

Security and **Development** in the **Pacific** **Islands**

Social Resilience in Emerging States

edited by **M. ANNE BROWN**

A PROJECT OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY AND
THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Security and Development in the Pacific Islands

Social Resilience
in Emerging States

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Foreword

Terje Rød-Larsen,
President, International Peace Academy

IT IS A PLEASURE for the International Peace Academy (IPA) to present this volume, *Security and Development in the Pacific Islands: Social Resilience in Emerging States*, at a critical moment for the South Pacific. This thoughtful and provocative work offers insights both for the communities in the South Pacific and for the broader international community as they reflect on many decades engaged in state building and embark on new cooperative enterprises to build peace in and among emerging states. Of the many conclusions that emerge from the rich contributions to this collection, none is more important than the common refrain of the importance of partnerships—between the international community and regional actors, between states and societies—if we are to achieve both security and development.

It is therefore appropriate that the book is itself a product of a partnership between the IPA and the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) at the University of Queensland. Led by Kevin Clements, director of ACPACS, and Neclâ Tschirgi, then vice president of the IPA, the two institutions joined together in 2004 in the Pacific Peacebuilding Partnership. This research initiative aimed to improve our understanding of security and development strategies from a South Pacific perspective and to generate lessons learned with implications beyond the region. To that effect, the program organized a number of workshops and conferences in the region and conducted field research and outreach. In particular, the Pacific Peacebuilding Partnership worked to bring together research and policy expertise from the Pacific Islands region and New York, so that each might benefit from the other.

Within the IPA, this project contributed to our broader Security-Development Nexus Program. This research program—envisioned and realized by Neclâ Tschirgi and her capable staff, in this case particularly Gordon Peake and Kaysie Studdard Brown—has contributed to a better understanding of the linkages among the various dimensions of violent con-

flicts in the contemporary era and the need for multidimensional strategies in conflict management. At ACPACS, the partnership was furthered by Professor Clements and M. Anne Brown, who brought her considerable diplomatic experience and interdisciplinary research expertise to bear in shaping this volume. We are particularly grateful to Dr. Brown for her perseverance in bringing this project to a successful completion.

The Security-Development Nexus Program was generously supported by the governments of Belgium, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, and the United Kingdom (the latter through its Department for International Development), as well as the Rockefeller Foundation. The program also benefited from core support to the IPA from the governments of Denmark, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as the Ford Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Our deep gratitude also goes to the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), whose support for the partnership extended well beyond its considerable financial contribution. AusAID knows well the relevance of the lessons of security and development in the South Pacific for similar enterprises elsewhere in the world, and, through the Australian government's contribution to this partnership, it has enabled us to bring some of those lessons to a broader audience in the United Nations community and beyond. I would particularly like to thank John Dauth, an old friend of the IPA, who played an integral role throughout.

The social portraits offered in the pages that follow hold rich insights for all those interested in the emergence of functioning and responsible states, whether in the South Pacific or elsewhere. The diverse group of authors whom Dr. Brown has assembled, ranging from voices from the states concerned to regional commentators, offer perspectives from a wide variety of disciplines. What results is a vivid portrayal of resilient Pacific Islands societies actively engaged with the external political, social, economic, and military forces that they have confronted during colonization and since, striving to build states that serve their wants and needs.

My own involvement with Middle Eastern politics began with a study of living conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and led me to a search for regional solutions; it will perhaps come as no surprise, therefore, that I see a particular importance for international policymakers and theorists alike in the emphasis that this volume places on engaging with communities, both local and regional, in building states. Only through such partnerships will we find the common security and generate the sustainable development that states ultimately protect.

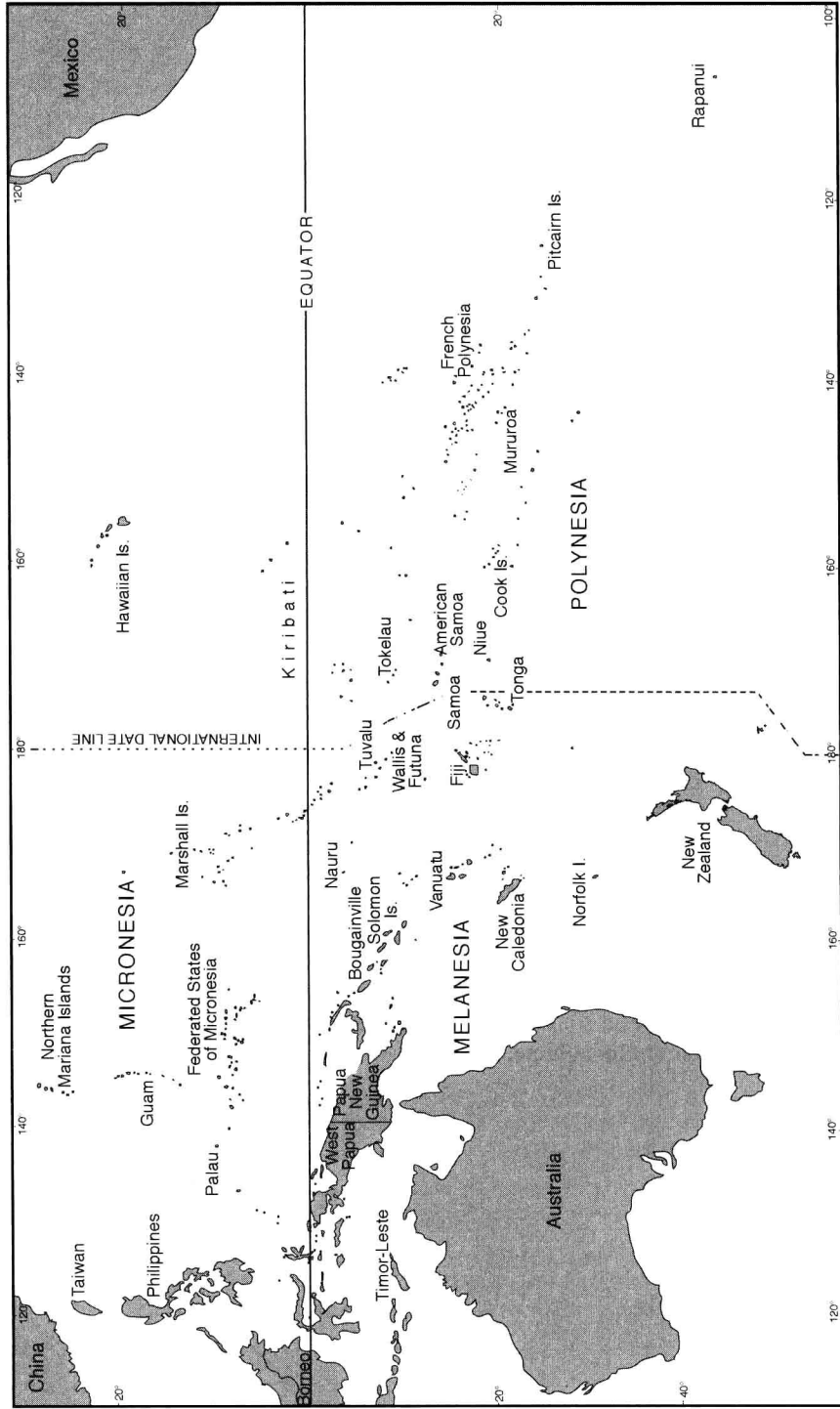
Acknowledgments

THIS PROJECT would not have been possible without the inspiration, determination, and drive of Kevin Clements (director of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies [ACPACS]), Neclâ Tschirgi (then vice president of the IPA), and Beris Gwynne (then director of the Foundation for Development Cooperation). It would not have come to fruition without the support and hard work of Wendy Foley, Anna Nolan, Bindi Borg, and Nadia Mizner at ACPACS in Brisbane, and Gordon Peake, Kaysie Studdard Brown, James Cockayne, and Adam Lupel at the IPA. My particular thanks to Wendy Foley for her time and energy. I would also like to thank the contributors to the volume for their participation and support. Clive Moore and Max Quanchi went well beyond the requirements of duty.

I would also like to thank many others who have offered conversation, critique, and support. This is a long list, but includes Neva Wendt (Australian Council for International Development), Steve Darvill (AusAID), John Henderson (University of Canterbury), Peter Wallensteen (Uppsala University), Jenny Corrin-Care (University of Queensland), and Volke Boege (the Bonn International Center for Conversion and ACPACS). Finally, I am grateful to AusAID for their generous support and patience in the production of this volume.

—*M. Anne Brown*

The Pacific Islands Region



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Security and Development: Conflict and Resilience in the Pacific Islands Region

M. Anne Brown

THIS BOOK EXPLORES the interactions of development and security in the Pacific Islands region—the great stretch of largely tropical and sub-tropical islands and ocean that, in approximate terms, approaches Australia in the west and New Zealand in the south, and includes the Federated States of Micronesia in the north and French Polynesia in the west.¹ While this book focuses on the Pacific Islands, the significance of the questions it explores is global. Questions of development and security lie close to the heart of political community. There is a growing awareness of the complex interactions of these fundamental but often elusive public goods at all the levels at which they are sought: human, national, regional, and international. The Pacific Islands region not only provides an important arena in which to investigate some of these interactions, but also offers insights relevant to other regions grappling with the joint challenges of development and security.

Development and security cannot exist without each other. Good development can untie the entrenched patterns of need, want, or fundamental inequity that often generate the conditions for violent conflict, but development can also produce or intensify patterns of inequity or marginalization. Development involves significant and sometimes rapid change; it creates new winners and losers, recasts the contexts in which communities give substance to their beliefs, and plays into dynamics of conflict already present, perhaps triggering latent violence. “Development” can be forced on people, fragmenting communities, creating conflict with their values and priorities, or alienating them from the values and relationships that animate or give meaning to their collective and ethical life. Different views of what development means for a community can themselves generate deep conflict, as Anthony Regan’s discussion of Bougainville (Chapter 5) makes clear. The safety and relationships of trust that security implies are fundamental to good development, as they are to all forms of community well-being. Violent conflict undoes the work of development, and can lay the ground for intergener-

ational suffering, but security approaches that are dominated by inappropriate or narrow frames of reference (an essentially military approach in a non-war situation, for example) can also compete with or distort broad-based efforts to deal with underlying structural sources of violence.

Despite this interplay, for many decades “development” and “security” operated as sharply different policy worlds and distinct scholarly orientations, the disjunction embedded both in institutional structures and in the political and ideological contests of the Cold War. International work against violent conflict since the end of the Cold War, however, has further underscored the complex interdependence of questions of security and development in causing as well as addressing conflict. This has led to renewed efforts to bring policy, practice, and scholarly agendas in these areas together—to shape development orientations in ways that are sensitive to the vulnerability of communities and their potential for destructive violence, and to find security approaches that are responsive to structural sources of violence and to their own impact on development. Awareness of these intersections changes the way we might look at development approaches, by consistently bringing to the fore questions of their impact on the generation of division and violence. And similarly, it changes the way we look at security, by including questions of what constitutes fundamental well-being and how to support that well-being more clearly within its scope.

What can an exploration of the Pacific Islands region tell us about these intersections? The following chapters explore different dimensions of the security and development nexus in various countries in the region (including the impact of socially inappropriate patterns of development; conflict over land, self-determination, and resource extraction; the challenges of external intervention, development, and gender; and reconciliation) with a view to drawing out insights into common problems and approaches. Four fundamental points can be drawn from this wide-ranging exploration.

The first point is that the region is characterized by high levels of social resilience. The social resilience of the region is grounded largely in its community life. Resilience and the sources of that resilience are the too often unremarked backdrop to analyses of the crises and problems the region faces. Yet acknowledging the strengths of the region changes subtly but profoundly the ways the region is approached. While the problems are real and pressing, if the focus is only on problems, there is a danger that they will be seen out of context and as disconnected from either potential sources of creative response or capacities for endurance.

The second point from this exploration of the Pacific is the emerging nature of states in the region. As will be discussed later, parts of the region are now almost routinely described as failed or failing states—such a view can carry significant implications for development and security approaches to the region. But while the peoples of the region have long, deeply rooted

traditions, states as such are young. Across the region a slow, difficult, but also potentially creative process is under way as governments and communities grapple with profound social, economic, and political change and with the challenge of forging states that are grounded in Pacific Islands societies. Many of the problems of the region reflect the turbulent nature of these processes. This is an essential context for understanding security and development in the region, and one that has considerable ramifications for policy.

The third point evident from many chapters in this volume is that there is often a significant disconnection between the institutions of the state and the life and values of Pacific Island communities. It is part of being an emerging state that central government institutions often lack roots in the patterns of legitimacy that have weight on the ground in Pacific Islands communities. As a number of the following chapters make clear, introduced or formal political, justice, policing, and administrative systems often do not fit easily with customary or local governance mechanisms and cultural norms. At times they interact destructively, becoming the context, the source, or a significant contributing factor to many of the problems that beset regional states. At the same time, there is tension between subsistence food production and the communal land tenure that largely underpins it, and the dynamics of international markets and commercial life. As with the lack of fit between introduced and indigenous political and social governance, so tension between indigenous and international economic life can be an underlying factor encouraging insecurity and conflict. These tensions are part of being an emerging state; they need to be recognized and consciously engaged as such.

The centrality of community life to the region is the final point that emerges from this exploration of security and development in the Pacific Islands. Community life is the basis for much of the social cohesion and resilience in the region, and for the food production that sustains most of the population. For those outside the region, but seeking to understand or work with it, engaging with communities is at least as important as focusing on governments and central institutions. For Pacific states to work well, they must be concerned with the health of their evolving communities, including customary sociopolitical and economic life.

This chapter briefly introduces the region and this volume; it reviews some of the challenges faced by efforts to strengthen security and support development in the region. The concluding chapter continues these themes and draws out broad implications for approaches to the region.

■ The Place

The Pacific Islands region (also known as Oceania) is an area of extraordinary cultural, social, and political diversity. (Table 1.1, which summarizes

Table 1.1 Characteristics of States and Territories Represented in This Volume, 2006

	Land Area (km ²) ^a	Population		Population Age 14 and Under (%) ^c	Population Urban (%) ^b	Adult Literacy Rate ^b		Life Expectancy at Birth ^b	Infant Mortality Rate (deaths per 1,000 live births, before age 1) ^b	GDP per Capita (US\$) ^d
		Population Density (people per km ²) ^a	Languages ^b			Male	Female			
Fiji	18,333	890,000	48	10	32	46	95	91	67	3,229
Nauru	21	10,100	481	2	40	100	89	75 ^e	58	4,322
New Caledonia	18,576	237,000	13	40	28 ^f	71	92	90	73	17,538
Papua New Guinea	462,243	5,695,000	12	826	41	15	50	40	54	824
Solomon Islands	28,370	460,000	16	71	41	13	27	14	38	585
Tonga	649	101,700	157	4	36	32	96	96	71	1,930
Vanuatu	12,190	216,000	17	110	41	21	33	33	63	1,405
West Papua ^g	410,660	2,200,000	5	257	n/a	6	58	44 ^h	58	450 ⁱ

Sources: a. 2004, <http://www.spc.int/demog/en/stats/2004/pacific%20island%20populations%202004%20by%20sex%20and%205yr%20age%20grps.xls> (accessed 18 April 2006); <http://www.spc.int/demog/en/stats/2003/posterupdate03.xls> (accessed 18 April 2006).
b. http://www.abc.net.au/pacific/places/stat_table.htm (accessed 26 June 2006).

c. 2004 UNESCO data, <http://www.unesco.org/profiles/en/edu/countryprofile> (accessed 26 June 2006).

d. 2004 GDP US\$, http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/statind/pdf/t16_dec05.pdf (accessed 26 June 2006).

e. http://www.uis.unesco.org/profiles/en/edu/countryprofile_en.aspx?code=5200 (accessed 26 June 2006).

f. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/print/nc.html> (accessed 20 April 2006).

g. <http://www.abc.net.au/pacific/places/country/papua.htm> (accessed 19 April 2006).

h. <http://www.citir.org/templates/internal.asp?nodeid=91181> (accessed 26 June 2006).

i. 2002 GDP US\$, <http://www.newint.org/issue344/facts.htm> (accessed 26 June 2006).

Note: Estimates and measurements of these characteristics vary considerably across sources.

characteristics of the places represented in this volume, gives some illustration of this.) The region's twenty-eight island states and territories, comprising thousands of individual islands, reach over 30 million square kilometers (12 million square miles), of which 98 percent is ocean. National populations range from over 5 million (for Papua New Guinea) to around 1,000 (for Niue), with an approximate total of 8 million for the region, or 10 million if West Papua (a province of Indonesia, also called Irian Jaya) is included.²

A number of states have considerable reserves of strategic metals, including copper, gold, nickel, and cobalt, as well as timber resources. Oceania's extensive sea territories (exclusive economic zones) are believed to contain oil and gas reserves as well as polymetallic nodules. Fishing is also a substantial resource, although it is pillaged by rogue operations from outside the region. Tourism is growing in some states, as is commercial agriculture.

The region's geography varies, from tiny coral atolls to mountainous land masses. Because of the ocean, and the extremely rugged terrain of many islands, many indigenous communities have developed within distinct ecological pockets, in isolation from each other or in far-flung networks of exchange. As a result, more than one-quarter of the world's total number of languages are spoken in the region. The majority of the region's population are sustained by subsistence agriculture; many live in small communities and lineage groups. Melanesia, a cultural and ethnic subregion that includes Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu, New Caledonia, West Papua (a province of Indonesia), and the Torres Strait Islands (part of Australia), makes up approximately 85 percent of the region's population and also holds most of the region's land-based mineral and timber resources.

The region's diversity also extends to the variety of political structures. Although the political system of most independent states in the region is some form of liberal democracy, Tonga is a slowly liberalizing monarchy, Samoa is a state where only chiefs can stand for election, while Fiji has "communal" parliamentary seats (voting within one's ethnic identification) as well as "common" parliamentary seats. New Caledonia and French Polynesia hold shared sovereignty with France, in a sometimes turbulent relationship; Niue and the Cook Islands are independent, but in free association with New Zealand; Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands are in association with the United States; Tokelau is a largely self-governing territory under the administration of New Zealand; West Papua is part of Indonesia; and the small islands scattered across the Torres Strait between PNG and Australia are part of Australia.

Despite this diversity, the Pacific Islands do form a region, although the exact borders may shift, depending on the perspective and purpose of dis-

cussion. Patterns of ethnic and cultural family resemblance weave across the region, alongside important historical, political, and geographical commonalities. Elements of a voyaging culture are widely held, and values of reciprocity, tolerance, restraint, family, spirituality, performance, and storytelling remain deeply embedded. Small communities have meant that in much of the region, societies are relatively participative and oriented toward consultation and conflict resolution.

Ocean and distance dominate much of the region, making communication, transport, trade, and the provision of services challenging. This has meant that, to those outside the region, the Pacific Islands can be seen as isolated and vulnerable, far from major lines of international trade. Countering this, commentators such as Tongan author Epeli Hau'ofa speak of "our sea of islands,"³ where the ocean is understood as a unifying and binding force rather than an isolating one, and a shared source of environmental, material, cultural, and spiritual resources. The region is also linked through an active network of intergovernmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, civil society associations, and faith-based linkages. Efforts at greater regionalization are discussed in the concluding chapter.

A Security Overview

From the international strategic point of view, the security environment of the Pacific Islands region is generally agreed to be benign—the region's security problems are essentially intrastate.⁴ Nevertheless, this should not suggest that the region's crises are simply endogenous; they flow to a significant extent from histories and patterns of exchange in which other parts of the world at least equally share. The Pacific Islands states and economies are small developing entities grappling with the demands and structural inequities of globalization, and working with the very mixed effects of their colonial inheritances, which are still current in the region.

The region, or parts of it, confronts many of the patterns of vulnerability and risk that are evident in other parts of the developing world: low economic growth coupled with high population growth, resulting in a very significant youth bulge; growing unemployment and underemployment, and poverty and the social problems that accompany it; growing inequality; very low human development indicators (particularly in parts of PNG and the Solomon Islands); poor leadership, corruption, and political instability; economic mismanagement on a grand scale (Nauru, Fiji, Tonga, and the Solomon Islands); protracted intercommunal confrontation or violence (Fiji, the Solomon Islands, PNG, Bougainville, and West Papua), including serious law and order problems (PNG); conflict around development and the use of resources and land; serious environmental degradation; and social violence, particularly violence against women.

HIV/AIDS is a rapidly growing disaster in PNG, with about 80,000 people infected (2 percent of the population),⁵ and there is deepening concern regarding its spread in other parts of the region. Environmental degradation is a pressing problem that often accompanies poverty and resource extraction. Questions of self-determination are still alive in the region, now most notably (though not only) in West Papua, an ethnically Melanesian province of Indonesia, where conflict with the Indonesian army has led to significant levels of violence.

As a recent analysis of security and peacebuilding in the Asia Pacific noted,⁶ violent conflict is not the norm for Pacific Island states. Nevertheless, there have been a number of serious crises in the region over the past twenty-five years. The 1980s saw conflict in Vanuatu, where a francophone movement sought a path independent of the newly formed government, dominated by Anglophones; in New Caledonia, over independence from France; and in Fiji, where elements within the army (dominated by indigenous Fijians) mounted successful coups in 1987, overthrowing the first government in Fiji to be led by a party dominated by Indo-Fijians. All three conflicts were significantly shaped by the colonial legacy of the states and territories involved.

The Bougainville conflict also broke into violence in the late 1980s. Lasting almost ten years, and fought across the island group at the eastern boundary of PNG, this was the region's most bloody post-World War II struggle. Several thousand people died in fighting that erupted over a complex mix of factors—the intense social and environmental impact on subsistence communities of what was then the largest open-pit mine in the world, intercommunal conflict, and demands for greater self-determination from PNG. Intercommunal conflict around the capital of the Solomon Islands, again rooted in patterns of uneven development intensified by grievances over land tenure, “the predatory practices of logging companies from South-East Asia,”⁷ government corruption, and the availability of small weapons from Bougainville, lasted from 1998 until the arrival of an Australian-led regional assistance mission in 2003. Hundreds of people died, and up to 20,000 were internally displaced. In 2000, another coup in Fiji, and an associated mutiny by an elite unit of armed forces, followed the second election of the predominantly Indo-Fijian Labour Party to government (with eight deaths). To varying degrees the legacies or unresolved elements of these three conflicts (in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, and Fiji) continue to challenge social and political life. In the Solomon Islands in early 2006, rioters, disgruntled with the newly elected parliament's choice of prime minister, burned down many businesses owned by Chinese settlers, who were popularly seen as being associated with vote buying and corruption in business and politics. In Fiji in December 2006, the commander of Fiji's military forces took executive power in a bloodless coup,

motivated in part by deep disagreement with the government of the day over how to handle those responsible for the coup and mutiny in 2000.

In Tonga in November 2006, the slow and peaceful process of democratization faltered when, despite the democratizing agenda of the government, elements of the prodemocracy movement, calling for a faster pace of reform, sparked a riot and looting spree in which seven people were killed and more than 80 percent of the capital's business district was burned down. The government, however, appears to remain committed to steady democratization, while those pushing for a faster pace of reform seem likely to be discredited by the tragedy. Further from international sight, a simmering conflict in West Papua stems from demands by Papuan groups for increased control over their own affairs in confronting the violent suppression of the Indonesian military, but also involves large-scale resource extraction. While already violent, this conflict has the potential to develop into a protracted and particularly serious conflict with regional implications.

Many of these crises have roots in historical patterns of uneven development, disruption of land tenure, or conflict around highly destructive resource extraction. Particularly in the context of fundamental tension between the demands and promises of the international market economy and scarcely monetized subsistence or exchange economies, large-scale resource-based projects can generate extreme confusion, social discontent, and envy. Bougainville is a leading example of this, but conflicts represented as "ethnic," such as in the Solomon Islands and Fiji, also have roots in histories of uneven economic development. Moreover, national or provincial governments in young states often do not have the capacities, or the popular authority and legitimacy, needed to manage these deep-rooted social and economic dilemmas. The rapid pace of social, political, and economic change has severely disrupted traditional structures, values, and societies, while new structures are still taking shape. The underlying political and economic tensions—between international and subsistence economies, and between structures of authority in state institutions and local communities—reflect the fundamental nature of the political, economic, and social changes under way, the profoundly long-term nature of state building, and the states' colonial legacies.

■ Emerging States or Failing States?

The significantly heightened international security concerns that followed the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and in Bali in 2002 changed the framework for security assessments in many parts of the world, including in Australia—the local major power for the Pacific Islands region. The genuine challenges presented by security in the Pacific Islands—which at the opening of the twenty-first century were dominated by the worsening crisis in the