units in command roles (say, as infantry sub-unit commanders), in an operational support role (say, as helicopter pilots or engineers), or in staff and training roles. Operations might be either against an external enemy or of an internal security nature - the second possibility perhaps being the more likely one in the short-term future.

Whilst it might be possible to remove the probability of Australian involvement in an operational command role at, or soon after, independence by rapid localisation of command appointments, the support roles are likely to continue for a number of years. Australian planners have had to accept the fact that precipitate withdrawal or non-participation of Australian personnel might jeopardise the success of PNG military operations. In this situation a wide-ranging prohibition by Australia on the employment of Australian troops within the PNGDF might force PNG to turn to mercenaries or other countries for defence personnel, or attempt to localise its forces at a pace which would lead to a serious reduction in effectiveness and reliability. Because of this crucial relationship between the role of Australians and the effectiveness of the PNG Defence Force it is understandable that the PNG government might want to know the conditions under which Australians are to be permitted to operate in the PNGDF after independence. In this regard Australia appears to face several alternatives. It might elect to set out formal and predetermined restrictions on employment, such as no involvement by Australians in operations against certain secessionist groups; or, alternatively, Australia might rely on a set of mutually agreed safeguards, such as insistence on the institution of proper legal procedures before Defence Force units could be employed on internal security operations. Australia might also want to insist on consultation and consent before certain types of operations of a particularly sensitive nature, such as internal security operations involving other foreign nationals. It would be very difficult for Australia to remain formally neutral in any conflict which involved the PNGDF (supported by Australian servicemen) and another state. Australia would be seen, internationally, to bear responsibility for the official acts of its own servants, that is, Australian servicemen in PNG.

In relation to post-independence defence relations at a more general level it seems that whilst PNG will principally rely on Australia, PNG has already indicated that she will

attempt to diversify her defence contacts as well as establishing close relations with Indonesia. PNG is already receiving small-scale personnel and training assistance from the New Zealand defence forces and it seems likely that contact between Indonesia and PNG will soon lead to defence links and exchanges.

The transfer of financial responsibility for the PNGDF from the Australian to the PNG government and the details of post-independence defence aid arrangements have also yet to be finalised. A smooth transition in financial responsibilities for defence has been hampered by almost complete metropolitan control over defence expenditure and by considerable difficulty in actually determining the level of defence expenditure in PNG, arising out of the integration of Australian and PNG defence. In April 1974 Mr Kiki did, however, announce that a general formula of defence aid to PNG had been agreed upon in defence consultations between the two countries. This formula provided that

for the financial year in which independence occurs the following arrangements would apply.

Under a program met directly from the Australian Budget and agreed between the Papua New Guinea and Australian governments provision will be made to cover the personnel costs of Australian servicemen attached to the Defence Force, the cost of training Papua New Guinean servicemen in Australia and the cost of selected capital projects.

The remaining costs of the Defence Force which I might broadly describe as normal running costs will comprise the Papua New Guinea Budget defence vote. Half of this amount will be met from Papua New Guinea's budget resources and the Australian government has promised to provide financial assistance in respect of the other half.³⁹

It was stated that this formula would be reviewed during the year of independence for application in following years.

The general problem which PNG leaders have faced in relation to the subject of post-independence defence aid has been that of how to secure the maximum Australian budgetary assistance from Australia without the PNG Defence Force appearing, in effect, as an Australian mercenary force. Papua New Guinea may have been attracted to the idea of a

³⁹HAD, 25 April 1974. Ministerial Statement on Defence.

substantial proportion of her future defence budget being funded from aid grants not explicitly tied to defence so that PNG itself would then be able to allocate its resources as between defence, law and order and developmental priorities. In this way Papua New Guinea leaders might believe they would be seen to be exercising greater sovereignty over their own defence forces. This approach to PNG defence aid would involve Australia in taking into account PNG's defence burden in determining levels of Australian aid. It would also be implicit in such an arrangement that Australia would have no control over defence expenditure. (PNG might, for example, decide that its security priorities lay in expanding the Police and down-grading its external defence capacity.) If Australian priorities were disregarded, Australia might be reluctant to continue to provide substantial levels of aid based on Australian perceptions of PNG security needs. Australian foreign defence policy could depend, for instance, on a PNG capacity to deal with low-level military threats on its borders and the lack of this capability might thereby be seen as increasing the likelihood of requests for Australian support in situations in which it did not want to become embroiled. Because of these implications it is likely that Australia may want to retain a considerable degree of influence over the manner in which aid is supplied to PNG's defence forces.

The issue of defence aid to PNG involves the wider question of all categories of aid to PNG, and Australian and Papua New Guinean views on this subject reflect important differences. In April 1974 the Australian Minister for External Territories, in explaining Australia's future aid policy to PNG, argued that Australia would want to know precisely how the money was to be spent (in PNG) before grants were made and, therefore, project-oriented aid would be favoured to a budget-support approach.⁴⁰ In contrast to this approach, the PNG Chief Minister during a visit to Australia in June 1974 called for Australian 'aid without strings'. Mr Somare said his government would resist any Australian action to use aid as a lever to guide PNG development plans.⁴¹ It has been argued that Australian insistence on project forms of aid management would distort PNG's developmental priorities and, similarly, project-

⁴⁰*Post-Courier*, 30 April 1974

⁴¹*Age*, 15 June 1974.

oriented Australian defence aid might inhibit the development of a defence force best suited to PNG conditions and priorities (Ballard, 1973).

A solution to the defence aid problem may lie in a proportion of PNG's defence budget being provided from earmarked Australian defence aid (perhaps for a specific project, for example, the development of an air element) and a larger proportion being received in the form of general aid which PNG might wish to apply to defence expenditure. Under such an arrangement there would be room for tacit understanding between governments that a certain proportion of Australian aid could be applied to defence. Apart from reassurance over minimum levels of defence expenditure, Australia might, at some time in the future, be concerned that unduly large proportions of Australian aid were not misapplied to PNG's security forces. This problem might occur if there was a change to authoritarian or military forms of government in PNG. In any event, Australia will need to be careful not to apply her own political and social values rigidly to the governmental problems of an independent PNG. There would seem to be 'neo-colonialist' as well as 'idealist' traps here.

There is also the issue of PNG's contribution to her defence budget from internally raised revenue. In January 1973 the Australian Defence Minister suggested an initial PNG contribution of about \$4 million per annum - an amount then judged to cover PNGDF indigenous wages, although these costs have subsequently risen above \$6 million. If PNG's defence budget, exclusive of costs attributable to Australian personnel and activities is placed in the year of independence at about \$15 million, a contribution of \$6 million would represent about 40 per cent of the total. This level of Papua New Guinean contribution might increase to a notionally important '51 per cent controlling interest' in a matter of a few years without undue dislocation to PNG's budget, provided that, as promised, the level of Australian aid to PNG remains at about its present high level.⁴² In 1973-74 Australia provided a total of \$A178.5 million in aid to PNG compared to \$A143 million in 1972-73 (*Post-Courier*, 22 Aug. 1973) and a total of \$A500 million was promised over the following three years. Assuming a PNG contribution of \$A6 million per annum to a total PNG defence

⁴² See, for example, Address by Hon. W.L. Morrison, Minister for External Territories, opening the 1973 Waigani Seminar, April 1973, *Post-Courier*, 30 April 1973.

budget of about \$A15 million per annum, total annual Australian costs might range between say \$A15 million and \$A20 million, taking into account the wages and salaries of Australian servicemen serving with the PNGDF, the training of PNGDF personnel in Australia and other administrative costs. Whilst Australian defence aid to PNG after independence will probably amount only to between 10 and 15 per cent of the total Australian aid - a percentage which would not appear to be excessive - PNG's total defence burden is, by comparison with a number of smaller states, somewhat above average. The reasons for the relative 'expensiveness' of the PNGDF are probably to be found in the Force's close integration with the Australian services as well as the generally high PNG cost structure, although it is possible that the post-independence period will lead to some defence savings.

There are also procedural and administrative problems to be overcome in transferring defence financial responsibility from Canberra to Port Moresby. Even by early 1974 the process of 'unscrambling' PNG defence costs from those of Australia had not been completed. Costs remained disguised, for instance, in the system by which PNGDF logistic units were supplied by Australian ordnance sources with stores, weapons and equipment. PNG officials have, for some time, sought increased financial independence and responsibilities in PNG for defence matters so as to provide a period of financial tutelage. Although financial devolution should have commenced earlier, the transitional arrangements for the management of the PNG defence budget for the 1974-75 financial year should improve the prospects of a smooth transition at independence.

Though PNG has been encouraged to develop defence forces and policies appropriate to its needs, there has been little fundamental change, so far, to the size, role and organisation of PNG's Defence Force. To a remarkable extent, PNG's own assessment of its defence needs have accorded with Australian perceptions of them. It is true that the more ambitious Australian military plans for PNG's defence forces produced before 1972 have not been adopted, but neither have PNG leaders sought radical defence alternatives to the solutions presented by Australia. This outcome is perhaps not unexpected since Papua New Guinean leaders have been so reliant on Australians, whether employed in Australia or PNG, for almost all of their specialist defence advice and, secondly, the rapid onset of independence and the reality of

an efficient force-in-being have combined to limit both the scope for, and willingness to institute, radical defence change. PNG has neither greatly expanded nor reduced the size of the Defence Force. It has accepted the need for a volunteer standing force and rejected, without ever seriously considering it, the option of some form of 'People's Army' based either on conscription or part-time service. It has adopted a formula of civil-military relations which resembled in formal terms those of Australia. These tendencies serve to emphasise the importance of the Australian military tradition in PNG and the fact that in the early years of independence, defence, like so many other aspects of the PNG polity, will be a syncretic Australian-PNG construct.

In reviewing the three stages in the transfer process, it is apparent that, whilst a substantial Australian strategic reappraisal of PNG's importance to Australia has taken place and the localisation of the Defence Force is at a relatively advanced stage, the third stage of military development is as yet in its infancy. The change in Australian strategic attitudes to PNG, from that at the conclusion of World War II when both major political parties in Australia saw Papua New Guinea's security as vital, to that of regarding PNG of strategic importance but not vital has greatly facilitated the military decolonisation process. Indeed it is difficult to imagine Australia being prepared to relinquish her military influence in PNG so absolutely if PNG was, today, still held to be as vital as it was once considered to be.

The second stage of the transfer process has marched in step with successive advances in political development and as PNG's political future became clearer the tempo of localisation increased. In this way defence localisation was seen as one aspect of ensuring the ultimate preparedness of PNG to assume the responsibilities of independence which included sovereignty over PNG's own armed forces. This involved the growth of a military structure which Papua New Guineans could manage and which was judged to be within its budgetary resources.

Military development - the process by which the Australian military heritage in PNG is eventually adapted to meet the needs of PNG - could not be completed in the artificial political environment of the decolonisation period in which indigenous political forces in PNG were distorted by Australia's interests and policies in PNG. This point may be exemplified in relation to future levels of PNG defence spending. Because the PNG government has so far not actually

controlled defence spending, it has not yet seen money spent on defence as an opportunity-cost in relation to other areas of public expenditure, and in this sense, at least, it has not had to locate defence within the national priorities. This problem is further complicated because, in the post-independence period, PNG's level of defence spending may still be determined more by what Australia is prepared to give than by what PNG is prepared to spend and it may not be clear whether there is a symmetric opportunity-cost relationship with Australian defence aid. That is, if PNG were to cut back on defence spending could she be sure of recouping these 'savings' in the form of increased Australian economic aid, or would it merely be a case of defence benefits foregone if not sought? This problem may impede the process by which PNG's defence forces are developed to conform to PNG's actual defence needs in terms of size, role and even conditions of service.

Because the third phase in the transfer of military power of PNG military development will occur within an independent polity, the course of this development should be less subject to Australian political and military patterns. On the other hand, these changes will still be subject to strong Australian influences in the form of defence personnel and aid. Rapid removal of this influence, by replacing Australians with other foreigners, or by becoming self-reliant in defence, is likely to be unattractive to most Papua New Guineans in the foreseeable future. A strategy of national self-reliance would, in the short term, be likely to lead to considerable hardship and social unrest. And the problem of over-dependence (on Australia) is unlikely to be solved by moving to a situation of over-dependence on, say, Indonesia. It may be concluded, therefore, that further military development in PNG in the early years of independence is more likely to be influenced by tradition than by pressure for radical change and, for this reason, a study of the PNGDF on the eve of independence will be a useful guide to the post-independence performance of the organisation.

Chapter 3

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force: an organisational analysis

The Defence Force organisation

Previous chapters have traced the development of PNG military forces. This chapter examines the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.¹ It is written in three parts: the first part describes the organisation and deployment of the PNGDF, the second examines the ability of the Defence Force to meet the roles which have been laid down by the PNG government and the third analyses the PNGDF's composition and social functioning.

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force is a unified, single defence force which has maritime, air and land elements within its structure. The Force had a total authorised establishment strength in January 1974 of 3681 officers and men. There were also 775 civilian employees authorised, making a grand total of 4456 military and civilian employees. The uniformed strength of the PNGDF in early 1974 was, therefore, only slightly less than that of the PNG Police.

The Defence Force consisted of the following components:

A Defence Force headquarters and departmental structure.

The role of this component might be described as the administration and command of the force, policy development and political liaison.

An operational component. This consisted of a maritime element containing a patrol boat squadron and a support squadron, an air element of one medium transport flight and a land element of two infantry battalions, one engineer company and a signals squadron.

A logistic system. This consisted of a number of special

¹The study is based on information current in 1974. In April 1976 the organisation of the Defence Force had not altered substantially from that described here.

purpose units designed to support the Force.

A training system. The major training units included a training depot, apprentice and officer training units.

The detailed organisation of each of these components of the Defence Force is discussed later, but it will first be useful to remark briefly on the Force as a whole and on the Australian contribution to it. Like the PNG Public Service the Defence Force in 1974 remained heavily dependent on Australians. Of the total of 3780 officers and men actually serving with the PNGDF in January 1974, 663 or about 17 per cent of the total were Australians. The dependence on Australian leadership and expertise was more sharply drawn in regard to officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs). In January 1974 75 per cent of the officers serving with the PNGDF were Australians as were slightly over 50 per cent of the senior NCOs. The Australians serving with units of the PNGDF were, in December 1973, separately identified as members of an Australian Defence Assistance Group (ADAG).² The role of this organisation was to provide the necessary personnel assistance to the PNGDF in order to allow it to operate and develop to the point when Australians were no longer required. In January 1974 there were also 226 Australian servicemen serving in units outside the PNGDF. There were several Australian support units involved in providing special types of support to the PNGDF, principally air support, and there were two Australian defence units with particular tasks: a survey squadron engaged on mapping tasks for the PNG government, and a small engineer unit which operated as a Public Works Office at Mendi in the Southern Highlands District.

The maritime element

The maritime element of the Defence Force consisted of two major units, a Fast Patrol Boat Squadron of five boats based at Lombrum Island in the Manus Island District and a Support Squadron equipped with a number of landing craft based at Port Moresby.³ Although these two units accounted

² In 1976 ADAG was redesignated as the Australian Defence Co-operation Group (ADCG).

³ Lombrum Island is adjacent to Manus Island and forms part

for only some 10 per cent of the total manpower in the operational units of the Defence Force they performed the important functions of patrolling PNG's territorial waters and providing logistic support.

The Patrol Boat Squadron at Lombrum consisted of fifteen officers, ten senior NCOs and sixty-five other rank. (The complement of each boat is three officers and fifteen men.) In January 1974 all the captains of the patrol boats were RAN officers and a number of key enlisted men billets on each of the boats were also filled by Australians. The senior PNG officers were lieutenants (i.e. captains in army rank) and planning them called for complete officer localisation some time in 1978, with Australian enlisted men being required at least until 1975. The Australian presence will therefore continue for some considerable time to come, unless officers of other navies or contract officers are employed in the task. Good progress in localisation is also dependent on the retention of highly skilled PNG specialists within the PNGDF. Some of these men are reported to be tempted by better pay and conditions available to them in the merchant navy and their loss would be a serious set-back to the development of the maritime element.

The role and capabilities of the Patrol Boat Squadron are affected by technical considerations associated with the 'Attack' class Patrol Boat.⁴ The boats are limited to some

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of the Manus District of PNG. The principal Manus District civil airfield and former wartime and postwar RAAF airfield at Momote is also on Lombrum Island. Both the naval base and airfield are joined with the District Headquarters at Lorengau by an all-weather road. I have followed the custom, generally, of describing it as the 'Manus base'. (The term 'maritime' rather than 'naval' has been preferred by the PNGDF as maritime operations in official usage incorporates operations not only on the surface of the sea but also under and over it.)

⁴ There are 15 'Attack' class Patrol Boats in service with the RAN as well as the 5 with the PNGDF. The boats in service with the PNGDF are:

	Age in 1974
PTF 84 <u>Aitape</u>	5-1/2 years
PTF 94 <u>Madang</u>	4-1/2 years
PTF 85 <u>Samarai</u>	5 years

extent in their coastal surveillance ability both by speed and endurance. Operating on both engines at 14 knots, their best economical speed, they can cover only some 560 nautical miles in about forty hours. Apart from fuel requirements they are able to carry enough water and supplies for about a sixteen days' patrol and the boats experience logistic problems when operating at a distance from their base or a source of replenishment. Their effectiveness in a surveillance role is greatly enhanced if they are able to operate in conjunction with maritime reconnaissance aircraft.

The Patrol Boat Squadron was supported by a shore base establishment at Manus of over two hundred officers and men, although this number is to be reduced. The shore facility formed part of the PNGDF logistic system and included a patrol boat maintenance section with engineering workshop facilities, a power house and other base services, including a hospital which also provides medical care for civilians in the area.

The patrol boats are based at what was once a major United States wartime base which was taken over by the RAN at the end of the war on a much reduced scale. This base, known as HMAS Tarangau, subsequently became the patrol base in 1964 when it was decided to form a PNG patrol boat squadron. HMAS Tarangau was also developed as an oiling station after a decision taken in 1964 and a major fuel oil installation designed for RAN fleet operations was established there.⁵ Although this installation underwent major

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PTF 93 <u>Lae</u>	5 years
PTF 92 <u>Ladava</u>	4-1/2 years

Each boat displaces 146 tons and is equipped with one 40/60mm Bofors light automatic weapon. They have a maximum speed of approximately 23 knots and are powered by two diesel engines. (See O'Neill and McLean, 1972:C.4.)

⁵ See O'Neill, 1971:6. The three fuel tanks at Manus have a total capacity of 11,500 tonnes. During the period of Australian military involvement in Vietnam, the Manus base was quite frequently used by RAN ships, but in February 1974 it had not been used by RAN ships for more than 18 months (and only once every 2 or 3 months by RN or USN ships). The current very low usage of Manus may be attributed, in part, to greater use of the western route to the Far East via Fremantle, rather than via the east coast.

refurbishment in 1972, the Australian government decided that it no longer has a strategic requirement for Tarangau. (It was decommissioned as an RAN base and handed over to the PNGDF before independence.)

The Manus patrol boat base, whilst providing most of the necessary shore maintenance facilities (it lacks a slipway), is deficient for operational purposes. Because of its location it is not well suited as a base for PNG maritime operations in view of the long transit voyages that are required to reach patrol stations and this entails uneconomical use of the boats. The isolation of Manus from Port Moresby has also led to logistic and administrative problems so that the costs of maintaining a maritime base on Manus are probably considerably greater than they would be in a more central location. Measured against this, however, is the expenditure that would be required to reproduce the accommodation and maintenance facilities already in existence at Manus. Studies conducted in order to determine the best site for a PNG naval base have pointed to Madang, which has an existing technical support base, and this would permit the centralised development of the country's nautical maintenance resources. Madang's harbour, although less suitable than Manus for very large vessels, is adequate for smaller craft.

Whilst the prospects of a naval base being developed at Madang at one stage seemed bright it is now unlikely. Estimates of the cost of a new base may have ranged up to \$8 million and it is unlikely that this amount of money would be forthcoming from Australian governments seeking to hold down defence spending. The option of concentrating both maritime units at Port Moresby has also been considered and discarded. Apart from the problems of congestion at the small ships facility in Port Moresby harbour and what was seen as the undesirability of placing too much of the Defence Force in the capital city, there was also an operational objection. For part of each year during the south-east trade wind season the passage of patrol boats around the southeast tip of Papua to the north coast is difficult due to sea conditions.

Aside from these financial and technical considerations it is likely that Manus will remain the PNGDF's principal maritime base for largely political reasons. The Manus base plays a significant part in the life of the District, supporting a community of about three thousand people. As Manus Island is one of the less developed Districts in

economic terms (although education facilities are widespread and Manus Islanders are prominent in PNG national life), local and national politicians would not wish to see the base removed if it could not be replaced by some other economic activity. Indeed, Manus leaders might wish to see the naval base developed to provide a maintenance facility for other marine activity such as fishing.

It could also be argued that Australia's interests might be best served by the PNGDF's retention of the Manus base. As Australia does not wish to retain the fuel oil installation as a foreign base after independence, on the basis that the strategic benefits and possible political costs do not warrant it, it might, nonetheless, still be able to use the oil fuel facility on Manus if it should become necessary. Although it will no longer be an RAN base, Australian personnel will still be required on Manus for a considerable number of years to assist in the operation and maintenance of the patrol boats and Australia may, therefore, obtain the best of both worlds - access to Manus without the odium attached to a foreign base.

The Support Squadron had an establishment strength of four officers, sixteen senior NCOs and fifty-eight other rank. This unit, previously a water transportation squadron of the Australian Army, is currently equipped with three LCM-8 shallow draft landing craft and several small work boats.⁶ Though the LCM-8 craft provide a valuable logistic capability, they lack crew facilities for long voyages and due to a lack of navigational equipment they have to be escorted on longer voyages. Because of these shortcomings and the view that more of the logistic burden might be borne by sea rather than by means of expensive air transport, the PNGDF sought to have the maritime element of the Defence Force equipped with larger sea-going transports of the Australian LCH type. It was announced in November 1973 that Australia had agreed to provide two such landing craft to the PNGDF.⁷ The craft were delivered in 1975.

⁶The LCM-8 has a range of 190 nautical miles at 8 knots (in a period of 24 hours). It can carry 50 tons of cargo or about 60 troops. Of the present group of three craft usually one two out of the three are available at any one time because of maintenance requirement.

⁷See Department of Defence Press Release No. 174/73 of 7 Nov. 1973. The LCH is an Australian designed heavy landing

Besides these two major operational components of the maritime element - the patrol boat and support squadrons - there were a number of supporting units which have been classified here as part of the Defence Force logistic system. These units were the Patrol Boat Maintenance Section and the PNG Dockyard. The Dockyard under present plans will not only carry out maintenance on PNGDF craft but also utilise any spare capacity in maintaining PNG government craft and it will probably be located at Port Moresby. Another small but important unit was raised in 1974 - an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit. Without this capability PNG would be reliant on Australia or another nation for the disposal of unexploded mines and bombs, largely a wartime legacy which continues to cause a problem.

The air element

Until the decision taken by the PNG and Australian governments in 1974 to develop a transport flight, the PNGDF had no air element. Instead, the air support requirements for the Defence Force were met by two Australian Support Units.⁸ Under current planning, the RAAF Caribou detachment in PNG will form the nucleus of the organic PNGDF air element, becoming progressively localised as PNG servicemen are trained. Although the Caribou was preferred by the PNGDF and PNG government because of its superior airfield performance and unique ability (amongst the aircraft types based in PNG) to carry certain awkward loads, the PNGDF is

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craft with an over-the-beach capability. Some 8 craft have already been built for the RAN. It has a 170-200 ton lift capacity and displaces over 300 tons. The craft can carry an infantry company or more and their equipment and vehicles over long sea voyages to all parts of PNG's coast and in the navigable rivers.

⁸ These two units were: 38 Squadron, Detachment A, RAAF (a detachment of 4 Caribou aircraft based at Jackson's Field, Port Moresby) and 183 Reconnaissance Flight (Australian Army) and its associated Workshop (total: 80 men). This latter unit was based at Lae and equipped with 3 Pilatus Porter turbo-engined fixed wing light transport aircraft and about 5 Bell Sioux light observation helicopters.

to be equipped with four Dakota aircraft.⁹ Dakota was offered by Australia because it is less expensive to operate and is a more convenient gift. Australia has only limited numbers of Caribou, several have been lost during service with the RAAF and it would be difficult to purchase replacements as production of the type has ceased. On the other hand the RAAF has surplus Dakota aircraft (military variants of the civilian DC3). Whilst the Caribou aircraft are certainly more expensive to run, they can land in well over one hundred airfields, including a number of strategically important airfields in the Indonesian border area which are at present classified as unsuitable for Dakota.

A belated start to the training of PNGDF ground and air crew was made in 1973 with seven pilot trainees and eight technical ground crew trainees. This training had been delayed until the future composition of the PNGDF air element was decided, but the trainees eventually commenced their courses before a decision was finally taken, thus saving a little valuable time.¹⁰ Some of the pilot trainees should complete their training by early 1975.

The Australian Army Aviation unit, 183 Reconnaissance Flight, based at Lae, was classified as an Australian support unit and therefore not part of the PNGDF. There were no Papua New Guineans within its ranks and no plans for the unit to be localised. Current intentions are that the PNGDF air element will consist of medium transport aircraft only and not include the types flown by 183 Reconnaissance Flight. Because of the valuable air support provided by 183 Reconnaissance Flight in the fields of reconnaissance and liaison, casualty evacuation and resupply of troops in the field and, because of the training value to the Australian Army of having the unit there, it was decided that the Flight would remain in PNG after independence.¹¹

There have been plans drawn up for a new PNGDF air base at Nadzab airfield in the Markham Valley near Lae; however, the expense involved in this project, together with the availability of the existing facilities at Port Moresby and Lae, make its adoption unlikely in the short term. In the

⁹ See Mr A.M. Kiki, *HAD*, Ministerial Statement on Defence, 25 April 1974.

¹⁰ See Department of Defence Press Release, No.58/73 of April 1973.

¹¹ The flight was withdrawn from PNG early in 1976.

longer term the development of Nadzab as the principal air base appears sensible. Nadzab is a better nodal point for air operations both in regard to the disposition of other PNGDF bases and the geography of the country and a base at Nadzab would be more economical and efficient. Such a project might, after independence, merit Australian financial support.

The land element

The operational units of the land element accounted for a high proportion (87 per cent) of PNGDF operational manpower. Here the PNGDF conformed to the pattern of black African armed forces in that the PNGDF was predominantly a land force. The principal PNGDF land element units were 1PIR, 2PIR, the PNGDF Engineer Company, and a Signals Squadron. There was also a small PNGDF Intelligence Section.

The infantry battalions in January 1974 were each organised on the basis of a 'restricted' establishment of 29 officers, 42 senior NCOs and 481 other rank. Each battalion had a headquarters, a combined administrative/support company and three (rather than the 'usual' four) rifle companies. The administrative/support group included a mortar platoon (equipped with 81mm mortars), a signals platoon, medical assistants and an administrative element. The members of the battalion Pipes and Drums (a nice colonial touch) also had an operational role as stretcher bearers. The rifle companies, each commanded by a major, contained three platoons, each with an effective day-to-day strength of about thirty men. The combat strength of each battalion in terms of 'bayonets' might, therefore, be reckoned at nine platoons, with an addition to this total of some or all the support company specialist platoons, depending on the type of operations. The PIR battalions were equipped with the current range of infantry weapons and equipment in service with the Australian Army. Indeed this range of equipment was to be found generally throughout the PNGDF.

The deployment of the two battalions was as follows. 1PIR was based at Taurama Barracks, Port Moresby, 2PIR at Moem Barracks, Wewak, with one of its companies located at Vanimo (this out-station company is periodically changed over with another Wewak-based company). Until 1974 1PIR had a company at Igam Barracks, Lae, but when the battalions were reorganised on a three rifle company basis to keep the PNGDF manpower level as close as possible to 3500 men, this outstation arrangement ceased. The deployment of the

infantry battalions has not led to 'specialisation' by one or another of the battalions to certain parts of the country. It has been policy for both battalions to patrol, train and carry out civic action tasks in all parts of PNG, so that 1PIR has commonly operated in the Sepik districts adjacent to the 2PIR bases and 2PIR has operated in Papua. This has been justified on the basis of the need for both units to be familiar with the whole country, not just part of it. Apart from operational reasons, familiarity with the whole country has been seen as an aspect of the soldiers' civil education, promoting a sense of nationalism and an awareness of how the people live.

The mobility this policy entails has been possible because the battalions are each located by airfields and ports, RAAF transport has been available on a quite elaborate scale to airlift troops to all parts of the country and water craft have also been used. Whilst the collocation of the infantry elements with airfields and ports facilitates rapid redeployment in an emergency, it would seem unlikely that the present extensive use of air transport for normal training will be sustained after independence when considerations of economy become more important. If this is so, the battalions will then tend to become more restricted to their own base and contiguous areas and it might become necessary periodically to change over the battalions in order to prevent any regionalist tendencies.

As a consequence of the concentration of the land element in Port Moresby and Wewak two key areas of PNG - the Highlands and New Guinea Islands - are without Defence Force bases. If the Defence Force does become involved in internal security operations in either of these areas it may have to rely on air transport for its deployment. The original intention to locate a third infantry battalion at Lae (for which Igam Barracks were constructed) would have meant that a battalion size force could have been rapidly deployed to most areas of the Highlands by road if air transport was not available. With a two battalion force this is not possible. In regard to the company base at Vanimo, its strategic location close to the Indonesian border makes it useful. It is a good location from which to mount surveillance patrols on the northern border region and if a border control problem were to arise in the future, the importance of Vanimo and its port and airfield would increase. The base at Vanimo also reduces the air support needed to deploy patrols in the border region.

The localisation of the PIR battalions in January 1974 was well advanced. In each battalion there were only about seventeen Australians (of these, sixteen were officers and one was a warrant officer). Thus the process of localisation below the officer level was virtually complete and about half the officer appointments had been localised. Of the higher appointments, the Commanding Officer of 1PIR in February 1974 was a Papua New Guinean and about half the total number of company commanders of both battalions were Papua New Guineans. On the other hand some Australian officers may be required in command positions in the PIR battalions into 1975 and in staff or advisory positions beyond then.

The PNGDF Engineer Company, based at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby, had a strength of eight officers and 159 men. Half of the officers and senior NCOs were Australian but almost all the other rank were PNG servicemen. The Engineer Company was organised to provide combat engineer support (such as the construction of obstacles and the carrying out of demolitions) as well as being able to carry out engineering construction tasks on a limited scale (such as road and bridge building). To carry out construction tasks the company was equipped with some engineering plant, including bulldozers, graders and dump trucks. This unit provided the basis of the Defence Force's civic action engineer capability, however, its limited number of men and equipment constitute real limitations on the projects which may be attempted.

The Defence Force Signals Squadron is also based at Murray Barracks with detachments at Wewak, Manus and Lae. It contained eight officers and 149 men (of this total 55 were Australians in January 1974). There was, therefore, some way to go towards full localisation in PNGDF communications. The Squadron links all the PNGDF bases with voice and teleprinter communications and provides communications with ships and aircraft as well as with land element groups operating away from their bases. The Squadron thereby provides for the effective administrative management and command of the PNGDF from the Port Moresby headquarters. Because the PNGDF communications system is independent of the communications provided by the PNG Posts and Telegraph Department (and of the Police which also has a radio network), the Defence Force is able to operate effectively

¹² In April 1976 only four Australian officers were still serving in the PIR battalions.

in the event of the failure of civil communications.

The logistic system

The logistic component of the PNGDF is both large and functionally important, accounting for 40 per cent of total Defence Force manpower and some 27 per cent of total officer strength in January 1974. Most of the civilians employed in the Defence Force were also to be found in supporting roles within the logistic system. Localisation within the logistic system was considerably less advanced than within the operational section of the Force. There were over three hundred Australians employed within the logistic system - an indication of both the complexity of many of the jobs and the late start made in training Papua New Guineans for them. Most of the logistic units are based in Port Moresby with their sub-units located in other Defence Force bases in order to provide support to the units they contained. Control of logistic units is generally exercised through senior staff officers within the headquarters although consideration has been given to the formation of a logistic battalion which would act as an intermediate logistic headquarters. It seems, however, that the present arrangements will continue. The Barracks Headquarters located in each of the Defence Force bases undertook the essential administrative 'housekeeping' functions, thereby freeing the operational units from this responsibility.

Repair and maintenance of Defence Force equipment was carried out by the three engineering workshops, the Patrol Boat Maintenance Section and dockyard. The workshop at Port Moresby was the primary installation and it handled the bulk of the work. In relation to maintenance of aircraft, when the PNGDF air element is formed most, if not all, major servicing will be conducted in Air Niugini workshops.

The Defence Force Supply Agency forms an important part of the logistic system. This organisation, of about seventy servicemen and civilians, was responsible for the procurement of equipment and supplies from outside the Defence Force, working in co-operation with PNG government departments and with the PNG Supplies and Tenders Board. It will also manage the flow from Australian sources of logistic assistance to the PNGDF after independence.

The Defence Force medical system has been designed to complement the civil medical resources available in PNG. It is, however, quite elaborate and luxurious by PNG standards

with medical centres staffed by doctors in all of the PNGDF bases (except Vanimo) and small but well-equipped hospitals at Manus and Port Moresby. Defence Force dependants as well as servicemen receive free medical attention from these facilities. There is also a well established dental care system. In January 1974 all the medical and all except one of the dental officers were Australians, but there were Defence Force-sponsored medical and dental undergraduates in training.

The PNGDF logistic system is the product of detailed planning and, where possible, procedures have been simplified to lighten the burden for the future Papua New Guinean operators of the system. Even so, some Australian officers claim that the stores control and accounting procedures remain needlessly complicated and will prove difficult to manage. The problem is of course to design systems which are both simple and effective but which also meet the criteria of financial accountability and the proper control of public funds. PNG politicians have already expressed concern about corruption within the government and corruption will, no doubt, also have to be guarded against within the Defence Force.

The training system

The PNGDF's training system accounted for only 10 per cent of total Defence Force manpower, but 20 per cent of the PNGDF officer corps were employed within the system. In any Defence Force the training of leaders and skilled men is a large task and this is even more the case in the PNGDF which has to replace skilled and experienced Australians with PNG servicemen. To a significant extent the future efficiency of the Defence Force will depend on the effectiveness of the training system. Formal military training, in addition to the normal routine of individual and collective training within units, is carried out at four locations as follows:

PNG Training Depot, Goldie River: recruit training, training in specialist skills, promotion courses and postgraduate training of officers;

PNGDF Apprentice Training Unit, Murray Barracks: training of Defence Force trade apprentices;

Manus Maritime Base: training of maritime members of the PNGDF after their recruit training;

Joint Services College, Lae: training of PNGDF officers.

The PNG Training Depot at Goldie River near Port Moresby has a headquarters and three training wings including a Recruit Training Company, an Arms and Services Company and an Officer Training Wing. Initial Defence Force recruit training lasts for twenty-four weeks and all recruits, with the exception of some officer cadets, undergo it. Maritime recruits complete their training at Manus at the conclusion of the Goldie River training. The minimum education level for General Service entrants to the PNGDF is PNG Form Two and during their initial training recruits undertake further general education. Military instruction is conducted in English, supported as necessary by Pidgin. The twice yearly recruit entries vary in size between 150 and 250 men.

The Arms and Services Company conducts courses in signals, engineering, infantry, clerical, driver training, catering, supplies management and music. A ten-week-long field engineering and civic action course, especially designed to increase the civic action capacity of battalion troops, has also been introduced. Promotion courses required in order to qualify for senior NCO and warrant officer rank are also held at Goldie River, as well as in-service commissioning courses for NCOs who are thought to have officer potential.

The important role of the Training Depot is emphasised by the fact that more than eight hundred personnel pass through the Depot's training courses annually. The training techniques employed are modern, emphasising training objectives rather than ritualised instruction, and the training facilities are excellent, although there are problems in raising the standard of Papua New Guinean instructors who are handicapped by a lack of formal education and poor English language ability.

The Joint Services College (JSC) represents a bold and innovative approach to officer training. Until 1974 PNGDF officers received their military training at the Officer Cadet School (OCS), Portsea. Before the year-long Australian course, officer cadets first underwent an eighteen-months-long preparatory course at the Military Cadet School (MCS), which sought to bring the students to Form Four level of education, give them a basic military grounding and prepare them for Portsea. This mixed PNG/Australian training was not very successful. Australian training was not fully suited to PNG needs, learning was inhibited by problems of adjustment and communication at Portsea and the total cost of training was great compared to a PNG-based system.

The first initiatives aimed at the formation of a military college in PNG were taken in 1970-71 and after some resistance by elements of the Australian defence community, which cited the case of New Zealand as a small country which continued to rely successfully on overseas training for its officers, the proposal was eventually supported. The Joint Services College (JSC) was approved by the PNG and Australian governments in mid-1973.¹³ It was agreed that the JSC would provide one year's common training for officer cadets of the PNGDF, Police and Corrective Institutions Service (CIS), and one year's advanced training for PNGDF entrants after the first year of joint training. Police and other non-PNGDF trainees, at the completion of the first year's training, proceed to their own special-to-service training at other places. The PNGDF cadets graduate at the end of the two-year course as second lieutenants.

The benefits of a year of joint training with the Police were not seen as simply economic. It was hoped that common training would develop understanding between the groups and serve the Somare government's objective of integrating PNG's elite by providing a common core of knowledge, understanding of government's aims and allegiance to government. The staff of the JSC includes both Defence Force and Police officers. The Commandant is a PNGDF officer whilst the senior Police officer on the staff is the chief instructor of the Joint Training Wing.

The joint training of Defence Force and Police officers is an interesting departure from Australian practice but not unique within developing countries. Whilst there may be obvious advantages in the arrangement such as developing a sense of nationalism and unity of purpose, there are also serious dangers because of the need to preserve a balance between traditional police and military approaches. Undue military influence in PNG Police training could lead to the development of an overly authoritarian, para-military force. Some might argue that the PNG Police, which has traditionally been an armed constabulary force, should be developed along these lines: however, this has been strongly resisted by Australians in the Police who look to the Australian model of kin-police, serving within the community, not apart from it. The success of the JSC may well depend on the manner in which Police and Defence Force interests are balanced. At present the location of the College on a Defence Force base,

¹³ A.M. Kiki, *HAD*, Ministerial Statement on Defence, 25 April 1974.

the collocation of the Advanced Defence Training Wing of the College and the preponderance of military staff within the JSC point to a very strong Defence Force bias to the training which even an impartial College Council may not be able to prevent.

Apart from the PNG-based training resources of the PNGDF, the Force at present also has access to training courses conducted in Australia and this is likely to continue in regard to specialist training for which the facilities are not available in PNG and for advanced officer training. Radiologist and flying training courses might be taken as an example of the former, junior officers' staff courses and attendance at the Australian Staff College as important examples of the latter.¹⁴

The Defence Force headquarters and departmental organisation

The PNGDF headquarters is located at Murray Barracks, Port Moresby, in smart concrete and steel buildings which contrast sharply with the disorderly sprawl of the PNG government's office complex at Konedobu. The headquarters accounted for about one hundred of the 377 officers in the PNGDF. In January 1973, the senior officers in the headquarters included a brigadier, five colonels and eight lieutenant-colonels. The role of the PNGDF headquarters is threefold. As defence headquarters it is responsible for the complete range of policy formulation and defence administration. It commands and controls the PNGDF logistic system. And the headquarters exercises operational command over all Defence Force units. This last function is partly achieved through the manning of an operations room which is in radio contact with the PNGDF's ships, aircraft and land elements. These three functions and the absence of intermediate logistic or operational headquarters account for what might be seen as a fairly lavish, over-ranked organisation.¹⁵

In early 1974 the headquarters was in a process of trans-

¹⁴See Department of Defence Press Release, No.127/73, Aug. 1973.

¹⁵The headquarters accounts for 75 per cent of the 20 officers of the rank of lieutenant-colonel and above in the PNGDF. This ratio of senior executive to total organisation is, in fact, less lavish than most of the important PNG government departments and comparable to the Police.

ition towards its planned shape based on a five-branch organisation with integrated civil and military staffs. Operations, Logistics and Personnel branches will be headed by colonels, the Finance and Programming and Policy and Planning branches are to be headed by public servants. The Commander of the Defence Force and the Secretary will be of co-equal status and both will have direct access to the PNG Minister for Defence. The allocation of responsibilities between the branches of the headquarters and the respective roles of the Secretary and Commander are listed as:

The Secretary is to have the following duties:
principal civilian adviser to the Minister; responsible for the efficient administration, control and accounting of all expenditure and revenue in the Defence Force; responsible for the direction and control of all civilian and military personnel employed in respect of his functions.

The Commander's duties are: principal military adviser to the Minister; command the Defence Force; responsible for the efficient administration and control of the Defence Force; in exceptional circumstances, to have the right of access to the Prime Minister.

The Branches

(The branches are co-ordinated in their activities by a Chief of Staff (Colonel), who has a small staff.)

Operations Branch (Military head): tactical operations planning; direction of military operations and training; military intelligence; survey and hydrography; military engineering; civic action; search and rescue; direction of civil disaster and emergency activities; communications.

Personnel Branch (Military head): personnel management; recruiting, enlistment; individual and specialist training; officer production; manpower policy and control; conditions of service; dress and discipline; protocol and ceremonial; establishments; welfare; health; legal services.

Logistics Branch (Military head): transportation, movements and removals; material development and planning; supply, policy and documentation; unit stores management; equipment, repair, maintenance and design; facilities, planning, supervision of design, construction and maintenance.

Finance and Programming Branch (formerly the Force Secretary's Branch until 1974) (Civilian head): programming, use of resources; estimates, budgeting and expenditure control; contracts, policy and control; internal audit; office services; library; civil personnel, establishments and administration.

Policy and Planning Branch (Civilian head): national strategic and defence policy; national military preparedness policy, force structure and development; policy in regard to the role and deployment of the force; external defence relations; liaison with national intelligence bodies; government co-ordination; parliamentary liaison; public relations.

The Secretary and Commander both have direct access to each branch; however military branch heads are responsible in the first instance to the Commander and civilian branch heads to the Secretary. The military deputy of the Policy and Planning branch has right of access to the Commander.¹⁶

The roles and capabilities of the Defence Force

The PNG government has allocated to the Defence Force the three roles of external defence, internal security and nation building.¹⁷ In regard to external defence it was clear that the government sought a force which was capable of deterring and if necessary repelling those incursions into PNG which might be too minor to attract the intervention of friendly countries; it was believed that the other countries would expect PNG to have this minimum level of defence capability. There was also the view that the Defence Force should be able to scout out and identify more serious incursions as a basis for seeking the help of allies, thus playing the role of a 'trip-wire' force. Beyond these situations, the Defence Force should be capable of playing an appropriate role in conjunction with allies in the defence of PNG against invasion. The approach to external defence therefore assumed the existence of close defence allies. In relation to internal security the PNG Defence Minister announced that the Police would retain principal

¹⁶ Interviews conducted at HQ PNGDF, Jan.-Feb. 1974.

¹⁷ A.M. Kiki, *HAD*, Ministerial Statement on Defence, 25 April 1974.

responsibility for the maintenance of internal security, whilst the Defence Force role would be of a secondary back-up nature, invoked only when the Police were no longer able to cope with the situation. In regard to the third role, the Minister stated that the fullest use of Defence Force resources was to be made in order to further the government's nation building objectives.¹⁸

External defence

Australian defence planners have usually based appreciations of the size of the PNG Defence Force on the defence of the PNG/Indonesian border in a situation of low-level military confrontation. Thus it has been held that the PNGDF should be based on a three-battalion force with one battalion able to operate north of the central cordillera, one south and a third required as a reserve, for retraining and rest. At present the Defence Force has only two battalions and some violence has, therefore, been done to this defence concept. On the other hand it might be argued that military confrontation with Indonesia now seems improbable and, if a threat were to arise, a third battalion might be raised within a relatively short time. The question, however, remains as to what external defence capability PNG has with the present two-battalion force of six rifle companies, compared to that of a full three-battalion force? In mathematical terms the PNGDF land element now has only 50 per cent of the capability once thought necessary by Australian military planners and it might be concluded, therefore, that the Force's external defence capability is indeed realistically represented as only a small 'trip-wire' force which would soon need the assistance of allies.

Nonetheless, the present force does seem adequate to deal with the minor operations envisaged. In quantitative terms, the PNGDF would be able to deploy a reinforced battalion group in the border area and maintain it logistically. This force might be deployed indefinitely, provided that elements of the group could be relieved from the battalion held in reserve and by other reserve units. This force, operating from company bases and supported by air, could effectively deal with small-scale border infiltration by small enemy groups or guerrilla bands. Incursions by groups above platoon size would probably tax its resources, although it

¹⁸Ibid.

would be within the capability of a battalion group to locate and identify larger enemy incursion forces, delay them and provide time to seek external assistance. The PNGDF therefore does appear to be able to meet its external defence responsibilities.

The Defence Force should also be able to act effectively as a border surveillance force, dealing, for example, with any attempts by dissident Irian Jayanese groups to use PNG territory as a sanctuary. Provided that this type of situation was on a small scale, a one-battalion force deployed in the part of the border affected should prove adequate. The present force would certainly be able to maintain the pattern of border patrolling conducted by the PNGDF over the past years.¹⁹

There are, however, two important provisos to this discussion of the border defence capabilities of the land element of the PNGDF. Defence Force operations will be greatly affected by the extent to which border incursions are localised and by the co-operation of PNG citizens in the border region. The PNG/Indonesian border is 725km long, it is exceptionally rugged terrain over much of this distance, communications are primitive and population on both sides of the border is sparse. If border operations were focused in only several areas, the Defence Force task would be simplified, but if border incursions occur along the length of the border the situation could quickly escalate beyond the resources of the PNGDF. On balance, it is more likely that low-intensity operations would be confined to the more populated border areas where there are cross-border track systems and traditional border crossing areas. There are seven major ones; four are north of the central cordillera and three south. From north to south they are: Wutung, Sekotchiau, Imonda/Waris, Kamerataro (west of Amenab), Ningerum, Boset (south of Fly River bulge), and Weam/Sota. Border control of several of these crossing areas should be within the resources of the Defence Force whereas simultaneous control of all of them would not. Effective border operations would also greatly depend on information and assistance from the local people. Poor intelligence and the non-co-operation, or resistance, of local people might place even minor border infiltration beyond the capabilities of

¹⁹ From June 1965 to April 1974 there were about 60 military patrols in the border area including about 10 patrols during 1973. These patrols covered over 13,000km of border tracks.

the present Defence Force.

In regard to external defence, generally, in areas other than the border region, the Defence Force could probably deal with small-scale guerrilla infiltration from the sea or air, provided that the local population were helpful and operations were conducted on sound intelligence.

The maritime and air elements of the PNGDF also have important surveillance and logistic roles in external defence. The transport flight would be committed to the logistic support of any force engaged in border operations where its tasks would include redeployment and resupply of sub-units in the operational zone. Apart from these tasks there would be a requirement for the type of support provided by the Australian Reconnaissance Flight aircraft. Light aircraft and helicopters would be needed for reconnaissance and liaison, casualty evacuation and resupply to small groups. If the Australian unit was not available the Defence Force might have to turn to civilian aircraft which might not be an effective expedient. Until now the PNGDF's operational doctrine has placed great reliance on the use of air support as a result of the rugged nature of PNG terrain, the lack of alternative means of transportation in many parts of the country and the influence of Australian air-minded tactical doctrine. Because of these factors the development of a PNGDF helicopter and light aircraft unit seems to be warranted. This type of unit might be developed slowly but until it is done PNG will remain dependent on Australian goodwill for an important aspect of its air support. It is relevant that almost all of the smaller defence forces in black Africa have helicopters and light aircraft as well as transports in their air inventory.

Coastal surveillance where enemy incursion into PNG was expected would fall in large measure to the five patrol boats. In regard to border problems one boat could probably be maintained continuously on a patrol station off the north and south coasts, allowing for maintenance and rest and relief requirements. (This is not to assume that the boats would be used singly in this way but to state a capacity.) The adequate surveillance of the rest of PNG's coastline could well be beyond the resources of the patrol boat squadron. Effective coastal surveillance would seem to depend on the complementary use of maritime reconnaissance aircraft, as well as the use of other craft for in-shore

patrolling²⁰ and a shore-based reporting system.²¹ Modern maritime patrol aircraft are probably beyond PNG's financial resources; however, PNG might be able to rely on Australian maritime aircraft which could operate from distant Australian bases in a manner unlikely to be politically sensitive, so long as they did not employ offensive weapons. Alternatively, PNG might decide to develop a primitive maritime patrol capability based on transport aircraft equipped with a rudimentary radar module (suggested by Bell, 1971:10), or special aircraft such as the Australian-built Nomad.

In conclusion, the capabilities of the Defence Force indicate that it is able to meet the very limited external defence role seen for it by the PNG government, but beyond this role the PNGDF would require expansion or the assistance of allies. Even in terms of the external defence role foreseen, the PNGDF is deficient in two areas. It is dependent on Australian maritime air reconnaissance and it lacks helicopters and light aircraft.

Internal security²²

Although the Police have the primary responsibility for

²⁰ PNG coastal surveillance might be supplemented by the small craft fleet of the PNG Department of Transport which includes eleven trawlers and more than sixty launches and work boats.

²¹ An Australian coastal information gathering and reporting system in the form of the Coastwatching Service operated until recently in PNG. (See *Australia in Facts and Figures*, No.40, Dec. 1953.) The PNG government may take over this service and operate it overtly rather than on a clandestine basis as in the past. Apart from the potential security value of such a system, it would also be useful for civil defence purposes, reporting incidents at sea and other civil disasters. A further task could be the reporting of the movements of foreign fishing fleets operating in PNG waters and unauthorised mineral exploration activities. The service could be based on schools and government posts equipped with two-way radio.

²² Internal security operations are defined in the Australian Department of Defence *Joint Services Glossary* as 'Military Assistance provided to the Civilian Authorities to maintain peace, restore law and order and safeguard essential services'.

internal order, PNG leaders have accepted the fact that the Defence Force should also be prepared for internal security tasks. PNG government policies will, it is hoped, avoid serious threats to domestic security, but policies need to be underpinned by security forces trained and efficient in internal security duties. PNG's internal security in the future might be affected by a range of problems including urban violence, widespread tribal fighting or armed secession and it may be assumed that the government will meet violence which threatens public order on a general scale with both political and coercive strategies.

Until independence, the participation of the PNGDF in internal security operations was subject to the provisions of Australian law, specifically, under the terms of the Defence Act and its Regulations. After independence, the legal basis for Defence Force participation in internal operations is subject to the PNG Constitution and legislation. Defence Force internal security training doctrine is heavily conditioned by Australian law and practice. Since the 1970 Gazelle Peninsula confrontation with the Mataungan Association, however, internal security training has been emphasised by the Defence Force.²³ In the future it is probable that the PNGDF will have a wider internal security role than now envisaged. PNG law may provide for a simplified procedure for the use of the Defence Force and wider powers for the Defence Force when acting in aid to the civil power. In spite of intentions to keep the PNGDF out of internal security, military aid to the Police may prove less exceptional in PNG than has been the case in Australia. The lack of military involvement in peace-keeping in Australia is increasingly exceptional in today's world and the Australian precept of using military force as a measure of last resort carries less weight in other western countries such as Canada and Britain than it does in Australia. The functional division in PNG between Defence Force and Police may also be blurred by the para-military character of parts of the Police Force, especially the mobile squads.

The effectiveness of the Defence Force in internal

²³ See O'Neill, 1971:14 and 15. During this crisis over 25 per cent of the Police were deployed on the Gazelle Peninsula and the Army was placed on standby, but was not sent. In 1974, the infantry battalions in the PNGDF were devoting about 25 to 30 per cent of their training time to internal security training.

security will depend greatly on the scale of disorder. Whilst the Force could enhance the logistic capacity and mobility of the Police, its usefulness in civil disturbances involving large numbers of people may be limited. It has a total of only eight infantry companies, or eight hundred men, readily available for these types of duties, and for this reason it might be unwise to commit the Defence Force's manpower prematurely. To be successfully employed, the Force may need to be used resolutely with the object of achieving a decisive effect, otherwise its manpower shortage may render it ineffective.

If the policy of generally keeping the PNGDF out of internal security duties is maintained the Force would only be used if the Police were unable to cope. The Police have the capability to deal with major disturbances, on the scale of the Mataungan confrontation, in only part of PNG at once and if problems arise which exceed this intensity, or occur in more than one place, the PNGDF would become involved. Even if the Defence Force were employed, widespread violence over more than about three Districts would be very difficult to control and the combined resources of the Defence Force and Police would be unlikely to hold down a PNG subject to widespread violence. The Defence Force, nevertheless, provides the government with a valuable reserve of force for the maintenance of domestic order. This reserve of force may also be used most effectively to back up the Police where they are deficient, that is, in logistics, communications, air and sea transportation. The capabilities of the PNGDF acting as an internal security force in its own right are limited by three factors. It has little manpower suitable for employment in low-intensity situations (e.g. the control of unarmed rioters rather than armed dissidents). The Defence Force, because it is trained and equipped with lethal weapons, may be inflexible when employed in an internal security role. Finally, the employment of the Defence Force in situations of disorder may lead both to the destruction of the PNGDF as a symbol of national unity and to problems of disunity in the Force.

The ability of the Defence Force to deal with secessionist problems merits specific consideration. It is well known that political leaders in PNG have previously advocated secession; however, questions concerning the actual likelihood of secession in PNG and the use of force by secessionists or government forces are ignored here (Griffin, 1973a: 116). This discussion is only concerned with the capacity of the Defence Force to deal with a military problem which

might arise out of armed secession.

Secession might be achieved by peaceful means. It might also be attempted by two violent strategies: either by a sudden *coup*, or by a protracted campaign of insurgency and civil disobedience. A combination of these strategies might also be adopted. To speculate on the capabilities of the PNGDF in the case of a campaign of violence is difficult beyond the observation that such a situation would be unlikely to emerge quickly. Insurgent movements require time to develop a political base of support and acquire arms and leaders. The Defence Force would then become involved in long-term operations to counter the usual tactics of insurgency in order to restore a central government control. The history of counter-guerrilla warfare points to bitter and protracted campaigns in which superior morale often conquers over superior material. If insurgency developed in a place like Bougainville, it might well prove beyond the resources of both the PNG Police and Defence Forces (in terms of their current size) to control. The PNG security forces should, however, be capable of dealing effectively with a range of insurgency situations where the insurgents did not have wide popular support and logistic resources. The evidence of both Indonesia and black African states suggests that guerrilla movements are less successful when they are in revolt against indigenous governments, rather than colonial or white minority regimes.

Secessionists might seek power by a sudden *coup* (by, for instance, seizing government offices, disarming the Police and issuing a proclamation over the local radio station). In this situation the new regime would tend to gain legitimacy the longer it survived and was thus able to mobilise domestic and internal support and consolidate its power. The effectiveness of the central government's attempts to put down the secessionists may well depend on the speed with which security forces were deployed to the area. Airfields might easily be obstructed and, in view of the lack of parachutists or troop-carrying helicopters, the introduction of Defence Force units might take several days as air and sea transportation was organised to deploy the force. In most cases, the PNGDF would probably be capable of putting down this type of local rising by operations on the scale of a one-battalion force (if introduced speedily), although the re-establishment of government control might require more troops.

The deterrent value of the Defence Force in relation to armed uprisings may also be relevant. The value of the PNGDF lies partly in its existence as a national force with a reputation for efficiency and loyalty to the government, and a Force of almost any size might cause secessionists to pause and reckon the potential costs of violence. Deterrence might also be achieved by the deployment of troops to potential 'trouble spots' on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, but as the Defence Force is concentrated in a small number of bases this is not practical. The concentration of the PNGDF on the other hand allows better training and supervision and it may also guard against isolated local units developing 'regionalist' attitudes. On balance, the present deployment of the PNGDF is unlikely to reduce its capability to deal with secession and besides, the permanent deployment of Defence Force units to parts of PNG where there are secessionist causes might now be seen as provocative.

Intelligence

The PNGDF's effectiveness in internal security operations is likely to be very greatly affected by the quality and promptness of intelligence. Intelligence organisations are frequently seen in a sinister light as threats to civil liberties and instruments of political control as well as being unnecessarily shrouded in secrecy. Efficient intelligence and internal security organisations, however, may also perform a positive role in contributing to domestic order in developing countries - by increasing the effectiveness of security measures and perhaps even avoiding military operations. A government serviced by a poor intelligence organisation is more likely to respond too late, with force, to situations which might have been avoided, or remedied by changes of policy or by negotiation. Without good intelligence and a proper framework for internal security decision-making and supervision, a government's developmental, administrative and security policies are unlikely to march together, so leading to greater security problems.

In early 1974 PNG's intelligence and internal security organisational structure was still in the process of evolution as Australia handed over these functions and as PNG planning was implemented. The formal organisational structure is also likely to be modified after independence as the system is adapted to the indigenous political system,

local leaders and PNG's particular internal security problems. The collection, collation, interpretation and dissemination of intelligence in PNG are the responsibilities of the PNG Security and Intelligence Organisation (PNGSIO).²⁴ This organisation carries out the range of functions conducted within the Australian context by Police special branches, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO). Thus the PNGSIO has three broad roles. It is concerned with the monitoring of internal security. To do this it maintains a knowledge of PNG internal affairs by means of reports from its own officers and information received from the Police and most government departments. Secondly, the PNGSIO is concerned with the broader issues of national intelligence including economic, political and foreign intelligence. Thirdly, the PNGSIO is responsible for the prevention of subversion, espionage and sabotage in PNG and the protective security of government employees and the classified information to which they have access. As the PNGSIO carries out the functions of the former PNG Police Special Branch, Police operations are dependent on the intelligence provided by the PNGSIO, although a great deal of information received by the PNGSIO initially comes from the Police.²⁵ The PNGSIO also has responsibility for servicing the interlocking structure of intelligence and internal security committees at the national and district level which have advisory and decision-making functions.

At the national level the PNG Intelligence Committee advises the government on all aspects of intelligence. This Committee, which meets regularly, makes its own intelligence assessments based on material provided by its secretariat. Information is received from a diversity of sources including the PNGSIO, Police, Defence Force and relevant government departments. The Defence Force is represented on this Committee. There is also an Internal Security Committee of senior officials who are responsible for advising the PNG

²⁴ This section is based on interviews with PNG government officials in May 1973 and February 1974. The PNGSIO comes under the ministerial responsibility of the Chief Minister.

²⁵ The PNG Police 'special branch' was formed in 1965 and disbanded in 1971 largely because the Police Commissioner of the day considered that special branch functions were best separated from the normal Police organisation. (Interview, Deputy Police Commissioner, 11 May 1973.)

Cabinet. The Defence Force Commander is a member of this Committee, as are the Police Commissioner and PNGSIO head. At the district level, intelligence and internal security responsibilities are exercised by District Internal Security and Intelligence Committees which have both advisory and executive functions and operate under the chairmanship of the District Commissioner. These committees also include Police, Defence Force, PNGSIO and relevant Departmental representation. (The Defence Force is represented under normal circumstances only in those Districts which have a Defence Force base.)

This intelligence and security organisation appears to provide an adequate framework for PNG, indicating that the experience of other countries has been well applied by those responsible for the development of the PNG system. The representation and participation of the Defence Force in the system provides the basis for co-ordinated PNGDF participation in internal security operations, if this should become necessary, within the compass of civilian control. The quality of PNGSIO intelligence assessments is, however, crucial to the operation of the system. The PNGSIO head is now a Papua New Guinean but many of the officers are still Australians. If localisation is rapid in this field there is a danger of reduced effectiveness which might be dangerous if it corresponded with problems of internal unrest after independence. The contribution of the Defence Force to the intelligence gathering task is valuable, supplementing PNGSIO assessments. PNGDF activities, such as civic action and patrolling and even the reports of soldiers returning from leave, provide useful information from which security problems may be identified (for example, tribal fighting, or cargo cult activities).

Nation building and military civic action

The PNGDF contribution to PNG's economic development and national unity might be described as nation building. This role includes the conduct of military civic action but goes well beyond it. The Defence Force also contributes to nation building indirectly. As a national organisation recruited from all parts of PNG, it is an example of integration to the rest of the country and a symbol of national unity. The Defence Force also contributes to nation building as a result of the skills and attitudes which Defence Force men acquire during their service. About 250 men leave the Force each year and those that go back to

their villages take with them non-traditional attitudes derived from military service about such aspects as hygiene, leadership and so on. Others leave the Defence Force with useful skills which may be utilised within the labour force. Training of drivers, mechanics, clerks and other tradesmen is part of this indirect nation-building contribution. The Defence Force in PNG may also be seen as a 'crucible of citizenship' - preparing its members for the duties of civil life as well as giving them useful skills and attitudes. The value of these contributions to nation building is somewhat reduced by the regular, volunteer character of the PNG Defence Force. If it were a conscript force, or even a volunteer force with short periods of service, the numbers of Papua New Guineans who benefited from the experience of military service would be considerably greater. The proposals made during 1973-74 to establish a National Youth Scheme represent an imaginative, but as yet unrealised, means of promoting citizenship training within a corporate structure and if the scheme is eventually adopted the Defence Force would be well placed to help run it. Defence Force leaders and instructors, barrack facilities and stores could be used to support the scheme (accepting that it would add to defence costs), although it is uncertain whether the PNG government will wish to establish a youth scheme with a predominant Defence Force influence. It may see in such an arrangement dangers in the expansion of military influence, as well as problems of reintegration when trainees complete their service.

The PNGDF makes a direct contribution to the nation-building objectives of the government in two ways. It carries out civic action projects and it operates as an agent of national administration. In this latter respect, the Defence Force maritime element conducts fisheries and sovereignty patrolling as an agent of the PNG government and the land element patrols remote areas of the country, representing the government as well as carrying out government tasks such as reporting on local medical problems.

The fisheries and sovereignty patrolling activities of the maritime element are important functions in national terms. As an archipelagic state PNG is dependent on her maritime environment for economic wealth and communications. The rapid development of PNG's fishing is expected, and the growth of the industry will increase the requirement for fisheries surveillance in order to control fishing by foreign fleets. Secondly, PNG's position astride important trade routes will lead to an increasing volume of shipping

passing through or adjacent to PNG waters and this is likely to impose responsibilities on PNG such as ensuring safe navigation, dealing with marine emergencies and controlling pollution. Thirdly, trends in international law towards extension of territorial waters will place increased demands on the maritime capability of the Defence Force. Some of the tasks which fall to the maritime element of the PNGDF have been carried out in other countries by coastguard types of organisations. This approach is unlikely to be adopted in PNG and the maritime element will probably continue to perform the resources protection role, supplemented where applicable by other government agencies. It is the opinion of PNGDF officers that the Force's fleet of five patrol boats is at present adequate for the natural resources protection role, but this may not be the case if PNG's territorial waters are extended, or if there is increased illegal fishing activity in PNG waters. Fisheries protection is likely to be a subject of quite wide political interest in PNG as it touches on problems of conflict between local village fishermen and overseas fleets operating in PNG. Local politicians are likely to demand action where the fishing grounds of their constituents are poached and, in particular, a measure of anti-Japanese sentiment may create a demand for tough fisheries policing by the PNG government.

The patrol boats of the maritime element have taken part in an active fisheries protection patrolling program in PNG since 1968, at which time there was an increase in illegal fishing activities in PNG waters, chiefly from Taiwanese and South Korean boats. Under present arrangements foreign boats (excluding Japanese boats) are not permitted to fish within a declared fishing zone (DFZ), which extends twelve miles from the coastline, unless they have a permit. Under the terms of a 1969 Japanese-Australian Agreement, Japanese boats are permitted to fish within the DFZ but not inside the three-mile limit. Although the Defence Force's fisheries protection role is shared with the Department of Fisheries, the PNG fisheries inspectors are limited by their craft to coastal waters. This leaves the PNGDF with an important 'open seas' role which is indicated by its significant share of arrests and 'sightings' of trawlers in the DFZ over recent years.

The maritime element is, at present, able adequately to carry out its role in co-operation with the marine resources of other government departments. This role is one which is valued by PNG politicians and constantly before the public eye as a Defence Force service. Because it is a service it

will be possible to measure its effectiveness, and any increase in illegal fishing in PNG may lead to charges that the Defence Force is not doing its job. An increase in PNG's territorial waters responsibilities may result in a need for more patrol craft (and perhaps a need for larger craft to take account of longer distances) and even maritime reconnaissance aircraft. PNG might, therefore, look to Australia for assistance in expanding the maritime element of the PNGDF in the future.

The civic action role of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force and the use of military resources on civil projects in PNG allows the Defence Force to contribute to the government's national developmental objectives. The extent of the Defence Force's contribution is, however, limited by its primary role as external defence force and it may be argued that if the nation-building role is over-emphasised the Defence Force might prove ineffective, if needed, in its primary task. There is also a strong economic argument for limiting the role of the Defence Force in physical nation-building tasks. The nation-building role of defence forces seems to have been used as a justification for increasing defence forces in certain developing countries and defence budgets, as a consequence, have taken up increasing proportions of the national budget. The utility of nation-building by the military is thereby challenged on economic cost-benefit criteria. The problem here is to identify and quantify nation-building benefits which result from the military role, such as social integration which may offset economic disadvantages (such as the higher labour costs and lower productivity of the military).²⁶

Apart from the economical contribution of civic action, it is useful for two other reasons. Civic action permits the members of the Defence Force to make a contribution to the social welfare of their country and in this manner the civic action program is complementary to the PNGDF serviceman's citizenship training. It reinforces attitudes of social responsibility and service to the people and ensures that the members of the Defence Force, who live in comfortable urban conditions, do not lose sight of the realities of PNG village life. Secondly, civic action has an operational dimension. Success in military operations in PNG, both in regard to internal security and externally directed aggression, is likely to depend on the co-operation

²⁶ This problem, with special reference to PNG, is interestingly developed in Bateman, 1973.

of the population. If Defence Force members look upon PNG villagers as 'kanakas' rather than fellow citizens they are unlikely to gain their assistance when they need it.

Civic action commenced in PNG on a limited scale with a postwar reactivation of the PIR. PIR patrols traditionally rendered assistance to the villages they visited, helping to build schools and local government council houses and tend the sick. From 1966 onward, however, emphasis on civic action increased (Hussey, 1968). Under current civic action policies, the range of projects undertaken includes the construction of bridges, fords and small airstrips, minor road and track construction, the building of school classrooms, local government council structures and medical aid posts and medical aid programs. Apart from engineering and health, the Defence Force is able to make a useful logistic contribution by virtue of its maritime and air transport resources. The tally of PNGDF civic action projects which have been carried out is impressive evidence of the scale of Defence Force assistance, and whilst there is a very definite symbolic importance attached to civic action it is no longer true to say that the value of civic action is more symbolic than economic.²⁷

The principles governing civic action projects and the mechanics of implementation are as follows. Requests for assistance are received from members of the House of Assembly, Local Government Councils, missions and officers of the District Administration. All requests are channelled through the government's Central Planning Office where they are co-ordinated in consultation with the Defence Force, although, in practice, many tasks are carried out on an informal basis, especially where the tasks are of a minor nature and there is what appears to be a once-only opportunity (such as an unscheduled, unladen military flight, which might be able to fly in urgent civilian cargo). The formal system is also short-circuited because of inefficiency in collating civic action requests.

The Defence Force prefers to contribute manpower skills, design support, instruction, supervisory and equipment

²⁷ This was the view of Mediansky (1970:41). Whilst the annual 'labour' contribution probably amounts to a total of about a month's effort by the equivalent of a battalion force, the effort, in terms of logistic assistance and contribution of skills, amounts to a more significant nation-wide impact.

capabilities and it expects to see contributions of funds, materials, equipment and unskilled labour from the civil community - the mix of contributions depending on the nature of the project. So far, Defence Force policy has favoured civic action projects which are relatively minor in nature, which can be completed in a relatively short period of time and which have a high impact on the community which has been helped.²⁸ Whilst there may be sound organisational and psychological grounds justifying this approach, it limits the scope of the PNGDF's nation-building contribution and so some senior PNG officers have argued that the PNGDF should also undertake major and long-term developmental projects. It is nonetheless difficult to see how the Defence Force could carry out major engineering tasks, given its small engineering resources, unless it were to rely on civilian manual labour.

Civic action effort has been focused on rural areas and few projects have been carried out in urban areas. This is based on the assumption that the Defence Force, because of its logistic resources and mobility, is best used in remote areas where the government is able to do the least. Whilst this may be a logically sound policy, the Defence Force's inactivity in its home areas does not help its image, which might, unfairly, be based on its comfortable barracks and elite status. There are, furthermore, increasing numbers of new urban dwellers living in squatter settlements who might profit from PNGDF small-scale civic action projects. This raises the political implications of the Defence Force civic action role. PNG political leaders in the future may become concerned that the popularity which accrues to the military and the managerial, economic and even political skills, which may be the product of a civic action role, constitute dangers to the survival of civil government. These dangers might be heightened if greatly increased emphasis were to be placed on civic action by the PNG government and the PNGDF. Because of the political dangers of an expanded civic action role, the government may be reluctant to see the Defence Force too active in this role after independence.

²⁸ For example the PNGDF Engineer Company conducted a 10-week project in the Western District of Papua in March-May 1974 involving the construction of 7 bridges and 36 culverts and upgrading an airstrip (*Post-Courier*, 28 Feb. 1974).

Civil defence

In early 1974 civil defence formally remained a civil responsibility although there were quite advanced proposals for the PNGDF to take over this function.²⁹ The PNGDF has a very significant capability in regard to civil defence and emergency requirements in PNG. In the past its manpower, communications and command system, special equipment, logistic and transport resources have enabled it to make timely contributions in cases of emergency. The Defence Force has assisted in famine, epidemic and cyclone relief operations, searches for ships, aircraft and ground parties and its communications system has been useful in the rapid reporting and assessment of damage and disaster after civil emergencies.

Under reorganisation proposals a central civil defence radio communications net was to be established at the HQ PNGDF and the Defence Force Commander was slated to take on the additional role of civil defence director, assisted by a civilian. A structure of National and District Civil Defence Committees was also proposed. Whilst such a system might be more efficient than the present arrangements, considerations of efficiency alone may not be a sufficient argument for a military takeover of civil defence, especially if they upset civil-military and police-military relations. For this reason it seems that the Defence Force will, for the present, continue to be employed, as in the past, within a civilian framework, although the consequence of this may be duplication of effort and some inefficiency. The issue may eventually be resolved when civil-military relations have been stabilised some time after independence.

Defence Force manpower composition and social functioning

Ethnic composition

Defence Force recruits are drawn from all parts of the country and the policy objective is that, as nearly as practicable, each District's representation in the Force should be in proportion to its share of total PNG population.

²⁹ Civil defence was the responsibility of the Civil Defence and Emergency Services Director. See Papua New Guinea Annual Report, 1971-72:17.

This policy has, in recent years, become more nearly possible as educationally qualified recruits have been available in the less developed areas. Nonetheless it remains true that specialist and more senior positions in the Force are over-represented by members from particular parts of the country.

Australian policy in the postwar period did not favour the exclusive recruitment of special 'martial tribes' as had frequently been colonial practice elsewhere, though recruiting did favour the traditional areas of wartime PIB and NGIB recruiting. As a result, in its early years, the PIR was dominated by Papuan NCOs (especially from the Gulf District) and Tolais who had been recruited for their superior education.³⁰ This influence has to some extent persisted up to the present time. Whilst the situation in recent years has been one of more equitable distribution between Districts, there are, nonetheless, significant anomalies which challenge the assertion that the Force is truly national. The percentages of PNGDF members from each District compared with the District as a percentage of total PNG population, as shown in Tables I and II, illustrate this problem. In general terms there is an over-representation of New Guinea islanders and Papuans in the PNGDF and an even more pronounced under-representation of the New Guinea mainland and Highlands. The Highlands region has only about half the representatives to which it is entitled on a national population basis. If the Southern Highlanders are excluded from the Papua total, the over-representation of the Papuan Districts becomes even more pronounced. Apart from these examples of mal-distribution, a 1969 survey found that two backward subdistricts (namely Wonenara and Menyamya) had no representation at all within the PNGDF. There is also a significant urban bias to recruitment which is likely to increase as urban population expands and as the PNGDF tends to recruit from within the families of its members. The danger here is that the Defence Force might become too urban and not sufficiently representative of a mainly rural PNG population.³¹

³⁰ See Bell, 1967a, for an explanation of the early postwar recruiting pattern.

³¹ During the year 1969 some 30 per cent were recruited from

Table I*

The percentage distribution of the PNGDF
by districts - May 1973

District	Percentage of PNGDF	District as percentage of total PNG population	Percentage under- or over- represented in PNGDF
<u>Papua</u>			
Central	6.5	6.1	+0.4
Milne Bay	5.5	4.4	+1.1
Northern	7.5	2.5	+5.0
Western	4.1	2.6	+1.5
Gulf	6.5	2.8	+3.7
Southern Highlands	3.6	8.1	-4.5
<u>New Guinea Mainland</u>			
Eastern Highlands	5.0	10.0	-5.0
Chimbu	5.9	7.7	-1.8
Western Highlands	6.2	13.6	-7.4
Morobe	7.9	9.4	-1.5
East Sepik	7.1	8.2	-1.1
West Sepik	5.3	4.2	+1.1
Madang	6.8	7.5	-0.7
<u>New Guinea Islands</u>			
Manus	3.3	0.9	+2.4
East New Britain	6.8	4.0	+2.8
West New Britain	4.1	2.4	+1.7
New Ireland	4.1	2.1	+2.0
Bougainville	3.8	3.0	+0.8

* PNGDF Records Section information correct as at 4 May 1973. Population percentages are derived from population figures shown in the *Papua New Guinea Annual Report*, 1971-72, Appendix 1, pp.264-6. Percentages do not quite add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

Table II
Summary for the PNG Regions

Regions	Percentage of PNGDF	District as percentage of total PNG population	Percentage under- or over- represented in PNGDF
Papua	33.7	26.5	+ 7.2
Papua less Southern Highlands	30.1	18.4	+11.7
New Guinea Mainland	44.2	60.6	-16.4
New Guinea Islands	22.1	12.4	+ 9.7
Highlands	20.7	39.4	-18.7

Whilst the present District imbalance in recruitment is partly due to a lack of educationally qualified volunteers, there may be strong political reasons for rapidly redressing the imbalance, especially in regard to the Highlands, even if it entailed a lowering of entry standard. Highland leaders have complained about their under-representation in the PNG Public Service and in national leadership positions and, in spite of the later development of the Highlands in comparison with other regions, PNG leaders will probably need to accept these demands in order to ensure the co-operation of Highlanders. Greater Highland representation in the PNGDF may therefore be predicted, even if it is at the expense of an overall expansion in the strength of the Force.³²

31 (continued)

Port Moresby and Rabaul, and together with Lae, Goroka, Mount Hagen, Wewak and Madang accounted for 60 per cent of enlistees. This trend may partly be due to recruitment taking place in high schools usually located in town centres.

³²The adjustment of ethnic representation seems to have been

It is theoretically simple to control enlistment on a proportional basis as between districts, but it is less easy and, in terms of efficiency, less desirable to control promotion on the same basis. Promotion should ideally be related to ability and qualifications and these factors are unlikely to be evenly distributed. On the other hand it may be necessary to make concessions in the direction of a fairer regional distribution of rank in order to avoid ethnic political problems, as has been the African experience in relation to officer positions. A 1970 survey of the land element revealed that NCO rank was seriously mal-apportioned on a District-by-District basis. It showed that, where about 29 per cent of the total force wore NCO rank, members from all the Highland Districts and the Western District were under-represented and the Central, Milne Bay, Northern, Manus and Bougainville Districts were over-represented. At both extremes, only 8 per cent of Southern Highlanders wore rank whilst about 48 per cent of Milne Bay soldiers did.³³ A further finding was that there was a tendency for those Districts under-represented to be even more seriously under-represented in the senior NCO positions which carried more authority and prestige.³⁴

The PNGDF is a youthful force. As most recruits are enlisted directly from high school, they are a lot closer to the minimum enlistment age of sixteen than the maximum of thirty.³⁵ The average age of the Force, taking into account the officers and senior NCOs and the other rank element is

³² at least a factor in the considerable expansion of the Kenyan, Ugandan, and Tanzanian armies after independence. See Lee, 1969:5 and 44.

³³ Australian Army PNG Psychology Research Unit, *Research Report* No.30, July 1970.

³⁴ Regimental officers in the PIR have reported difficulty in overcoming this imbalance. It has been found that Highlanders are frequently unwilling to assume NCO responsibilities and some who have done so have proven themselves to be unsuitable (personal communication, 1PIR, 1972).

³⁵ Enlistment for other rank members of the PNGDF is for an initial term of four years followed by re-engagements of two year terms (*PNGDF Manual of Personnel Administration*).

probably between twenty and twenty-three. This average age may well rise in the future as trained personnel recruited in previous years elect to stay on in the Defence Force - especially if civil employment opportunities decline in the future. The maturing of the Force in this way might lead to improved stability, especially in the PIR.

Education

The PNG serviceman belongs to an educated elite in regard both to the distribution of educational opportunities in PNG and the minimum educational standard of Form Two for entry to the Defence Force. Whilst there are many soldiers in the Defence Force who joined before the imposition of the Form Two standard, about 95 per cent of the Force have received six or more years of education.³⁶ This represents a dramatic improvement since 1957 when most of the soldiers in the PIR were classified as illiterate.³⁷ Educational standards affect the Defence Force in three ways influencing the capacity of the Defence Force to cope with managerial and specialist tasks, the way in which the PNGDF perceives and responds to political issues and the contribution that Defence Force personnel make to PNG society when they ultimately return to civilian life.

The educational level within specialist units of the PNGDF, such as the engineering units, is significantly higher than that within the infantry battalions. Even in the infantry and less technical areas, however, educational attainment levels are carefully considered in selection for promotion, and minimum education standards are laid down in order to qualify for NCO rank. Within the PIR it is recognised that illiterate, or even non-English speaking, leaders are unable to function effectively in administrative and training roles, although they might well be excellent leaders in other respects.

In order to train professionals for the Defence Force in the fields of medicine, dentistry, law and engineering, an undergraduate trainee scheme has been instituted. Students at the universities of PNG and Technology are sponsored by

³⁶In June 1969, 84 per cent had six or more years of education. The 95 per cent figure is an estimate based on the earlier figures and subsequent trends (see *Research Report* No.32, April 1972, para.24.

³⁷*Ibid.*

the Force during their courses and, at the completion of them, become officers. This scheme is similar to that operated in PNG by the Public Service and schemes which operate in the Australian Services. Defence Force teacher trainees are also being sponsored at PNG teacher training institutions. These trainees will eventually replace Australian professionals but it will be several years after independence before PNG professional officers, in significant numbers, complete their training and replace Australians.³⁷

In-service civil education programs have been emphasised in the Force as a means of improving the capacity of the individual serviceman to absorb instruction and perform skilled tasks. Until the termination of the Australian National Service Scheme the civil education program in the PNGDF was supported by large numbers of national servicemen teachers. With the ending of national service, the reduction of education resources has led to concentration on more specific educational objectives. Whereas during most of the national service period all soldiers compulsorily underwent six weeks civil education each year, emphasis is now placed on those who show potential for further education which would benefit them in their Defence Force service, either through suitability for promotion or specialist employment. In addition, all servicemen are encouraged to reach at least Form One level.

Whilst there was some opposition in earlier years to increased emphasis on civil education, especially amongst some Australian officers who believed that a 'cult' of education was developing at the expense of regimental efficiency, this view has since been discredited. It has been necessary to advance educational standards in the Defence Force merely to keep in step with rapid advances in the educational standards of other groups such as the Public Service and, secondly, a well-educated force seems to be needed if it is to be able to administer itself and maintain its equipment as well as being able to fight.

³⁷ A total of 27 students were selected for sponsorship under the PNGDF Sponsorship Scheme in 1974. Sponsored students are enlisted as officer cadets, receive an allowance and have their university fees paid. They are required to serve as officers for a period of up to five years, depending on the length of their courses. (See PNGDF brochure: 'Papua New Guinea Defence Force Sponsorship Scheme'.)

The continuing in-service education of the serviceman is also important from a national point of view. Servicemen who return to civilian employment are, in many cases, better suited to their new jobs as a result of the formal education they receive in the Defence Force. Although a 1969 survey of former PNG soldiers showed that only a comparatively small percentage of the 65 per cent in urban employment were able directly to apply their former military employment, the general benefits of military service were useful to them - that is, increased formal education and standard of social discipline and leadership as a result of their military training. There are now, however, increasing numbers of Defence Force men who have skills in demand in the urban sector as a result of the diversification of PNGDF units from the infantry base of the early 1960s. These include mechanics, plant operators and drivers, clerks and storemen. Nevertheless, there are still numbers of Defence Force men who do return to their villages, the majority of whom are engaged in subsistence and cash crop agriculture. There would, therefore, be considerable national benefit to be had in improving the agricultural and business skills of these men before they left the Defence Force. The Defence Force has, so far, placed little emphasis on vocational training to help servicemen to resettle in rural communities. This is unfortunate and more could be done. As he is likely to have favourable attitudes to change and some accumulated capital as a result of military service, the ex-PNGDF man who returns to his village is a potentially powerful agent of rural development, especially if equipped with agricultural knowledge and skills. Emphasis on vocational training in the Defence Force would, furthermore, complement the rural improvement objectives of the Somare government which has acknowledged that most Papua New Guineans will continue to live in the subsistence sector of the economy (*Papua New Guinea's Improvement Plan 1973/74*:51-61). A small-scale farming project which has been in operation since 1969 at Moem Barracks may provide an example for further development. This project provides training in animal husbandry and agricultural techniques to interested soldiers and the expansion of this sort of program on a Defence Force-wide basis would seem to be desirable. It might be linked to a government resettlement scheme for Defence Force personnel, involving assistance with land and loans.

Education within the PNGDF also plays a role in the training of servicemen as citizens. As described in

Chapter 1, Australians have believed that the PNG Defence Force might be educated to accept an apolitical role in the PNG political system. The assumption has been that if servicemen understood about the processes of democratic government and the relationship of the PNGDF to government, there would be little danger of a crisis in civil-military relations after independence. Nevertheless it seems to be a matter for speculation whether the political education of an army is more, rather than less, likely to develop a corporate political consciousness. Political education might prove counter-productive after independence, especially if the course of national politics does not correspond with soldiers' theoretical expectations of democracy, efficiency and honesty in government. Equally obvious are the dangers of no or little political education, as in Africa, where armies have so frequently seized political power, and there seems to be no ready answer to this problem.

Under existing policy in 1974, political education was conducted within the framework of civics and ethics training. All units in the Force were directed to conduct periodic sessions dealing with subjects contained in a syllabus and most units conducted a civics session once each week in which chaplains, education and regimental officers participated. Subjects ranged from 'How the Government operates' to the 'Need for Law' and 'Who Controls the Army?' This form of citizenship training has been intensified in recent years to meet the pressures which may be experienced at independence.³⁸

So far the citizenship training conducted in the PNGDF has been a mixture of Christian ethics and high school social studies. The content has therefore been non-ideological in character, other than for the intrusion of Christian and liberal-democratic values. Plans were afoot during 1974 to introduce a code of conduct booklet which was more explicitly ideological in approach, setting down social and military duties of Defence Force members. The

³⁸ The function of citizenship training in the PNGDF as PNG approached independence was explained in the following terms by the PNG Commander:

We must make sure as servants of the National government that we understand our responsibilities to the government and that there is no misunderstanding on our part regarding our responsibility both as citizens and as soldiers (HQ PNGDF Citizenship Training Directive 1973).

danger of establishing an explicitly ideological code of conduct, given that it might have benefits in terms of building morale and *esprit de corps*, is that it might be misemployed in the future to justify unlawful political action by the Defence Force. These are questions which will be more appropriate for Papua New Guinean, rather than Australian, leaders to resolve after independence.

Language

Like other national organisations the Defence Force is multi-lingual. English is the official language of command and of written communications. Pidgin is an important language for social communication and an auxiliary language for command and instruction. Apart from these two languages, Hiri Motu, the principal Papuan lingua franca,³⁹ and dialects (or *Ples Tok*, of which there are estimated to be about seven hundred) are spoken by members of the Defence Force amongst themselves, with their families and with civilian kinsmen.

Language issues are relevant to the functioning of the PNGDF in several ways. They bear on the pattern of communication in the Force and thus its effectiveness: if language is not comprehended adequately, orders may be misinterpreted and instruction not understood. Language also affects the social cohesion of the Force. It may be postulated that a common language unites in the way that a diversity of languages segments. Language use also affects the PNGDF's ability to communicate and establish rapport with other groups in PNG society.

English is PNG's principal language of government and it is also the official PNGDF language for command and all written communications, orders and instructions. It is the language of formal military instruction and command between officers and men as well as being the language of social intercourse between Australian and PNG officers and NCOs in

³⁹ Hiri Motu is now more popular than the former description Police Motu. Hereafter, where I refer to Motu I mean the lingua franca, not the dialect spoken by the Motuans of the Port Moresby area from which the lingua franca has been derived. (These and the following remarks in this section on language are based on discussion with PNGDF officers and NCOs, and personal experience whilst serving in PNG during 1965-66 and 1971-72.)

the officers' and sergeants' messes. It is, however, also necessary to recognise the important use of Pidgin in the Defence Force. Whilst PNG officers and NCOs usually speak to PNG soldiers in the specialist and headquarters units in English, in the PIR battalions they are more likely to use Pidgin. This language, which is PNG's most widespread lingua franca, has had a strong tradition in the PIR as a language of command, instruction and off-duty communication between soldiers. It was, from the beginning, an instrument of integration and a builder of *esprit de corps* as the PIR developed its own brand of Pidgin replete with slick idioms and military vocabulary. The use of Pidgin has continued strongly in the PIR battalions, although officially discouraged in recent years in favour of English. On the other hand, the use of Pidgin in specialist or headquarters units during duty hours has largely given way to English. This has resulted, to some extent, in the dichotomous situation of Murray Barracks being predominantly English speaking, Taurama and Moem (the PIR bases) being Pidgin speaking and Goldie River and Igam falling somewhere between the two. If this is the on-duty situation, the situation off duty in the married and single quarters environment is less simple. Here Pidgin, Motu and dialects are used more and English less and it is, therefore, easy to overestimate the extent to which the Force is in fact English-speaking. Few servicemen, other than some well-educated NCOs who also have educated wives and most (but not all) officers, speak English at home, preferring to speak their own dialect when conversing with their own families and *wontoks* (i.e. those of the same language group). Pidgin or Motu are also used, especially if there are non-*wontoks* present.

Although most servicemen may prefer Pidgin, Motu and dialect when off duty, they need English for their work situation. Many Australian NCOs and officers in the Defence Force are effectively non-Pidgin speakers and instructions and technical handbooks are written in English. Nonetheless Pidgin has continued to flourish in the Defence Force for several reasons. It is an expressive language with vocabulary and speech patterns that are easy to pick up, whereas many soldiers find English cumbersome and inadequate for many topics of social conversation. For the PIR soldier on patrol, Pidgin seems better suited to communicating with his fellow countrymen in the villages; with English he usually cannot. The use of Pidgin identifies the soldier with PNG villagers and establishes rapport with them; English almost always sets him apart as a member of an alien elite. For

these reasons the PIR soldier in most cases prefers to use Pidgin.

For functional reasons it seems that the PNGDF will remain in important respects multi-lingual. It will in this respect be no different from the PNG Public Service and Police.

The Defence Force will be able to perform an important role in promoting the use of Pidgin as the principal national lingua franca and, in so doing, contribute to the process of national integration as more and more Papua New Guineans are able to understand and converse in one language. One important implication for Australia in these observations about the multi-lingual character of the PNGDF is that Australian servicemen attached to the PNGDF in the future may need to be trained Pidgin linguists in order to be fully effective in a training and advisory role.⁴⁰

Social cohesion

The effectiveness of a military organisation ultimately depends on the quality of cohesion. That is to say, even when under operational stress armies have to function as a team with their authority and hierarchy unimpaired if they are to be successful in combat. The cohesion and corporate character of modern armies depends not so much on coercion but the indoctrination and resocialisation processes that result in their members accepting the norms and objectives of military organisation. Similarly, the cohesion of the PNG Defence Force derives not only from the patterns of organisation and authority but is also a product of morale-building activities (Little, 1971:293).

The Defence Force and its barracks may be described as a total institution in which almost all aspects of the service-

⁴⁰ Bell (1971:35) and other experienced officers believe that Pidgin will be likely to be used to the exclusion of English amongst troops in moments of stress, as for example, 'when the first shot rings out'. It is important that Australian servicemen who do need to understand Pidgin are taught it properly rather than merely picking up the brutalised 'baby talk' version known by Papua New Guineans as *tok masta*.

men's lives are the concern of the military authorities.⁴¹ The barracks enclaves provide for the physical and spiritual needs of the soldiers as well as for those of their families. The barracks contain supermarkets and swimming pools, picture theatres and chapels in addition to being the servicemen's place of work. Married servicemen live within adjacent married quarters areas and their families are also part of the military community. Their houses are periodically inspected for cleanliness, their families receive free medical attention and their children attend schools within the barracks. Although there may be opportunities for outside social contact, such as visiting civilian friends, playing sport and shopping at the town markets, servicemen in PNG, far more than their Australian counterpart, are members of a total institution (symbolised by the cyclone wire fence which surrounds Murray Barracks in the midst of Port Moresby).

The total character of the Defence Force organisation provides the arena in which the indoctrination and socialisation of Defence Force recruits take place. In basic training recruits undergo a process of disorientation followed by indoctrination into the mores of the PNGDF. Their civilian life patterns are disrupted, individual expectations are replaced by group objectives and they are taught to accept authority without question (see Yarmolinsky, 1971:397). Eventually, military training in new skills and rituals produces in the successful recruits new self-esteem and sense of group participation - they have joined the team (Little, 1971:202). In this process the recruits' prior social characteristics are de-emphasised, their hair is cut, they don a strange uniform, are given a regimental number and placed in the strange company of fellow recruits. From the start of this resocialisation recruits are regarded impersonally as soldiers and not Chimbus or Tolais. In this manner the recruits' old primordial loyalties are, to some extent, replaced by a new loyalty to the Defence Force,

⁴¹Goffman (1961:4,5) suggests that 'total' institutions are distinguished by the following features: 'all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same authority', activities are carried out in large homogeneous groups; all activities are purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution. Examples of total institutions include prisons, monasteries, boarding schools and army barracks.

their unit and leaders.⁴²

During the recruits' subsequent service new loyalties and their acceptance into the organisation are reinforced by vocational, social and even religious activities within the Defence Force. In the social context, servicemen mix with Defence Force groups which cut across primordial groupings. They play, for example, in Defence Force football teams not Papuan or Highland ones. Their spiritual needs are met by Defence Force chaplains and the composition of their denominational congregations are broadly national.⁴³

In regard to their military duties, servicemen belong to units within which they are members of smaller primary groups - in the case of the PIR, a section of about ten men commanded by a corporal. These primary groups form part of larger groups such as platoons and companies. Whilst each of these groups commands some of the soldiers' loyalty, it is probably at the section and platoon level that the indoctrination and socialisation processes are the most intensive. Although these primary groups exist in all the Defence Force

⁴² Primordial loyalty is used to refer to the 'givens' of blood, race and language.

⁴³ Religion has been consciously and actively employed within the PNGDF as an integrative force and morale builder. Religious symbolism, for example, plays an important part in the annual rededication ceremonial parades held in the PIR and other military ritual involving Regimental Colours is enmeshed with religious symbolism (it is of course true that even in countries like Australia which have a relatively low proportion of active Christians, religious symbolism is still emphasised in aspects of military ceremonial). In PNG the evangelising character of the Christian missions, their role in education, and possibly the spiritual attraction of Christianity in replacing traditional magico-religious practices, have made religion important to the lives of many, perhaps most, soldiers. Religion also provides continuity and stability in the lives of servicemen between village and Defence Force. The denominational composition of the PNGDF mirrors that of PNG society. The Anglican and Protestant faiths account for about half the total (the principal Protestant denominations are the United Church and the Lutherans). Roman Catholics account for just under half the overall total. Very few PNGDF members claim to be non-Christian.

units they seem to be strongest in the infantry battalions, on board ships and in other units where the work situation involves sustained periods of proximity and co-operative effort, as for example in the operation of a patrol boat at sea or within an infantry platoon on patrol.⁴⁴ For this reason it may be argued that these units are likely to be more cohesive and less likely than support and headquarters units to fragment along ethnic or other lines in times of stress.

In addition to the effects of indoctrination and the informal bonds of the primary group, the cohesion of the Defence Force organisation is reinforced by its formal structures. The demands of military discipline, the formal authority of NCOs and officers and the power which they wield through the disciplinary system all contribute to the corporate character of the PNGDF.⁴⁵ Each member of the PNGDF has 'unit identity', he is part of a unit organisation in which he has his own superior officers and a functional role. He is, therefore, in both a formal and informal sense part of the Defence Force team. The cohesion of the Force is enhanced not only by the total nature of the institution, but also by the serviceman's awareness that he is part of a privileged group in PNG society which is well paid, well housed and which possesses excellent social amenities.

Discipline within the PNGDF is more severe and the scope of military regulations more comprehensive than is the case in the Australian Services. This is justified on the grounds of the allegedly special need of Papua New Guineans for strong discipline, a view which is partially supported by the experience in PNG with both the Police and Defence Force. Discipline for both operational and support units in the Force is based on what has elsewhere been described as the combat ethic (see Rosser, 1973). Training with infantry weapons, drill and ceremonial are part of the routine for combat and support units alike and are seen as a means of building *esprit de corps* and maintaining discipline.

⁴⁴ A.L. George in Little (1971:298-306) argues that the loyalty of members to the primary group is intensified the more isolated the group is.

⁴⁵ See Janowitz, 1964a:23. Janowitz discussed the possibility of the primary group conflicting with the formal structure. This could occur in the PNGDF where there was poor communication between officers and men.

The standards of formal discipline demanded are probably highest in the infantry units. Discipline in the PNGDF appears to be founded on two assumptions about Papua New Guineans, one paternalistic, the other authoritarian. It is generally believed that the PNG soldier respects firmness and abuses concessions which he mistakes for weakness and that once a soldier 'fouls' (that is, commits a serious disciplinary breach) he is unlikely to reform himself and, therefore, he should probably be discharged. For this reason discipline in the Defence Force, by Australian standards, is generally stern and unrelenting and high standards of conduct are maintained. This formal pattern is to some extent humanised by a paternal style of management of troops by their officers. Deriving from a PIR tradition, officers are required to know and 'understand' their men and Australians in the Force are expected to steep themselves in PNG traditions and lore - in a sense, to love their troops in the way that British officers loved their Gurkha or Sepoy.⁴⁶

This pattern of leadership and discipline, which has developed in a colonial force, may not be suitable for a force commanded by black officers. The relationship between white officer and PNG soldier has, in a sense, resembled that of feudal lord and retainer and this is unlikely to be an effective or durable basis for relations between Papua New Guineans. It is evident that some PNG officers have a more informal and closer social relationship with soldiers, although the PNG officer on duty may be less inclined to interest himself in the total welfare of his troops. He is likely to be less paternalistic and more willing to let his fellow countrymen sort out their own problems. This attitude has led some PNG soldiers of the old school to feel that their own officers are 'second rate', whilst other PNG officers who have emulated their Australian counterparts are regarded by some soldiers as 'too Australian'.

In this connection, Luckham (1971) has described how officer leadership in the Nigerian Army changed in important respects after independence, although many of the outward appearances and rituals remained seemingly unaltered. This is likely to be the case in PNG also. The PNG officer will be closer to the social pressures and grievances of the men

⁴⁶ The close relationship between officer and soldier is more pronounced in the PIR than in most other PNGDF units where there is generally less opportunity for close contact between officers and men.

he leads and he will be subject to the influence of his own ethnic group within the Defence Force. It is unrealistic to see the PNG officer corps isolated from the pressures and conflicts of PNG society at large. The closed nature of the Defence Force organisation may reduce these external influences but not remove them. Familial and ethnic linkages are likely to produce close bonds between Defence Force and Police officer, public servant and politician within what will continue to be a relatively small and interlocking elite. Evidence of this was indicated by a survey of officer cadets at the Joint Services College. Over half the officer cadets had members of their close family either employed in positions within the PNG elite or attending high school and, therefore, probably destined for such employment.

The extent to which integration within the PNGDF has weakened, or actually destroyed, ethnic or regional loyalties bears examination. Are there, in fact, any ethnic 'flaws' in an ostensibly well-integrated and cohesive organisation? This issue is especially relevant to the performance of the PNGDF in the case of involvement in PNG internal security problems with ethnic implications. Although armed forces in developing countries have been characterised as nationalist organisations which are least affected by the tribal divisions present in the rest of society (see Lefever, 1970: 20-1), there are dangers in overemphasising this approach. Violent ethnic conflict within society at large, when it reaches a certain intensity, may spill over into the military (Luckham, 1971:8). Ethnic or regionalist tensions in PNG society could also be reflected within the PNGDF and these tensions might conceivably result in anything from a minor reduction in efficiency to the unreliability of units, the defection of ethnic groups, or, in an extreme case, internal revolt.

In spite of powerful Defence Force indoctrination and socialisation processes it is an over-statement to describe the Defence Force, or even the PIR element within it, as a new tribe (see Bell, 1967b:49-58). Whilst personal friendships do form across ethnic and regional lines and ethnic prejudices are reduced through barracks life, the importance of *wontok* loyalties is, in some respects, undiminished. On duty the soldier is part of a multi-ethnic environment and as a result his opportunities for *wontok* groupings may be reduced; off duty, however, *wontok* groupings may even predominate. Some officers believe that in recent years the soldier's preference for social mixing with *wontok* groups may, paradoxically, have increased rather than decreased.

This has been attributed to the growth of the towns in which the PNGDF bases are located and the tendency for soldiers, like others in the community, to fall back on primordial allegiances in a time of rapid social and political change (Geertz, 1963). The growth of urban population has meant that most PNG ethnic communities are represented and the soldier now has new opportunities for social mixing with his own group.⁴⁷

The influence of *wontoks* within the military system may also be seen in the line-boss system. Traditionally, line-bosses were the experienced, respected leaders of their own ethnic group; however, with the influx of large numbers of younger, well-educated soldiers, the influence of these men is now confined largely to matters of custom and traditional affairs, rather than military duties. They do, nonetheless, provide an informal communications and intelligence network which is sometimes useful to regimental officers as a means of finding out what is occurring. The line-boss system is an obstacle to complete integration in the PNGDF as well as being a possible means of group action in times of ethnic conflict. The term *wontok* itself has an imprecise meaning within both the PNGDF and PNG society. In the Defence Force the term more usually refers to an allegiance beyond one language group, such as a Subdistrict or even District. Members of small ethnic groups are happy at times to become identified with a larger group of greater prestige, for example, Tolais or Chimbus, and there is evidence that a process of regionalism, as a building block of nationalism, is under way in the Defence Force. Nevertheless generalisations of this sort are likely to be misleading because of the situational character of these loyalties. As Parker and Wolfers have pointed out (see Epstein, Parker and Reay, 1971:16), political loyalties are in a process of rapid change in PNG and 'a man's loyalties still tend to vary with the social content of a conflict' and, in the Defence Force context, a Kerema soldier may see himself as a member of a

⁴⁷ These observations are based on discussions with PNGDF officers and personal experience. The town *wontok* group provides hospitality, opportunities to discuss village affairs and to converse in the local language. In turn, the soldier is expected to honour his own reciprocal obligations which may include help with money, and some soldiers find these reciprocal social obligations onerous. They may even try to evade them by applying for a transfer to another base.

Papuan drinking group in the canteen but later support his Moveave kinsman in a political dispute with other Keremas.

Evidence of the persistence of ethnic groupings in the Defence Force is provided by social distance surveys that have been conducted. These surveys show that there is considerable degree of ethnic stereotyping, in the minds of both PNG and Australian servicemen. In a 1970 survey, for example, Chimbus and Keremas were ranked low and Bukas and Tolais were ranked high in terms of social acceptability (*Research Report* No.39). (Significant divergences were revealed in the opinions of PNG and Australian respondents.) Another project in 1972 provided evidence of high regard for Bukas and poor regard for Goilalas (*Research Report* No.62). This is a complex issue, however, and the research that has been conducted so far is an inadequate basis for any broad generalisation, other than to say that some Defence Force members are less acceptable than others as colleagues on purely ethnic grounds. Ethnic stereotyping has certainly been an aspect of the Australian experience in PNG and it has led to a belief amongst officers that certain behaviour is 'typical' of particular ethnic groups and, therefore, that the behaviour of soldiers from 'A' may be intuited. Whilst such beliefs may be based on experience and regimental lore, it is extremely doubtful if the relationship between ethnic groups has ever been as simple as that postulated by Bell (1967b:49-58):

As a generalisation it could be said that New Guineans have gained moral ascendancy over Papuans, Highlanders over fellow New Guineans and *Bukas* over all.

The significance of tribal prejudices within the Defence force is that they are obstacles to complete integration and possible chinks in the cohesion of the PNGDF which have operational implications in the event of an internal security role.

Further doubt may be cast on cohesion in the PNGDF because of the incidents of disorder that have occurred since the PIR was re-established. These incidents have revealed a lack of adjustment to military discipline, ethnic conflict, a reaction to perceived injustices in conditions of service and poor communication between officers and men. Some or all of these problems might recur in the future, especially those concerned with conditions of service in a time of post-independence austerity, and some of the more recent disorders which have been more in the character of 'industrial action'

may provide a model for future disorders. The consequences of such action would be serious if industrial action leads the Defence Force to recognise its political strength. The susceptibility of the Defence Force to group disobedience emphasises the need for careful and thorough man management, so that soldiers' 'worries' are talked out and trouble averted. It is also important that methods of determining pay and preserving pay relativity with the PNG Public Service and Police are fair and expeditious. Whilst the formal organisation, the indoctrination and socialisation processes and the strength of primary groups within units in the Defence Force have produced a well-integrated Force of high morale and *esprit de corps*, there are, nonetheless, traditional elements of ethnicity which also permeate the Force. Under certain social and political conditions in PNG which accentuated ethnic issues the cohesion of the Defence Force could not, therefore, be taken for granted.

Localisation of the Officer Corps

Localisation may be seen as a necessary aspect of PNG's social and political advancement to independence, enabling Papua New Guineans to find satisfying employment within their own country and allowing them greater control over their own affairs.⁴⁸ In virtually no area of PNG society, however, could localisation be complete by independence, and commerce, industry, the Public Service, Police and Defence Force all still require expatriate manpower.⁴⁹ In this respect the PNGDF is like the defence forces of black African states at independence which also relied on manpower assistance from the former metropole. And like African states PNG's manpower shortage will be greatest in regard to officers - the managerial and command element of the military - because, in all cases, it has been this group that was recruited last into the defence forces.

Localisation of the PNGDF officer corps involves two distinct aspects: the actual replacement of Australians by trained local officers and the consequent effects on the

⁴⁸ Localisation refers to the employment of Papua New Guineans in the place of Australians (and other expatriates) within both the public and private sectors of the economy.

⁴⁹ See PNG's *Improvement Plan 1973/74*, chapter 3; *National Times*, 19-24 Nov. 1973; 'The Stranglehold Australia has - and will keep on PNG'; *Report on Police Assistance from Australia*. Jan. 1974; and Pitoi, 1973:221-8.

military organisation in terms of efficiency, stability and professionalism. Although the first two PNG officers were commissioned as early as 1963 only between 30 and 40 per cent of the officers in the PNGDF at independence will be Papua New Guineans and PNG will, therefore, gain independence with the Defence Force subject to a significant degree of expatriate control.⁵⁰

In regard to black African states the pre-independence officer localisation program was characterised by neglect and mismanagement followed by a flurry of rapid localisation in the post-independence period. In no British territory in Africa, apart from Kenya, did Africans fill more than one-quarter of the officer posts at independence. (Forty-eight per cent of Kenya's officer corps was localised at independence (see Luckham, 1971:163; Lee, 1969:44; and Guttridge, 1969:26,34).) In French colonies the situation was somewhat better. Because of the different defence policy pursued by France there were, by 1960, about five hundred black officers in *Afrique Noire* and this amounted to some two-thirds of the total requirement.⁵¹ Australia's failure in PNG to improve on the localisation record of the African armies, in spite of a relatively early start, may be attributed to neglect and mismanagement as well as the limited number of high school graduates that had to be shared amongst a range of occupations. To some extent the small number of PNG officers was, therefore, inevitable.

As in Africa, the pace of officer localisation in PNG will accelerate after independence as a result of increasing numbers of educationally qualified candidates and the establishment of the Joint Services College. In January 1974 defence plans called for the PNGDF to have a complete complement of indigenous officers by 1977-78, based on an annual output of eighty officers from the JSC and a wastage rate of about 10 per cent per annum. Under current planning, however, the rate at which Australian officers will be

⁵⁰In January 1974 there were 79 PNG officers in a total officer establishment of 356 (22 per cent). It was estimated that there would be about 170 PNG officers by December 1975 and 250 by December 1976.

⁵¹Bell (1965:8) observes that there were only 55 black officers in 1955 and the subsequent program of officer production was primarily designed to develop French military capability in *Afrique Noire* rather than prepare indigenous armed forces for independence. French officers remained in virtually all command appointments.

replaced is less spectacular. Numbers of Australians may still be required up to the end of the decade if PNG officers are to progress through a range of career appointments and accumulate proper professional experience. On this basis, plans allow for about one hundred Australian officers in 1978, fifty in 1980, with only a few key specialist officers remaining beyond then.⁵² It may be doubted whether such plans will be permitted to run their course because of political and nationalist issues, especially if African experience is any guide. Despite the low levels of localisation at independence, African armies rapidly reduced the role of European officers within several years of independence. As the case of Ghana illustrates, a feature of the localisation process has been the telescoping time frame on which planning is based (see Alexander, 1966:12-13,99; Lee, 1969:44).

Officer localisation not only concerns numbers but also involves seniority and experience. In the PNGDF the shortage of Papua New Guinean officers is even more evident in the senior ranks. Of the seventy-nine local officers serving in January 1974, more than half were lieutenants or second lieutenants with less than two years commissioned service. The average years of commissioned service for each rank in January 1974 was: lieutenant-colonel 10 years; major 6 years; captain 3 years. (By comparison Australian Army officers have in recent years been promoted to lieutenant-colonel after 14-15 years service, major after 7 and captain after 3.) PNGDF promotion regulations provide for the following promotion requirements:

Promotion to lieutenant:	2 years, 3 months as second lieutenant
Promotion to captain:	1 year, 9 months as lieutenant
Promotion to major:	4 years as captain; promotion by selection
Promotion to lieutenant-colonel:	by selection

Amongst the more senior group of PNG officers there were only two lieutenant-colonels, eight majors and some twenty-two captains. Most of these officers will eventually fill the senior twenty appointments between the ranks of lieutenant-colonel and brigadier and this will create vacancies in the middle ranks which will be filled by even younger officers. The officer corps of the PNGDF will, in

⁵²Personal communication HQ PNGDF, Jan. 1974.

consequence, be younger and less experienced than the Australian Services' officer corps in the post-independence period.

Localisation policy in the PNGDF may also increasingly reflect tensions between conservative, professional arguments for prescribed career patterns, which take account of fixed periods of time in rank and rotation through career appointments to gain experience, and political and social pressures for adaptive careers marked by rapid promotion. As in Africa, the cautious advice of expatriate advisers who might tend to place efficiency and stability goals foremost, is likely to give way to a process of rapid promotion. Indeed, rapid promotion is already under way, although the Defence Force, in early 1974, lagged behind the Public Service and Police in regard to senior level localisation. Then, seven of the eighteen Public Service departmental heads were Papua New Guineans and there were two local Assistant Police Commissioners.⁵³ In May 1974 it was announced that a Papua New Guinean Police Commissioner would be appointed in May 1975.⁵⁴ It is probable in the light of these developments that pressure will mount from both the PNG elite and officer corps for more rapid advancement of PNG officers in the Defence Force. In the Public Service rapid localisation at the senior levels has been justified on the basis that Australians face conflicts of loyalty in their dealings with the PNG political leadership and local men are required in order to apply Papua New Guinean, rather than Australian policies and solutions. This argument might be relevant to the Defence Force also.

If rapid localisation in the senior ranks does occur in the Defence Force as predicted, it is likely to produce similar problems to those experienced in the Public Service. Reduced efficiency and even psychological stresses in those who are rapidly promoted may be expected. Luckham has shown how rapid localisation in the Nigerian Army led to serious organisational as well as political consequences. Rapid localisation reduced professionalism and produced tensions between senior and junior officers. Junior officers lacked respect for, and challenged the authority of, their 'senior'

⁵³ See *Canberra Times*, 16 Nov. 1973 and *Post-Courier*, 24 Dec. 1973.

⁵⁴ *Post-Courier*, 13 May 1974. Mr Pius Kerepia became the first Papua New Guinean to be appointed as PNG Police Commissioner in May 1975.

officers whose formal status did not accord with their level of expertise (Luckham, 1971:164). At the same time the high rate of posting turnover, as a result of rapid promotion between ranks, prevented the development of the usual patterns of influence and authority of seniors over juniors. Luckham argues that in the Nigerian case this led to the spread of tribal antagonism and breakdown of loyalties and, ultimately, revolt (ibid.). Rapid localisation in Nigeria also led to careerism and inefficiency. Accelerated promotion of officers in the first seniority echelon led to unrealistic career expectations. When the top posts were filled the opportunities for those who followed were greatly reduced and officers in junior posts saw that their advancement would be blocked for many years by another set of officers in the senior posts. Rapid promotion also led to a sense of *anomie* in which important appointments were devalued as mere stepping stones on an ascendant career. In the Nigerian case, the officer corps became restless as junior officers sought promotion but not necessarily the responsibilities that were entailed.⁵⁵ These consequences of rapid promotion suggest similar potential problems in PNG. Captains and majors in the PNGDF may expect rapid promotion to the senior ranks of colonel and lieutenant-colonel in a period of only a few years and the present group of lieutenants are likely to reach major rank quickly, whereas later graduates may see their promotion prospects blocked by young incumbents in senior posts. The PNGDF is aware of this problem which might be reduced by a slower localisation rate, earlier retirement of some officers and secondment or transfer of Defence Force officers into the Public Service. The possibility of employing Defence Force officers in other government jobs, such as District Commissioners, has been the subject of public discussion in PNG.

Rapid localisation may also erode the standards of professionalism in the PNGDF which have been nurtured by the presence of large numbers of Australian officers. The extent to which Papua New Guinean officers have absorbed the values and norms of western, military professionalism is a

⁵⁵ Luckham, 1971:170-3, defines this 'careerist' *anomie* as follows:

The limits are unknown between the possible and the impossible, what is just and unjust, legitimate claims and hopes and those which are immoderate ... [thus] ambition always exceeds the results and the unobtainable goal can give no pleasure.

matter for speculation.⁵⁶ The brief careers of most of the officer corps and the short life of the Defence Force as an indigenous institution may render transmitted professional values unstable, especially under political stress. The reality of military professionalism in PNG may prove to represent little more than a veneer of inchoate, professional socialisation (Luckham, 1971:120). Luckham has contrasted the observance of officers mess ritual, the image of 'officers and gentlemen' and the ritualised inter-personal relationships embodied in the military system, with the subsequent breakdown of these values. He has suggested that the local officer corps was, on one level, enthusiastically adopting western military values but at the same time undergoing a process of antagonistic reactions to western military values in favour of indigenous social norms, racial images and nationalism (see also Mazrui, 1973:9). It is possible that similar forces are to be found within the PNG officer corps and that the post-independence Defence Force will become progressively more localised, not only in personal terms, but also in regard to social values which may be in conflict with those of western professionalism and so the officer corps is likely to become more Melanesian and less Australian in outlook. Incompletely digested professionalism may also lead to the development of naive political beliefs within the Defence Force based on 'morbidly high self-esteem' and a view of the military as guardians of the nation and of public morality.⁵⁷ Professionalism, rather than performing the function of keeping the military out of politics, might conceivably lead to the opposite effect because of its incompleteness and vulnerability.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Huntington (1957) has defined military professionalism in terms of three characteristics: a body of expertise, social responsibility and corporate identity.

⁵⁷ The morbidly high self-esteem of the military has been seen as one of the causes of military involvement in politics (see Finer, 1962:70).

⁵⁸ Although Huntington argues, generally, that high levels of military professionalism produce an apolitical military, incomplete professionalisation may lead to the development of 'pseudo-intellectualism' in elements of the officer corps based on naive political theorising within the 'hot-house' officers' mess and headquarters environment. This may be encouraged by political instruction of the military in the citizenship training and the traditional professional

As discussed earlier in the chapter the proportional representation of Papua New Guinean ethnic groups within the Defence Force may assume political and organisational importance. The primordial composition of the officer corps is potentially even more important in view of its command and managerial function and a divided officer corps is likely to lead to a similarly divided Defence Force. Furthermore, the weight of empirical evidence in regard to military intervention in politics in Africa and elsewhere indicates that military politics are largely those of officer corps politics. The officer corps usually contains the more politically conscious, it provides the 'plotters' and leaders of the classical *coup d'état* process and it provides the leaders of the new regime. The NCOs and other ranks usually perform the role of willing executants of the officer corps' political plans, although they may exercise a degree of influence on them (see First, 1972:and Be'eri, 1970).

The ethnic composition of the PNGDF officer corps reflects the over-representation of Papuans and under-representation of Highlanders that was a feature of the overall Defence Force ethnic structure. In the senior group of thirty officers of the rank of captain or above in the Force in January 1974, 50 per cent were Papuans and there was only one Highlander. (Seven of the ten officers of major and above were Papuans.)⁵⁹ Whilst the regional distribution of the more junior officers and those in training at the JSC was more balanced it would seem that Papuan officers will continue to predominate at the senior levels on a seniority basis. Future recourse to the preferential promotion of New

58 (Continued)

duty of the officer to 'keep up' with politics and current affairs. Luckham (1971:126) observes that the January 1966 Nigerian *coup d'état* was blamed on officers 'too clever by half' who read too many books on politics and were too close to intellectuals and university students.

⁵⁹ Statistics derived from PNGDF records, Feb. 1974. Among the Papuan group of senior officers, seven were from the Central District and five of the ten officers above the rank of captain were from the Central District - all of them from the Rigo Subdistrict. Although the prominence of Papuans in the senior ranks of the Defence Force is remarkable, its explanation is simple. Early recruitment of officers was virtually limited to the principal source of high school graduates, Sogeri High School, near Port Moresby, in which Papuan students were over-represented.

Guinean officers might well lead to the development of ethnic tensions within the PNGDF. The over-representation of Papuans in the senior ranks of the PNGDF is, furthermore, apparently mirrored in the PNG Public Service, though not in the Police where they may even be slightly under-represented.

Given that there are certain ethnic imbalances in the Defence Force, there is nevertheless evidence that ethnic and regional affiliations may not play so important a role within the PNGDF officer corps as in other sections of the PNG polity. Surveys and interviews with Defence Force officers indicate that the Papua New Guinean officer appears to be strongly nationalist in his political outlook. Both senior and junior officers have spoken publicly and privately of their willingness to shoot their own *wontoks* if their duty as servants of the national government demanded it in hypothetical situations. The results of a survey of fellow PNG officers by a local officer show that there is an apparent consensus amongst the officer corps that, if necessary, secession should be met with force and, if required, the Defence Force should be used for internal security duties.⁶⁰ The results of two surveys conducted by myself also show that the officer corps at present holds strongly nationalist attitudes about the need for unity and internal order (see Mench, 1974:Vol.2, appendices). It seems that the PNG Defence Force and its officer leadership, like most African armies, will have a built-in inclination as nationalists to prevent separatism and the dismemberment of the country by secessionist groups.

The social functioning of the PNGDF reveals tensions between the traditional and modern in PNG society which may affect the role of the Defence Force within the PNG polity. The PNGDF is, ostensibly, a cohesive nationalist organisation whose members are subject to intensive socialisation and

⁶⁰ Personal communication, May 1973. The survey included 32 of the 48 PNG officers then serving in the Defence Force. All the officers surveyed believed that PNG should stay together in order to become a 'strong country'. Only 14 out of the 32 believed that secessionist issues would not disappear after independence, however, all believed that PNG districts which attempted to secede should not be permitted to do so. Thirty officers considered that the Defence Force would play an important role in holding the country together after independence.

indoctrination within the environment of a total institution. This organisation is modelled on notions of western military professionalism in which universalistic criteria such as ability, efficiency and duty rather than particularistic criteria such as tribe and language are emphasised. At the same time, traditional values persist in the Defence Force. The *wontok* grouping remains relevant, personal relations are influenced by ethnic origins, and a degree of traditional authority resides in the line-boss system. The PNGDF may, therefore, be seen as a transitional organisation, not traditional, but not yet modern. The persistence of the traditional values of PNG society in the Defence Force is almost certainly reflected in a similar manner in both the PNG Public Service and Police and it would be remarkable if it were otherwise.⁶¹

The key to the future stability and professionalism of the Defence Force lies in the officer corps. The successful development of the officer corps will largely depend on the tempo of localisation, the quality of individual senior officers, and, to some extent, the stabilising influence of a continued Australian presence for several years after independence. The significance of traditional ethnic loyalties within the PNGDF and its officer corps will primarily depend on the importance of these criteria within the PNG social and political environment. As the Nigerian case shows, an officer corps may remain substantially isolated from ethnic pressures until these issues escalate beyond a certain undefinable intensity and this would also seem to apply to PNG. The cohesion of the Defence Force under certain political conditions in PNG should, therefore, not be taken for granted.

⁶¹For a detailed comparison of the Police and Defence Force see Mench, 1974a.

Chapter 4

Defence and security problems in Papua New Guinea

National security and the PNGDF: questions of relevance

Papua New Guinea's national security problems are discussed in this chapter in the context of the relevance of the Defence Force to internal and external threats. 'Threat' is used here to denote a security contingency which might be faced by PNG in the future but for which no specific degree of probability is assigned unless otherwise stated. Papua New Guinea's national security may be defined as the ability of PNG to pursue its perceived legitimate national interests and to establish and maintain its own political, social and economic values, free from either external or internal disruption.¹ This definition raises questions as to the extent to which a small country like PNG is actually capable of establishing and maintaining its own national security, and the relevance of defence forces to the achievement of national security.

Probably no state is able to obtain absolute security under the present system of world order and it may be argued that even in the case of the major powers, national security is a relative rather than absolute condition - somewhat regardless of the defensive measures that may be taken. In the case of PNG it is evident that the definition of legit-

¹This definition may be amplified by the following quotations:

A nation has security when it does not have to sacrifice its legitimate interests to avoid war and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by war (Lippman, 1943:51);

and

Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked (Wolfers, 1962:150).

imate national interests needs to be more constrained than that of a major power if these interests are capable of being successfully pursued. Whilst a super power may have the military and diplomatic resources to secure national interests far from its own shores, PNG, as a small state, is unlikely to be able to do more than preserve its territorial sovereignty and the sovereignty of its coastal waters.

It is also evident that not all threats to PNG's national security, according to the definition that has been adopted, need necessarily have the character of a threat to physical security. The 'values' embodied in PNG's national security might also be jeopardised by the effects on PNG's political, economic and social life of so-called neo-colonialist structures and influences (for example see Hayter, 1971: Chap.17). Thus, PNG might conceivably suffer a loss of national security from the consequences of foreign economic or cultural dominance. Whilst these problems may appear more acute in the decolonised states of the Third World, they might also be experienced by developed nations, as for example by Canada. The point is that armed force is not usually well-suited as a means of dealing with such non-violent and insidious threats to national security, and the relationship between defence forces and this aspect of national security is, therefore, tenuous, except in so far as a deterrent military capacity is a factor in bargaining processes between small and larger states.²

As shown in earlier chapters, PNG decided to maintain a standing defence force at independence in the belief that this would contribute to its security as a nation. This decision places PNG with the overwhelming majority of new states which possess their own armed forces. PNG's Defence Force, like the armed forces of other states, may be seen to contribute to national security by the exercise of three functions within the PNG polity. The existence of a PNG

² The actual use of force by PNG against a larger state (say, Australia) on which PNG was dependent, would probably be a self-wounding strategy in most cases because of the severe internal effects resulting from disruption of the interdependence - for example, the cutting of economic aid and the removal of skilled manpower. Alternatively, the use of a low level of force against a specific target might be helpful in gaining international sympathy and support for the under-dog where there was an exploitable grievance.

Defence Force will symbolise Papua New Guinea's sovereignty as an independent nation-state. The notion of organised military force as a necessary pre-condition for political independence is as old as the concept of the nation state (see, e.g. Bagehot, 1872:52), and this traditional, whilst not undisputed, view has been accepted in practice by those Third World states which maintain defence forces, often in the absence of a rationally definable external defence threat. Secondly, PNG's Defence Force constitutes a constabulary external defence capability.³ PNG leaders have reasoned that, although small, their Defence Force is capable of deterring potential acts of aggression by removing the temptation of an undefended 'easy prize'. PNG has also implicitly accepted the view that, in a world characterised by armed nation-states and an international society in which conflict resolution and peace-keeping mechanisms are of uncertain reliability, a 'trip wire' force was needed so that PNG might earn the right to assistance from allies or international intervention in the event of aggression. Thirdly, the Defence Force, together with the Police, forms the PNG state's legitimate monopoly of physical violence - the government's internal coercive resources - and the Defence Force therefore has a contingent role in enforcing the authority of the government, by the use of force if necessary, over internal dissident groups.

³ Janowitz (1960:418) has defined the constabulary concept of military forces as follows:

the military establishment becomes a constabulary force when it is continuously prepared to act, [is] committed to the minimum use of force and seeks viable international relations rather than victory.

The constabulary concept, therefore, emphasises the deterrent effect of an external defence capability rather than the successful conduct of military operations in which victory is the goal. This preventive military role has become of increasing relevance in modern society because of the destructiveness of warfare, especially nuclear weapons, and changes in socio-political attitudes in many countries where warfare is now seen as a potential catastrophe. The constabulary notion is readily adaptable to the role of PNG's armed forces which do not have the capability to gain a military victory against larger neighbours, but rather, may deter, or seek a politico-military solution in the context of 'viable international relations'.

In view of the three functions, what type of defence forces does PNG actually require and how big should they be in order to carry out these functions? As a working hypothesis it might be argued that PNG's present and future defence organisation and equipment should bear a rationally based relationship to its security environment. That is, PNG's perception of internal and external defence threats should provide the basis for determining the size and composition of the PNGDF. Such a rationalist approach to the determination of defence force levels, however, involves some form of quantification of defence capability against threat and hence a calculation of what is 'enough'; this approach contains several problems for a small state like PNG.

The first difficulty is that what constitutes enough in terms of defence force capability usually depends on how much an opponent has (Art and Waltz, 1971:105). In an adversary or confrontation situation between major powers what constitutes enough may to a considerable degree be calculated, whilst, in this sense, what is enough for PNG is not readily calculable. The actual quantification of defence capability is also more difficult for a small country like PNG. In the case of a nuclear power like the United States, the decision to adopt a strategy of 'mutual assured destruction' of its principal adversary, or the capacity to fight one-and-a-half or two-and-a-half wars simultaneously, calls forth quantifiable requirements in terms of numbers of strategic weapons systems, missile warhead numbers, targetting capacities and so on in relation to the capability of the potential enemy. Calculation of the potential of these high technology weapon systems and of conventional ground forces is clearly a vital ingredient in the central strategic balance between the major powers, but for a small state like PNG, whose forces are composed of more primitive weapon systems, the quantification of defence capability is, by nature, less mathematically meaningful. Unlike missile systems whose performance may be reliably predicted, the capability of small conventional forces including infantry battalions depends on indeterminate factors of morale, training and mobility which render comparisons hazardous.

Furthermore, the quantification of defence capability and a determination of what is 'enough' in the military sense for a small country is only meaningful in relation to specific defence threats which are within the theoretical resources of the country to deal with. A small state, regardless of the strategy of national defence adopted,

short of the use of nuclear weapons, may not even possess a theoretical military capacity to defend itself successfully, unaided, against larger neighbours or potential aggressors. That is, the total war efforts of a small state may still be demonstrably inferior, militarily, to an enemy's limited war capacities - limited both in terms of the level of mobilisation and weapons employed, but 'total' in its consequences on the small state. It follows that where a small state is part of the region in which there are much more powerful states, the small state's external defence capabilities are necessarily tailored to meet contingencies which are limited war options of the potential enemy. The small state is, therefore, faced with the problem of anticipating the aggressor's limited war calculations which involve difficult and conjectural questions about the relationship of military to political objectives. To decide what would constitute a credible defence deterrent, the small country has, essentially, to decide what level of damage or risk the enemy would have to sustain before his political and military losses would be out of proportion to the objectives under dispute.⁴ These are matters of political rather than technical military judgement that are highly circumstantial in character and involve assessments of the trends in international politics and the prospects of intervention by allies at a certain level of aggression.

This problem of small state strategic vulnerability is shared by PNG. PNG's particular national security problem is that it cannot ensure its security by military means against the range of regional security contingencies which depend on an assessment of the capability rather than the intention of potential adversaries. PNG's strategic environment is asymmetric. Its neighbours are either many times more powerful than itself, or insignificantly small. PNG shares a long frontier with Indonesia whose armed forces are, on paper at least, nearly one hundred times larger than those of PNG and whose manpower resources in a primitive

⁴ H.A. Kissinger (in Art and Waltz, 1971:107) argues that: 'The purpose of limited war is to inflict losses or to pose risks for the enemy out of proportion to the objectives under dispute'. This would be the problem confronting PNG leaders in the event of military aggression. It follows that PNG's strategy would need not only to escalate the aggressor's military risks but also to escalate those of a political nature - arising from the prospect of PNG gaining, or the aggressor losing, allies and international support.

war-fighting environment would, comparatively speaking, be limitless. Indonesia's army of 250,000 includes about 100 infantry battalions although many of these may not be of combat status. Whilst there would, admittedly, be considerable logistic problems in Indonesia maintaining a large force on the Island of New Guinea, it might still prove possible to deploy a large force over a period of time, especially if operations were conducted at a technologically primitive level (*The Military Balance 1973-1974*:51). And, in relation to Australia, PNG faces a regional power with an equally formidable defence potential - based not so much on formed units as on technological and economic strength, as well as small but modern and efficient forces.⁵ On the other hand, PNG's own military power dwarfs that of her other Pacific Ocean neighbours, including her principal island neighbour, the Solomon Islands, which has no defence forces at all.

PNG's strategic situation is significantly different from other small states which are themselves part of a region of small states in which there is the possibility of approximate local strategic parity. For example, in East Africa and parts of West Africa it is feasible for a small nation to possess armed forces which constitute a military insurance against attack by other regional states, whereas this military option is clearly beyond PNG's resources. PNG also suffers from a second form of strategic vulnerability shared by small states that are not of great geo-political importance and thus unlikely to involve important national interests of the major powers (as do, for example, small states like Singapore, Israel and Cyprus). It is conceivable that PNG might become subject to military aggression which, because it involved no important major power interests, provoked no effective intervention or support by the major powers for international action. The lack of interest by major powers in the destiny of PNG might also affect the

⁵ It seems highly improbable that PNG and Australia would become involved in military conflict in the short term, nonetheless, in the longer term PNG may see Australia as a potential aggressor in relation to PNG's special interests, for example, in the Torres Strait. Even though PNG may be militarily weak she may possess considerable disruptive potential, for example, by sponsoring, or tolerating, the presence of terrorist and/or guerrilla groups in PNG operating against Australian shipping, oil rigs, etc., in the waters adjacent to PNG.

capability of PNG's own allies to intervene on its behalf.

These are rather theoretical statements of strategic vulnerability which depend, essentially, on a comparison of military strength; there are also other factors which contribute to an assessment of a nation's strategic 'risk'. The most obvious of these is the existence of actual sources and motives for conflict. This involves the step from assessing the defence capability of other states to determining their intentions. The problem for PNG, like most states, is that whereas capabilities generally take time to develop, the intentions of her neighbours may change relatively suddenly - by a change of government, a radical realignment of world powers or an unexpected and serious international incident. For this reason, states have commonly considered it prudent to plan for contingencies involving states which have the capability to attack them even though there may be the absence of a credible intention. There is the further important question of the dependability of allies and the effectiveness of international and regional mechanisms for conflict resolution. PNG might consider the prospects of UN assistance in the event of aggression to be at best uncertain. Although UN intervention has generally occurred where the major powers have been involved and had important national interests (e.g., the Middle East, Congo, and Cyprus) other instances of aggression in which the major powers have not had an interest have taken place without effective UN intervention (e.g., conflict between Rwanda and Burundi). As regards regional mechanisms for dispute settlement, it has already been suggested that PNG might form part of a regional grouping with Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand. This body might have a role in the resolution of regional disputes through a formal mechanism, or merely by the good will and understanding the association generated. It has also been suggested that PNG might seek affiliation with, or membership of ASEAN. At present ASEAN does not have a defence orientation although questions of collective security have been raised between the member states, but if PNG was a member of ASEAN its security (and relations with Indonesia) would be very likely to be of interest to other member nations. Apart from these two possibilities for international conflict management, Australia and Indonesia may attempt, as the two dominant states in the region, collectively to 'manage' PNG security problems between themselves in the interests of Australia and Indonesia, but not necessarily in PNG's interests. For this reason PNG may well feel that her security interests

were likely to be better met in the future by the 'internationalisation' of her external security problems (see U. Sundhaussen in Griffin, 1974:105-6).

Just because PNG's strategic environment is asymmetric it does not, therefore, necessarily mean that PNG will face the prospect of greater insecurity. What it does entail is that the question of PNG defence adequacy - the decision on what is 'enough' - cannot be resolved on rational technico-military grounds but is a matter of political and bureaucratic value-judgement. There is, therefore, an arbitrariness from the military point of view in deciding whether a defence force smaller or larger than at present would constitute a credible PNG external defence deterrent when the forces against which it is to be compared are, in any case, many times larger than the largest practical force option for PNG. In practice, therefore, the size of PNG's defence forces may only be meaningfully reckoned in relation to specific and limited contingencies; that is, an appropriate political definition of the external threat that PNG's forces are designed to counter. One might conclude that, to a considerable extent, the actual force level PNG needs in order to retain an external defence credibility is more a matter of political resolve, diplomacy and propaganda than of military assessment. There is in this way an inbuilt circularity of argument about PNG defence adequacy in that the credibility of the PNGDF depends on the sustaining of the confidence of PNG public opinion and the belief of allies and potential aggressors in the adequacy of its forces.

Because the level of force necessary to achieve very limited external defence objectives, such as those that the PNG government has propounded, is so problematic in terms of international politics and diplomatic consequences (would a one-battalion force be significantly less effective than two battalions in functioning as a trip-wire force?), it would appear that the external defence role provides no real force structure imperatives beyond that of a minimum 'critical mass' on land, sea and in the air, in order to be seen as a viable defence force. It follows that the size of PNG's Defence Force in the future is more likely to be determined in practice by a set of factors which includes the size of forces already in existence, the accustomed economic burden of defence on the national economy, the effects of bureaucratic politics on resources allocation within the PNG government and, in particular, the requirements of collateral defence functions. It is likely that on-going rather than

contingent defence functions - that is, the provision of internal security, the maintenance of sovereignty over territorial waters, civic action and disaster relief - will constitute more persuasive political and bureaucratic justification for altering the size of the PNGDF. This is likely to be the case even though the existence of the Defence Force may continue to be legitimated in terms of its national territorial defence function. In the process of establishing and developing the PNGDF for these collateral defence tasks, a credible external defence force will, almost incidentally, be achieved.

Although the special problem which PNG has in relating the size of her defence forces to external defence requirements (in contrast to major powers and small states in a region of small states) has been emphasised, because of the nexus between the defence *status quo* and future defence decisions, it is probably true that no country manages its defence policy in a wholly rational way and this will be true for PNG also.⁶ The forces in existence in PNG will, however, constitute a datum level about which argument for expanding or reducing PNG's defence capability will have practical meaning and a real life political and bureaucratic setting. Even if PNG's defence force size is not capable of being determined on a national military basis, this is not to say that the contingencies they are designed to meet and the defence preparations taken are not realistic. Emphasis by PNG on external defence threats that her forces can deal with, such as low-intensity military operations on the border, is realistic in terms of PNG's military capabilities. Beyond these minor scenarios, PNG's defence posture might also be seen as realistic in terms of either a publicly declared reliance on the assistance of allies in the case of more serious eventualities, or a more ambiguous position of reliance on the international community, or even the moral suasion of a posture of 'strategic nakedness' against

⁶ The overall conclusion reached in a survey which analysed the defence statistics of 26 African states, PNG and Fiji, was that the factors influencing the size of a country's forces were, in each case, *sui generis*. The size and cost of forces was not related to parameters such as population, land area, GNP or GNP per capita in a statistically significant manner, nor was a relationship to factors such as internal or external security problems or the incidence of military rule evident (see Mench, 1974a: Appendices).

serious aggression.⁷ But, because these options depend on the assumption that the political costs of an aggressor's actions increase with the extent of the military effort and that there is a threshold of military force at which international and/or allied assistance would be forthcoming, it follows from this analysis that PNG's external defence preparations are only realistic in a broader sense if the aggressor's limited war intentions and political costs, as well as the response of allies, are correctly assessed.

PNG's national security heritage

The level of PNG's military forces will, to some extent, also be influenced by the perceptions of the PNG leadership and public in relation to national defence and these perceptions are, in turn, likely to be influenced by PNG's defence heritage - in particular the extensive period of Australian colonial rule. This part of the chapter discusses the circumstances of PNG's past which are likely to affect the perception of, and policy towards, future internal and external security problems.

In relation to external security, strategic considerations were, from the days of Queensland's illegal annexation of Papua, an important component of Australian policy in Papua New Guinea and it is reasonable to expect that some of these Australian preoccupations with security and 'threats' have rubbed off on Papua New Guineans. More recently in the postwar period Papua New Guineans have been exposed to Australian attitudes about the 'red menace' and the threat of communist expansion throughout Southeast Asia. Papua New Guineans have also been aware of a traditional Australian view of New Guinea forming Australia's strategic bulwark within a forward defensive framework and, somewhat regardless of the currency of these ideas in Australian politics today after the Vietnam experience, Papua New Guineans may none-

⁷ It is not yet clear which path PNG will follow. Although the Somare government has spoken of a neutral option for PNG and appears not to want a watertight security pact of the ANZUS type with Australia, it similarly does not appear to be seeking an option of strategic nakedness. Mr Somare and Mr Kiki have on several occasions referred to an expectation of Australian assistance in the face of aggression and PNG has expressed interest in a regional grouping with Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia.

theless see themselves as situated in an exposed and strategically vulnerable position.⁸

There are also substantial historical reasons that might lead PNG to regard the prospect of external aggression as a realistic contingency, even in the absence of an obvious and current defence threat. Apart from the 'peaceful invasion' of PNG society by the colonial powers, PNG has experienced the violence of the Japanese military invasion of 1942 and the protracted allied military campaigns of reconquest which took place within the lifetime of most of the country's present political leaders. The period of Confrontation, tension in Australian-Indonesian relations under Sukarno and the hand-over of West Irian to Indonesia are also relevant to PNG security attitudes. These events led to military expansion in PNG and fears amongst the population of Indonesian military intentions. Though relations with Indonesia are now harmonious, it is not unreasonable to expect, and there is evidence to show, that some suspicion persists amongst Papua New Guineans. Suspicion of 'strangers' is, moreover, a salient aspect of traditional PNG society and this may influence the behaviour of PNG leaders in the conduct of their foreign relations with other countries including Indonesia. In addition to these factors, PNG shares a frontier with Indonesia and PNG leaders would be aware that common frontiers have historically been one cause of conflict between nations.

A further important element in PNG's security heritage has been the existence of defence forces in PNG - on a permanent basis since 1951 and of approximately the present size since the mid-sixties - and these forces constitute an established notion of defence adequacy in times of peace. Another fundamental PNG external defence orientation derives from Australia's traditional role in providing for PNG's external defence. Because Australia has been intimately and historically associated with PNG's external defence and has developed PNG's present forces and declared its willingness to continue to do so after independence, it might be a reasonable and entrenched expectation amongst Papua New Guineans that Australian defence assistance would be forthcoming if they were attacked. This expectation might be reinforced by a Papua New Guinean belief that PNG was of strategic importance to Australia because of its historical prominence in Australian defence thinking as an invasion springboard and because of its proximity, separated as at

present by only several hundred metres of shallows from Australian off-shore islands in the Torres Strait.

The assumption by PNG that there was some form of tacit Australian strategic commitment to PNG, somewhat in the manner of the British defence commitment to her former Dominions, might be tragically misconceived. There are a number of areas of potential miscalculation. PNG may misjudge Australian perceptions of PNG's strategic importance, the extent to which Australia is prepared to accept the international and domestic political burdens of maintaining forward strategic interests and the extent to which *realpolitik* rather than morality suffuses Australia's policies towards PNG. It would, for instance, require fine political judgement for PNG leaders to estimate the extent to which Australia would be willing to support PNG's security interests (even if, on balance, fair and just from PNG's point of view) where Australian support for PNG potentially threatened Australia's long-term relationships with, say, Indonesia, a much larger and more significant state in the region.

Australia could well be confronted with the similar sort of foreign policy choice in regard to PNG and Indonesia as she was concerning Dutch West New Guinea and Indonesia. In the absence of great power support for the Dutch position in the latter case, Australia had little alternative but to accept the outcome of Indonesian diplomacy and military policies. This situation might conceivably recur. PNG should therefore be alert to the limitations of Australian support and the possibilities of policy reversals on the part of Indonesia.

PNG might also have to face the prospect that Australia was unable, rather than necessarily unwilling, to retain her traditional strategic interests in the PNG area. Australia's predominant influence might be weakened or become untenable as a result of major power developments. It is conceivable that the Soviet Union, China, and a Japan whose military strength was expanding to meet her economic strength, might each develop interests in PNG. T.B. Millar has commented 'It is not unlikely that both China and the Soviet Union have considered the prospects for gaining or gaining access to maritime facilities in the area [Southwest Pacific]' (Millar, 1969:181). Australia might not be capable of resisting, or alternatively might see its national interests best served by accepting, the introduction of major powers into PNG. Whilst such a development would seem to nullify Australia's

long-standing strategic objective of keeping the major powers, excluding the United States, out of PNG, she may be incapable of preventing such a development and incapable of fulfilling any commitment to PNG in that regard. The United States might even see merit, in spite of Australian interests, in balancing major power interests in the region (for example, a countervailing Soviet or Japanese interest to that of China in Southeast Asia). Secondly, American withdrawal from Asia in the post-Vietnam era might be accelerated, leading to a United States acquiescence in other major power moves in the area.

This review of Australia's strategic relationship to PNG suggests that PNG's own national security in the future may importantly depend on the ability of PNG leaders realistically and accurately to assess the contribution Australia is likely to be able to make to PNG's external security, so that PNG may adjust its national security policies accordingly. For instance, in 1974 R.J. O'Neill argued that it needed to be borne in mind that Australia's military capacity to intervene in PNG was distinctly limited in terms of the current size of her armed forces (O'Neill, 1974).

Papua New Guinean perceptions of internal security problems are also likely to be influenced by the past. The colonial era in PNG saw the imposition of the rule of law, enforced under an extremely centralised bureaucratic system. Under this system a high standard of civil order, relatively free from security problems, was established by a colonial regime with a virtually unchallenged monopoly of violence. If this situation of civil peace has been somewhat disturbed in the last years of colonial rule by increasing crime, tribal fighting and urban rioting, the overall internal security situation in PNG remains one of a high standard of public order maintenance within a centralised political and bureaucratic system. Because this has been the traditional standard of public order in PNG, deviations from it after independence may be seen, both internally and internationally, as a significant failure of the independent PNG state to provide for civil order. A PNG government that could not control civil disorder might risk both a collapse of public confidence as well as a loss of international credibility and this might result in serious repercussions in regard to commerce, economic development and the flow of international aid.

A second important traditional Australian approach to the maintenance of civil order in PNG has been the total reliance

on civil instruments to keep the peace. Whilst, as recounted in Chapter 1, Australia (like Germany and Britain in earlier times) has relied on constabulary forces organised in para-military formations and using para-military equipment, Australia has never, in peacetime, employed military units to maintain order. The contingent internal security role of the Defence Force has never been exercised and this situation is likely to continue until independence. Even if an independent PNG government shared the former Australian view that it was undesirable to use military forces in this way, if it did become necessary to employ military units to maintain domestic order, an important and potentially destabilising precedent would have been created which would emphasise the seriousness of PNG's internal order problem in a more dramatic way than had the use of military forces for internal order maintenance been a routine procedure under Australian colonial rule.

The conclusion which may be drawn from this discussion is that the Australian connection has produced expectations amongst PNG leaders and citizens which may not necessarily be met in the years of independence. PNG may no longer continue to loom large in Australian minds in strategic terms and this may reduce the reliability of Australian strategic protection to PNG. PNG may have to face the problem of being made 'offers that can't be refused' by other major powers with strategic interests in the area and about which Australia was able to do little. In internal security matters, the high standard of civil order in PNG and the reliance on civil police during the colonial period may provide a problem in terms of the contrast to the post-independence pattern of civil order.

External and internal security problems

External defence

External threats to PNG security may be considered first, not least for the reason that this defence responsibility has been emphasised by the PNG government. The need to provide defence forces against the contingency of external military threats has been presented as the principal rationale for the maintenance of armed forces in PNG. Identifying PNG's external security problems might be regarded by some as an unnecessarily pessimistic exercise. This may be so, nonetheless, the suddenness with which new conflicts erupt and

the abruptness of changes and new trends in international relations give little grounds for complacency, as events in the Middle East have recently shown. Whilst the present international situation in relation to PNG and her region may suggest a benign environment this should not preclude analysis of some future possibilities.

There is, firstly, the question of major power conflict. Like all nations, PNG has at least to face the prospect, although it can do little about it, of nuclear war between the major powers - as unlikely as it may seem in the present era of limited *detente*. As others have pointed out, PNG's actions, like those of most of the world's nations, would be irrelevant to the outcome of conflict between the major powers and PNG would be largely defenceless against the physiological effects of a global nuclear war. Beyond the prospect of a Hobbesian world of 'war of all against all' in the aftermath of global nuclear warfare in which there was a removal of international constraints on inter-state violence and hence the need for states like PNG to defend themselves against military attack, super-power conflict has little relevance to a discussion of PNG defence problems (see O'Neill, 1972:194).

There is, however, the question of aggression against PNG by a major power. (Together with the nuclear powers, Japan and India might be included here. Leaving aside the questions concerning Japan's acquisition of nuclear weapons and/or conventional forces expansion, Japan, by virtue of its growing economic interests in the Pacific, deserves to be considered as a major power in the context of PNG's future.) As O'Neill (1972) has argued, attack by the major powers is unfeasible under the present pattern of international politics because of the enormous political costs of such action, nevertheless, there is the less drastic prospect of diplomatic coercion on the part of a major power backed by the sanction of force - coercion which PNG may find difficult to resist. As suggested in relation to Australian interests in PNG, the major powers might see the regional stability best served by the establishment of, say, a Japanese, Soviet or Chinese sphere of interest in PNG. The major powers may see the survival of the politics of *detente* depending on acquiescence in such new major power interests, perhaps in the context of a general balancing of major power influence within Southeast Asia, the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It appears to be an open question whether PNG's security resources - a small military deterrent, active diplomacy within the Third World and at the United Nations

and the prospects of Australian or Indonesian support - would, in all cases, guarantee PNG against major power penetration.

Turning from the major powers, there are two security problems of a less specific nature associated with trends in international politics. Firstly, there are the security problems which PNG might face in relation to exercising sovereignty over natural resources within territorial seas and economic resource zones, if eventually recognised under international law. The legitimate extent of national sovereignty in these matters is subject to opposing views at a time when the world's demand for maritime resources and improvements in the technology of extraction have increased the importance of the question. Consequently, the establishment and/or the policing of PNG's claims to resources in the sea, on and under the sea bed may provide the basis for future international tension and conflict. Secondly, PNG might become a target or an unwilling base for political violence and terrorism by extremist groups. Such a possibility might be seen in the context of a continuation of a world-wide trend towards the employment of private violence in international society, as exemplified by groups like the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. Extremist political groups may seek to subvert the PNG government, or influence its policies, by the employment of techniques of private violence such as aircraft hijacking, political kidnapping and terrorism. One scenario might be the intervention of groups based in Australia or Indonesia attempting to assist PNG revolutionaries in their struggle against a 'corrupt' or 'repressive' regime. One might expect the sympathies of the extreme Left in Australia to lie with any national liberation movement should it arise in PNG, although there may not necessarily be a willingness to support such a movement by arms and men.

The external defence problems which have so far been discussed - the role of the major powers and the vague threats to national sovereignty posed by foreign exploitation of natural resources and terrorism - may be seen as subsidiary to the two central issues of PNG national security. These are PNG's future relations with Indonesia and with Australia.

It may be assumed that PNG will see the threat posed by Australia in primarily non-military terms. PNG leaders might, however, see a 'neo-colonialist threat' to their country's national security as an independent nation as a

result of Australian commercial and economic dominance and influence over PNG society brought about by linkages of an economic, manpower and aid nature (see Hastings, 1969:260-2). A PNG government that decided to pursue a neutralist or even anti-Australian foreign policy could regard the remnants of Australia's defence interests - an active role in the PNGDF and continued use of defence facilities in PNG - as a threat to PNG's security and an obstacle to the success of PNG diplomacy, especially within the Third World. Abrogation of defence agreements, as occurred soon after independence in the case of the Anglo-Nigerian defence agreement, might follow on pressure from radical groups in PNG politics.⁹ PNG reaction to perceived Australian threats to national security might also be motivated out of a need to find scapegoat issues to divert attention from pressing domestic political problems and, as a result, crisis-provoking PNG policies in regard to PNG/Australian relations may become part of the rhetoric of post-independence politics, important as a means of establishing the myth of nationalist struggle - a familiar problem to new states which have achieved independence with little or no armed struggle.

There is also the potentially difficult question of the Torres Strait border with Australia.¹⁰ Apart from the practical difficulties and even injustices which PNG may see in the present border, the readjustment of the border may emerge as an ideal nationalist *cause célèbre* - a cause in which justice might well be seen by sections of the Australian public to rest with the PNG claims. If the PNG government, or local groups of Papua New Guineans in the border area, decided to employ even a low level of violence to draw attention to their cause in the face of Australian intransigence on the issue, Australia might be confronted with a difficult problem. Interference with the Australian administration of the Torres Strait population and, for instance, Papua New Guinean occupation of off-shore islands at present belonging to Australia, or illegal fishing by PNG

⁹ See Phillips, 1964:Chap.III. The agreement was dropped in response to pressure from other African states though the consequences of the abrogation were largely symbolic: British defence aid subsequently continued and, indeed, broadened in scope. This might provide a key to the pattern of post-independence PNG-Australian defence relations.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the historical origins of the Torres Strait border and previous readjustment proposals see Van der Veur, 1966.

craft in Australian waters, might confront Australia with difficult diplomatic and military problems.

The second and possibly the most difficult general strategic problem that PNG may face is that of her relationship to Indonesia, and here four types of situation which threatened relations between PNG and her large neighbour may be envisaged. The question of the border between PNG and Indonesia raises several specific contingencies. It is conceivable that Indonesian integrationist policies in Irian Jaya may not be successful in dealing with Irianese dissent. Although the present extent of the Irianese dissident organisation, the number of men under arms, the number of supporters and the nature of its political base are difficult to gauge, dissent in Irian Jaya might in the future grow in effectiveness (see Hastings, 1969:218-20, 267). Political forces in Irian Jaya might be able to establish links with PNG groups by espousing irridentist causes such as 'one island, one people, one nation'. In this connection, the political role of the Irianese refugee community within PNG and its relationship to the PNG political leadership would be an important determinant of PNG government policy on this question.¹¹ The present level of co-operation between the PNG and Indonesian governments in the control of the border area and the prevention of the movement of dissidents into PNG may be difficult to justify in PNG if Indonesian rule in Irian Jaya is seen in the future as repressive and if political dissidence increases.¹²

There are also security implications for PNG arising from Indonesia's political future after the present Suharto regime. Here there are manifold possibilities, none of which should be totally discounted in the longer term future,

¹¹ There are about 500 Irianese refugees living in PNG, including a number with tertiary education qualifications who occupy positions in the PNG Public Service (*National Times*, 19-24 Nov. 1973).

¹² A border demarkation agreement between Indonesia and PNG was signed on 12 February 1973 in Djakarta; a Border Arrangements Agreement was signed on 13 November 1973, establishing principles for the regulation and administration of border security. It was agreed that 'Governments on either side of the border agree to continue to co-operate with one another in order to prevent the use of their respective territories in or in the vicinity of the border areas for hostile activities against the other ...' (Article 7).

namely, a radical revolutionary struggle, a process of national fragmentation and rebellion on the pattern of the 1958 PRRI and Permesta regionalist risings (see Grant, 1964: 31-2), or even the return to a militant regime with expansionist foreign policy objectives. Although Indonesia's long-term political future may well be one marked more by stability and less dramatic change, any of the above contingencies might well embroil PNG in Indonesia's internal affairs as a result of its proximity and common frontier.

There is, furthermore, the question of how a regime of any persuasion in Indonesia might react, perhaps unilaterally, to extreme political instability, secessionism and civil disorder in PNG. Faced with such a problem, Indonesia might fear the risks of 'contagion' within Irian Jaya and, in the emergence of a broken-backed state in PNG, it might see a base for subversion against Indonesia and a danger in terms of a 'demonstration effect' on the Indonesian polity. Lastly there is the prospect that Indonesia may interpret the growth of a prosperous, stable and democratically governed PNG state as an insidious threat to the security and stability of Indonesia's own political system - especially a threat to the legitimacy of her continued rule in Irian Jaya if economic and political development there was seen seriously to lag behind that of PNG. Indonesia might also pursue non-violent strategies in order to gain political influence over PNG. Indonesian influence might be established by the development of extremely close relations between the two countries and PNG 'understanding' of Indonesian national interests. Indonesia's present military-led government might see merit in establishing close relations with particular sectors of PNG society - such as the Defence Force and Police - in order to influence the course of PNG political change - for example encouraging the development of a military role in PNG politics.

This discussion of potential sources of conflict between PNG and Indonesia suggests three levels of possible military action: low-intensity border friction and conflict with insurgents, confrontation with guerrilla and small unit forces and, thirdly, conventional military attack. Border friction might arise as a result of PNG's deciding to prevent the use of PNG territory as a sanctuary for Irianese actions against the Indonesian government. Dissidents might try to foment discontent in the PNG border region or terrorise PNG border populations in protest against a lack of official PNG sympathy for this cause. Alternatively, conflict might arise between PNG and Indonesian security

forces as a result of Indonesian pursuit of Irianese dissidents into PNG territory in a situation where PNG sympathies lay with the dissidents. This type of confrontation might also result in attacks on villages and border administrative posts and deeper raids into PNG territory.

The overall conclusion to be drawn from this discussion of external defence is that PNG faces a diversity of contingencies, most of which appear, today, to be in the category of possible but unlikely. In the longer-term future there are greater uncertainties which are related to the nature of political change in Indonesia, Japan's future foreign and defence policies and major power relations in the Pacific area. Beyond the capacity, based on the present defence organisation, to deal with a very limited range of violence, PNG will need to rely substantially on its diplomacy to avert conflict and if that strategy fails it will need to look for allies and international support.

Internal security

Useful speculation about PNG's future internal security problems involves an analysis of aspects of PNG's social, economic and political systems as a result of the inter-relationship of these factors and civil violence. Although PNG may apply the rationale of external defence in maintaining the PNGDF, there are grounds for believing that the most important responsibility of the Defence Force will be the maintenance of internal security.¹³ Indeed, PNG political observers, public servants and indigenous members of the PNGDF officer corps have commonly assumed that threats to PNG's national security are more likely to be internal than external.

PNG's transition to independence has already involved considerable public speculation concerning the likelihood of

¹³ The distinction between internal and external security problems is usually made; however, internal problems in PNG are unlikely to occur without entailing an international dimension as well. Opposing sides to internal conflicts - the government, secessionists, dissidents of one form or another - may be expected to vie for international support of a diplomatic, financial or logistic nature. Other nations will, therefore, probably be obliged to adopt policies of some sort towards serious internal problems in PNG although these problems might be primarily domestic in origin.

political instability and civil disorder after independence and this speculation has been fuelled by reports of increased urban crime and tribal fighting, widespread discussion of secessionist claims and gloomy predictions of disorder by expatriate and indigenous residents in PNG. Credence has been lent to the predictions of post-independence troubles by what appear to be at least plausible comparisons with those black African states which, at similar stages of development, experienced political chaos and/or civil disorder. Apart from the pessimists, there have also been more optimistic observers who have pointed to PNG's own emerging political style and the relative political stability experienced so far in the progress towards independence. PNG's future may, therefore, be seen in terms of a debate between optimists and pessimists. For the pessimists, the problems of political order, secessionism and regionalism, controlling social change and maintaining civil order have appeared dauntingly insurmountable. Whereas, for the optimists, the apparently unique quality of PNG society, PNG's comparative economic affluence, the politics of Melanesian Consensus, and, in some quarters, the prospect of the eventual establishment of a one-party state, have provided grounds for believing in a non-violent and politically stable future.

Papua New Guinea's internal security appears to depend on the stability of the country's political system. Effective, stable government in PNG involves two aspects. The government of the day needs to be able to claim the support of significant sections of the country's citizens and, secondly, the government needs to be able to command the legitimate monopoly of violence. Stable government in PNG therefore requires the establishment of political authority, that is, the acceptance by Papua New Guineans of the legitimacy of their government's role in governing over the whole country (see Gurr, 1970:183-8). And, apart from the co-operation of the citizens, the PNG state must also be able, if necessary, to enforce its authority over criminals and dissident political groups who break the law, by legal sanctions, including the use of force.

The legitimacy of the PNG government after independence may be subject to challenge as a result of separatist and secessionist pressures and also as a result of political dispute over the shape of PNG's political institutions. The present form of government, which is based on liberal democratic traditions of parliamentary-cabinet government, relies on widely accepted conventions of political behaviour.

Experience of parliamentary rule in other countries, however, points to the need for a mature, national political party structure in order to sustain this type of government and, in PNG, political parties are organisationally weak and in the main regionally, rather than nationally, based (see Stephen, 1972:175). The future relevance and serviceability of recently introduced political conventions remains uncertain and the prospect has to be faced that PNG may not in fact constitute the sort of integrated community that is linked by affirmative attitudes to rules, leaders and conduct and the necessary degree of consensus which a parliamentary system needs in order to survive. If this is so, PNG's political system may be subject to radical systemic change after independence and this political change might involve widespread political violence.

The weakness of the central government in new states like PNG has been attributed to several factors. The narrow base of articulated and mobilised public support for the government and the dichotomy between politics at the centre, which are largely 'westernised', compared to village and regional politics which are largely 'traditional' in nature, are both cited as factors contributing to fragile central political power (see Zolberg, 1968:70). Because the distributive capacity of the political system in a country such as PNG is low due to the shortage of economic resources and the problems of a new and inexperienced bureaucracy, the central government is limited in its ability to widen its base of political allegiance. This results in an accumulation of political demands and a tendency for the most pressing demands, often those backed by violence, to be met first. The limited resources available to the regime may also result in an intensification of the political struggle by fair means and foul in order to gain political power - because many of the political and economic spoils are to be had by those actually holding office. These tendencies may all lead to a situation in PNG where violence, or the threat of it, becomes a useful and necessary aspect of the political process because it is the most effective means of achieving political goals.

Whilst the co-operative and consensual aspects of the nation-state concept are frequently emphasised in relation to the modern, western democratic states which have strong liberal parliamentary traditions, a benign role for the state may not necessarily be the norm in new states where there is a lack of consensus about fundamental questions such as the composition and boundaries of the state and the

* means of resolving political disputes (see Johnson, 1966: 19-21 and Russell, 1948:236). Instead, Lenin's dictum that 'every state is founded on force' (quoted in Walter, 1964:359) may be a more realistic and useful way of looking at the role of the state in newly independent countries where political integration and nation-building processes are incomplete. The relationship to political authority in the state therefore appears to be crucial to the understanding of challenges to political order in PNG. Huntington (1968:7) has observed that in many modernising countries the primary problem of government is not liberty but the control of the government and the creation of a legitimate public order.¹⁴

Violence might result from political instability in PNG in two ways. It might arise from the use of violence for political objectives within an environment of political disorder, or it could arise in the form of general lawlessness and chaos as a consequence of the ineffectiveness of government and of its coercive instruments. Civil disorder might, therefore, ensue from violence which is politically motivated and also from violence which is not manifestly motivated by political causes. These two broad categories of potential violence in PNG may be classified as political and social violence.

The boundaries between political and social violence in PNG are not always likely to be clear. The motivation for violence in PNG may have deep psychological well-springs and not be articulated. Furthermore, the consequences of violence may be political whereas its motivation may not be. Whilst normal levels of urban or rural crime may not be politically motivated, violence directed at Europeans, other ethnic minorities or black elites, arising out of a sense of relative deprivation¹⁵ might have a political basis

¹⁴ Huntington also observes that 'Men may, of course, have order without liberty, but they cannot have liberty without order. Authority has to exist before it can be limited' (p.8).

¹⁵ See Gurr, 1970:24-5, for a development of the concept of relative deprivation: 'Relative deprivation is defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping'.

and political consequences such as the removal of social inequalities. There is also the matter of sporadic, spontaneous *anomic* violence. This form of violence may be formally leaderless but political in its effects on government and identifiable with political causes.¹⁶ The future pattern of violence in PNG is also likely to reflect tradition in the way that violence in all societies tends to take traditional forms. It may be argued that in societies which have a high level of traditional violence, violence is more easily adopted as normative political behaviour than in societies where the incidence of violence is low. Where certain forms of violence such as pay-back killings are normative behaviour, violence may be seen as the only acceptable and appropriate way of resolving disputes. The forms of political violence which might occur in PNG are discussed in the context of these remarks.

Political violence already occurs in PNG, particularly in the Highlands area, in the form of tribal fighting (see Standish, 1973b), between clans and kin groups which may be seen as political communities.¹⁷ Warfare therefore represents the breakdown of non-violent political relations and the continuation of a political dispute by violent means. The political nature of tribal conflicts, which may be over matters ranging from marriage disputes to compensation for vehicle accident injuries, is perhaps most sharply drawn in relation to disputes over land ownership. The last years of the decolonisation process have seen an apparent increase in tribal fighting and this trend may continue after independence as part of a process of reduced regime authority coupled with increased economic justifications for conflict over land.

Political violence might also result from the activities of secessionist or regionalist political groups. Conflict with the central government over failures to meet demands for either a devolution of political power or outright secession, or alternatively, the employment of violent means

¹⁶ See Weiner, 1962:190. Weiner defines *anomic* violence as a condition of lawlessness in which participants have no explicit ideological rationale for the violation of the law.

¹⁷ See *Report of the Committee Investigating Tribal Fighting in the Highlands*. Most tribal fighting in PNG and particularly in the Highlands is between clans and groups of clans.

by such groups in order to achieve these objectives may lead to violence. Political violence from this source has been a common phenomenon in new states which face problems of national unity and political integration, and if regionalists see their cause in terms of absolute value criteria, such as race or religion, rather than in terms of pragmatic issues and interests, the scope for resolving these tensions without violence would seem to be reduced. In PNG, however, regionalist pressures (in Papua, Bougainville and the Highlands) seem to be based partly on problems of integration - of suspicion and mistrust between communities - and partly on pragmatic issues of economic development and claims for a share in political power.

Violence as a result of secession (either to achieve it or prevent it) posits the failure of political bargaining and compromise between the centre and the regionalists. If the commitments both to secession and 'national unity' are pragmatically based, as they in part appear to be at present, then the prospects of violence may be reduced. It is not clear at present whether ostensibly secessionist groups in PNG really want complete political independence or rather more economic development and a greater devolution of political powers. Nor is it clear that PNG nationalist leaders at the central government level are necessarily prepared to guarantee the political cohesion of the nation by the use of force in the last resort. These relative probabilities may significantly alter if secessionist issues become engulfed in an atmosphere of emotion and appeals to the absolute values of race or language.

Political violence might also arise in PNG in the more distant future as a result of the development of radical political movements based in either rural or urban areas, or perhaps a combination of both. Such violence might take the form of terrorism or armed insurgency by urban, or rural-based guerrillas, or as a consequence of violent repression by the regime. This form of extremism probably requires the evolution of serious political grievances and inequalities in PNG society of a dimension which is not yet evident and, furthermore, it probably calls for sophisticated levels of political organisation, leadership and ideology as a precondition for the introduction of revolutionary rather than anomic violence in PNG. If it is still premature to make any predictions about the likelihood of radical political groups in PNG threatening internal security, it is already clear that social change as a result of economic development, education and urbanisation is creating considerable problems

which may have serious long-term security implications.

Although the present government economic policies are based on an eight-point program emphasising equality, rural development and economic self-reliance, the long-term economic trends may still be in the direction of increased rather than diminished socio-economic inequality.

One aspect of the economic development problem is the so-called tide of rising expectations which is generated by economic change and which, in turn, contributes to high rates of urban migration. Rapid urbanisation, represented by growing urban squatter communities of rural people seeking the 'bright lights', jobs and reputed economic opportunities of the towns, is likely to lead to considerable problems of civil order. Whilst the integrative effects of urban populations may, as argued by Mair (1963:199),¹⁸ provide the vital building blocks of nationalism, rapid urbanisation may also place intolerable loads on government by way of demands for housing, employment and social services.¹⁹ It would not seem unduly pessimistic to predict that within ten to twenty years PNG's towns and cities will have large communities of unemployed, poorly housed citizens whose economic plight will be cast in harsh juxtaposition to the employed, comparatively well-housed, affluent members of the bureaucracy, police, armed forces and business community. The danger is that urbanisation may proceed in the future at a faster pace than the integration of the new migrant urban dwellers into new life styles and associational relationships. The destabilising influences of this type of rapid social change, the diminution of traditional authority and the lack of economic opportunities may lead to social frustration and increased violence - the sort of process which Johnson (1966) calls social disorientation and which is manifested by increased violence.

¹⁸ Mair argues that it is in the towns of the modernising societies where the 'melting pot' process occurs, where new loyalties and political associations which span primordial lines spring up and where new attitudes to nationalism develop.

¹⁹ The population of PNG by 1991 is estimated to reach 4.294 million based on a population growth rate of 2.7 per cent per annum. It is estimated that urban population by 1991 may be between 750,000 and 1 million (*New Guinea Research Bulletin*, No.42, Sep. 1971).

Aside from the political pressures that may flow from rapid urbanisation in terms of a shortage of jobs, housing and social amenities, there is the spectre of communal violence between ethnic groups in urban areas. The belief that urbanisation provides the foundations of nationalism depends on the success of the acculturative process. It is assumed that the new town dweller when he leaves his traditional village society is subject to new social pressures and relationships in the town and, although he may retain many of his former traditional attitudes and loyalties, some attitudes will change and his loyalties will broaden (Mair, 1963:133). In reality and in the short term, however, urban migration in PNG, rather than leading to the integration of tribal groups, may merely intensify primordial loyalties of clan and tribe as a result of these groups becoming politicised within the psychologically secure boundaries of tribe and clan.²⁰ This intensification of ethnic loyalties, if it occurs, will increase the likelihood of communally-based violence in PNG towns.

Two further problems which may affect PNG's internal security in the future are land distribution and ownership and the socio-political problems set in train by formal western education. Apart from traditional patterns of conflict which may arise over land disputes between clans, there is also the prospect of conflict over land for economic and social reasons. Whilst there is not an absolute land shortage in PNG, there are specific land problems - a local shortage of land in the populous Chimbu District, shortages of economically useful land in other parts of the Highlands (due principally to the altitude) and high levels of expatriate alienation of land in the Gazelle peninsula. Because land ownership and usufructuary rights in PNG are, by tradition, conferred on groups rather than individuals and there are few people in PNG who have no claims to land usage, it would initially appear that land questions are unlikely to give rise to the sorts of conflicts which have arisen elsewhere in the world.²¹ On the other hand, however,

²⁰ See Geertz, 1963. Geertz argues that in nations undergoing social and political change, primordial affiliations are prone to become intensified in the modernisation process.

²¹ Huntington (1971) argues, for instance, that inequality of land distribution is a key factor in the potential for revolution in a country and hence an effective strategy for averting revolution is a socially just program of land redistribution.

there are long-term factors which may lead to conflict, including the problem of natural population increase and the pressures this will place on existing patterns of land use.

Education may also have a fundamentally destabilising effect on rural PNG by challenging traditional patterns of behaviour and authority and generating expectations of progress and affluence that will not be fulfilled for those Papua New Guineans who drop out of the school system, cannot find jobs in the urban areas, or who are simply not given the opportunity to go to school. The extension of western education and literacy has been a tenet of Australian colonial policy in PNG since the end of World War II but, even though less than half the eligible children receive primary level schooling, it is clear that most of those who do receive education are still destined to return to their village environment.²²

Although it is true that this problem is being confronted by PNG government attempts to adapt education to the needs of PNG society and by emphasising the continued social relevance of PNG rural life, it remains to be seen how effective these approaches are in adjusting the expectations of those in the education stream, especially those whose prospects are cut off by educational and economic limitations.

If PNG rural economic development results in domination by individuals rather than alternative patterns of development based on co-operative, participatory economic/political organisations on the model of, say, the Mataungan Association, class tensions and land distribution problems may provide the political grievances around which radical political movements committed to violence could emerge. It might also be argued that the semi-educated youth in urban areas will provide a potential base amongst which revolutionary political movements might flourish, given the development of a structure of ideology, organisation and leadership. Apart from economic inequalities, education will, itself, generate expectations of social change and, for those who remain in the rural areas and for many who move to the urban areas, these expectations are unlikely to be fulfilled. Comparisons with the affluence and status of an urban black elite and other affluent minorities may lead to the development of a

²² In 1972 only 34.3 per cent of the 7-year-old population entered school and only 7.5 per cent of the relevant age cohort entered high school (PNG's *Improvement Plan*, 1973-74, p.14).

sense of social frustration and radical political action to give vent to this deprivation may result.²³

Internal security: conclusions and contingencies

Whilst this discussion has pointed to a number of potential causes of internal disorder in PNG after independence, it has not been argued that political change and economic development need necessarily lead to internal violence. Nor has it been argued that PNG is necessarily bound for a future as a broken-backed state of the sort envisaged by Hugh Tinker (1964:Chap.7). The maintenance of civil order in post-independence PNG does appear to depend, however, on the establishment of stable, effective government at both the national and local levels. An important requisite for such effective government would appear to be the maintenance of equilibrium between change and tradition and a balancing of resources and priorities between the rural areas, which are likely to remain largely based on traditional economic and social patterns, and the urban areas which will be pockets of modernisation and inhabited by Papua New Guineans in a process of more rapid transition to a westernised type of society.²⁴ The challenge to PNG's political leaders will, in essence, be to try to maintain what has been described as an homeostatic equilibrium within a changing and dual society.²⁵

The success PNG leaders have in controlling violence and removing its underlying causes in the future will ultimately be affected by a wide range of variables about which little may be predicted with certainty. These variables include

²³ See James C. Davies in Kelly and Brown, 1970:148-67, for a discussion of the relationship of rising expectations and internal violence.

²⁴ The continuing importance of the village-based subsistence sector of PNG society is underlined by the fact that in 1971 only 25 per cent of economically active Papua New Guineans were engaged wholly or mainly in cash earnings activities (*PNG's Improvement Plan 1973-74*, p.61).

²⁵ For an explanation of the concept of homeostatic equilibrium see Johnson, 1966:53-8. Broadly speaking, homeostatic equilibrium posits co-ordinated social change - a moving equilibrium - in which the value structure and the environment change in synchronisation with each other.

the capacity of the institutions and participants in the PNG political system to resolve conflict by peaceful means, allocate resources and claim political allegiances, and how wealth actually comes to be distributed within PNG society as economic development proceeds, that is, whether the trend is towards greater equality or whether inequalities grow. The future course of PNG politics and civil order will also be determined, in great measure, by the three problems of government postulated by Machiavelli (e.g. 1950 ed.:4-94), namely, the skill of political leaders, human fortune and the practical limitations placed on human choice.

Because the actual direction of constitutional change remains unclear and the possibility of radical systemic change (including one-party government or military rule) cannot be discounted, serious civil disorder should also be accepted as a possibility. The assertion that consensus and compromise, the so-called politics of Melanesian Consensus, provide the effective basis for PNG's political culture remains to be tested in situations of grave tension where seriously competing political interests are at issue and these testing situations have not yet occurred. Other countries such as Indonesia which have claimed to base their politics on consensual styles have experienced widespread internal violence when political tensions have moved beyond certain limits and it is, therefore, necessary to acknowledge that PNG politics may also fail to maintain a consensually based unity.

On the other hand PNG leaders may be able to develop the concepts inherent in Melanesian Consensus into the basic tenets of a political ideology which would have a useful integrating role and might be employed in the future to legitimise 'tough' political decisions (which might not, in reality, be consensually based) without the use of violence. There is also the prospect that PNG may develop along the lines of a *Palaver* polity in the post-independence period in which there is endless political conflict and disputation between the regions and the central government and between political groups at the centre, and a great deal of posturing and threatening of violence, but little actual political violence (see Zolberg, 1973:728-39). For instance, continued threats of secession by regional political groups in PNG may largely represent a political technique as a means of gaining political concessions in other areas, rather than an actual demand for secession.

The problem of ethnic diversity and a lack of unity which at present loom large in a discussion of the prospects of internal violence might, alternatively, be overcome by the development of a form of consociational politics in PNG. This concept, which has been used in relation to other pluralistic polities, may take the form in PNG of co-operation at the central government level between members of a national elite whose political support was formally based on ethnic communities (see Lijphart, 1969). This elite might share the common interests of power, affluence and the benefits of western society and it might, thus, come to have little in common with village society, other than a diminishing ethnic loyalty. This elite would therefore become relatively isolated from the groups it formally 'represented' and largely independent of them. From this pattern of politics a workable form of tutelary democracy could emerge which might reduce the prospects of political instability and violence.²⁶

The above discussion of sources of internal violence in PNG society prompts thoughts on a number of specific internal security contingencies that PNG may face. The danger inherent in the contingency or scenario approach is that by attempting to define a finite number of specific situations, other possible contingencies are thought to be excluded and subtle variations and combinations of contingencies may be omitted from consideration. There is also the problem of the interrelated and complicating effects on internal problems that may be posed by external developments. Several of the more obvious internal security contingencies may, nonetheless, be listed.

National political crisis. A crisis of political authority might occur in PNG after independence as a result of conflict over the constitutional form of government, radical systemic political change, or as a result of a leadership succession crisis. The collapse of political authority might lead to a serious increase of both social and political violence.

Rural warfare and disturbances. Tribal warfare and disturbances to civil order, based on tribal cleavages in society, seem likely to continue in PNG, and the focal area of this problem is likely to continue to be in the Highlands. One scenario

²⁶ Shils, 1968:60-4 discusses the important role of the political elite in a tutelary democratic regime.

might be Highlands tribal fighting, increasing in frequency and intensity and becoming increasingly directed at the agents of the central government in the urban areas. This might eventually lead to a collapse of administration and commerce and a political crisis.

Civil strife in urban areas. Some of the possibilities here might be conflict in urban areas between immigrant communities along tribal lines, or between immigrants and indigenous populations (e.g. Bougainvilleans in conflict with 'Red Skin' outsiders on Bougainville). Alternatively, strife may be based on industrial or ideological grounds: trade unionists rebelling against the government or business, unemployed immigrants seeking better conditions or student activists protesting against 'black, elitist' government.

Insurrection by secessionists. Secessionists in PNG may attempt to achieve their goals by the use of force. Possibilities might be Bougainville, Papua (or part of what presently forms Papua), or perhaps part of the New Guinea islands. Secessionist attempts might conceivably receive external assistance.

Military or Police mutiny. The Military or Police, or both, may mutiny. This might occur because of a breakdown of discipline, or mutiny might take the form of organised corporate action as a technique of demanding improvements in their conditions of service or resolving other grievances. The example of the mutinies of the East African armies in 1964 comes to mind here. In the case of mutiny the civil government may lack the coercive resources to re-establish control over the mutineers. This may lead to the curtailment of the government's authority leading to an outbreak of civil disorder. Such a display of governmental impotence might encourage an eventual military or police/military takeover of the government. A civil government faced with the mutiny of its coercive instruments would, if it could, be likely to seek external assistance to re-establish order

and save 'democratic institutions'.²⁷

Military (or Police/Military) *coup d'état*. The coup has been a common technique of political change in new states and PNG might not escape the phenomenon; however, the outcome of a coup might depend on the degree of co-operation between the PNGDF and Police and the cohesion amongst the officers of both. Further, to rule effectively the 'Coupists' would seem to require the assistance of the PNG bureaucracy. (This issue is discussed in the last chapter.)

As stated earlier, it is difficult to quantify the capabilities of the PNG Defence Force and Police in relation to these internal security contingencies on a hypothetical basis. The capabilities of the PNGDF acting with the Police have already been discussed in general terms in relation to its internal security roles; however, some of the broad conclusions which flow from both a consideration of military capabilities and the nature of likely internal security problems in PNG may be listed.

Besides factors of size and equipment which may be measured, there are subjective factors of morale, cohesion and leadership within the Police and PNGDF which will have a crucial bearing on the outcome of any internal security problem. Any assessment based on numbers alone is, therefore, only one of the overall range of factors. Another major factor is the part which a good intelligence organisation is likely to play in the maintenance of PNG's internal security. In general, one might predict that internal security problems in PNG are likely, for several reasons, to be very expensive in manpower terms. PNG's terrain is likely to require larger numbers of men, logistic support in remote areas will be costly in manpower, and mediocre intelligence in the initial stages of operations would increase the manpower requirement.

While not an inconsiderable force the PNGDF could be quite rapidly and effectively swallowed up either in a situation of widespread civil strife in the Highlands, or in a protracted conflict with secessionists. In both these types of

²⁷ See Gutteridge, 1969:24-40. Australia could find it difficult to decline a request by the PNG government to assist in putting down a mutiny which threatened a democratically elected government and public order. The problem would be, however, to distinguish between a mutiny and a situation that had matured into a *coup d'état*.

situations it could be dangerously easy to overestimate the military capacity of the PNGDF two-battalion force. Whilst in certain circumstances Defence Force intervention in localised, poorly organised, unsustained violence might result in a decisive outcome, this might not be so where an insurrectionary force was well organised and had the support of the people. In extreme circumstances, for example, a two-battalion force might be able to control little more than one urban centre and its rural environs.

Because of what a PNG government might consider to be quite meagre coercive resources available to it, it may tend to see its options in the face of internal violence largely in terms of bargaining, compromise and concessions - a reliance on Melanesian political styles of conflict resolution. This is quite apart from other substantial reasons, including humanitarian ones, why such approaches might be preferred. It is likely that a PNG government would only resort to a use of force, or agree to a significant escalation in the level of force usually applied in Police-type activities, where there was the prospect of a decisive, rapidly achieved outcome and it seems plausible to argue that where the internal use of the PNGDF seemed likely to lead to protracted, inconclusive, nationally divisive operations, the government would prefer to accept higher political costs in the form of concessions rather than attempt to resolve the problem by violence.

These may, nonetheless, be very conditional observations, unduly influenced by the 'form' shown so far by the present PNG government. A future PNG government may take a firmer line in regard to 'anti-government groups' as part of the process which has taken place elsewhere in newly independent states and described as the 'erosion of democracy' (Emerson, 1969:272-92). Dr Guise (now Sir John Guise, the Papua New Guinea Governor-General) warned on several occasions that separatism and disunity could be exploited by foreign powers and 'Elements in the Community who attempt to create disturbances and threaten the peace or security of citizens of this land will be dealt with quickly and very firmly by the government' (*Post-Courier*, 17 Sep. 1973 and 24 Jan. 1974). Assumptions about the use of non-violent means may also prove unfounded because, in spite of government policy, PNG's security forces might be quite easily drawn into a gradually deteriorating internal security situation in a piecemeal fashion. Under such circumstances, theoretical options of force or no force might become obscured. And under certain circumstances the PNG government

may not see any option available to it other than to use force; for example, in the case of a mutiny by its own security forces, or where extremists were using terrorist tactics. Furthermore, it has been generally observed that in crisis situations leaders see the options open to them in a restricted way and thus, at the time of a crisis, the obvious option of force may be preferred to less obvious ones.

In so far as predictions have any value in these matters, it seems more likely than not that internal security problems will arise in post-independent PNG which will need to be met by coercive strategies as well as government policies in social, economic and political spheres. In the short term the threat may come from secessionists who are prepared at some point to use violence, from anomic violence in urban areas, and from tribal violence. Pressures may also be placed on the Police as a result of increasing urban crime levels and this may lead to serious problems in the allocation of scarce financial and manpower resources between rural and urban Police duties. The decrease in administrative efficiency as a result of rapid localisation of official positions is also likely to add to rural and urban policing problems. In the longer term beyond the end of the decade, however, trends of population growth, urban migration and socio-economic change point to pressures on internal security as a result of both urban and rural unrest. This discontent may become successfully mobilised by political organisations prepared to employ techniques of violence. It seems more likely than not that some of the internal security situations that may eventuate will pose problems beyond the capacity of the PNG Police to deal with and, therefore, the PNGDF will be required to assume an active internal security role.

Chapter 5

Civil-military relations in Papua New Guinea: the future

A Native army running riot could tie up and take control of Papua New Guinea within days. The troops have the weapons, the the marine and air transport. They also have the benefit of concentrated, high standard training. Unless the military planners are very careful, the Native troops will also develop the special kind of vanity which has made the Native soldiers of other developing countries think he [sic] can do a better job of government than the civilians (Ryan, 1969:266).

The above quotation from John Ryan's *Hot Land* presents in a popular if sensational way one aspect of the problem of PNG's future civil-military relations. So far in this monograph the relationship between the Defence Force and the civil power and the question of the role of the military in Papua New Guinea's political system have only been indirectly raised. In this final chapter the problems and prospects of civil-military relations in an independent PNG are considered in the context of some of the literature on the role of the military in the politics of new states. The central question of whether or not the PNGDF might come to play an important political role in PNG is tackled. The conclusion is prescriptive. A pattern of PNG civil-military relations is suggested which, taking into account the objective of civilian controlled democratic government, might contain the political role of the military in PNG's future political life.

Discussion of the role of the military in politics is bedevilled by the question of political values. Whilst some scholars have evidently believed that to discuss military politics, its strengths and weaknesses and how it comes about is, somehow, to advocate military rule, the reality is that merely to condemn the 'anti-democratic', 'repressive' or 'corporate' character of military government is unlikely

to prevent its occurrence, nor has it, in a succession of Third World states. There is also the troubling fact to be faced that civilian regimes in the Third World have sometimes shown themselves to be equally anti-democratic and in some cases equally incapable of dealing with the problems of national government.

Robert Pinkney (1973:152-66) has argued, in this connection and in relation to the developing countries of black Africa, that the distinction between the performance of civilian and military government may be a distinction without a difference. Pinkney argues that:

many of the shortcomings attributed to military governments would be seen in a less harsh light if observers compared military leaders with the alternative political talent actually available, rather than with the ideal type of politician whom it might be desirable to have in power (p.152).

He concludes that in many African states, governments, whether civil or military, may be equally limited in their capacity to grapple with national problems:

To criticise military governments for their failure to promote 'modernisation', 'social mobilisation' or 'development' is, in most cases, only to criticise them for possessing the same limitations as civil governments, few of which have impressive records in the countries most prone to military coups (p.166).

Arising out of this problem of political values two general schools of thought on military involvement in politics in developing nations may be identified.¹ One is essentially a negative view shared by writers such as Shils (in Johnson, 1962), Finer and Janowitz (1964b; see also First, 1972). This group, whilst recognising that in the short run the military may be able to restore order and maintain stability, argues that in the long run military intervention in politics impedes genuine political development. Apart from the anti-democratic nature of military rule, writers in this school have focused on the unsuitability of the ascribed characteristics of the military to the task

¹For a similar view see review by J.C. Oh of Se-Jiu Keim *The Politics of Military Revolution in Korea*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1971 in *American Political Science Review*, Vol.7, No.2, June 1973, pp.674-5.

of government. It is argued that because of the authoritarian, hierarchical structure of the military, its insensitivity to public opinion, abhorrence of 'political' compromise and a preoccupation with 'honour' and 'dignity', military government is unable to perform a political role satisfactorily; rather, military government attempts to rule the nation as though it were a large army camp. The second school of thought about military involvement in the politics of new states is more positive and approbatory. This school, represented by scholars such as Huntington, Pye and Emerson, has argued that the military is able to perform a useful dual role of promoting 'modernisation' whilst at the same time maintaining political stability in the developing nation (see Huntington, 1968; L.W. Pye in Johnson, 1962; Emerson, 1969:Chap.XV; Lefever, 1970). Other writers have argued, however, that this preference by a group of western, principally American scholars, for law, order and political stability and hence authoritarian military regimes in the countries of the Third World, reflects their own domestic political prejudices. Donal Cruise O'Brien (1972) argues that American political scientists in the early 1960s espoused democracy for the Third World as an article of faith, in the context of an ideological confrontation with communism. Later, a swing to authoritarianism occurred, partly as a result of a reflected concern for law, order and stability in their own country and partly out of a concern for political order in the new states as the political dimension of anti-communist counter-insurgency doctrine. Yet another group of commentators hold that the tendency toward authoritarian military rule is in a sense inevitable and may be attributed to nothing more than a return to the sort of administrative regime that functioned during the colonial period (see Feit, 1973).

If western scholarship on the benefits of military rule in new states is fundamentally divided, so too is the scholarship on the question of the causes of military intervention in politics in the new states. But, since few, if any, Papua New Guineans at present advocate military government for PNG it will be more profitable in this chapter to analyse the causes of a military role in politics rather than discuss the benefits of such rule or influence should it come about.

The problem of civil-military relations in PNG

Before commencing a general analysis of the causes of military involvement in politics it will be useful to define what is being investigated. Military involvement in politics may take many forms. It comprehends involvement by the military at four identifiable levels which begin at influence and extend to blackmail, displacement and finally supplantment of the civilian regime. These forms of involvement in politics, which are derived from *Finer's The Man on Horseback* (1962:140), may be associated with various techniques of military involvement in politics, including constitutional means, collusion and competition, intimidation and violence. The forms of military involvement and the various techniques of involvement may, in turn, be associated with different types of political regimes. According to *Finer's* classification, again (p.166), these range from a regime where the political power of the military is indirect and limited to a regime in which the political power of the military is direct. The complete taxonomy is given here with my own examples added:

<u>Indirect, Limited</u>	(France, May 1958)
<u>Indirect, Complete</u>	(Post-Civil War Spain)
<u>Dual</u>	(Brazil 1974)
<u>Direct</u>	(Chile 1973)
<u>Direct Quasi-Civilianised</u>	(Indonesia 1974)

This categorisation of the forms and techniques of military involvement in politics and of the resultant regimes illustrates both the complexity and diversity of military politics. It also shows that the question of the political role of the PNGDF is a considerably more subtle one than a simple dichotomy between either an apolitical military, or the situation of *coup d'état* and outright military government by military officers.

The term civil-military relations also requires examination. Civil-military relations in PNG may be seen, essentially, as the power relationships between the military and civilian groups in society. In this context power means the ability to control the actions of others within the political system. Power may be possessed as a consequence of formally bestowed authority, or as the result of the informal patterns of influence and the possibility of sanctions either threatened or implied (see Huntington, 1957:

86-7 and Dahl, 1970:Chap.3). These relationships will have a formal dimension manifest in the departmental arrangements and constitutionally-provided role of the Defence Force; they will also have an informal dimension in terms of the relationships between Defence Force personnel, the bureaucracy, the political leadership and PNG society at large. The political power relationships between the military and society in PNG may be seen to operate at three levels: at the macro-level between the military establishment as a whole and PNG society; at the officer corps-national elite level; and thirdly between the senior military commanders and the nation's political leaders.

By their very existence armed forces generate political implications which extend beyond a consideration of their formal national security role. The armed forces are a 'heavy' institution because of their special relationship to the regime as the principal instrument of state violence and, for this reason, the PNGDF possesses great potential political power which under certain circumstances may be actualised. The political power of the military in PNG at the present time may be seen as mainly potential because civilian control is maintained by a combination of moral and legal authority. Civilian control is legitimate because it carries with it the suasion of public opinion; it is, at present, also reinforced by consensus between the government and the military leaders on the desirability of civilian rather than military government. Nonetheless the PNGDF's potential political power might be converted into actual power were the relationship between the military and civilian leaders to break down and the military prepared to assume political power in its own corporate interests, or, alternatively, at the invitation or with the connivance of other groups in society.

PNG civil-military relations, in addition to being concerned with the distribution of power between civilian and military groups, may also be seen in terms of the balancing of national security needs against socio-political values. In this sense Huntington (1957:1-2) has argued that the institutional framework of civil-military relations reflects a compromise between optimising the nation's security at the least cost to the nation's values, and by such a compromise most states are able to achieve an adequate level of defence preparedness without jeopardising their dominant social values. On the other hand, states which face greater strategic risks, or when actually at war, commonly place greater emphasis on security needs at the

cost of social values. There is also a third case where national security and social goals are perceived as largely compatible and the cases of Sparta, Switzerland and Israel might be cited here (see D.C. Rapoport in Huntington, 1962: 71-2).

PNG appears to fall into the category of a state which, in the absence of a pressing strategic danger or a military tradition such as that of a nation-in-arms, seeks a compromise between national security needs and socio-political values at the least cost to these values. Although PNG's military security might conceivably be enhanced by development along the lines of a garrison state in which military imperatives and values predominated over civilian ones, such an increase in security would almost certainly be achieved with the cost of increased military power in PNG society (see H.D. Lasswell in Huntington, 1962:51-70). Without a strategic danger or a radical change in national political ideology away from liberal democracy such an increase in military power would appear unlikely.

This is the crux of the civil-military relations question in new states like PNG. The balancing of civil-military relations in PNG appears to have as its central objective not so much the maximisation of military security but rather the maximisation of civilian power and control over the Defence Force. This ordering of priorities provides a focus for the discussion of civil-military relations in PNG and reflects the concern that leaders of new states including PNG have expressed about the dangers of a *coup d'état*, military rule and other forms of military involvement in politics.

The formal relationship of the Defence Force to the civil power in PNG, as in all states which profess to be constitutional democracies, is expressed by the principle of the primacy of the civil power over the military. This principle means that the military is required to be an apolitical institution which acts in a disciplined manner as the loyal, impartial instrument of those who exercise constitutional power. Baldly stated, the PNG Defence Force is expected, on every occasion and in every respect, to obey the civilian government of PNG without attempting to influence the political, as distinct from technical and bureaucratic, decision-making processes in relation to the Defence Force and its role within society.

Notwithstanding the principle of the primacy of the civil power, it may be observed that the notion of a completely

apolitical military is likely to be as much a theoretical fiction in PNG as it has proved to be in other states, including the developed western democracies. Even in countries like Britain which have long boasted a non-political army, the interrelationship of defence and foreign policies, questions of defence finance, and the very nature of defence decision-making within a bureaucratic system, have led to a significant political role on the part of the military. To a rather greater extent, the military in the United States, although formally apolitical, wields considerable political power and the so-called military-industrial complex has excited contemporary concern, even though there is a strong tradition of formal civil control over the military in the United States. And whilst actual military involvement in politics may have been, in recent times, more common in the new states it has occurred in most countries of the world during their history, including the older states of Europe.

In the new states the prominent political role of the military and the non-observance of the principle of the primacy of the civil power is a commonplace. In Asia the political role of the military has been widespread (India being the most significant exception) although the origins, traditions and the character of the military role in politics remain widely disparate. In regard to Indonesia and Vietnam the origins of the state and the military in anti-colonial struggles established the Army in politics. Whilst the Indonesian military have held power in their own right since 1965, the Vietnamese military's political role is largely subsumed within party and state organs somewhat similar to the PLA in China (see Waddell, 1972:Chap.13). In the Middle East, the central role of armies and officer corps in Arab politics has been a dominant feature of Arab nationalism. And in Latin America, military politics, endemic since the days of the *Caudillo*, has more recently tended to expand from the role of constitutional guardian, arbiter and intermittent participant in politics to that of long-term agent of political control, social change and modernisation.

This brief review of the military in politics may be completed by turning to black Africa, a region which appears to offer the most suitable comparisons with PNG. To be sure, the military have not risen to power in every one of the states in post-colonial black Africa; nevertheless the phenomenon of military politics, in statistical terms alone, lays claim to being the most pervasive and dominant political

trend in the region.² Given that there are dangers in an overly simplistic comparison between the experience of military politics in black Africa and PNG, arising out of real cultural, historical and geopolitical differences, there are, nonetheless, similarities which may have a bearing on the future course of civil-military relations in PNG. The principal difficulty in a dispassionate comparison between PNG and black Africa in regard to civil-military relations is the fact that the African parallel, with relatively few exceptions, is so compellingly pessimistic in terms of the prospects for constitutional democracy and an apolitical military. For this reason the comparison is seen by many Papua New Guineans and others to be of itself prejudicial (see Colebatch and Scott in Scott, 1970:166-70).

The fundamental point to be made in a comparison between black Africa and PNG is that in terms of political and military development, PNG is more closely similar to African states than to the States of Latin America and Asia - the other major regions of decolonisation. Similarities between black Africa and PNG lie in the nature of the colonial background, the course of political change towards independence and the development of national defence forces. Unlike the colonial period elsewhere in the world, the period of colonial contact and development in black Africa and PNG has been relatively short. In both cases colonial regimes were established where there had been in most cases in black Africa and in PNG no extensive central political units beyond the tribe and where state boundaries were arbitrarily determined, frequently cutting across ethnic divisions. In both black Africa and PNG the final stages of colonialism saw the rapid development of political institutions largely based on the liberal democratic traditions of the coloniser's own political system. These transplanted institutions, by which the new states were expected to govern themselves, contrasted with both the authoritarian colonial system by which the metropolises had previously governed and the lack of indigenous political institutions at the national level readily capable of adaptation in the independence period. In both regions the transition to independence has also been similar in that, unlike Latin America, Asia and parts of North Africa,

² Of the 34 independent states in black Africa in January 1974, 16 (47 per cent) had experienced a successful *coup d'état* and a total of 24 (70 per cent of the total) had at least one recorded incident of military involvement in politics since independence (see Mench, 1974a:Appendix I).

independence has generally been won without violent and protracted political struggle. The nationalist political forces have, as a result, been weaker, less well organised, and fewer of the population have been mobilised into the political system.

The similar road to independence has also resulted in a similarity in the origins of the defence forces. The armies of black Africa, like that of PNG, were 'colonial gifts', developed by the colonial power. In both cases they played no significant active part in their nations' nationalist movements and they possessed no revolutionary tradition. They were, and in most cases still are, small infantry-based forces, dependent on a metropolitan country in logistic, financial and training matters.³ The significant point here is that it has not only been strong, relatively large armies, active in the struggle for national independence, that have assumed political roles. Whilst the leadership groups of revolutionary 'people's armies' have moved easily and naturally into the political vacuums created by the disappearance of the old colonial regime, it has also been the small previously apolitical black African armies, like the 200-man Togo army, which have taken a decisive political role. The manner in which the military rapidly assumed an important political role in many of the nations of black Africa after independence had not been widely predicted and surprised many commentators.

If there are similarities between PNG and the states of black Africa, what may be learnt from the experience of military politics in Africa? Considerable research has been conducted into the causes of military intervention in African politics and whilst some writers have tended to emphasise external factors in the polity, others have placed emphasis on factors within the military institution itself. Depending on the emphasis placed on these two broad causal categories, typologies have been constructed in order to classify different types of military intervention in politics. It is, however a 'revisionist' analysis of military intervention which appears to offer the most satisfactory explanation. As argued by Luckham (1971a:7),

The military role [in politics] ... is not the product of any single factor or set of factors. There is a complex interplay of changing pressures from the political and social environment; the

³ This argument is drawn from Welch, 1967:306-9.

professional doctrine and political ideas of the officer corps; and the coherence of the military ...

Allowing that the sources of civil-military conflict lie both in the military and in society and in the interrelationship between the groups, the discussion now turns to some of the potential causes of civil-military conflict in PNG. These causes are discussed under three broad heads: corporate causes, ethnic and regional causes and political causes.

The corporate causes of civil-military conflict may be considered in two parts, professional causes and those of corporate self-interest. Conflict between the military and the government has commonly arisen elsewhere in relation to professional judgements by the military, especially where the ability of the military to carry out its mission or adequately provide for national security is perceived by the military leadership to be threatened. Conflict might, for example, arise over the future size of the PNG Defence Force, the types of units in it, their equipment and training. There might be professional resistance to the roles given to the Force by the PNG government especially if they are non-traditional ones. It is possible that tensions may develop between the political leadership's view of the PNGDF primarily as an agent of improvised modernisation and that of the PNGDF commanders who may prefer to see their primary role as a guarantor of national security and as an internal security reserve of force. Professional conflict with the political leadership may be expected to arise almost inevitably as a result of the military's 'conservative realism' in security affairs and their demonstrated tendency to prepare for the worst (Huntington, 1957:62-79). This will only rarely accord with the political leadership's assessments of security problems, conditioned by both the pressing and competing demands for resources in non-defence areas and a disposition to look toward 'political' solutions, involving compromise and bargaining.

Political conflict between the military and the civilian regime may be generated by military requests for newer, better (and probably more expensive) materiel. Such demands may be seen by PNG politicians to jeopardise more important national priorities and may be attributed to the military just wanting new toys to play with. The military may well be prone to seeing their demands in the narrow context of national security imperatives without considering broader national priorities. The risk would appear to be increased

because the PNGDF have, in the past, generally been accustomed to receiving modern equipment from Australia on a fairly lavish scale.⁴

Political tensions might develop over government attempts to diversify the sources of international defence assistance. Although this policy may be based on sound foreign policy objectives it could be resisted by the military leadership both for logical reasons of uniformity in defence materiel and procedures and also out of a sense of loyalty on the part of the military leadership to their colonial military heritage. The attempt by President Nkrumah of Ghana, for example, to have his defence force officers trained in the USSR provoked a strong reaction from British-trained Ghanaian officers who were opposed on ideological as well as purely professional grounds to the change.

Several causes of civil-military conflict may be considered under the heading of corporate self-interest, a familiar theme of writers on the subject of military involvement in politics. PNGDF personnel are likely to be sensitive about the standard and relativity of their pay and conditions in relation to other groups in society. The transition to independence and beyond may involve some deflation of these standards and this may be resisted by the military leaders under pressure from the members of the Defence Force who might see the issue as a test of the competence of their new local leaders. The Defence Force, as argued earlier, has occupied a position of privilege within PNG society and it has been the last institution to be placed under the control of local political institutions. It may resent and attempt to resist attempts by national leaders to reduce resource allocations to defence in favour of other developmental priorities. The PNG military may see their present 'slice of the cake' as an irreducible minimum and fight strongly for it to be retained.⁵ The Defence Force might also

⁴ It is of course not necessarily only the military who might want new 'toys' but on occasions the political leadership - for reasons of national or personal prestige. President Nkrumah's desire for an expensive modern navy equipped with frigates as a symbol of his nation's independence is a case in point (see First, 1972).

⁵ As argued in Chapter 3, political debate in PNG about the

promote the need for expansion after independence both for logically argued professional reasons and for corporate reasons connected with the career ambitions of senior officers and the need to satisfy the promotion expectations of the second echelon of local officers.

The central point about the potential of corporate and professional interests to cause strain on civil-military relations in PNG is that, whilst most of these interests are also present in a mature democracy, PNG is more vulnerable because the constitutional conventions and institutional restraints on military action are, relatively speaking, untested. The extent to which the PNGDF is willing to pursue its corporate interests politically in the future depends to some extent on its own perception of its power as an institution, and here past experience of success or failure will weigh heavily. If the Defence Force does, at some point, exceed the boundaries of constitutional action in order to achieve its goals then there would seem to be a significant chance that it will be encouraged to do so again in the future. As First (1972) has remarked, the 'political virginity' of an army once assailed is probably never regained unless there is a radical change in the professional and political environment.

The experience of black African states has illustrated the significance of ethnic and regional tensions as a cause of civil-military conflict and they may also be important in PNG. Issues of ethnicity and regionalism in PNG are intimately connected with national policies concerning economic development, the distribution of resources and the preservation of law and order. If such issues do become intensely politicised and charged with emotion there is a considerable danger that they might spill over into the military also. Alternatively, the PNGDF leadership might feel compelled to involve itself in the political resolution of these questions out of a concern for the preservation of its own organis-

5 (continued)

size of the defence budget may be distorted for several years after independence because the full extent of defence costs will be disguised by Australian defence aid. If foreign defence aid diminishes or foreign aid is not specifically tied to defence, the political debate on defence spending is likely to become more intense as the defence burden comes to be seen more clearly in terms of alternative costs.

ational cohesion. The Defence Force is likely to see the parochial exploitation of the politics of tribe or region as a threat both to national unity and to the unity of the PNGDF. A specific problem here is how the Defence Force might react to the imposition of ascriptive promotion criteria (based on ethnic origin) which may form part of government policy to even up the representation of various regions in national organisations.⁶

A further consequence of ethnic and regionalist political issues in PNG may be an increasing tendency by the PNGDF to foster its own form of elitist 'tribalism' as a means of insulating the Defence Force from external divisive pressures. The resultant isolation of the Defence Force and its adherence to professional, western military values entailed in the building up of military in-group loyalties and *esprit de corps* might well bring the PNGDF into conflict with aspects of government policy which sought, for example, to reduce urban elitism and privilege.

A third more diverse category of civil-military conflict may be subsumed under the head of political causes. The Defence Force might in the future be drawn into politics as a result of its involvement in internal military operations in PNG. Should the PNGDF be needed to restore internal security in a part of the country, it will already, by implication, have assumed a *de facto* political role. Once the military do assume an order maintenance role they become involved in the political as well as military aspects of the situation. The nature of such operations invariably involves issues concerning the civil law and the government's social and economic policies. The internal security doctrines of the PNGDF, which have been influenced by the Australian Services' counter-revolutionary warfare experience, emphasise the importance of 'winning the hearts and minds' of the population and, consequently, a purely 'military' approach to these operations would be seen by the military as

⁶The prominence of Papuan officers at the more senior rank level in the PNGDF, which was observed in Chapter 3, provides a potential parallel with the Nigerian army and the Ibo. In that case, as tribalism increasingly became a political issue, the preponderance of Ibo officers in the senior ranks was widely interpreted as indicating favouritism in the promotion system, whereas it was in fact the consequence of the earlier pattern of recruitment, as is the case with the prominence of Papuan officers in the PNGDF.

nugatory.

Quite apart from the *de facto* political role of the PNGDF if it became engaged on internal security operations, there are two further ways in which such a situation may precipitate deeper political involvement by the Defence Force. Increased reliance by the civilian regime on the Defence Force to suppress political dissent and disorder would, of itself, indicate that the government was losing political authority (see Arendt, 1970:53). That is, the more the civilian government came to rely on violence, the more it would be obvious that it was dependent for its survival on the instruments of violence - the Defence Force and Police. This might easily lead to the exploitation of this power relationship by the Defence Force in terms of political demands on the civil regime. Secondly, there is always a greater possibility when the military are ordered to use force against their fellow countrymen that the military also becomes dissatisfied with the government. If the PNGDF was seriously involved in internal operations to keep the peace, elements within it might come to believe that the government was ineffective, unjust or in some other way not fulfilling the people's needs. The dilemma which a PNG government faces here is, on the one hand, to contain military influence in politics, but, on the other, to identify and associate the Defence Force with PNG's political problems from the outset so that the Defence Force leaders are able to develop realistic assessments of the problems of government rather than a naive belief in simple panaceas which a military government might want to implement.

Attempts by the civilian government to balance other organised instruments of force such as the Police, or a form of militia, against the Defence Force, in an attempt to neutralise its political power might also lead to civil-military conflict rather than the resolution of it. It may lead to the setting up of dangerous rivalries and conspiracy bases for political factions, apart from the proliferation of organisations and financial waste. The present policy of the PNG government has been, however, to preserve a parity between the Police and Defence Force, and provided that it is generally maintained this problem is unlikely to eventuate.

A key area of possible civil-military conflict and of military intervention in PNG politics is that arising out of a national political crisis. It is conceivable that as a result of deadlock or conflict between the PNG Parliament

and the Cabinet, or between factions of the Cabinet, the government (or elements of it) may attempt to employ the Defence Force under constitutional provisions either to maintain the *status quo*, or to unseat an allegedly illegal government (see Luckham, 1971a:237-8). The possibility of this type of military involvement in PNG depends to some extent on the distribution of constitutional powers between a head of state (if there is to be one) and the head of government and in whom commander-in-chief powers are to be vested and, at the time of writing, these issues have not been resolved. But, notwithstanding the provisions of the constitution, a political crisis may see one of the parties or external groups such as the bureaucracy or trade union movement invite the Defence Force to intervene to resolve it by force. A severe economic crisis induced by political causes might also precipitate military involvement.⁷

It is possible that conflict and military involvement in PNG politics may arise out of the formal structure of civil-military relationships entrenched in the country's constitution or adopted by legislation. Post-independence PNG institutional civil-military relationships, involving the power relationships between military officers and public servants within the PNG Defence organisation and the overall distribution of power between the political leadership (including the Defence Minister), the military and public servant officials, are unlikely to meet the apolitical expectations of Australian defence planners, nor to conform in practice to Australian patterns of civil-military relations. The presently intended equal distribution of power in the PNG Defence organisation between the military commander and civilian secretary has been consciously modelled on Australian practice. The fact is, however, that the Australian pattern of civil-military relations has evolved in an historical context; conventions of civilian control over the military have developed after considerable experience in both war and peace and there are established attitudes within Australian society to the military profession which are unlikely to be shared exactly by PNG society. Furthermore, civilian control in Australia is effected within a mature defence bureaucracy rather than one only now being established, and the appropriateness or otherwise of the Australian model for PNG may only be tested with time. One of the situations which might lead to con-

⁷ As occurred, for example, in Dahomey (see Rotburg and Mazrui, 1970:chapter by Le Vine).

flict in PNG is the development of personal antagonism and rivalries between minister, public servant and senior military officer within the Defence Organisation, with possible political consequences.

There are two themes that emerge from this review. Firstly, there is the danger that the corporate isolation of the Defence Force as a result of its distinctive institutional identity and values might lead it to take independent political action. Secondly, there is the danger, also arising from the Defence Force's corporate identity, that divergent political attitudes and values may develop within the military and in civilian leadership groups in PNG.

The future of civil-military relations in PNG

It was earlier argued that the Defence Force might, conceivably, become involved in politics at four identifiable levels, following Finer, ranging from political influence to the supplantment of the civilian regime by a military one. Although the present position of the PNGDF is formally apolitical it may already be said to be capable of exercising political influence. The PNGDF's influence on political decisions in relation to the development and role of the Defence Force emerged during the transfer of military power and this influence is likely to increase as local officers assume senior appointments in the PNGDF and work more closely with their peers in the senior levels of the PNG Public Service, and with politicians, after independence. On the other hand, the presently limited integration of the PNGDF within the government, advocated and practised by the Somare government, may not go as far as some PNGDF officers might like, and claims for a more extensive political role by senior officers have already been articulated.

In September 1973 one senior PNG officer wrote, in advocating a more active involvement of the PNGDF in PNG, that:

it can clearly be seen that the government must expect the senior Service officers to be involved in political matters and allow them to speak out when and where necessary accepting the fact that what is to be spoken may not be in keeping with government views ... Experience has indicated that the ethos and rules governing the conduct of Service officers has been a direct take from the Australian concept ... PNG, therefore, should disregard this

principle of total civilian supremacy over the Military and clearly recognise and appreciate the contribution Service officers can offer in the development of the country.

Earlier, in May 1973, at a round-table seminar on defence in Port Moresby, another senior local officer in discussing future problems of civil-military relations wondered about the future loyalty of the members of the PNGDF in the case of harsh unpopular decisions by a civilian government. He thought that the solution to this problem was military representation at a political level. 'Having a military man as minister of defence would be a step in the right direction'. The same officer pointed out that the problem of harmonious civil-military relations extended throughout the officer corps. In this connection he volunteered the view that a successful *coup d'état* might initially be launched in Port Moresby by a force as small as one platoon.

Beyond the question of greater political influence by the military within a constitutional framework there is also the prospect of forms of political blackmail, such as, for example, mutiny. If the likelihood of some form of corporate action cannot be predicted, it should not be altogether dismissed as impossible. Both the PNGDF and the Police have in the past experienced incidents of unrest involving a refusal to work and some of the Defence Force incidents have been in the nature of industrial action with some elements of organisation, leadership and specific claims. These types of incidents, or more serious ones, might recur and, in an independent PNG which had no other coercive organisation to fall back on, their political potentiality would be unmistakable. Government austerity measures or economic problems might lead to the presently favourable conditions of service in the PNGDF and Police deteriorating, restraint on political action might diminish as the result of the widespread politicisation of PNG society and the Australian presence may be no more effective than that of the British in other circumstances in keeping the PNGDF out of politics. Furthermore, Papua New Guinean Defence Force officers may, themselves, be unable to prevent certain forms of corporate action and some local officers may even elect to lead it.

The prospects of a *coup d'état* at some time in the future in PNG were briefly mentioned in Chapter 4 in the context of threats to internal security. It has, in the past, been argued that the PNGDF is too small to conduct a successful *coup* and that the officer corps lacks adequate political

motivation, but both these observations may be misleading. In operational terms the *coup d'état* - the seizure of political power by the military - may be seen as a problem of urban politics. To be successful in the first instance, a *coup* in PNG would need to be effective in the principal urban areas where the centres of political power - 'the commanding heights' - are located. Once the 'commanding heights' had been seized including the political leaders, parliament, principal government offices and radio stations) and the civil government toppled, the process of consolidation and extension of power to the rural areas might take place more gradually. The point here is that in the initial seizure of power a small force may well be adequate, perhaps acting without the active support of other groups. It is in the second stage, the extension and consolidation of power, that a *coup* would need to broaden its political base. At this stage the support of the PNG Public Service (or significant elements of it) and of the Police would probably be of great importance in order to establish a viable pattern of administration over the country in the wake of the *coup*.

Although support by the Police and Public Service might be the *sine qua non* for a successful military takeover in PNG, it is relevant that this support has almost invariably been forthcoming in the black African experience and the reasons why this has been so may also apply in the PNG case. It is argued that the bureaucracy and police in black Africa have been willing to co-operate, or at least not obstruct the military in their involvement in politics because these three groups represent a substantial community of interest - in terms of their status as members of an urban elite and in their perception of modernisation and nationalism as key political issues. In addition, in the eyes of the bureaucrats, a military *coup* is often seen as resulting in the promotion of 'administration above politics'; that is, increased power and opportunities for the Public Service to exercise its 'rational' skills of administration and planning, replacing the politicians and their political compromises and deals.

Apart from the question of how the PNG Public Service might respond to political intervention by the military, there is the possibility that, under certain circumstances, the Public Service might actually encourage or incite military intervention. That is, in terms of Janowitz's distinction between designed and reactive military intervention, the PNGDF leaders might be led to perceive the political situation in such a way that intervention was required for the good of the country as well as being called for by the Public Service

and other groups. Further, on the basis of the experience of the African armies, one might argue that a *coup d'état* in PNG may not necessarily require a highly politicised or politically sophisticated officer corps. Junior officers in command of units and politically naive officers have led takeover bids merely out of a sense of 'national duty' or from simplistic motivations of wanting to 'clean up the country', rid it of 'corrupt' politicians, or even out of a naked self-interest in achieving power. The *coup* in PNG might require only a relatively small cabal of politically motivated officers who were able, at the crucial moment, to claim the loyalty of their less 'political' fellow officers and men. The key group of officers in any planning would probably be the troop commanders who controlled the 'bayonets' and personal loyalty of the troops. As the examples in Nigeria, Ghana and elsewhere illustrate, the most senior echelon of military commanders may even be bypassed in any plotting because of a belief that they are too close to the politicians or unsympathetic to the cause of the junior officers. In regard to the actual political attitudes of the PNGDF officer corps it has been asserted, for instance, that whilst 'Papua New Guinean lieutenants will admit over their second beer their contempt for most politicians ... the Army is not yet anyway - a political force'.⁸ It is implicit in this sort of observation, however, that the evolution of political attitudes in the military may be both rapid and sudden in response to developments in the political environment. There is, moreover, considerable evidence that the process of politicisation in the PNGDF, especially amongst the officer corps, is further advanced than the above quotation indicates and that this process is accelerating.

The survey conducted by a senior PNG officer amongst thirty-two of his fellow Papua New Guinean officers in late 1972, referred to in Chapter 3, yielded some interesting results in this connection.⁹ Twenty-eight officers agreed that the military should intervene in politics in the interests of the nation if a political impasse developed.

⁸ *National Times*, 5 Nov. 1973: Christopher Ashton, 'Special Report - Papua New Guinea, The End of Australia's Empire'.

⁹ Personal communication, May 1973. The officer tested 32 of the 48 PNG officers then serving with the PNGDF. He stated that the remainder were either serving in a remote area, or not available because of other duties.

Thirty officers believed that the military should intervene as the guardian of the nation if the nation suffered at the hands of politicians. Twenty-six officers believed that PNG was not suited to a democratic form of government. Thirty-one officers believed that a military officer should represent the Defence Force in the Parliament. Thirty respondents believed that the Army would play an important part after independence, especially in enforcing law and order. And significantly, thirty of the officers believed that the Defence Force would play an important role in holding the country together after independence. One specific implication of these results, if they are to be taken as generally representative of the PNGDF indigenous leadership, is that the political dismemberment of PNG after independence would severely test the cohesion and loyalty of the PNGDF to a national government which tolerated such developments without an attempt to use force.

Surveys conducted by this writer also reveal the development of political attitudes amongst the PNGDF officer corps and those about to become officers (Mench, 1974:Appendices). Although, in a survey conducted in January 1974, a majority of those questioned in the PNGDF firmly rejected the proposition that the Defence Force constituted a threat to civilian supremacy in government, there was widespread support for the expansion of the military role in PNG society. Those questioned wished to see military men employed in non-military areas of government in PNG and, specifically, in the operation of a national service scheme. More than half, in what would be a most significant deviation from an apolitical role, wished to see the PNGDF represented by its own member in the national Parliament. Given that it was unlikely that PNGDF officers and officer cadets would be completely frank in these matters, especially where their attitudes were in conflict with their training and indoctrination, the overall picture that emerges from these surveys is that of considerable doubt about the persistence of apolitical norms in the PNGDF. It would also appear from the two surveys that attitudes within the PNGDF and amongst the PNG civilian elite about questions of civil-military relations are in a process of evolution and this process may intensify, making any predictions on the subject a hazardous undertaking.

Like Papua New Guinea, the development of armed forces in black Africa during the colonial period was based on what now seems to be an incorrect premise, namely, that armies in these states would naturally assume an apolitical

relationship to the civil power and so remain outside politics. Such an assumption overlooked the historical evolution of the state in western society and the relationship of force to the state. In the absence of a developed political culture which established conventions and political traditions within the polity and concepts of professionalism within the military, it was unrealistic to place the military outside the political processes of the nation - as much as it might have been a very desirable philosophical objective. The recent political history in Africa and elsewhere in developing nations has pointed to the likely failure of this policy in PNG. The structure of relationships between the civil government and the military within any given state are largely determined by historical evolution. The prescription of rules alone, where they have no foundation in established conventions of legitimate political behaviour within the society, is unlikely to be respected when under stress. As argued by Rapoport, military and political institutions should not be regarded in isolation. Rather, they have an inter-dependent relationship and it is logical that the function the military performs within the state will affect its relationship to the civil power (Huntington, 1962:97). The principal function of defence forces in most developed countries is their employment as instruments of foreign policy and for external national defence, whereas in the new states they have been more prominently involved in internal security and in nation-building tasks, either as a consequence of their general administrative resources or through physical developmental tasks such as road building. This involvement of the military in day-to-day activities within the nation, rather than emphasis on a contingent role of national defence against an external threat, appears likely to be the case in PNG also, and this will in all probability contribute to the projection of the military into PNG political affairs. One might conclude that if the military in the new states are destined to continue to play an active political role, continued formal adherence to the concept of civil-military relations based on an apolitical military in a country like PNG is dangerously unrealistic.

In the developed states civil control over the military and the development of *apolitisme* has been achieved by one of two broad strategies; in Huntington's terms (1957:80-97), by either the subjective or objective civilian control of the military. The suitability of these two strategies as a means of limiting the political role of Papua New Guinea's Defence Force is discussed below.

Huntington argues that under a system of objective civilian control the maximisation of military effectiveness may be achieved by a combination of a low, defined degree of military political power and a high degree of military professionalism. Huntington cites as examples Britain and the United States since World War II. Australia also fits this model. On the other hand, Huntington argues that subjective civilian control is achieved by the maximisation of civilian political power over the military professionalism and military values. The states in the communist bloc may be seen generally to follow this form of civilian control over the military.

In PNG, civilian control over the military is at present based on the objective model following Australian practice, but objective control would appear to depend on two pre-conditions which may not apply to PNG. These are, first, the existence of mature, stable political institutions through which civilian power over the military may effectively be exercised and, second, attitudes of professionalism within the military which impose normative restraints on political involvement. If the web of political institutions or the tradition of professionalism are not well established within the polity, as would appear to be the case in PNG, it is unrealistic to expect that objective civilian control will become reliably established.

For this reason, hopes for effective civilian control over the military in the new states and in PNG might be better placed with subjective control. The political domination of the Defence Force by the political leadership in PNG would require that the leadership be able to retain the loyalty and allegiance of the Force by a pervasive ideology, or by dependence on the charisma of a leader. This would have to be backed up in either case by a control apparatus such as a network of political officers in the Defence Force and courses of political indoctrination. Because of this structure of political ideology, charismatic leadership and controls, it would be difficult to envisage such a system operating successfully in other than a single party state. PNG has not yet moved in that direction (although it has been advocated by some) and, therefore, subjective control does not seem to be a practical option in the immediate future. But even under a system of subjective civilian control of the military, as in Tanzania, the danger of military intervention in politics is not removed. The non-political role of the military under such a system still ultimately depends on the pervasiveness of

the dominant state ideology and the control apparatus in ensuring military loyalty. Although the integration of the military into the political system in Tanzania (by the appointment of a political commissar, by party membership for military leaders and party indoctrination) has so far averted military intervention in the political process, the armed forces in Tanzania still provide a potential source of opposition to President Nyerere and they apparently continue to occupy an elite status.

It appears, therefore, that there is no simple answer to the problem of civilian control over the military in PNG, by either so-called subjective or objective patterns of control, and there is a case for looking at an alternative pattern of civil-military relations in PNG.

The containment policy of civil-military relations in PNG

The central problem of military politics in PNG may be stated not so much in terms of keeping the military out of politics and apolitical but rather of containing the military's political role so that it does not dominate all other political groups in society. To the extent that some degree of military involvement in politics is inevitable (as is argued here) a solution might be found in channelling involvement so that it contributes to PNG's political life in a manner that does not wreck civilian political institutions. This approach might be described as a policy of containment of the military roles in politics.¹⁰

The containment approach to the problem of political involvement would begin by accepting the PNGDF as a centre of potential political power and then proceed to place the military within the political system with a defined role, in much the same way that other groups such as the trade unions and political parties have legitimate political roles. The policy would seek to reduce the Defence Force's corporate isolation and thus improve civil-military communications. In this way the potential for unilateral political action by the military might be significantly reduced. Similarly, there would seem to be a diminished

¹⁰The containment policy employs Sundhaussen's concept of politico-military integration (Sundhaussen, 1973b:4 *et passim*).

likelihood of political action by the military if their political outlook and perceptions accorded more closely with those of the civilian leadership. This would be more likely if there were, in addition to an integration of leadership elites, legitimate and prescribed channels of political activity through which the military were able to articulate political demands in a similar manner to other groups possessing political power. Legitimate political activity by the Defence Force might also serve the added purpose of political education. In this process, the military leadership would be able to develop an awareness of the overall problems of government. It would, hopefully, thereby develop realistic expectations of what lay within the resources of government to change, of what was possible and what was impossible to achieve.

In practical terms the containment policy would involve the expansion of the present role and formal powers of the Defence Force and it would follow on from the present limited policy of integrating the PNGDF leadership with the government. The changes entailed in a containment policy might include the following sorts of proposals. The Defence Force would be consulted and actively involved in the development of national policies beyond narrow defence spheres. Thus, senior Defence Force officers might participate as advisers on Departmental and even Cabinet committees concerned with economic, social and foreign affairs policy questions. Defence Force leaders might also be associated with the civil government by other measures such as the rotation of PNGDF officers in senior Public Service appointments, including District Commissionerships (or their post-independence equivalents). So as to provide for a suitable pattern of promotion and turn-over of officers and as a means of more closely associating the military with the civil community, officers could be permitted to retire early and be absorbed into the Public Service, commerce and industry under the provisions of special re-employment schemes.

The present system of dual headship within the higher defence organisation is probably inappropriate to the containment policy of civil-military relations, which accepts the military as a political force; it would therefore have to be modified. The military head of the PNGDF might be placed in a superior relationship to the senior civilian either by law or under a *de facto* arrangement. The question of whether or not the Defence Minister should be a military man is a more difficult one. In one sense the Defence Force

has the potential political power of veto over a civilian Cabinet regardless of whether or not the military is represented in the Cabinet and so the argument that a military Defence Minister would be able to bring down the government is not a key issue. On the other hand the Defence Minister in PNG, under a system of cabinet government, is involved in a range of non-defence political issues and he belongs to a political party, and for these reasons it may not be desirable to have an officer as Defence Minister. One possible solution could be to appoint either a serving or recently retired officer as Assistant Defence Minister. He would report and represent the views of the Defence Forces and its Commander on professional questions within the Cabinet and to the Defence Minister as required. The Assistant Defence Minister would be available to represent the Defence Force on Departmental and Cabinet committees as necessary and he would also have the task, with the Defence Minister, of presenting the Defence Force budget proposals to Cabinet and arguing for them. He might, or might not, have a nominated seat in the Parliament. The relationship, in this proposal, between the Assistant Defence Minister and the Defence Force Commander would need to be carefully specified to minimise conflict; however, the Commander would probably have to remain as the principal source of professional military advice to the government, although the government would also be able to draw advice from the Assistant Minister, who might well be retired and thus somewhat independent of the Defence Force.¹¹

PNG is confronted with a dilemma in its civil-military relations. It may seek either to achieve civilian domination of the military, or it may adopt policies of civil-military integration. Civilian domination in an underdeveloped state probably points towards subjective civilian control and whilst subjective control broadly preserves the principle of a non-political military it does not appear to be a practical option for PNG. Integration of the military and political leadership in PNG, as proposed in the containment policy of civil-military relations, necessarily discards the notion of military *apolitisme* by its recognition of the military as a centre of political power. It therefore offends against concepts of liberal democracy in which power is

¹¹ The concept of nominated officials holding appointments as Assistant Ministers might also be extended to the Police and Public Service.

held to be derived from the electoral mandate of the people. (Military political power is representative only of the people within its organisation.) On the other hand it has been argued here that the integration of the PNGDF within the PNG political system, the sharing of political power and the conferral of defined political roles on the military might offer a better prospect of limiting military intervention within PNG by developing closer co-operation between the civilian and military leadership groups. Limited participation in politics by the Defence Force might also be expected to lead to a commitment to the political system, the development of a common ideology amongst the military and civil elites and the emergence of conventions of military restraint in the political sphere.

It might be argued that opening the door to a political role by the PNGDF in this way would, in fact, lead to military domination of PNG politics and that to assert otherwise is just wishful thinking. If it is true that adoption of the containment policy does have an element of hopeful thinking in it, it may be compared to the prospects for civil-military relations in PNG based on an apolitical military, which indeed offers little grounds for hope.

The history of the black African states shows that the leadership of new states commonly places national priorities in the direction of building a unified nation by means of strong central government. In this task of forging national unity and consensus the military, as the coercive basis of state power, occupies a key role, especially if political compromise with dissenters fails. The history of the new states also shows that the creation of consensus and the development of viable political institutions is seldom without its procrustean aspect, as democratic values fall prey to expediency and necessity. In this phase of development the military is unquestionably a potential political force. When consensus is developed, institutions mature and norms of political behaviour become established, the military role in politics may be expected to diminish and civilian control over the military will become feasible. Until this occurs the political potential of the military is an at times unpalatable reality which should be faced. The threat posed by military intervention to the democratic values and institutions of PNG cannot be met effectively merely by the wording of constitutions or by the espousal of sentiments of democratic theory.

Papua New Guinea has so far and like almost all new states regarded its Defence Force as both an indispensable symbol of national sovereignty and, more practically, as the guarantor of state power. Because of the decision to maintain a Defence Force, PNG will also be faced with the problem of establishing a pattern of civil military relations which reflects the real distribution of political power.

The Papua New Guinea Defence Force possesses a limited military capacity, but a rather greater political capability. The PNGDF is a national organisation which will seek to establish its own nationalist ethos within the independent state of Papua New Guinea. This process is likely to involve adjustment from its present formally apolitical status, based on its Australian heritage, to a political role as an important participant in PNG government. The expansion of the Defence Force role may result either from conscious political decisions to involve the military more deeply in politics, as advocated under the containment policy, or from the force of events.

The overall conclusion of this study is that Papua New Guinea's Defence Force will emerge as a significant political force which will probably come to share political power in PNG with civilian politicians and other groups including the Public Service, Police, trade unions and students. If the Defence Force is granted a legitimate political role, as advocated, then it seems likely that it will be a force for stabilisation, national integration and development and it will contribute to the establishment of a stronger institutional order in PNG. If, on the other hand, civil-military relations continue to be based formally and in substance on the imported model of an apolitical military then the future may bring military intervention in politics which is destructive of civilian political institutions and which leads to serious political instability in Papua New Guinea.

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