PART 2: DECOLONISATION

Chapter 6

Gearing Up

The Arek Select Committee

A generation later, it is hard to imagine a time when decolonisation seemed neither inevitable nor perhaps achievable. But, in 1969, the pace of parliamentary politics in Papua New Guinea was still leisurely. Weeks before Whitlam's visit and Gorton's U-turn, the Member for Ijivitari in Papua's Northern District, Paulus Arek, took the initiative. A graduate of Sogeri High School, Arek was more articulate and more experienced than most members. When he proposed another Select Committee, the House agreed, expecting that this, like Guise's Committee, would merely tinker with the status quo. Its membership reinforced that impression. Having proposed the Committee, Arek was (by convention) its chair. Seven of the 14 members (the Australians Tom Leahy, Wally Lussick and John Middleton, the Highlanders Tei Abal, Sinake Giregire and Matiabe Yuwi, and the Tolai Matthias ToLiman) belonged to the new and conservative United Party. Two more were officials, and the other five were aligned with Pangu (Arek, Donatus Mola, Ebia Olewale, Michael Somare and Oala Oala-Rarua).[1] Ninkama Bomai from Gumine in the Highlands warned that 'if you people really want to ruin the Territory you can introduce self-government, but we people in the Highlands do not want it in our area. [You] should inquire into our thoughts on these matters.' Arek assured him that they would do just that.[2]

The committee embraced precedents from previous committees and the Australian connection. They elected Deputy Administrator Leslie Johnson as Arek's deputy and agreed that he recruit an executive officer from Canberra. They asked members of previous committees (Johnson and Abal) for advice on how to manage consultations.[3] When Johnson quit (Chapter 5), a shaken Arek asked Barnes to bring him back to help draft the report.[4] Like the Gunther and Guise Committees, therefore, they first consulted Canberra. The political scientist Robert Waddell was sad but not surprised when Arek explained that 'we will find out from the Department of Territories what powers they would be prepared to delegate.'

Although such an approach no doubt displayed a firm grasp of realpolitik, it seemed strange … that the committee should have to find out what Canberra was prepared to concede before they discovered what the people of Papua New Guinea wanted.[5]

As late as their visit to Canberra, their ambitions were modest. According to Bruce Juddery in the *Canberra Times*,[6] even Somare would not agree to independence: he just wanted more decisions made in Konedobu. Lussick, speaking for Arek, merely wanted decision-making to be more accessible to the people. On May 23 in the Melbourne *Age*, Arek summed up the confusion, conceding that the people did seem to want 'a basically incompatible form of constitutional advance'. Most did not want self-government for several years, yet they did want more full ministers with more power and more financial control. Perhaps the clearest expression of the committee's intention was Ebia Olewale's, commenting on demonstrations in Rabaul and Bougainville. The protestors were not hostile to the police or even to the Administration, he insisted, but resented Canberra's tight control. In his inaugural lecture at the University of Papua New Guinea, Charles Rowley expanded the critique: the local public service, he insisted, 'is effectively though not formally an extension of the Commonwealth Public Service, dominated by Australian values and methods. The real executive is located in Australia.'[7]

Cautious schizophrenia reflected the mood of meetings when the committee consulted the electors. In Rabaul, 1,500 people heard the Mataungans call for immediate self-government, demanding that 'all powers now held by Canberra should be surren-dered to Papua-New Guinea immediately', and that there be a presidential form of government. As well as a presidency, however, they wanted regional governments, so that Highlanders could opt out of self-government.[8] That proviso acknowledged a strong Highland sentiment. In the Western Highlands 'on behalf of 37,000 people,' Kaibelt Diria insisted that they 'did not want self-government for another three generations'.[9]

Constitutional terms were used so loosely that it is difficult to determine what was meant. Somare and others sought devolution, but they avoided emotive terms ('independence' and even 'self-government') lest they offend audiences. Even in Rabaul and Bougainville, few people demanded 'independence' but they did want power to devolve, either to Konedobu or to regional bodies. As before, Canberra was fully informed, and learned that the people 'do not yet understand the way the present system of government works and the implications of future change. There is evident a desire for more political education.'[10] Every indication suggested another report seeking minor adjustments.

Overseas travel shifted some opinions. In March 1970, the committee formed two groups to see the world. Arek, Giregire, ToLiman, Middleton, Olewale and Littler went east to the Solomon Islands, Fiji, American Micronesia, Samoa and Tonga. Those who flew west to Ceylon, Ghana and Kenya were Abal, Yuwi, Mola, Somare, Oala-Rarua, Lussick, Leahy and Morrison.[11] Before they set out, they welcomed a new executive officer. Alan Kerr from the Department of Territories was well travelled, having escorted Members of the House and other Territory delegates through Africa on their way to UN meetings[12] in a campaign to introduce Papua New Guineans to Africans and Asians.

Kerr travelled with the Africa party, and observed that African politicians made a great impression. Africans equated self-government with the winning of an elected majority in the colonial assembly. The visitors were shocked to realise that they had enjoyed precisely such a majority since 1964 but had never thought to build on it. Kerr was also impressed by Somare's determination that his rival, Tei Abal, should hear and grasp all the comments of the Africans.

African insights were reinforced by Australian Government statements that change would have to be accepted, if not embraced. When Gorton delegated powers, the contrast between Australian and Territorial opinion was overt: the Australians wanted haste while the Select Committee lagged. Waddell summed up the tension neatly, if unkindly:

> Papua New Guinea was going to be treated like Henry Ford's early customers and be offered any kind of constitution provided it was parliamentary, unicameral and unitary.[13]

It would need deft wording to reconcile Australian policy with Territory sentiment. Happily, the committee was up to the task.[14] Their final report assumed that each House would last four years: 1972 to 1976 and 1976 to 1980. Their constituents felt 'that internal self-government should come about *no sooner* than during the life of the 1976-1980 House'. This anxiety was acute in the Highlands, whereas some other people did believe that 'the time is now ready for internal self-government'. To square the circle, the committee observed that 'the rate of political development and awareness … is accelerating', so that Territory and Australian opinion might be expected to converge. In that case, 'the majority of the people of the Territory may request that the country move to internal self-government before the end of the next House of Assembly [ie,. before 1976]'. And they expected that a change of government in Australia would result in 'internal self government becoming a reality before the majority of the people are prepared to accept it'.

The committee listed popular views that were hard to reconcile. They saw little interest in independence but 'some desire for self-government'. There was a strong desire for regional government but equal interest in a central presidency. People valued Australian patronage but they also wanted to reduce official membership of the House and to increase the number of elected members. Perhaps rashly, they invited suggestions for the country's name and solemnly recorded not only the plausible Paguinea, Papua-New Guinea and Niugini, but the unlikely Melanesia, Taronesia, Paradise, Pangu — and even Bougainville.[15] Alan Kerr heard a man promise to accept Niugini — if it were pronounced Papua!

To synthesise these views and reconcile them with Australian policy, the committee proposed a program of development towards self-government. For the first time, they sketched a timetable, such that self-government would be achieved during the life of the next House (1972–76). To that end, they wanted to dilute the official membership, with no more than four official and three nominated members, as against 82 open and 18

regional seats (instead of 69 and 15). The Administrator's Executive Council should expand to include 10 ministers beside the Administrator and three other officials. The wider ministry would comprise 17 ministers, who would elect the Deputy Chair of the AEC. The Deputy Chair would be, in effect, the Territory's Chief Minister.[16]

These propositions were put to the House, together with a name (Niugini), a crest and a flag. After three days of debate, the House adopted the report, except the name Niugini. In September, the recommendations were accepted, though Tammur reckoned that the report 'only tells us what the Australian Government thinks this country should have'. He moved that self-government be granted by the end of 1972, but allowing regions to opt out. The motion was lost, 51 to 14. The next day, Arek explained that defence and external affairs would remain Australian responsibilities, and there would be shared control of police and internal security. He also expected 'some sharing arrangements' for 'the Public Service, judiciary, trade, banking and perhaps some areas of civil aviation'.

Because Canberra leaned on the committee, and the committee massaged the House, the territory had accepted the goal of self-government, at least in name. By January 1971 Whitlam found that the prospect of self-government was accepted by 'the most significant sections of the population'. The compromise did not, of course, satisfy him. He insisted that speed was essential in order to hold Papua New Guinea together, so he reckoned that the Minister should set target dates, that official members should leave the House at once, and that Territory ministers should begin to exercise real responsibility. These were more steps than the politicians would accept: on March 18 the House threatened to seek UN intervention if a Labor government tried to impose self-government.

As Goode suggests, the harmony between the committee, the Administration and the Territories Department embodied cooperation in drafting the report. The man in the middle was Alan Kerr, who formed warm relations with committee members. After his committee work, he returned to the department as assistant secretary for constitutional and political matters, and was one of the key intermediaries between Konedobu and Canberra in the transfer of powers.

The Gearing-Up Program

The Select Committee report delighted Barnes, who objected to timetables only if they were imposed from outside. He had no complaint about the House fixing dates, especially as they implied only gradual change. After the Territory's election of early 1972, he expected 'a cohesive group of Ministers' to emerge, supported by a majority in the House. In that case,

> the Commonwealth would in practice regard this group as constituting a government, with the authority of the Administrator gradually becoming confined to matters remaining within Commonwealth responsibility.

Further powers would be handed over as the House felt able to accept them, and the Papua New Guinea Act would be amended to acknowledge 'the attainment of full

internal self-government'.[17] Australia had certainly changed course and so had Papua New Guinea's leaders. But the Territory would still need budget support; timid ministers would still rely on department heads; and self-government would be more shadow than substance.

Time, tide and the department did not wait for the Select Committee. Planning began when Territories officials began talks with (among others) the Prime Minister's Department, the Attorney-General's Department and Treasury. By June 1970, they were exploring 'the implications of early self-government'.[18] A revealing shift occurred between two drafts. The first pointed out anxiously that 'more work will be required on several matters, some of which require quite exhaustive examination', and the purpose of the draft report was

> not to advocate the early achievement of self-government, rather it aims at pointing up for Ministers those implications of early change which may be useful to Ministers when considering a related submission concerning changes in the constitutional arrangements.

The next draft deleted the need for exhaustive study and reworded the purpose:

> neither to advocate nor to argue against the early achievement of self-government. Rather it aims at pointing up for Ministers the more obvious implications of an early change.

The paper first delineated 'self-government', as a situation in which Australia

> 'has ceased to have any executive part in the administration of the Territory in relation to its internal affairs'. This assumes that internal security would be the responsibility of the local authorities, but that … [Australia would] retain responsibility for the external affairs and defence of the Territory.[19]

However defined, 'self-government' aroused passions. 'It is widely held to be a stage in development at which Australia and Australians would withdraw.' In order to dispel that notion, it was important to insist that Australian officers and Australian aid would continue.

> If the early achievement of self-government is contemplated it will be important to regard it and to express it as a move towards greater local responsibility but in continuing association with Australian men, money and assistance.

Whatever course Cabinet adopted, all policies should lead to 'greater involvement of indigenes in the social, political and economic affairs of the Territory', while the nervous were assured of continuing Australian involvement and commitment.[20]

Self-government was a stage, but on what road? Many people in the Territory imagined it as 'a lengthy period on the road to independence', but in recent African

experience the stage lasted only a few months or was bypassed. It was an opportunity 'to draw up a constitution, arrange for self-determination, and make the necessary administrative changes for independence'. Australia's problem in Papua New Guinea was the reverse. If there was 'little pressure' to move forward, 'a lengthy period of self-government … might provide difficulties'. Australia would still be

> internationally responsible for acts of the local authorities whether or not it was in control of them; similarly it could be held responsible by the United Nations 'Committee of Twenty-Four' in regard to Papua … [and] Australia could find its own relations with Indonesia affected by acts of the local authorities.

Although prolonged self-government would not appeal to Australia, it might be needed to allay opposition in the Territory. Some dangers to Australia might be removed if the people had (by referendum) chosen this status instead of independence. That status ('self-government in free association with an independent state') was recognised by the UN, following the precedent of Cook Islands and New Zealand. As this was the only occasion when that 'freely associated', semi-independent status was mooted, it is worth seeing how the officials regarded it. They saw its benefit to Australia as the fact that people of the Territory would have chosen it, that 'Australia's responsibilities would have been delimited', and that her 'international responsibility would be reduced'. But there was an alarming downside:

> no matter what the constitutional position may be, Australia will always have a close interest in whatever happens in Papua and New Guinea and no matter how reluctant an Australian Government of the future may be to intervene to prevent chaos or in protection of its own interests, the possibility cannot be ruled out that it would feel compelled to do so even if the Territory had attained full independence.

Prolonged self-government or 'free association' were not outcomes that Australia should seek, but possibilities that might have to be endured.

Whatever self-government proved to be, there were obstacles on the road. One was the difficulty of winning the agreement of Australian departments and agencies with Territory interests. These included the Army and the Navy (still separate), specialist agencies in the Attorney-General's and Prime Minister's Departments, Civil Aviation, Shipping and Transport, Public Works, Interior and National Development. Several instrumentalities would also be affected, from broadcasting to airlines, banks and CSIRO scientists. The intimate involvement of Australian departments and programs is suggested by the fact that more than 100 pieces of legislation would have to be amended or withdrawn, from Air Accidents to Whaling (see Appendix).[21] Cooperation was by no means assured. An interdepartmental meeting in June discovered, for example, that Defence and Foreign Affairs were peeved to have been marginal to discussions: sensitivities would have to be stroked.[22]

Pat Galvin was the leading Territories officer involved in the Interdepartmental Committee that developed the cabinet submission on 'the Implications of Early Self-

Government'.[23] Alan Griffith and Bill Worth (both from Prime Minister and Cabinet) helped in 'ventilating issues and digging out entrenched positions'. By contrast, Galvin thought that Foreign Affairs representation was variable and low-key. Foreign Affairs wanted to represent itself as (and maybe to be) more progressive, the White Knight — but without mastering the detail of the issues. They did not like the way Papua New Guinea had been handled, and the time and resources it required of them in the UN General Assembly and elsewhere. Defence was more involved in the committee, and deputed helpful people to it. Most other departments expected little change in arrangements. Bureaucrats were not the only possible hurdle: Galvin believes that Gorton waited until McMahon was out of the Cabinet room before bringing this submission forward; it then passed without opposition. The UN could be difficult, as it would have to approve the outcome of devolution (Chapter 8).

Not least of the obstacles to swift devolution was the Administrator, who compiled a long list of prerequisites for self-government.[24] One political and constitutional requirement was a constitutional framework, though not necessarily a written constitution. A more problematic precondition was 'adequate and stable political leadership': although experienced leaders were emerging, the base was narrow. A stable and seasoned judiciary and public service were also necessary: if Australian office-holders stayed until localisation (which Hay predicted for the 1980s), all would be well, but this could not be assumed. Again, the forces of law and order were adequate only 'on assumption that leadership will be largely expatriate', and there were unresolved issues over the armed services (see below).

Hay urged the same caution in respect of economic issues. The level of aid was adequate — 'provided Australia accepts continuance of aid obligations and [the] Territory accepts some shortfall in full financial autonomy'. An adequate local tax base would emerge with Panguna copper mine, but banking and currency institutions were a long way off, and foreign investment needed encouragement. There was also a social prerequisite, in the form of new citizenship legislation, to retain expatriate public servants and foreign capital.

But Hay's most worrying concern was 'national unity and mutual confidence'.

> In the absence of any strong feeling of unity, some means would have to be found to
> create a degree of mutual confidence between the main groupings.

Proportional representation in Cabinet might serve as an interim measure, pending a full inquiry before independence, to determine 'whether the various parts want to remain together'.

He concluded that Australia would have to support Papua New Guinea 'more or less indefinitely' with finance and manpower. Australia would not control

> policies on major issues such as land, human rights and freedoms, the constitution,
> administration of the law, and so on, although it could expect a good deal of broad
> and some particular influence on economic policies.

One way to read his analysis is that self-government was feasible only if Australia and Australians continued to perform most of their present functions. Papua New Guinea's 'position would be more akin to that of French territories in West Africa than to that of British territories' — meaning more dependent financially and politically.

Fully aware of these cautionary remarks, the Territories Department completed a draft for Cabinet, beginning with a review of the Territory's status and the powers of the Territories Minister and the Administration. The ship of State was crewed by a public service of 14,240 Papua New Guineans and 7,085 expatriates (of whom one-quarter were permanent). Other Commonwealth departments and statutory bodies employed significant numbers; and 3,500 police and 3,500 soldiers maintained order. Obvious impediments to development and devolution were acute shortages of skilled Papua New Guineans: only a handful had professional credentials.

Australia had argued that change would not be imposed, but the majority of people — especially in the Highlands and the Sepik — were likely to resist early devolution. For these people, self-government looked like 'government by coastal Papuans and Tolais'. On the other hand, the Mataungan Association insisted that 60,000 to 90,000 Tolais were more than ready for self-government. The implications of self-government were widely misunderstood, either as access to 'cargo' or as the withdrawal of Australians, or in some places (and by some expatriates) as reverting to pre-colonial conditions. Fragmentation was a distinct possibility: some Sepiks, Highlanders and Bougainvilleans might try to secede if self-government was granted; but Mataungans might try to secede if it was withheld. Another unpleasant prospect was the chance that early self-government would slow the pace of economic development.

To achieve the goal of 'a peaceful and well ordered Papua and New Guinea well disposed towards Australia', the authorities must walk the tightrope between moving too soon or too late, between the minority who wanted self-government and the majority who did not yet find it attractive, many of whom assumed that Australia would proceed at the slowest pace. These difficulties could be reduced by 'pressing authority on to native members of the House of Assembly and native public servants' and by devolving decision-making to local and district levels. That approach would meet resistance but it was necessary in any political scenario. The department presented itself as proposing the middle way, moving 'along a course that might avoid the worst of either of the extremes.'

> This middle course would involve pushing the devolution of political authority on to the people's elected representatives — and on native leaders at all levels — just as fast as (or indeed a little faster than) it could be readily digested or would be understood in the more conservative areas. The intention would be to achieve self-determination as soon as practicable in a climate in which the people of the Territory would feel that Australia was anxious to promote their autonomy yet continue to assist them

Changing arrangements for governance needed legislative and administrative action in Australia. Until the moment of self-government,

the Papua New Guinea Act barred the conferring of powers on Papua New Guinean Ministers by acts of the House of Assembly, which complicated the mechanics of transfer and necessitated a good deal of enabling legislation. [25]

Barnes had committed the department to preparing a program for 'movement to full internal self-government in the period 1972–76', although implementation would depend on the leaders and the policies adopted by the House of Assembly. So the department must plan that program.[26]

The head of the Division of Government and Law was John Greenwell, a successful lawyer before he joined the Public Service, and a clear thinker in constitutional and political affairs. He picked up on the Select Committee's proposal that constitutional change be 'geared to' achieving internal self-government during the life of the next House. First, what did internal self-government mean? For Greenwell, it meant the Papua New Guinea Government having responsibility for internal affairs, while Australia retained Defence and Foreign Affairs (possibly including trade, foreign aid and investment, and immigration). Next, a timetable had to be laid down. '*For the purpose of this programme only*, December 1975 has been chosen arbitrarily as the date for the granting of full internal self-government' (as matters turned out, this was serendipitous). The program had two aims. One was to define what had to be done, when it had to be done, and the interdependence of activities and agencies. The other was to protect the Australian Government by providing a contingency plan in case the transfer of powers happened faster than anyone expected.

Back from the Select Committee, Kerr was also involved in the 'Gearing-Up Program'. He describes it as a matrix, tabulating every event that had to occur between then and independence. The matrix listed the dates when the Australian Parliament would meet, when bills had to be ready for it, when the House of Assembly was due to meet, when acts of self-determination had to be made, when the UN Committee of 24 met and so on.

These events were listed across the top of the matrix … Down the side were listed every possible function of government that we could think of — I think we got to 193.[27]

Lest the planning get ahead of the politics, before the Gearing-Up Program was referred to Papua New Guinea, Greenwell was careful to set its legal context.[28] The authority for the program was a Cabinet decision of May 18, 1970, which endorsed the draft program for presentation by Peacock to the leaders of the next House 'as a basis for initial discussions'. As Peacock had reminded everyone, 'The decision to accept self-government is one for the House of Assembly to speak about' or to resolve how the popular will should be measured. Australia wanted to encourage movement towards self-government, and (with a view to promoting unity) to involve non-government party leaders, so that Australia's position would be, 'as far as possible, accepted by all sections of political opinion in the Territory'. While the program embodied more determination than before, it had not departed entirely from the gradualist tradition:

Some years ago it was legitimate to see in Home Rule a step of the greatest significance … But proceeding from the present plan the constitutional change is of far less importance … self-government will be largely though not entirely legislative recognition by the Australian Parliament of a state of facts which [already] exists.

Security Issues

Underlying every other consideration was the need to ensure peace and order. Internal security was problematic even before Gorton's fateful call-out of the troops. When Cabinet discussed self-government in June 1970, therefore, it directed Territories and Defence to mount a study of security. Cabinet often referred complex problems to interdepartmental committees, to ensure that they were thoroughly analysed and their ramifications explored. Such a committee might grind slowly, but it did grind exceedingly small.[29]

To that end, the departments commissioned 17 separate studies. Their overall purpose was to propose a program for transferring responsibility for internal security, to explore comparable episodes of decolonisation (by consulting the British), to advise on the timing of the transfer of responsibility, to review the organisation and capabilities of the police, and to propose procedures 'for a request by local authorities for the assistance of the defence forces (either locally based or Australian-based) in the event of domestic violence or the threat of such violence'.[30]

Sources for the study of the Territory's internal security were limited. Although the British were asked for information on the management of security while Kenya, Uganda, Singapore and Fiji were moving to independence,[31] Papua New Guinea was unlike a typical British colony. Fiji was likely to be the closest analogy, and Territories procured records of the Fiji constitutional conferences, and abstracted a checklist of items to address.[32]

A Territory Intelligence Committee (TIC, which evolved into PICNIC, the Papua New Guinea Intelligence Committee) collated patrol reports from *kiaps*, added clippings from the newspaper, and kept them under lock and key in a windowless room. The TIC was a subcommittee of the Australian Joint Intelligence Committee. (At self-government, the police special branch was separated out and given two staff seconded from ASIO.) The TIC could collect only information that was widely known.[33] No one who worked for them or read their summaries felt safer.[34] In discussion with other Departments, Territories revealed that there were two branches of the intelligence agency: the Intelligence Branch itself, which would become Papua New Guinea's Internal Security Intelligence Organisation, and a Security Branch, which serviced the Internal Security Committee. The Intelligence Branch evidently employed 100 people — including one Papua New Guinean.[35]

Despite this limitation, an officer of the department circulated a progress report and overview towards the end of 1971.[36] He noted, 'A general decline in respect for law and order and the authority of the government coupled with a rapid increase in the number of crimes reported', and expected further deterioration. There were two flash-

points. One was the Gazelle Peninsula, its problems caused (he thought) by 'strains imposed on a relatively static society by rapid economic development and the imposition of a technologically superior culture, land problems, educational opportunities and a high population growth'. That analysis blended the colonial psychiatry of the day[37] with empirical anthropology.

The second flashpoint was the Highlands. During the first half of 1971, there was a marked increase in reports of tribal fighting, with 22 deaths, 140 injuries and 800 arrests. Two police squads had restored some order, but the trend was worrisome. The violence was mainly intertribal, and it was acute in and around Mount Hagen in the Western Highlands. Although the hostility was not aimed at the Administration, here too 'it seems unlikely that the general state of law and order will improve' before independence.

Bougainville was not seen as a flashpoint although separatist sentiment persisted. A conciliation campaign had followed Lapun's and Bele's appeal and Gorton's intervention (Chapter 4), but secessionism was expected to revive after the 1972 election. The forecast was prescient. To prevent secession by force

> would impose intolerable strains on the internal security forces … and would almost certainly be unsuccessful. The only practicable method of preventing secession would be by political means.

Irian Jaya was another trouble spot. Melanesian opponents of Indonesia's annexation had carried out raids on isolated posts and patrols. If Indonesian troops launched large-scale operations against them, fighting was almost certain to spill across the border.

It was 'highly probable' therefore that there would be disorder 'on a scale beyond the capacity of the police force to deal with', and 'the assistance of the defence forces to restore order will be essential'. The police strength was 240 officers and 3,400 other ranks, expected to rise by 500 in five years. That strength included 11 'special duty squads' — riot police — of whom eight were in the Gazelle, two in the Highlands and one in Port Moresby. The Police Commissioner reckoned that his forces could deal with one large disturbance at a time (such as the 12,000-strong Mataungan rally in 1970) or one medium and one small riot. In view of the number and size of the risks, this was worrying. Recalling the Administrator's Executive Council's appetite for forceful measures, the department's fear of being drawn into actions provoked by a self-governing Cabinet was not unreasonable.

To complicate matters, officials still did not know how much the Pacific Islands Regiment (PIR) was entitled to assist the civil power. Territories assumed that there was

> no limitation on the power of the Defence forces to provide logistic, administrative and transport assistance, nor for units of the military forces to be used to deter unlawful activities by their mere presence *provided at all events that this did not require their involvement in violence.*[38]

It was the proviso that caused concern: if the military was barred from violent action, how strong would be its deterrent effect?

Towards the end of 1971, the IDC proposed to define internal security as 'co-extensive with the state of law and order' — a broad enough view to accommodate any likely crisis.[39] If troops were called out, they would probably be from one of the seven PIR rifle companies. In theory, each company mustered 120 men, but in practice this would be closer to 80. Groups of about 30 could also be drawn from the support companies, giving a maximum of 'about 600 fully trained men readily available'. If the crisis was protracted, other commitments would reduce this total. Unfortunately, it was not clear that troops would really be available at all. Although the Australian Departments of Defence and Territories had agreed that the PIR and the police would train jointly for riot control, and that their equipment would be compatible, the IDC discovered that joint training with the police had simply not happened:

> the Army held the firm view that the PIR could not under the present law carry out duties in aid of the civil power except with its normal weapons (i.e., rifles). The PIR is therefore unwilling to carry out training with batons and shields.

Greenwell agreed with the IDC that ultimate responsibility for internal security should remain with the Commonwealth for the time being: normal law enforcement might devolve to a self-governing Papua New Guinea, but not responsibility for emergencies.[40] This was the situation put to the first Interdepartmental Committee early in 1971.[41] The British view (with which John Ballard was most familiar) was that the period of internal self-government should be as brief as possible. A short period of self-government would minimise Australia's risks, although 'politics might dictate otherwise'. Papua New Guinea's circumstances might very well 'dictate otherwise': for this reason, the Secretary of the Territories Department would have preferred 'an evolutionary approach' to devolution, possibly dividing self-government into stages. To shield Australia from Papua New Guinea's troubles, the IDC urged Australians at all costs to avoid suggesting that the Papua New Guinea Government 'had a right to seek Australian help in internal security matters after independence'.

The United Party was expected to win the 1972 election. Tos Barnett, who observed them closely, doubted that they could have played a leading role in decolonisation, as they were 'pathetically dependent' on whoever advised them.[42] This helps explain why the Canberra discussions expected little contribution from Papua New Guineans. In May 1971, 'the Administration' was renamed 'the Government', while ministerial members became 'ministers',[43] but real change would need a change of personnel. In the nicest possible way, the Australians who had introduced elections were introducing self-determination. Like democracy, it was installed from the top down.

Appendix: 'Commonwealth Acts which, or some of the provisions of which, extend to the Territory of Papua and New Guinea'[44]

Air Accidents (Commonwealth Liability) Act 1963
Air Force Act 1923–65
Air Navigation Act 1920–66
Air Navigation (Charges) Act 1952–69
Airports (Surface Traffic) Act 1960–66
Aliens Act 1947–66
Approved Defence Projects Protection Act 1947–66
Atomic Energy Act 1953–66
Australian Coastal Shipping Commission Act 1956–69
Australian National Airlines Act 1945–66
Australian Security Intelligence Act 1956
Banking Act 1959–67
Banking (Transitional Provisions) Act 1959
Broadcasting and Television Act 1942–69
Citizenship Act 1948–69
Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1959–66
Civil Aviation (Damage by Aircraft) Act 1958
Commonwealth Employees' Compensation Act 1930–69
Commonwealth Motor Vehicles (Liability) Act 1959
Commonwealth Police Act 1957–66
Continental Shelf (Living Natural Resources) Act 1968
Copyright Act 1968
Courts-Martial Appeals Act 1955–66
Crimes Act 1914–66
Crimes (Aircraft) Act 1963
Defence Act 1903–66
Defence Forces Retirement Benefits Act 1948–69
Defence (Re-establishment) Act 1965–68
Defence (Special Undertakings) Act 1952–66
Defence (Transitional Provisions) Act 1946–66
Defence (Visiting Forces) Act 1963
Designs Act 1906–68
Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1967
Evidence Act 1905–64
Explosives Act 1961–66
Export Payments Insurance Corporation Act 1956–66
Extradition (Foreign States) Act 1966–68
Extradition (Commonwealth Countries) Act 1966–68
Fisheries Act 1952–68
Flags Act 1953–54
Geneva Convention Act 1949
Genocide Convention Act 1949
Gift Duty Act 1941–66
Gold Mining Industry Assistance Act 1954–68
Income Tax Assessment Act 1936–69
Insurance Act 1932–66
International Organisations (Privileges and Immunities) Act 1963–66
Judiciary Act 1903–69

Jury Exemption Act 1965
Lighthouses Act 1911–66
Marriage Act 1961–66
Matrimonial Causes Act 1959–66
Meteorology Act 1955
Native Members of the Forces Benefits Act 1957–68
Naval Defence Act 1910–68
Navigation Act 1912–68
New Guinea Timber Agreement Act 1952–53
Overseas Telecommunications Act 1946–68
Papua and New Guinea Act 1949–68
Papua and New Guinea Bounties Act 1926–37
Papua and New Guinea Loan (International Bank) Act 1968
Papua and New Guinea (Validation of Appointments) Act 1953
Passports Act 1938–66
Patents Act 1952–69
Patents, Trade Marks, Designs and Copyright Act 1939–53
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Footnotes

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