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Contested future: Where to for Pacific security?

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality ... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

Martin Luther King, Jr

The three case studies (in Chapters 4, 5 and 6) are meant to demonstrate the wide diversity of historical, sociopolitical and cultural experiences of Pacific countries in the area of security. The ‘Pacific’ is not a generic or homogenous entity, as is often assumed and reflected in such generalised terms as ‘arc of instability’. Rather, the region consists of diverse cultures, political systems and life experiences. Instead of constructing universalised narratives, it is important to delve deeper into the unique experiences of different countries. This book attempts to capture the specific experiences of three different countries, without being limited by the usually mechanical conventional comparative analysis template of identifying similarities and differences, often used by some political scientists. This allows one to study the countries in depth without being confined to superficial comparative variables.

Within the broader analytical eclectic paradigm, the book employs various conceptual tools, most notably the postcolonial, securitisation and human security lenses, to examine power relationships from precolonial times to the postcolonial period. The three approaches are closely related,

and collectively they can shed light on the complex interactions between people's human security and well-being and the perception of security in the postcolonial context.

Critical lessons from the case studies

This study highlights a number of conceptual, methodological and empirical aspects that redefine the notion of security in the Pacific and more broadly. Not only is the notion of security contested in relation to varying schools of thought, it is also contested in terms of contextual application, as we have seen in the very different cases of Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands. With this in mind, it is prudent to think of regional Pacific security not in terms of a unifying metanarrative but in terms of multiple narratives. The study has also revealed a number of significant aspects of Pacific security that could be the basis of how we define, conceptualise and operationalise security discourses in the future. Although the case studies are meant to stand on their own to represent the unique situations of different countries, there are some common strands of conceptual and empirical themes that connect them and which are worth considering in the context of the broader analytical eclecticism framework of the book. We look at some of these below.

Importance of the analytical eclecticism approach

At a broad theoretical level, the use of multiconceptual approaches provides a holistic narrative of the situation within countries, especially in relation to social conditions, group relations, power dynamics, resource distribution and conflict as well as phases of their historical development. The postcolonial approach provides a more nuanced view, which, instead of simply documenting the official state-centred perspectives, examines situations from the viewpoint of the subaltern colonised groups in the broader contest of history and the unfolding political economy. This approach is appropriate for postcolonial societies whose state structures, economic development models, cultural institutions and collective national consciousness and identities have been shaped to some degree by the imposed colonial pacification processes. The imposition of taxation, for instance, as we saw in Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands, had profound

effects on the economic conditions of the locals, thus breeding dissent and opposition to state rule. Even after independence, the colonially constructed and imposed systems remained and evolved in ways that were driven by and served the interests of local elites. Although Tonga was a protectorate and not formally a colony of Britain, British influence was significant, nonetheless, and the monarch assimilated or imitated a lot of the symbolism and state institutions of the British monarch.

The postcolonial narrative has resonance throughout the Pacific. Although formal colonialism has passed (except for the French colonies, Tokelau and Pitcairn Island), new forms of cultural hegemony, the impact of climate change, the global neoliberal agenda, and the influence of big power militarism and corporate interests have further diminished the leveraging power and increased the insecurity of Pacific Island Countries (PICs). In other words, new forms of domination and subalternation have emerged and created a structure that continues to keep PICs at the bottom of the global power strata. One's position in this power hierarchy continues to pose security challenges for the region, as we have seen. For instance, the trade deficit with the Pacific powers of Australia and New Zealand, the imposition of the PACER Plus free trade deal, the latent conditions linked to aid by donors and the challenges of climate change are just some of the ways in which PICs continue to remain 'subservient' in a hostile geopolitical environment. Domination is justified by stereotyping of subaltern communities and countries using negative imagery, a process referred to by Said as orientalism. Subconscious prejudices latently embedded in terms such as 'arc of instability', for instance, have reinforced perceptions of inferiority while justifying interventions as modern forms of civilising missions. The postcolonial discourse provides the methodological tools to illuminate these often hidden dimensions of power, exploitation and inequality, which are often overlooked by security theories such as realism, liberalism and even securitisation.

While the postcolonial discourse analyses and critiques existing modes of dominance and associated problems of marginalisation, it also opens up new windows for alternative narratives and new trajectories for the future. This is critical for understanding regional security where power differentials exist at various levels whereby two dominant countries like New Zealand and Australia occupy the top tier and Fiji and Papua New Guinea are at the second tier and others at the lower tiers. A related question is how to address this unequal power structure, economic disparity and associated stereotyping, as detailed in Chapter 3, to ensure that we have a more

egalitarian and just economic and political configuration for the region. This should be a critical question of our time since lack of equality, access and opportunities can pose a serious security challenge for the region.

While the postcolonial discourse provides a useful overarching approach that frames and analyses the historical and political economy of the region and individual states, there is still a gap in analysis in relation to individual perception and psychology. The securitisation theory fills this gap by focusing on the dynamic relationship between language, words and actions and the way they shape the security environment. Rather than just framing security in terms of direct threat, naming and thinking about a potential threat can be profoundly transformative. As we have seen in the case of Fiji, the use of the term ‘coup’ invokes collective anxiety and fear, and discussions of the riots in Tonga or the ‘tension’ in Solomon Islands ignite memories of the past and become sources of collective psychological threat.

In Fiji, the perception of inequality, economic deprivation of indigenous Fijians, threat of loss of land and power, and fear of being politically overwhelmed by Indo-Fijians gave rise to ethnonationalist sentiments, open conflict and regime change. Perception and framing of each other (indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians) as sources of threat as well as the use of racialised stereotypes such as *jungali pagla* (stupid Fijian bushman) or *Kaidia lawakica* (cunning and untrustworthy Indian) have securitised ethnic relations in a potentially explosive way. In the case of Tonga, behind the veneer of respect for the monarch, the use of the term *temokalati* (democracy) securitised the King and nobles as enemies of the people and dichotomised Tonga into two major competing political camps. In Solomon Islands, words such as ‘corruption’, ‘politicians’, ‘militants’ and ‘tension’ have become part of the vocabulary of security and, even in the ‘post-conflict’ era, continue to invoke consciousness of threat because of their association with the 1999–2003 civil conflict.

Generally, in the Pacific, although the threat of climate change may be real, the mental image of the threat and potential for even more destruction in the future has galvanised Pacific countries to engage in international lobbying and leadership, such as Fiji’s presidency of climate change process under COP23. For small island states in the Pacific, the perception of threat from stronger and more destructive cyclones, sinking of islands, droughts, sea erosion, loss of land, relocation and loss of culture and identity are all mental constructs articulated and realised through

language as a means of reification. These images are shared and collectively crystallised through social media, electronic networks and other forms of modern communication and, in the process, they contribute to the securitisation of the environment and everyday life.

While postcolonial theory is based on the study of inequality of power and exploitation, and securitisation focuses on the conceptualisation of threat through words, the human security approach adds the missing dimension of connectivity between different aspects of life and well-being by defining social, political, economic and environmental issues as security-related by virtue of their impact on human well-being. The case studies demonstrate how various combinations of human security issues such as socioeconomic inequality, justice, competition for power, questionable governance, resources allocation and identity could lead to various stages of individual and group grievances, shimmering conflict and eventually open conflict. The volatile human security issues, which were common in all countries, have continued to worsen over the years.

The point I want to emphasise here is that the use of multiple prisms has the distinctive advantage of providing multiple dimensions to security that single narratives cannot provide. In a region and a world that are changing rapidly and where multiple transformational forces are at play, using multiple narratives is the appropriate way to go.

Colonial experience and security

A major theme that emerged from all three case studies was that most of the security issues were not only internally generated but also built on the issues of the past and replicated themselves over time until they exploded into open hostility. The political conflicts the countries experienced resulted from complex interactions between power relations, inequality in resource ownership and distribution, contestation and protection of identity and unfulfilled collective expectations. The competing players belonged to different ethnicities or classes who constructed cleavages and boundaries based on identities. The boundaries became not only social lines of identity demarcation but also security and battle lines. Most of these security issues had roots in the earlier colonial epoch and, in some cases, even the precolonial era. In Fiji and Solomon Islands, the process of colonial transformation encompassed a complex process of constructing a new imperial state system, resistance to the colonial policies

of pacification, introduction of the capitalist mode of production and the imposition of a coercive system of rule. These were to have long-lasting impacts on security in these societies.

Symbolic and functional role of 'ethnicity' in the conflicts

A significant feature of the three case studies is that, while the conflicts were different in relation to their causes, manifestations and impact, ethnicity had a role either as a marker of socioeconomic inequality or as a mobilising force. In Fiji one of the main axes of conflict was between an indigenous group (Taukei) and a diaspora group (Indo-Fijians), whereas in Solomon Islands it was between two indigenous groups, although they were from separate islands and tribal affiliations. The conflict in Tonga was quite different in the sense that it was fundamentally between two antagonistic social classes. Moreover, the ethnic factor arose after the riots started when Chinese businesses were attacked, but these were 'collateral' victims of the main conflict.

The ethnic components of the three case studies were connected to broader issues of socioeconomic disparity, identity, land and political power. Ethnic differences on their own do not automatically invoke conflict, but rather conflict is inspired by the way these differences are linked to socioeconomic inequality and competition for power. In the case of Fiji, the situation was characterised by the division of the economy along ethnic lines with Indo-Fijians controlling commerce and Taukei controlling the land and political power. Socioeconomic grievances by the Taukei after independence culminated in the 1987 conflict and coups, and since then the threat of military takeover has remained part of the country's security narrative. Grievances over land and resources, socioeconomic inequality and lack of opportunities contributed to the intercommunal tension in Solomon Islands. In Tonga, the tension built up over years of pro-democracy protests spilled over into street riots, and some rioters took advantage of the chaos to attack Chinese businesses that they had loathed for some time for taking away business from them. In all these cases of conflicts related to ethnicity, ethnic and political entrepreneurs played a critical role in mobilising people's grievances for political ends.

Responses to conflict

Because the conflicts in the three countries were unique in their own right, the responses to them were somewhat different, although there were some common features, such as the use of traditional means of conflict resolution at the community level. In Fiji, the role of the military was paramount in determining the trajectory of the political process towards democratic elections. This was not the case in Solomon Islands, where the security apparatus of the state was no longer operable and militants took over the security role of the state until the arrival of RAMSI. RAMSI provided some real security muscle to keep the warring militias at bay. In Tonga, they had to call for intervention by the Australian and New Zealand military to quell the situation. In all cases, restoration of stability became the precondition for democratic elections.

At the community level, a range of programs were organised by civil society organisations, churches and other community groups. One of the key factors that distinguished conflict in Fiji and Tonga from Solomon Islands was the fact that, in Solomon Islands, a 'civil war' situation between two militia groups representing two communities took place. Nevertheless, one of the common features of the three case studies is the use of multiple means of peace-building involving a range of stakeholders at the state and community levels.

The international community was more sympathetic to the Tonga and Solomon Islands situations than to Fiji. Australia, the United States and New Zealand imposed sanctions on Fiji and, furthermore, Fiji was suspended from the Pacific Island Forum and the Commonwealth. Instead of weakening Fiji, the sanctions forced Fiji to align itself more strongly with China as well as to build up a more independent and assertive foreign policy aimed at outflanking Australia and New Zealand and making it a minor regional power in its own right. The establishment of the Pacific Islands Development Forum to counter the Pacific Islands Forum, funded by Australia and New Zealand, was part of these geopolitical manoeuvres.

In all three cases of conflict, the ripples spread throughout the region and had different effects. In the case of Fiji, the PICs were initially sympathetic to Fiji after the 1987 and 2000 coups, but this was not so after the coup in 2006. The Pacific Islands Forum tried to send a team to engage with the military government, but Fiji did not take it seriously. The Forum resorted to suspension. In the case of Tonga, Australia and New Zealand,

the strongest powers in the region, intervened in the form of military assistance, whereas in the case of Solomon Islands, regional intervention was possible through RAMSI. These interventions show the increasingly regional nature of national conflicts and at the same time the impact of regional security narratives on national conflict resolution.

Security and regime change

In the case of Fiji and Solomon Islands, extralegal regime changes resulted from the conflicts while in Tonga there was potential for a similar situation to occur. Regime change through coups has been an unsavoury part of Fiji's political evolution since 1987, where every coup was followed by a period of calm and then tension as prelude to another coup. In Solomon Islands, the coup in 2000 was part of the larger environment of instability at the time rather than an imitation of the Fiji coup earlier in the same year, as some journalists suggested. In Tonga, it was alleged by the government representative, Lopeti Senituli, that the November 2006 riots were aimed at staging a 'coup', but this did not eventuate.

In the context of the securitisation theory, regime change provides an extreme image of a scenario that must be avoided at all cost. It is associated with images of a collapsed society, anarchy, lawlessness and possible deaths. Although regime change may be 'relatively' peaceful as in the case of Fiji, the thought of a disintegrated, chaotic and lawless society is a powerful psychological deterrent against the use of force as well as a strong incentive for peace-building and conflict resolution. Regime change is an extreme expression of what is possible when human security issues remain unchecked and neglected. Viewed through a postcolonial lens, regime change is seen as a consequence of tension that has its roots in the colonial order. Regime change, and the potential for it, have created new narratives of peace-building in the three communities. As a securitised concept, it provides a psychological marker as a lesson for the future.

Level of violence

The level of violence experienced during the Fiji coups, Tongan riots and Solomon Islands conflict differed considerably. Except for the 2000 coup, when a failed mutiny led to several deaths, the coups in Fiji were relatively bloodless. While there were documented cases of torture and human

rights abuse, there was no civil unrest in terms of intercommunal violence of the type witnessed in Rwanda, Kosovo or even Solomon Islands. One of the reasons was that the coups focused largely on competition for state power by elites and the military, and tension was concentrated in the realm of state power. By and large, everyday ethnic relations remained stable, despite some cases of sporadic ethnic violence and intimidation.

This was also the case in Tonga, a very homogenous society. Conflict manifested itself much more vigorously at the realm of state institutions and power. Community relations remained strong amid the riots and burnings. Those who died in the riots were victims of the fire and not of violence. This was not the case in Solomon Islands, where violence revolved around the civil realm. The Malaitans and Guadalcanal communities were in direct confrontation through their respective militia forces and, as a result, hundreds of people were killed. The inability of the state to intervene provided the militia with the self-issued licence to kill, thus worsening the situation considerably.

The contested terrain

This multilayered approach to analysis of the three Pacific case studies testifies to the contested nature of security in the broader theoretical debate. Indeed the competing discourses on security that we examined in Chapter 2 show the diverse ways in which security is framed and articulated. These differences are not to be taken as a basis for creating a hierarchy of reliability of the different modes of framing offered, but as signalling the fact that different approaches have their own legitimate claims, based on their choice of explanatory variables and conceptual justifications. It is probably fair to say that there is no strictly 'right' or 'wrong' way to frame security but rather that there are a range of alternative narratives one can choose from, given particular circumstances.

The debates on security are manifestations of the way in which we interpret the causes, dynamics and consequences of particular types of human behaviour deemed threatening to a particular group or to society as a whole. What is 'threatening' is often constructed in relation to the 'victim/perpetrator' dichotomy, and interpretation of 'threat' depends very much on where one is located in the relationship as well as in the intellectual and ideological lenses of the beholder. For instance, while the notion of 'security as speech act' espoused by the securitisation

discourse of the Copenhagen School has been seen as a breakthrough in terms of its ability to redefine the psychological aspect of threat, it has nonetheless been criticised by realists for being too incoherent and idealistic, and by postcolonial theorists for being Eurocentric. These criticisms have not stopped the expanding influence of securitisation and modern security thinking.

The ambiguity and confusion relating to defining security also emanates from this diversity. For instance, while some theories of security, such as human security, have a universalised thrust, others, like the concept of orientalism, are more contextual and are seen as appropriate in particular historical circumstances and in particular places. In addition, some theories (such as securitisation) are classified as formal theories of security whereas some concepts (such as orientalism), which clearly have deep security implications, are not seen as relevant to conventional security framing. This is where a more nuanced, critical and contextualised security approach is important in order to illuminate for us what is relevant without making superficial generalisations that are not applicable in many situations.

The limitations posed by some of the dominant security discourses such as realism, neo-realism and liberalism, among others, are due to their links to particular ideological and geocultural and technical lenses, which often have underpinning interests that exponents hope will serve them. Realism, for instance, was an influential narrative to justify the military build-up and arms race during the Cold War, while securitisation became a more nuanced way of not only redefining the diverse manifestation of security but also identifying the sociopsychological basis of the construction of security. Moreover, security theories should not be seen as strictly independent because, in some cases, there are common strands running through some theories, and there are also areas of overlap. For instance, one of the common threads linking securitisation theory and human security is a shift from identification of generic threats to a more nuanced construction of what constitutes threat, using more dispersed variables.

The increasing dominance of the human security agenda has not necessarily displaced realist and traditional 'hard' or state-centred security thinking. In many ways, rather than 'shifting' the paradigm, as claimed by the UNDP, it has simply absorbed state-centred security into its broad coverage and redefined it as just another random element in the universal basket of human security variables. The numerous criticisms of human security as lacking in coherence and focus have ignited further debates

about prioritising threats. US President Donald Trump's disdain for 'liberal' issues and values, including his denial of aspects of human security such as climate change, environmental considerations, accountable democratic governance and ethical politics, poses a major threat to the global human security agenda. His attitude has effectively changed the global power configuration and security dynamics in a major way. To the securitisation school's speech act approach, Trump is himself a security threat because almost everyone—the media, political analysts, world leaders, the general public—talks about him and defines him as such. This has redefined global security dynamics in unprecedented ways, especially when the US president, who is constitutionally the embodiment of US state identity and is to be protected and preserved, is now seen as a security threat to his own country through his alleged political and business dealings with Russia and his perceived lack of integrity.

The securitisation and human security approaches have their shortcomings in terms of providing a reliable framework for understanding the complex realities of 'developing' societies. With its focus on power, ideology, exploitation and the relationship between dominant and subaltern groups, the postcolonial theory tries to rectify these theoretical and analytical deficiencies. Although mainstream political science and international relations does not usually see the postcolonial discourse as a formal security discourse, it does provide a critical approach, which unearths some of the deeper issues of socioeconomic, cultural and political domination that threaten the well-being, identity and survival of subaltern societies.

Capturing diversity of narratives

The use of multiple approaches in this book, especially the postcolonial and human security lenses, to understand some of the dynamics in Pacific societies is an attempt to broaden the analytical paradigm to incorporate diverse perspectives in a highly diverse region. Contrary to dominant stereotypes about a homogeneous entity represented in such romantic notions as 'Pacific identity', 'Pacific way', 'Pacific culture' and 'sea of islands', or articulated in deficit terms such as 'arc of instability' or 'failed states', the case studies show that the three countries have very little in common in terms of sociopolitical security situations. Although they all shared a common 'player' in the form of the British colonial state,

the specific historical conditions that shaped the sociopolitical security contours in those countries over the years and that led to political upheaval were very different.

Fiji faced probably the most complex situation because of its multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural make-up. Tension was spawned over time by the dynamic and invariable interplay between multiple factors such as resource distribution, intra- and inter-ethnic competition over political power, an ethnically based parliamentary system under the first three constitutions, feelings of insecurity (real and perceived), the role of ethnic entrepreneurs in mobilising ethnonationalism, the politicisation of stereotypes and the military, the political role of the churches and the failure of the state and political leaders to respond effectively to grievances. Ethnicity was often considered the 'primary' factor, but behind the facade of genetics and culture were deeper political and economic interests that constantly constructed and manipulated ethnicity as mobilisation and justificatory leverage.

Tonga's conflict does not involve ethnic diversity but intracommunal class inequality and associated contestation over power. Tonga's hierarchy has three superimposed pyramidal structures, all headed by the King: the traditional chiefly structure of the Tu'i Kanokupolu and Tu'i Tonga lineage; the feudal structure modelled on the British system based on the three tiers of monarch, nobles and commoners; and the constitutional state system, centred on legal political authority and governance. The commoner-based pro-democracy movement has been fighting for democratisation and greater distribution of political rights. Other intersecting variables, such as economic inequality and corruption, fuelled and sparked the riot and arson in November 2006.

In the case of Solomon Islands, paternalistic, unequal and oppressive British development policies and labour policies that encouraged internal migration, land alienation and maldistribution of wealth and resources, nurtured grievances and exploded into open civil war. The conflict was contained by external regional intervention in the form of RAMSI and, with the recent termination of the mandate of the intervention forces and officials, the Solomon Islands Government has now resumed full control of the security of the country.

Despite fundamental differences, a couple of strands seem to connect the three cases. First, they were at some point in their history associated with British colonial rule. Fiji was a Crown colony, Solomon Islands was a protectorate through the British colonial establishment in Fiji, while Tonga was an 'independent' protectorate or 'protected state'. British influence had a significant bearing on the situations in both Fiji and Solomon Islands, especially in relation to socioeconomic development and the political power structure and dynamics, and the effects of these on the security of these countries were profound and long-lasting. While Tonga's political elites had the tendency to mimic British royal symbolism, titles and idiosyncrasies, the actual impact of the British in terms of applied policies was minimal.

The second common thread was ethnicity, although its place in social life and political discourse was very different indeed in each case. In Fiji the two major ethnic groups competing for political power and resources were the indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians, a major diaspora group. In contrast, the Chinese, who were 'collateral' victims of both the Tongan and Solomon Islands conflicts, were not major political competitors against the local political elites. Their only 'crime' was their control of local retail businesses, which caused socioeconomic grievances that, over time, metamorphosed into political mobilisation. This was also true in the case of Fiji in respect of Indo-Fijians, where Indo-Fijian retail shops and businesses, which symbolised horizontal inequality, were targeted during the 2000 riots. However, in Fiji, Indo-Fijians were seen by the Taukei as both political and economic threats. The symbiotic relationship between socioeconomic class, ethnicity and politics manifested itself differently in the three different countries. These unique experiences are what this book attempts to capture.

However, it must be noted that these three factors were not part of an interrelated general trend in the Pacific but were, rather, unrelated developments that emanated from specific historical conditions. Nevertheless, it is also relevant to point out here that, as a result of globalisation, regional interactions and the adoption of a common development agenda, including such issues as free trade, there will increasingly be more shared security issues and challenges in the future. The capacity of the different PICs to deal with these challenges differs, and there will be an increasing tendency for both regional approaches and bilateral approaches to be taken, whereby bigger and more resourceful

PICs will need to provide assistance to small ones. The role of New Zealand and Australia, who themselves have entrenched interests, will become more critical in the future.

Rethinking security and empowerment

In a fast-changing and perilous world, perhaps the most critical question that we need to ask is: what are the most empowering and effective responses to security for Pacific peoples? The answer to this is not straightforward for several pertinent and often interrelated reasons.

First, it is not possible to generalise about the universality of various security issues around the Pacific because of the diverse sociocultural, historical and sociopolitical experiences and dynamics of the different communities. The much larger communities in the west are far more heterogeneous than the smaller and more homogeneous communities of the eastern Pacific. Conflict over resources, status and power pervades all communities, but they are manifested in quite different ways. Many of the larger and more resourceful Pacific communities, such as PNG, Fiji and Solomon Islands, face problems associated with commercial appropriation of land resources, while many of the small states do not face the same problems. The level of literacy, health, social support systems and other forms of social protection and associated challenges differ from country to country.

Second, the way security is defined and conceptualised internally by the communities can be at odds with the external definition formulated by others. For instance, land disputes between or within tribal groups in Fiji may be seen from the outside as security threats, but at the same time they are seen by the people involved as ironing out anomalies and correcting imbalances. While lack of luxurious living is usually associated with 'poverty', it is often seen by many villagers as humble, cultural living and being close to nature. In Kiribati and Tuvalu, one of the most challenging social and ideological hurdles for addressing climate change is the perception by ordinary villagers that climate change is part of the divine plan and that humans have no right to alter its course. The appeal to supernatural explanations, either in terms of the intent of the ancestors or the will of the Christian God, is often lauded as an explanation for natural disasters or human misdeeds. These beliefs may run counter to the externally introduced technical and political discourses by the

state, civil society organisations, regional institutions and international agencies. Changing perception is not easy, especially when it is rooted in religious beliefs that explain things in terms of divinity, immortality and primordiality.

In addition to these forces, the ways in which these threats manifest themselves and affect the communities differ, and the technical capacity of the local communities and the state to respond appropriately differs as well. Some countries, such as Fiji, are more economically advanced than others and are in a position to address some of the security issues more effectively than others.

Given these diverse challenges, addressing and mitigating the security issues in the Pacific needs careful thought and systematic approaches. As we have seen in the cases of Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands, political security is linked in complex ways to other human security issues relating to inequality, resource distribution, intergroup perception, feelings of powerlessness and state policies. This means that long-term approaches should encapsulate multiple strategies to address different aspects of security. The different stakeholders, including the state, civil society, faith-based organisations, the private sector and communities, should be involved in a broad collaborative engagement to identify individual security issues and propose ways of collectively addressing these. Because it affects everyone, security should involve a partnership in relation to conceptualisation, response and monitoring. Security partnerships should be inclusive, participatory and consensual:

The notion of security partnership in this context involves the participatory and mutually agreed process of sustained collective engagement between the state, civil society, private sector and citizens at large in identifying and critically examining security issues, framing responses to security dilemmas and establishing a collective and appropriate process which is sustainable in addressing old and new security challenges. (Ratuva, 2015a: 2)

As we have seen, one of the salient issues pertains to the contending conceptions of security and their various claims over the legitimate approach. Conversations between rival views and approaches are important in creating a consensus. Competing approaches often create conditions for insecurity itself. The seemingly irreconcilable different schools of thought actually have certain things in common, such as the focus on humans and their well-being, yet these are often ignored in favour

of differences as a way of imposing intellectual and ideological superiority over one another. Identifying and popularising common strands can be a way forward in a security partnership approach.

In the Pacific, there should be broad partnership at the local, national and regional levels. Different countries have different historical experiences, yet common threads bind them and, increasingly, they share similar security challenges. At the global level, the PICs have exerted themselves quite visibly in drawing the world's attention to their plight. The presidents of Kiribati and Marshall Islands have been vocal internationally about climate change and associated human security issues, and Fiji's convening of the UN Oceans Conference in New York in June 2017 and chairing of COP25 in November 2017 have raised the level of articulation and campaigning for Pacific security for the future. There are indeed obstacles posed by powerful economic and political interests that need to be understood and addressed.

In a world marked by dramatic transformation and conflict, peace-building increasingly becomes an important aspect of life. How secure we are depends very much on how we define security, respond to it and monitor its impact. Security should not be seen as the responsibility of a single group, a single country or a single region. It should be a global responsibility. After all, we are now connected globally, and the painful experience of one becomes a source of collective grief of others.

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