ENHANCING PACIFIC SECURITY

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by
Ron Crocombe
P.O. Box 309
Rarotonga
COOK ISLANDS
Ph (682) 28-100 Fax 28-101
E-mail: ronc@oyster.net.ck
## CONTENTS

Summary 3
Abbreviations 4
What are the security objectives? 5
Enhancing national security 6
  Whose security?
  What are the threats?
    Environmental and food security, and health 7
    Crime, smuggling, false documentation, international terrorism etc 8
    International financial crime
    Harmonising laws and procedures
Basic causes of deteriorating national security 9
  Economic security
    Renting sovereignty 10
    Fear of foreign takeover 11
    The vulnerability of small currencies
    Rapid population growth
Issues of governance 11
  Social policies with security implications 11-12
    Social security 13
    The information invasion
    A non-enforcement social role for the police 14
    Cultural disadvantage in a competitive hi-tech world
    Forum recognition of the link between social factors and security
Disputes over land 15
  How far does the public accept the legitimacy of government’s coercive power?
    Prisons as ‘schools of crime’ 16
  Making sure the official checks and balances are efficient and respected
Coordinating regional security issues
  Facilitating the work of unofficial institutions and processes that enhance security
  Broadening the composition of the FRSC 17
  The role of law enforcement agencies in minimising threats 18
  An annual Regional Security Report? 19
Military threats from beyond the region
  The benefits of water boundaries
  The re-arming of Asia
  And within the region? 20
  The benefits of larger powers enhancing one’s security
Criminal threats from beyond the region
  The role of regional institutions in security 21
    The cost-effectiveness of meetings
    Preventive diplomacy
    A regional peace-keeping force 22
    Regional legal and administrative arrangements to facilitate peace-keeping
    Measuring security
    Facilitating a culture of peace 23
    Regional action in security matters must distribute benefits and costs equitably
Taking the process a step further
Matters for further consideration 25-26
Bibliography 27-30
SUMMARY

Despite the diversity of the region and the perceptions of threat within it, there is also considerable agreement on security matters.

External military threats exist, but are low.

External criminal threats involving international finance, smuggling of drugs, goods, people and rare plant and bird species, are serious and escalating.

Internal threats are generally considered to be the most serious. The main instances of overt conflict in the Pacific in the past 20 years have involved a combination of ethnic tensions (whether among Pacific Islanders, or between Islanders and immigrants), land disputes, economic disparities, and a lack of confidence in government’s ability or willingness to solve the problems. These elements usually co-exist before a security breakdown occurs. They merit more attention.

Few situations of insecurity (except from natural disasters) come about suddenly. They may be triggered suddenly, but the causes usually build over a long time. Without reducing attention to problems which have already erupted (the ‘control’ side) the Forum may wish to give equal attention to those which are ‘developing’ (the ‘preventive’ side), to reduce the chance of their becoming unmanageable.

The region is well served with coordinating bodies in each sector of law enforcement (police, customs, immigration, prisons, heads of legal services etc), and the FRSC links them to the Forum, along with other relevant regional organisations. But all ‘security’ issues are basically ‘integrity’ issues. The law enforcement side is concerned with requiring minimum adherence to standards set by society; the ethical side is concerned with strengthening personal commitment to high standards. To the extent that the latter is achieved, the former does not arise. It is understandable that the main focus has been on enforcement, because that deals with crises which confront us. But perhaps we should give equal attention to integrity, for enforcement can never succeed unless most people, most of the time, voluntarily behave ethically. The Oceania Customs Organisation has taken a lead in this. That precedent should perhaps be the basis for a wider programme of action.
Abbreviations

CSCAP  Committee on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Bangkok
ESCAP  United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok
FAO      United Nations Food and Agriculture Programme, Apia
GEF      United Nations Global Environment Facility
OCO      Oceania Customs Organisation, Brisbane
PCRC     Pacific Concerns Resources Centre, Suva
PICCAP   Pacific Islands Climate Change Assistance Programme
PIDC     Pacific Immigration Directors Meeting
PILOM    Pacific Islands Law Officers Meeting
RHPM     Regional Heads of Prisons Meeting
SOPAC    South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, Suva
SPC      The Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission), Noumea
SPCPC    South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference
SPICIN   South Pacific Islands Criminal Intelligence Network
SPREP    South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Apia
UNDP     United Nations Development Programme, Suva, Apia and Port Moresby
UNEP     United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi
UNFPA    United Nations Fund for Population Activities
WHO      World Health Organisation, Suva
WWF      World Wide Fund for Nature, Suva
WHAT ARE THE SECURITY OBJECTIVES?

In broad terms everyone shares common objectives. They want:
   Peace (i.e. no destructive conflict),
   Progress (i.e. improving income, education, health and other services), and
   Prosperity (i.e. better goods and services for all).

Each of these goals depends to some extent on the others. This report is concerned with the processes that may enhance security by pursuing those goals.

Dozens of people throughout the region provided information, insights, opinion and considerable wisdom. Their diverse contributions are greatly appreciated, but they are not acknowledged individually because many expressed views on condition that they were not named.

Those consulted were officials of government and inter-government agencies, non-government organisations, academics and others. I also raised some of the issues with people in many walks of life whom I came into contact with incidentally. Their perceptions are no less interesting or relevant.

In addition, I read many reports and publications on various aspects of this topic. In addition, before this request was received, I put into the press a new book of mine which contained several chapters dealing with security issues.

The six weeks allowed for this task included brief visits to the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Tonga. As I live in the Cook Islands, and visited Solomon Islands on another assignment, some discussions were also held in those countries.

There are no perfect solutions to such a range of issues, and very diverse perspectives were expressed about goals and strategies during this survey. Nevertheless, there was considerable agreement on general directions. Opinions seem to differ more within countries than between them.

Security is such a loose and general term that it can be given a range of meanings. Perhaps the most basic is ‘freedom from danger’ – but that too allows many interpretations. Defined broadly, it covers everything the Forum does, and the Aitutaki Declaration by Forum leaders in 1997 gave the term a broad definition. In a brief report one must be selective. This report tries to incorporate a range of views, but I take responsibility for the final selection and presentation.
ENHANCING NATIONAL SECURITY

Whose security?
Security interests, and perceptions of security, differ widely. In the Bougainville case, for example, there are not only the views of the Papua New Guinea Government and those of Bougainville independentists, but within each of those and other categories there are many opinions and interests. Likewise in New Caledonia or elsewhere. What is seen as, and may be, a threat to some, is a solution to others, and vice versa. But all parties seek peace, progress and prosperity. The debate is about how best to achieve them.

What are the threats?
In discussions with people in six countries of the region during this survey, most saw the threats more in terms of slow, pervasive forces (such as economic stagnation, great economic disparities, ethnic conflicts, the ‘information invasion’, quality of government and absence of corruption, loss of control to external financial, political and criminal powers, environmental and food security), than in terms of the violent threats from foreign military forces.

The main situations that have involved overt conflict in the Pacific in the past 20 years all involve at least four common elements:
1. Ethnic differences
2. Land disputes
3. Economic disparities
4. A lack of confidence in the government’s ability to resolve differences fairly or satisfactorily, and usually a belief that those with the power to act are either biased, corrupt or ineffective

So people ignore the law and security is breached. All four elements were apparent in such conflicts as:

- The Santo Rebellion in Vanuatu in 1979-80
- New Caledonia’s ethnic turmoil in the 1980s
- The Fiji coups in 1987
- The Bougainville war of independence and other matters in the 1990s
- The Oro for Oro movement and other similar movements in Papua New Guinea
- ‘Tribal fighting’ in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea
- Few Papua New Guineans from other provinces remain on the Highlands coffee and tea plantations, and even people from neighboring Highlands tribes are in many cases being forced out.
- Riots and burning of Papeete in 1995.
- The Guadalcanal conflict in Solomon Islands in 1999-2000
- Increasing attacks on Chinese and other recent Asian immigrants in several countries
- The former conflict in East Timor and the present one in West Papua show the same four elements.

On a less acute scale, such tensions are also prevalent in Hawai’i, New Zealand and Australia. Even in Tuvalu, although no overt conflict occurred, there were in the 1980s threats by some leaders of the “capital” island, Funafuti, to secede from the rest of the nation and force other Tuvaluans out of the capital. At
varying levels of intensity, similar tensions are widespread in the Pacific and the world.

Given the apparent importance of those elements, especially in combination, in situations where security has not been maintained, they seem to merit more attention. Part of the reason they have not been given adequate attention is that they are ‘sensitive’.

There are two approaches to ‘sensitive’ issues. One is to hide, deny, or avoid them until they deteriorate to the point of conflict. The other is to enhance public awareness about them, encourage open and constructive research and discussion on them, and facilitate widespread involvement in actions to overcome them or avoid their becoming sources of overt conflict.

Another reason the real security issues are not focussed on is habit. Some security services are not well geared to the actual problems that have erupted and are likely to continue to erupt. Ten years ago we left the Cold War which, rightly or wrongly, led to preparations, forces and postures that created jobs and vested interests and patterns of reaction. These become difficult to shift when the real problems change.

Some important security issues are not dealt with in this report, because they are being dealt with elsewhere, or I have no experience which would be relevant to them. These include:

**Environmental security, food security and health**

Almost unheard of a generation ago, considerable resources and public interest are now devoted to these matters. World inter-governmental agencies such as UNEP and GEF, regional inter-governmental bodies such as SPREP, SOPAC and PICCAP (which are largely funded by national and international donors), and global, regional and national NGOs such as Greenpeace and WWF, PCRC and PIANGO, Solomon Islands Development Trust, Siosiomanga and the Taporoporo Society, manifest the new awareness of these important issues. FAO, SPC and many NGOs have programmes in relation to food security. In health, SPC, WHO, UNFPA and many NGOs are working on AIDS and other health problems. The potential new diseases, and the potential for genetic attack or deterioration, are important, but beyond my understanding. Many universities in the region and beyond are researching all these vital topics. SPREP and SPC are the regional bodies with most expertise in these matters and are the appropriate ones to advise the Forum on them. Adding another layer of bureaucracy would be counter-productive. For the same reason, they are not dealt with in this report.

Enormous improvements have been achieved in awareness, resources and action in environmental and health issues over a generation ago. The increases were needed, progress is being made, and continuing support is required. But few of those spoken to regarded them as the top priority for additional resources in the security area. It is therefore recommended that new initiatives emphasize aspects of security that are less well understood and acted upon – including ethnicity, land rights, and widening gaps between the privileged and underprivileged.

**Crime, smuggling, false documenting, international terrorism etc**

These are matters for police, customs, immigration, airport authorities and other specific organisations, and are only matters for a regional, inter-agency organisation such as FRSC
when the problems can be ameliorated by involving a wider range of agencies. Each service has its own regional organisation (SPCPC, OCO, PIDC, RHPM, PILOM etc) and interaction between them is facilitated by the Forum Secretariat’s law enforcement liaison service and by the FRSC. These are all relevant and appropriate for sharing information, training, evolving more effective strategies etc.. However, they are not dealt with here because there is nothing I can suggest beyond their present actions and directions, except to emphasize the need for further cooperation and sharing of information between law enforcement agencies within each nation as well as regionally.

**International financial crime**

The Forum Secretariat has just had a Regional Financial Intelligence Information Sharing Assessment, which will be reporting to this meeting. It is therefore not dealt with here.

However, the region’s police and other forces are not well equipped to deal with these new, highly sophisticated, high technology crimes. Regional cooperation is necessary, but regional solutions alone are unlikely to succeed as these crimes are the work of people outside much more than those inside. The key linkages need to be with authorities abroad who can ‘rein in’ criminals from their areas. Training of national staff is essential, but there are limits to how much can be retained, for persons with such skills can usually earn vastly more in commerce and industry (if not in crime!). This very important topic merits serious and separate attention by persons with appropriate skills.

**Harmonizing laws and procedures**

This is being undertaken by PILOM and the Forum Secretariat. Progress has been slow, but positive. The real problem, and it will get worse rather than better, is that very small countries cannot afford the range and number of legal and related experts which a sovereign nation needs to keep up with an ever more complex, interactive world. And some governments do not have the political will (and may even be motivated to subvert) to abide by the principles they have expounded and agreed to at regional meetings.

**BASIC CAUSES OF DETERIORATING NATIONAL SECURITY**

Four issues were identified above as being at the core of the actual conflicts in the region in recent decades - ethnic difference, land disputes, economic disparities, and quality of governance. Since economic problems and inadequacies of governance commonly triggers the first two, we begin with them.

**Economic security**

Around the world we see a general correlation between economic prosperity and security. Where economic security is attained, the risk of war and other violence is reduced. The correlation is not absolute, for there are many factors, but there is a correlation. Civil war and communal violence is much more common in poor countries than in rich, and in countries where the rich-poor gap is widening, causing resentment and hostility. Those with little to lose are the easiest to mobilize to try to overcome their problems or express their frustrations through conflict.

One major way to enhance security in the Pacific is for the economies to grow, for people to have more quality goods and services which they value, for opportunities for employment to grow, for commerce and other activities to widen, and for the quality of education, health and
other services to improve. In doing so, however, it is essential to ensure reasonable equity, and to adopt policies to ensure that Pacific Islanders earn a good proportion of the benefits derived.

Enhancing the economy requires increased investment and employment. As much as possible, investment should come from within -- from government and community investments in infrastructure and services, and private investments in employment and income-creating activities. To maximize investment from within, those within must be encouraged to generate resources and to use them in-country. Part of Singapore’s successful is due to its having not only encouraged but required every citizen to save and to invest. It is sometimes said that Singapore can afford to save and invest because it is rich. The opposite is true. Singapore was poor, and lifted its economy by hard work, savings, investment and clean government. There is little doubt that one factor in the low crime rates in Singapore is the economic prosperity that has been achieved by energetic action by government and people in both generating employment and in ensuring that everyone owns property and shares in the prosperity. Home ownership is 93% in Singapore due this policy. It is sometimes said that Singapore is prosperous because of its location. This is not so. Location is the reason that one or other city on the Straits of Malacca has been a major centre of trade and prosperity for over 1,000 years. Cities in what is now Indonesia and Malaysia played that role, and still are even better located to potentially achieve the same. But Indonesia and Malaysia have not had the quality of government that Singapore has had for the past few generations, nor the cultural values of its people. Those make the difference between prosperity and poverty.

People will invest most readily (both local people and foreign) where they feel their investment is safest and most profitable, and where there is not inordinate government or other interference or inefficiency. No one wants to put their money and skills in places they perceive as insecure. To the extent that investment by nationals is inadequate, overseas investment needs to be sought. The main risks are inconsistent government policies, and an unsafe environment. It would be of value to the FRSC to have some independent assessments of how investors see the risk levels of various Pacific Islands nations and territories, and why. All banks and some international investment firms make such assessments (but seldom make them public., Standard and Poors provide credit ratings for several countries of the region (Cook Islands, Fiji and Papua New Guinea at least) and could be asked to provide them for all. The Asian Development or World Bank could be asked to provide ratings. In the short time allowed for preparation of this report I have not been able to determine what information is available, but the Forum Secretariat or someone else could assemble this information for your next meeting. One major advantage of this information is that it is objective, in the sense that those making the assessments have no interests in the countries concerned.

As economic risk assessment is a major determinant of who invests, and of how much, and how much benefit goes to the local economy. It is also a major determinant of physical security in terms of levels of crime, inter-ethnic or other violence. One essential step in the direction of enhanced security is an enhanced economy. This necessitates improving investor confidence, and that requires consistent and fair government policies, non-interference apart from equal implementation of clear policies, a fair and efficient judicial system to settle disputes, social stability, and quality government.
**Renting sovereignty**
The political and economic security aspects of the marketing ‘sovereignty products’ are a cause of concern. It has in some cases reduced the international standing and trust in the nation concerned, and increased its vulnerability to further penetration by undesirable influences.

Passports of limited value (usually not involving rights of citizenship and residence) have been sold to foreigners by several nations. At least some of the buyers are criminals who use the passports to cover their true identity, or for other nefarious purposes. Almost all have been associated with scams, gave little benefit (and some cost) to the people of the nations concerned, while giving their nations a second-rate image internationally.

Money havens, flags of convenience and other uses of sovereignty likewise, have in many cases been associated with unethical and criminal behavior which impacts more widely on the nation, and brings little benefit to ordinary citizens. Their main function is to protect the richer peoples of the world against the poorer and to widen income gaps – including in this region. Pacific peoples cannot expect to have their declarations of sovereignty taken seriously when they rent it out so readily.

**Fears of foreign takeover**
Considerable concern is expressed in the region about the control of minerals (both land-based and sea-bed), timber, fish and other resources. The main concerns relate to the fear that the benefits go disproportionately to external interests, and to some political and bureaucratic mediators of the process. This has led to considerable rioting and destruction, particularly in the logging and mining industries.

Destruction of the capital base increases the chance of future conflict. In the case of non-renewable resources, when minerals are extracted, unless much of the income is invested in trusts, ‘Dutch disease’ ensues, and agricultural and other productivity declines. In the case of renewable resources such as forests and fisheries, unless the extraction rate is sustainable, the resource base and the benefits that went with it, soon shrink.

**The vulnerability of small currencies**
Generally, the smaller an economy, the more vulnerable its currency. FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau overcome this by using US currency; Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu by using Australian; Cook Islands and Niue by using New Zealand. Some people feel Australia and New Zealand might be too small to operate their own currencies in the longer term. It is an issue the Forum first deliberated on in the early 1970s, but it may be worth further consideration.

**Rapid population growth** makes economic growth especially difficult, and the provision of quality education, health and other services more so. This feeds back to higher security risks.

Some economic issues relate to scale (of capital and technology and skills), but some basic issues are cultural, and are discussed on page 13.
Issues of Governance
Jeremia Tabai, former President of Kiribati and Secretary General of the Forum, observed when opening the Pacific Science congress symposium on Challenges to Sovereignty, Security and the State, that:

The real threat to the Pacific Islands comes from within, from policies pursued by our governments...which undermine our ability to function effectively."

My only qualification to President Tabai’s statement would be that the policies are often excellent, but inconsistent practices subvert them.

Much of the solution involves persuading governments to withdraw from fields in which they have been found to be more of an obstacle than a benefit, and enhancing the quality of governance. This is not dealt with further here because some progress is being made through the initiatives being undertaken by governments to improve the economy, by commitments made by the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting, by regional ministers of trade, and because the Secretariat already has a programme in this field. However, any security assessment needs to take the quality of governance into consideration.

Social policies with longer-term security implications
Ethnic issues (both between indigenous and immigrant, and between different indigenous cultures) have been so prominent in security breakdowns that it is surprising that more has not been done to understand the processes, and that more action is not being taken to minimize the chance of their becoming more troublesome. Why, despite ethnic tensions being major causes of security problems in much of the region, has so little attention been given to study and action to improve ethnic relations, and reduce the likelihood of it being a point of conflict?

Reasons include the fact that it is generally in the interest of immigrant cultures (whether resident or from abroad) to down-play ethnic factors – and most researchers in the region are from immigrant cultures. Another reason is that the main theoretical frameworks came from Europe, where the social sciences were heavily infused with Marxist thinking, which assumed that ethnicity was mere false consciousness. Academics found it hard to see the reality of ethnicity in security issues until people of their own kind in USSR and Yugoslavia, who had denied the significance of ethnicity for three generations, found that their countries fell apart into ethnic communities because of their naïve assumptions. Universities are no less subject to fashion than any other aspect of society, and the frequency of ethnic conflicts in their own societies, and developments in psychology and genetics is leading to a change of fashion.

Ethnic problems are especially acute in multi-cultural countries, which now includes most of the Pacific. Even Tonga, with very few non-Tongans, reports a big increase in crime against the 300 or so Chinese, who have taken over a high proportion of the retail trade. Likewise, the Congressman for American Samoa says that in recent years Asian businessmen have taken over more than 80% of businesses in American Samoa, and that this causes considerable friction. This is much more so in the Western Micronesia and in Melanesia. From the 1950s there was a slow increase in the number and scale of indigenous businesses. This continued until the 1990s, but now the proportion is reducing through most of the region,
to be replaced by recent Northeast Asian immigrants. This trend, which is continuing, will have considerable security implications.

Ethnic issues are important with indigenous populations too. In the Federated States of Micronesia, all citizens are constitutionally equal, but non-legal processes ensure that unofficial ‘micro-citizenship’ applies in component states and islands. Even in the Cook Islands with a total national population of 15,000, an old lady recently complained in the newspaper that since she originated from an outer island, she was always made to feel an ‘outsider’ in the capital of Rarotonga, even though she had spent most of her life there.

A major basic cause of insecurity in the region derives from inadequate education. Low levels of education often correlate with low levels of income and employment, and high levels of crime. Education levels are rising world-wide. But they are rising faster in East Asia, the region with which the Pacific Islands will interact much more, than in the Pacific. This is widening the gap in knowledge, income, privilege and power, between Pacific people and those with whom they interact. Another yawning gap is in levels of education between the capitals and the outer islands or hinterland. Kiribati has a policy of granting scholarships for secondary education on a population basis to each island, and giving a quota of places in the Maritime College to each island, to ensure a spread of opportunities. There is a need for more such policies, both in relation to the rural and the urban poor, if extreme class division is not to occur. It would correlate with a vicious circle of deteriorating economies, shrinking services, and growing insecurity.

The greatest educational benefit comes from action at the youngest age. Probably the greatest payoff would come from training young mothers to help their children make the best use of their natural talents. It is now known that from pregnancy until the time they go to school is a much more important period in a child’s learning and personality development, than the time at school. Universities cost most and contribute least to the learning process. Several countries are now reviewing their educational policies to better serve national needs in the 21st century. Changes in educational policy, including curriculum content, could have great positive impacts on long term security.

The talents of women have been freed up considerably, but there is still some distance to go. It is relatively easy where incomes are high, labour-saving devices and family planning services available. Where they are not, it is more difficult. Progress has been made. Further progress is likely to enhance security too. It is probably not accidental that security problems are most evident in the region in those places where women have least equality, and their potentials are least developed.

Many forms of crime and security threat involve youth disproportionately. For decades there have been proposals for national youth services of various kinds, some linked to military service, some not. Little has been achieved in this area by governments, though a great deal by voluntary organisations. It may be appropriate to review youth activities in the region, to see whether further beneficial activities can be evolved – but probably not by governments or intergovernmental agencies, for their record is of high cost and low effectiveness. An assessment of the key criteria in the region’s most successful programmes for youth may help us forward to a more secure future.
Social security
Security in the sense of absence of threats of violence, is enhanced by social security. Unlike environmental security, little seems to be being done about social security with the exception of health, population planning, domestic violence and child abuse. But much remains to be done in social security, for while average health has improved over the past generation, population of many countries has grown beyond the capacity of services, and average real incomes of ordinary Pacific Islanders have fallen. In the health and population area, SPC, WHO, IPPF and other regional and international actors have extensive and valued programmes.

The information invasion
"The most sinister invasion is information: by television, video, Internet and other sources" said a senior and experienced Pacific diplomat, politician and entrepreneur. While appreciating the positive potential of global information, he is concerned about the severe erosion of any form of ethics in some of the material introduced. What is often called the ‘free flow’ of information is anything but free. A very few (largely non-governmental) interests in a few rich nations have a determining effect on what swamps the Pacific and the world. This man, and a number of others in the region, expressed concern about its effect not only on individuals, but on the integrity and cohesiveness of Pacific cultures and nations, and thus on national security.

This raises the vexed question of how far freedom of information should go. Every country has some form of control on extreme forms of violence and pornography, but it is difficult to implement. And some of the most sinister erosion is not in these but in commercial advertising which is beyond control.

Several people raised the possibility of ideological invasion – especially in the form of fundamentalist religion, but also in other forms. Perhaps the most serious today, is the ideology of greed promoted by the advertising industry.

A non-enforcement social role for the police
Some leaders of police services feel that their mandate is too narrow. Some would like some police officers to have training in mediation and conflict resolution, rather than too exclusive an emphasis on punishment. Another said he would like to see his force trained to think developmentally, and to relate their work at all times to economic, social and personal development. These directions would probably have public support.

Cultural disadvantage in a competitive, connected, hi-tech world
Cultural values and ethics which evolved in the context of small, self-sustaining societies have often been applied to national problems where they are inconsistent with public interest. These are sometimes described as ‘Traditional’ and ‘Western’ respectively, but this is not so. The cultural values and ethics of Europe when it too was made of many self-sustaining, subsistence-based communities (before the relatively recent emergence of nation states) was very similar. And in the Pacific as anywhere, some values and ethics from small-scale societies continue for a long time after the formation of the nation-state.
Thus many principles which are virtues in small, self-sustaining society, are vices in a nation-state – e.g. nepotism, giving gifts to leaders (and from leaders) on the basis of reciprocal personal help and blood ties, and so on. This leads to frustration and disillusionment of those who miss out, and erosion of ethics throughout. These patterns do not change overnight, and much has been achieved in governance and economic management to meet those challenges. Constant pressure is needed to strengthen principles which are best suited to the nation-state.

**Forum recognition of the link between social factors and security**
There is a need to bring policy-makers, researchers, NGOs and media together from time to time as has been done so successfully with environmental issues. Ethnicity and other relevant socio-cultural factors need the kind of ‘treatment’ environment has had in recent decades, with action research, constructive media coverage, programmes in schools and colleges and women’s and youth organisations, and so on. A statement from the Forum that it recognised ethnicity and other social issues as matters requiring deeper understanding and action, could support the inclusion of these issues into the public consciousness and educational programmes.

**Disputes over land**
This has almost always been a component of breaches of security in the region in recent years. It is also a major factor in sluggish economic growth. At the time of independence, most new governments of the region gave resolution of land disputes a high priority. In fact, however, other priorities soon took over and land matters are in many cases more serious now than they have been for a long time.

The reasons they have not been given the priority include the fact that they are very time-consuming, that results are slow to emerge, and that they involve tension which can be avoided for a time, even at the cost of worse tension and economic and social cost later.

There are no total solutions to land problems, but work on resolving them, which is a continuous process, merits a higher priority than it now receives in many places.

**ENFORCING THE LEGAL POWERS OF THE STATE**

**How far does the public accept the legitimacy of government’s coercive power?**
This seems to have declined in several nations of the region. In territories (such as those of France) or provinces (such as West Papua), the legitimacy depends to some extent on indigenous versus immigrant ethnicity. But ethnic issues are not only between indigenous and immigrant peoples. The Guadalcanal problems relate in part to claims of Malaitans being over-represented in law enforcement and other government services, having higher average incomes, owning more assets including businesses, having higher education and other criteria. Ethnic imbalance can reduce public confidence in the law enforcement agencies, unless it is compensated by reciprocal balances in other aspects of society.

A problem raised not only by non-governmental observers, but also by senior officials within the law enforcement agencies and beyond, was that of political interference in staff selection and in detailed operations of the law enforcement agencies. This leads to appointments being made on other than objective criteria, to persons being charged or not charged with crimes on
political criteria, and similar problems. All this leads to a lowering of morale in the law enforcement agencies, and a lowering of public confidence in them.

There seems also to be a widespread public view in some areas, of certain sectors of the military and police as causes of insecurity. Some are accused of abusing powers for personal advantage, renting and selling weapons to professional criminals, extensive brutality, theft and rape. There is objective confirmation of such allegations in some localities. One highly ethical and respected community leader said "Our people now hate the police and the army. It was not like this before." On the other hand, while not condoning such actions, some members of the forces claim that in view of the inadequate staff numbers, pay and facilities, and the ineffectiveness of the formal justice system, they sometimes have no choice but to administer ‘bush justice’.

On the other hand, many police and military personnel set high professional standards which enhance public confidence, economic growth and social development. Quality in the law enforcement services is a major contributor to public confidence building, which is basic to all development. As mentioned earlier, the actions taken by the Oceania Customs Organisation in enhancing confidence, ethics, professionalism and integrity, may provide a beacon for the region.

In the same way that the example set by the enforcement agencies influences both crime and security, so does the example of leaders in politics and other walks of life. Too often in the course of this study I heard people, both within governments and without, complain of particular politicians using their powers for personal gain and ‘behaving above the law’. Many saw this as the most important source of insecurity. Unless political leaders set a good example, and are dealt with like any other citizen if they do not, crime and insecurity will escalate.

In small jurisdictions with one or a few languages and significant cultural uniformity, it is obviously easier to control crime, and conviction rates appear to be relatively high. Where conviction rates are very low, crime does pay for the criminal in the majority of cases. In such jurisdictions there is some demand for delegating more to local courts, and to incorporating more of traditional principles of justice. As in custom, greater emphasis is wanted on restitution, and of the responsibility of relatives for their families in small communities. Alternative forms of justice are being explored, including youth courts, family group conferences etc.

**Prisons as ‘schools of crime**

Owing to financial constraints of governments, prisons are in many cases said to be of low standard and therefore ‘schools of crime’. This too is another reason for more community responsibility for social control where this is feasible. Many countries have had commissions of enquiry and reports and considerations of the most appropriate forms of justice, but there is a feeling that the present systems are too influenced by processes and principles used in high income industrialised nations.
Making sure the official checks and balances are efficient and respected
Unless the police, courts, Ombudsman, Leadership Tribunal, Commission for Offshore Financial Services, etc work effectively, security of the public and the nation and indeed the region is compromised.

COORDINATING REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Facilitating the work of unofficial institutions and processes that enhance security
Government agencies can only work effectively if most people, most of the time, obey the law and consider the interests of others.

One cannot help but be impressed in Solomon Islands with the fact that each of the churches now has a programme to promote reconciliation in the Guadalcanal dispute. Some churches bring together members of the opposing groups for discussion and mutual understanding. As those leading the negotiations for the Commonwealth and the Government confirm, little progress can be made until most people are convinced of the need for reconciliation. The work of both official and unofficial organisations are needed to achieve peace and make it permanent.

Broadening the composition of the Forum Regional Security Committee
To be of maximum effectiveness, both for the participants and as a source of coordinated advice to member governments, the FRSC needs the leaders of the various security-related services present, as they now are. These include the chairperson and chief executive of each of the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference, the Oceania Customs Organisation, the Pacific Islands Directors of Immigration Conference, the Pacific Islands Law Officers Conference, the Forum’s law enforcement liaison officer, and the chair of the Forum Officials Committee. As most Pacific Islands nations do not have military forces, there is no regional organisation for them, but it nevertheless seems that the heads of the region’s defence forces should participate also.

If other officials can be present, that is a bonus. At present a number of countries are represented by ambassadors. This is fine in terms of presenting reports from their governments, and reporting back, but the committee needs mainly persons who themselves have extensive accumulated experience and operational responsibility for that sector of national security.

There is also a strong case for non-official participation and involving more stakeholders. Until a decade ago most governments and intergovernmental agencies held closed meetings. In recent years they have found the benefit of involving a wider range of participants. The United Nations, World Bank, and dozens of other institutions are increasingly opening their doors to broader participation, to mutual advantage.

Involving churches, NGOs, youth and women’s organisations, educational institutions, Transparency International, Businesses for Social Responsibility and so on, all enhance security, and make the task of Pacific police and other government agencies more manageable.
The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) adopted a ‘two-track’ philosophy, providing for some meetings exclusively for governments and others for a wide range of participants. The ‘second track’ of ARF is the Committee on Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), which involves representatives of government and non-governmental organisations. Though not associated with CSCAP, the June 1999 conference on Island State Security held at CINCPAC in Hawai’i with official and unofficial or ‘civil society’ representatives from throughout the region, was of that kind.

So far, the Pacific Islands nations have had little involvement in CSCAP, although there is nothing stopping their participation except time, funds and the range of expertise in this field. It is suggested that the Forum should be represented at CSCAP and publish a summary of the main finding of relevance to this region in the Forum Review.

Civil society is a recent term used to encompass non-government, non-commercial individuals and institutions. It includes the enormous number of NGOs which have boomed over the past 50 years, and seem likely to continue to become of growing importance, as well as journalists (the ‘fourth estate’) rather than the media as a whole which is more driven by commerce, and educators rather than schools and universities. The most common problem of secular NGOs is funding, as the Pacific's money supply is largely 'cornered' by governments through their taxing powers, by commerce through its profits, and by churches through the widespread commitment of Pacific people. Secular NGOs have few such secure sources of income, yet they are becoming more successful and more influential, and they are in many instances more cost-effective than governments, inter-governmental agencies, commerce or churches.

The very influential World Watch, in its identification of seven “keys to the next 30 years”, identified the growth of civil society “that may soon be strong enough to begin to counterbalance an unresponsive government and industry” (World Watch March 2000, vol. 13 no. 2 page 13).

It is suggested that the FRSC consider broadening its participation to include, in the first instance, an appropriate church person because the reality in the region is that churches are the most influential non-government institutions in this regard (perhaps a person who has been involved in reconciliation in Solomon Islands would be appropriate), Transparency International (a recently formed but highly respected institution which does not deal in particular cases, but in enhancing the ‘building blocks’ which lead to greater security), an appropriate academic representative (the PNG National Research Institute has a current research programme on security and conflict issues), and an appropriate NGO representative (perhaps from the Pacific Concerns Resources Centre). There are many others, but if it is not possible to invite many on the first occasion, the order they are in above may be an appropriate order of priority.

**The role of law enforcement agencies in minimising threats**

While the extent of military forces is a matter for governments, not only outside observers, but many citizens of the countries concerned, wonder about the reasons for their relative scale. Almost no one in any country felt under military threat from beyond their borders, or that their forces could withstand an assault from a major power if they were.
Some countries are without military forces and see no need for them, while others close by and with similar circumstances consider them essential. Some reasons given officially for the existence or scale of the forces, are not taken seriously by their neighbors or even by many of their citizens.

One exception is international peace-keeping, which seems to be popular at home and abroad. Fiji has used its military (and recently police also) extensively and effectively for this work. It earns substantial income, provides work and training for a segment of the population that needs it, gives a good image internationally, and provides bargaining leverage for the nation should it need support from the international community.

The other role which seems to have public support is patrolling the 200 mile EEZ against fish poaching, smuggling, for search and rescue, and other activities. In most countries this is a police activity, in others military. The functions are more similar to police functions ashore, and they are within each nation’s zone.

All military forces also undertake some training which is of value to staff once they retire from the service, and all undertake some public service whether in construction, transport, sending bands to promote tourism, or otherwise. If the forces are essential for military purposes, such uses for them in peace time are wise, but in the actual cases the case for their present scale is hard to understand.

Beyond international peace-keeping, EEZ patrolling, and meeting reciprocal obligations with cooperating countries, and given the absence of external threats which national forces could repel, and in the Bougainville case (the only one in which Pacific military have been used internally in war) the objective was not achieved, it is at times difficult to understand the relative expenditure on military as against police. This is especially so at this time of economic stringency. Given the rising criminal threats, especially from abroad, it is easy to see a case for strengthening the police, but some countries which want to do so feel they cannot afford to, while spending heavily on military forces.

**An annual Regional Security Report?**

An annual report, probably by the Secretary General, and summarising the security status of the region, may be worth publishing for general dissemination through the media. It would bring together the concerns and achievements, not just of governments only, but of nations and the region as a whole. It would enhance public awareness of security issues in a coordinated way, and facilitate public cooperation in meeting the challenges. That cooperation is essential.

**MILITARY THREATS FROM BEYOND THE REGION**

**The benefits of water boundaries**

Water boundaries are everywhere easier and cheaper to defend than land boundaries. The region is fortunate in having only one land boundary - that between West Papua and Papua New Guinea - and it has been a source of frustration to say the least.

**The re-arming of Asia**
Although few people see military threats as a short-term danger, many Asian nations are spending heavily on increased military power. While this is not aimed at the Pacific Islands, which are marginal to most Asian security interests, some fear that by-products of that growing militarisation could be dangerous, in the same way that the two major wars that affected the region in the 1900s (World War I and World War II) involved this region only incidentally. However, they still had a very heavy impact on the region – especially World War II in Micronesia and Melanesia.

The two main areas of concern seemed to be the possibility of Indonesia's problems spilling over into Melanesia; and the possibility of repercussions of an Asian conflict in the Pacific Islands - the most commonly mentioned was China, which is the most expansionist power in the Asia-Pacific region today. Possibilities include a China-Taiwan conflict having repercussions in the Pacific; or China applying pressure to 'protect its citizens' in one or more countries of the region where the growing number of recent Chinese immigrants cause problems in the host country.

And within?
Although almost all such threats are external, several people pointed out that the military incursions into Solomon Islands during the Bougainville conflict, showed that problems between neighbors were also a possibility which needed to be kept in mind.

The benefits of larger powers enhancing one's security
The Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau, have all contracted their defence largely to the USA through their Compacts of Free Association. As in any deal, there are pros and cons. The main loss is that many strategic decisions are out of their hands, but gains include being protected by the world's largest military machine, and at no cost to the Micronesian nations. Micronesians from these countries can and do join US military forces. The US Navy and US Coast Guard also provide search and rescue and other services for the Micronesian associated states. This necessitates them constantly rescuing Micronesian fishermen who are lost and sea, which is a very expensive exercise paid for by USA under the Compacts. Given their limited economies, it is unlikely that their own governments could provide the facilities for the rescue of many of these men.

When it became self-governing in 1965 the Cook Islands likewise delegated its defence relationship to New Zealand, but in the 1980s it took responsibility for its own defence and now has a defence agreement with New Zealand, similar to those New Zealand has with Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and other neighbors. The Cook Islands also has treaties of strategic/defence significance with France, Australia and USA. Fortunately for the Cook Islands, it is small, relatively scattered and isolated, and does not feel any external military threat.

Although most nations would prefer to provide their own defence, the financial reality for most small nations, with or without military forces, is that there is very little they could do against a major sustained external attack. In fact, no nation in the world can now 'go it alone' in military terms - the rest is a matter of degree.

As the world becomes more 'wired together', the concept of sovereignty becomes more problematic. Who to join with? To what extent regional? To what extent with larger partners with more resources?
**Criminal threats from beyond the Region**
The possibility of criminals destabilising or toppling or crippling governments is a new phenomenon. But criminal organisations now have the power to do these things to small governments. The governments of the Cook Islands, Marshall Islands and Vanuatu would have been bankrupted if they had not been saved from fraudulent ‘letters of guarantee’ deals that they were enticed into. Governments of the region are now more aware, but criminals always seek new and more plausible schemes. Military, police and other enforcement agencies now take such possibilities seriously.

Criminal threats, however, are unlikely to be military. They are more likely to be in terms of controlling financial institutions, national gatekeepers, and resources.

**THE ROLE OF REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SECURITY**

**The cost-effectiveness of meetings**
It is important to meet from time to time, but meetings are expensive, time consuming, and take us from other tasks. Police chiefs used to meet every two years, now every one. Law officers, heads of customs, immigration, prisons meet every one or two years. There is good reason for such people to meet, but is the frequency of once every 12 months a matter of logic, or magic, or habit? Why not every 3 or 6 or 24 or 36 months?

Also, in a region where most of the external threats of a military, criminal or other kind come not from other countries of the region, but from beyond it, it is necessary to remind ourselves to keep an appropriate balance in interaction between inward-looking and outward-looking. Palau’s major security concerns have little relevance to the Cook Islands, nor Papua New Guinea’s to Kiribati. We need to ensure that regional linkages are based on benefit to the countries concerned, and not on any self-deluding ideology.

It is also necessary to be aware of other regions. For some purposes, Micronesia is a logical region for cooperative activity, because they have more actions in common than the whole Oceania region. Likewise, there are many common elements in Melanesia that differ from those in Polynesia.

With the tremendous advances in telecommunications it may be timely for the Secretariat to calculate the real costs (i.e. those to home country taxpayers for salaries and overheads as well as those for fares, accommodation and conference costs, whoever’s taxpayers have to pay them – for all aid has alternative uses) of the existing security-related meetings in and on the region (whether they are strictly Forum membership or not). At present all meetings seem to be of chiefs, for which there is good reason, but perhaps there is a case for heads of specialist divisions from time to time.

**Preventive diplomacy**
This is popular in principle but difficult in practice. And it costs money. Areas of potential security threat are numerous, but few of them will explode into major conflicts. Ideas varied enormously as to which ones are likely to be helped by preventive diplomacy. Some
suggested to me in the course of this study included ethnic conflicts in a number of countries of the region and class conflict in at least one.

Perhaps the four most critical security situations in the region in recent times were listed above (page 6-7). In all cases there were those who foresaw the probability of those conflicts, but in no case would those in authority have agreed to 'preventive diplomacy' which is by definition international. The authorities (at least until after the conflicts erupted and became international issues) refused external mediation on the grounds that the matters were 'internal', even though they also had repercussions for other countries of the region.

The Forum’s ministerial fact-finding missions to New Caledonia are sometimes described as ‘preventive diplomacy’ However, although I believe they are useful for the Forum and they play a positive role in adding another dimension to the political process in New Caledonia, this is a little different from ‘preventive diplomacy’.

In the other cases, by the time any external action is accepted, the situation is usually well past a ‘preventive’ phase. We may be better served by a more accurate term? ‘Diplomatic conciliation’ perhaps?

If such external involvement is accepted, the government concerned will decide who it wants to undertake the conciliation. There is a case for it to be done by neighbors, or within one’s own region, but there is also a case for involving those far away and as detached as possible, such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth or others.

If a country wants such involvement to be undertaken regionally, there is a need for funding. There may be a case for expanding the role of the Regional Disaster Relief Fund into a Regional Emergency Fund, which could include human conflicts as well as natural disasters. It would be difficult to justify a full-scale preventive diplomacy structure in the region, as the need for it is likely to fluctuate enormously – with nothing to do most of the time, and more than it could realistically cope with at others. However, the Secretariat could play a role on request from member countries, both to tap into existing world systems (e.g. United Nations and Commonwealth) and to mobilise assistance within the region.

**A regional peace-keeping force?**
First proposed by Sir Julius Chan, then Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, in the early 1980s. It has been raised at various times since. Difficulties that make it unattractive to most countries include who will pay for it, who will command it, where will it be headquartered, who will most influence its control, and whose side should it be on?

For example after the 1987 coups in Fiji, different member countries of the Forum officially or unofficially supported different sides. In 1978 Sir Albert Henry’s party claimed victory in the Cook Islands elections and took over the government. There was bitter division in the community but fortunately no bloodshed. If there had been open conflict (and it was close) and other governments’ forces were called on to assist, which side should they have assisted? A subsequent court case, which dragged on for months, determined that Sir Albert had won the election only by massive bribery and corruption, and the other party was put into power. When civil servants in Vanuatu in 1997 rioted because they believed the government had
stolen their money, who should an external force have supported (it was called for), since the
government was later found to be in the wrong both legally and morally? If East Timor had
been in the Pacific, should an external force have assisted Indonesia or East Timor? In New
Caledonia, the government elected by the majority (which is predominantly French and
Polynesian), or the opposition minority (which is predominantly Kanak)? And in Bougainville,
the Bougainville independentists or the government of Papua New Guinea?

In almost every actual case I am aware of in the region, it is debatable who are the ‘goodies’
and who the ‘baddies’, let alone the ‘legitimates’ and the ‘bastards’! Too many such
difficulties make it unlikely that such a force will be set up in the foreseeable future.

**Regional legal and administrative arrangements to facilitate peace-keeping**

This is the ‘mini” version of a regional peace-keeping force. Earlier proposals for a regional
State of Forces Agreement (SOFA) have been set aside in favour of the Secretariat
collecting, and being familiar with, SOFA agreements from around the world, so that if a
need arises, these precedents can be used quickly to prepare an agreement suited to the
particular conditions. Bilateral SOFA agreements are a matter for the nations concerned.

**Measuring security**

Independent international security-related ratings of such concepts as ‘freedom’ should
perhaps be assembled and disseminated annually, because they provide multiple perceptions
of security and well-being of the people concerned. There has not been time to assemble all
of those available for this exercise, but for example Freedom House’s annual world-wide
rating uses levels of crime and corruption, conduct of elections, political rights, civil liberties,
freedom of media, etc. It puts Australia, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall
Islands, New Zealand and Tuvalu into the highest of seven categories. The UK ‘Observer’
used different criteria and gave Tuvalu the highest rating. UNDP uses several indices,
including the Human Development Index, a Poverty Index, and a new one which does not
yet include Pacific Islands nations except Papua New Guinea. While any rating depends on
the criteria used, all ratings using different criteria show Tuvalu to have a high degree of
personal freedom and internal security. And all show at least a broad correlation between the
main other quality of life factors, and security. It must indicate something. Dr Clive Hamilton
is working on a GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator) which includes security concerns such as
crime and risk, as well as income distribution, employment, resource depletion, and other
indicators of progress. It has not yet been applied to the Pacific islands region. Investment
risk ratings were discussed on pages 89. It would not be difficult for the Secretariat or
someone else to, once a year, collect and disseminate all available independent ratings. It
would be helpful in showing governments and non-governmental organisations where the
stresses lay, as a first step in taking action to avoid their becoming the cause of more serious
conflict.

**Facilitating a ‘Culture of Peace’**

UNESCO has been promoting the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of
It was endorsed by the Forum at its 1999 meeting. Action on the proposal is more
appropriately a matter for churches and NGOs, with the endorsement of governments.
However, it may be appropriate for the Pacific Community to promote as part of its social
programme, not in an extensive way, but as a visible regional inter-governmental support for the concept – perhaps in the form of a regional competition for reports by individuals or clubs on actual cases of successful reconciliation.

**Any regional action in security matters must distribute benefits and costs equitably**

The effectiveness of regional activity has been greatly compromised by the benefits from it being very unevenly distributed. This leaves many countries marginalised, and seeing regional cooperation as a burden rather than a benefit.

**Taking the process a step further**

The FRSC may wish to consider at its next meeting having some appropriately experienced person (e.g. Savenaca Siwatibau or Tony Hughes) to introduce a discussion on security concomitants of economic policy and practice; someone on ways to reduce the possibility of ethnic differences becoming security concerns; and someone on ways to avoid land matters becoming sources of civil disturbance. The governance issues are probably now adequately discussed in other contexts. Progress in each of these areas would have a very positive impact on security as well as on progress and prosperity.

The Secretariat or the FRSC may wish to consider, at its next meeting, trying to explore directions for improvement in the security climate, using a computer-based facilitating programme. In this process, each person has a computer and feeds his/her responses in. A facilitator acts as chair and initiates the process, but has no personal input to it. This process has many advantages. It allows more topics to be dealt with and digested more quickly, it avoids personality clashes and dramas (because no one knows who put what into the process at each stage), it reduces advocacy (i.e. individuals, institutions or nations pushing their own agendas), and it is democratic. It also enhances the learning process.

Another possibility at the next or a later meeting, would be to invite someone such as Edward de Bono, the world famous author of many books on how to think and plan more clearly and effectively, to conduct a one-day workshop as part of the conference. Anyone who knows de Bono will know that he is very stimulating and invigorating, and opens our minds to new ways of handling existing possibilities. At commercial rates he would cost more than the Pacific could afford (he consults for some of the world's largest military forces, international corporations, governments and inter-governmental organisations), but he has a heart and can be persuaded to do things if he believes there is a need and an interest. The latest of his more than 30 books is listed in the bibliography.

**MATTERS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

There is an urgent need for training of law-enforcement agencies in hi-tech crime (page 8).

Further cooperation and sharing of information between law enforcement agencies within each nation as well as regionally, is feasible and desirable (page 8).
Issues of economic growth, distribution of benefits, education, governance, ethnicity and land rights are crucial to the maintenance of security. Therefore any progress towards deeper understanding, and enhancement of those factors, will improve security (pages 8-15, 24-5).

Training law enforcement personnel in mediation and conflict resolution, and in developmental thinking, rather than too exclusive an emphasis on punishment, are recommended by some police chiefs and would probably have public support (14).

Forum endorsement of the need for awareness of the link between social/cultural factors and security, would be helpful (page 14).

Integrity issues in the law enforcement service have great impact on their effectiveness and public acceptance. The initiatives of the OCO could be very helpful to the other services. High integrity among political leaders makes an even greater contribution to security, and any steps to their enhancement can be of great benefit (page 16).

There is an interest in exploring alternative forms of justice which might be more effective in the region (page 16).

A broadening of the composition of the FRSC is suggested, to encourage wider public understanding of, and support for, development of a positive security environment (page 17-18).

That the Secretariat consider participating, or facilitating participation by other relevant persons, in appropriate consultations and exercises of CSCAP, and publicising the main findings in the Forum Review (page 17).

An annual Regional Security Report is suggested (page 19).

It may be appropriate for the Regional Disaster Relief Fund to be broadened to a Regional Emergencies Fund to enable the Secretariat to play a role in diplomatic conciliation if so requested by a member country (pages 22-3).

It would be of value to the region to have all ‘security-related’ ratings (e.g. those by UNDP and various other agencies) compiled and disseminated (pages 9-10, 23-4).

The Secretariat to consider compiling in its library a comprehensive set of books, reports, articles and other materials on security issues in or relevant to the Pacific Islands (page 25).
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