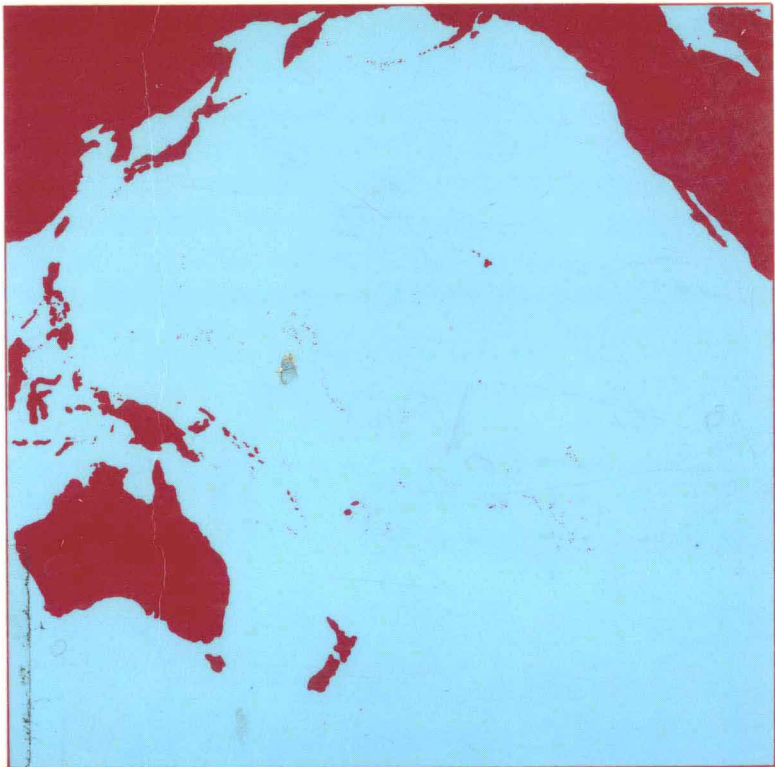


THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY
STUDIES ON PEACE AND REGIONAL SECURITY

THE PACIFIC

PEACE, SECURITY & THE NUCLEAR ISSUE



EDITED BY
RANGINUI WALKER & WILLIAM SUTHERLAND

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The United Nations University
Tokyo

Zed Books Ltd
London and New Jersey

The Pacific: Peace, Security and the Nuclear Issue
was first published in 1988 by:

Zed Books Ltd, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1 9BU, UK, and
171 First Avenue, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716, USA

and

The United Nations University, Toho Seimei Building,
15-1 Shibuya 2-chome, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150, Japan.

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Cover designed by Adrian Yeeles/Artworkers.
Typeset by EMS Photosetters, Rochford, Essex.
Printed and bound in the United Kingdom
by Biddles Ltd., Guildford and King's Lynn.

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

The Pacific: peace, security and the nuclear issue.
– (The United Nations University studies on
peace and regional security; v.5).

1. Pacific region. Military policies

I. Walker, Ranginui II. Sutherland, William
355'.0335'1823

ISBN 0-86232-814-4

ISBN 0-86232-815-2 Pbk

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

*The Pacific: peace, security, and the nuclear
issue/edited by R. Walker and W. Sutherland.*

p. cm. – (The United Nations University
studies on peace and regional security)

Includes index.

ISBN 0-86232-814-4.

ISBN 0-86232-815-2 (pbk.)

1. Pacific Area–Foreign relations. 2. Pacific
Area–Foreign economic relations. 3. Nuclear-
weapons-free zones–Pacific Area.

I. Walker, R. (Ranginui) II. Sutherland, W.
(William) III. Series.

JX1391.P28 1988

327'.09182'3–dc19 88-17225 CIP

Contributors

Jim Anthony earned his Ph.D at the Australian National University in Pacific History and Politics. He is Director of the Pacific Research and Information Network located in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and was the United Nations University consultant responsible for organizing the conference at which the papers in this volume were presented.

Dr Helen Clark, MP, is a former political scientist and long-standing member of the Labour Party who was first elected to the New Zealand Parliament in 1981. She became chairperson of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Select Committees and is particularly interested in international affairs and equality for women.

Professor Jim Falk is a physicist and heads the Department of Science and Technology at the University of Wollongong in Australia. He is particularly concerned with the social impact of technological change. His recent books include *Global Fission: The Battle over Nuclear Power* (Oxford University Press, 1983) and *Taking Australia off the Map: Facing the Threat of Nuclear War* (Penguin, 1984).

Michael Hamel-Green is a Melbourne-based peace and educational researcher currently working on the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

Peter Hayes is a consultant to several international organizations on peace, security and development issues in the Pacific-Asia region. He is a co-author of *American Lake: Nuclear Peril in the Pacific*. He currently works for Nautilus Pacific Research, a public interest organization which specializes in strategic, political and nuclear issues in Asia and the Pacific.

Helen M. Hill holds a doctorate from the Australian National University. She has worked for various Members of the Australian Federal Parliament. She has travelled widely in the Pacific and written on political and educational issues in the region. She is now associated with the Commonwealth Youth Programme at the University of the South Pacific.

Peter D. Jones is convenor of the Australian Quaker Peace Committee and has long been active in the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement. A Vice-Chairperson of War Resisters' International, he has also been Research Officer for Jo Valentine, the Independent Senator for Nuclear Disarmament from Western Australia.

Vijay Naidu is a Fijian who teaches Sociology at the University of the South Pacific, Suva. He is the author of numerous articles on Fiji which have appeared in *The Journal of Pacific Studies*, *South Pacific Forum* and other journals.

Uentabo Neemia was attached, at the time his paper was written, to the Institute for Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific.

Dr William Sutherland taught Political Science at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, from 1981 to April 1987 when he became Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister under the newly elected Bavadra Government. After Fiji's first military coup on 14 May 1987, he and his family had to go into hiding and eventually flee the country.

Richard Tanter has written extensively on issues of militarization in Asia, including its cultural consequences. He teaches Politics at Monash University, Australia.

Dr Mark J. Valencia is an oceanographer and research associate with the Resource Systems Institute at the East-West Centre, Hawai'i. He is the author of *South East Asian Seas: Oil Under Troubled Waters* (Oxford University Press, 1985), as well as numerous articles and edited books on various aspects of marine policy in South East Asia and the Pacific.

Lyuba Zarsky is a co-author of the highly acclaimed *American Lake: Nuclear Peril in the Pacific*. She currently works for Nautilus Pacific Research, a public interest organization which specializes in strategic, political and nuclear issues in Asia and the Pacific.

Preface

This is one of the five books that comprise the United Nations University's series on peace and regional security. Unlike the other four, which deal with particular regions, this volume focuses on the Pacific from the viewpoint of the nations and people of the Pacific Ocean rather than on the Pacific Rim as do many other books published on this region.

The book results from the proceedings of the International Conference on Peace and Security in Oceania organized by the UN University in Auckland, on 3–6 April 1986. All the contributors are specialists on the Pacific from the Pacific; their points of view are diverse, and no attempt has been made to force upon them a unified position.

Regional peace and security can be dealt with on many different levels. Here, a conscious attempt is made to touch upon the various non-military aspects of peace and regional security. Close links exist, especially in the Pacific, between the economic development and the military strategic trends of the region. Notable efforts have been made by the regional countries towards disarmament and denuclearization, and these must be understood as part of the regional dynamics. Such efforts are inseparable from one crucial aspect of the Pacific, that is, the growing importance of the search for ethnic and national identity of the different peoples in search of development and peace. New strategies are emerging in terms of delinking, non-nuclear initiatives and the search for self-determination. It is within this context that the Pacific has entered a phase in which the search for a regional peace paradigm is developed.

It is, perhaps, the advantage of researchers deeply rooted in their regional and national realities to be able to see beyond the more conventional issues of peace and regional security, into deeper issues of development, democracy and identity. This book, therefore, proposes to its readers a fresh way to look at the complex realities of regional peace and security in the Pacific. Written in spring 1986, these chapters do not refer to recent events, but the analyses they contain, sometimes almost prophetic, cover the major factors that determined the course of events. In some cases the Editor has added a brief note of recent developments which have occurred since the chapters were written.

The United Nations University is deeply appreciative of the editorial work of Drs James Anthony, Ranginui Walker and William Sutherland. Recent events

in the area made it impossible for them to complete their task and the final responsibility for editing is mine.

Kinhide Mushakoji

Vice-Rector

The United Nations University

Introduction

Jim Anthony

Oceania is a region beset by multiple uncertainties. A highly unstable and volatile situation has existed for more than a decade in the Papua New Guinea–West Irian border area and within West Irian itself. There is violence, including murder and assassination, in New Caledonia. In East Timor the ruthless might of the Indonesian armed forces is being used to decimate and subjugate the local population. There have been charges and counter charges over alleged USSR and US interference in domestic elections in Fiji (1982). The charges against the Soviets were withdrawn even before a specially appointed Royal Commission of Inquiry could complete its deliberations. The allegations against the Americans, although dismissed by the sole commissioner who conducted the Royal Commission proceedings, seemed, even at the time, to contain some truth, particularly for those familiar with clandestine activities in other parts of the world. A great hue and cry has been raised about Kiribati entering into a fishing agreement with the Soviet Union. A President has been assassinated under mysterious circumstances in Belau – here too, is a suspicious, though sometimes indistinct trail, left by US agents. The French are apparently planning a Guantanamo-type base in New Caledonia, and the Americans are rumoured (and the rumours have always been hotly denied) to have plans for a base in Fiji. In French-occupied Polynesia (Tahiti) French nuclear testing continues, aided and abetted by US silence, despite protests that go back for almost a quarter of a century. Issues related to contamination of the marine food chain and rising cancer rates (both in Tahiti as well as in the US colonies north of the equator where the US engaged in atmospheric testing until relatively recently) are ignored, despite mounting public pressure within the Pacific and abroad.

When this was written, in 1986, I said, 'There are unmistakable signs of domestic militarization in Fiji.' The situation in that country has since changed dramatically. On 14 May 1987 a newly elected, moderate, multiracial government, committed to a nuclear-free Pacific and to quite modest domestic reforms, was overthrown by a military coup. There is evidence of foreign involvement in the planning and execution of the coup, and in events that have occurred since. Israel, France and the US have all been involved in political

developments there, not only recently but since a considerable time before the first coup. Fiji is now a police state, governed by decree – one wonders how far is Fiji from the midnight knock on the door, shallow graves and growing missing persons lists. The ‘Latin Americanization’ of the Pacific seems now to have begun in earnest with Fiji as the first victim of this process. There is more in what is also a new theatre of the cold war.

The Americans make allegations about a Soviet naval/military build-up in the region and use this as a justification for its own forays, its increased presence and its continued claims to hegemony there. The US assiduously seeks client states and pliant elites and accuses the USSR of having similar goals.

In the larger Pacific region, of which Oceania is a part, there is a superpower, naval nuclear build-up of unprecedented proportions. No less significant, and indeed linked to this build-up, is a massive, forward-deployed arc of US bases and communications facilities stretching from Hawai’i through the islands of Micronesia, Guam, Okinawa, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Australia.

In the last five years or so US interests in the islands of Oceania have intensified. There have been visits to the region by high-ranking US State Department officials, the US military establishment and the US National Security Council. The islands have also been the subject of Congressional hearings, a major report commissioned by the US Department of State and a series of seminars and conferences at US universities and think-tanks – one of these, at the National Defense University, attracted 400 participants. But this is not all.

As the ‘Pacific’ has become the new growth centre of the capitalist world economy, there have been parallel developments of great significance to the islands of Oceania. As a result of the UNCLOS III-induced sea enclosure movement the very geography of this vast region has changed substantively. The islands of Oceania, once possessed of half a million sq. kilometres of land area, now have jurisdiction over 30 million sq. kilometres of ocean – 60 times their combined land area!

The expanded maritime jurisdictions of these oceanic micro states share boundaries with the global commons. For almost 20 years, both within the island states’ 200-mile exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and beyond, there has been a spate of almost unrelenting research activity, using surface and sub-surface vessels, satellites and a wide range of new oceanographic instrumentation to map the ocean floor and lay bare its secrets for the day when sea-bed mineral-mining can begin. The principal players in this research and development game have been the US, Japan, West Germany and France.

The substantive point here, is, that the juxtaposition of the expanded maritime jurisdictions with the global commons, and all the complex issues attendant upon it, confront the islands with some of their greatest policy problems.

The ‘Pacific’ is also now a new globalized information frontier. As changes are made from analogue to digital systems, as barriers are broken in fibre optics technology, as a web of high capacity, high quality and low cost cable and

satellite systems are developed for the region and the larger markets of the Pacific Rim, the islands are faced, again, with complex and far-reaching communications policy choices: to more or less blindly join the onward rush that will further integrate them into the global system or to proceed more carefully, measuring the costs and consequences of integration and inescapable dependency. So far, there have been few indications that the consequences of making wrong choices in these crucial areas are recognized.

What is fundamentally at issue here is control over telematics – the meeting point between telecommunications, computers and audio-visual systems, and the centrality of satellites to all three. The media giants are not simply concerned to get monopoly control over broadcast television, but much beyond that – to telematics – for that is where power and big profits lie.

Knowledge and information scarcity are related to a crucial lack of capacity to deal with many issues. For island governments they range from issues to do with foreign policy, dealing with foreign governments or salespersons, choosing experts to advise them on matters of public importance or buying such luxuries as television systems or airplanes. For non-government organizations interested in holding state institutions accountable or simply in seeking to influence public policy or educating sections of the public, the problems of information scarcity are even more pernicious and overwhelming.

Nowhere, however, is the lack of capacity and the knowledge and information scarcity from which it stems more likely to lead to devastating and irreversible decisions than in some of the frontier policy areas that have been identified here: sea-bed mining, protection of the ocean ecosystem, conservation of living marine resources, and telematics. It is precisely in some of these areas, where the imbalance of information is so great, and the pressures and inducements from the outside are so successfully applied and so unsuccessfully resisted. And it is precisely in these circumstances that the greatest damage is done to the interests of the people of the region.

The crucial linkage between a crippling lack of capacity, and the scarcity of information and knowledge, perpetuate and sustain each other in one more vicious circle. In turn, both, together, shackle governments as well as individuals and groups throughout society.

There is a mosaic of other issues. Questions that have to do with academic imperialism need to be examined and discussed. The gender debate has barely begun in the region – issues related to women's rights need to be more widely canvassed and addressed. The role of so powerful an economic state as Japan, and one that has become so important militarily, needs to be better understood in the region. South American states that border on the Pacific should also occupy our interests. Closer to home it is important to understand and disseminate information about state formations and the elites who dominate and manage or mismanage them. Dr Epeli Hau'ofa's crisp and elegant keynote address at the Pacific Studies Conference at Auckland University in 1985 is an important statement on the role of elites in the region; it should be read, reread and discussed. In an age when it has become fashionable in some circles to place questions of indigenous peoples' rights on the agenda of national and

international debate, the agenda needs to be broadened. In view of recent events in Fiji, justified by some as action taken on behalf of indigenous peoples' rights, we need to be able to debate: if and when indigenous people obtain control of the coercive instruments of the state, what rights, if any, do non-indigenous people have?

All of these issues are related to what some students of international law have termed the concept of 'inter-generational equity' – matters related to 'problems of equity between generations arising from such factors as depletion of resources, degradation of the quality of resources, impoverishment of resources or foreclosing options for future generations.' Implicit in this conceptualization is the idea of security as encompassing ecological and cultural security. By implication, matters concerned with structural violence and the cluster of issues tied thereto are also included. The 'natural resources' to which reference is made here extend beyond those we normally think of as resources. Here I have in mind such resources as the following set out in a recent United Nations University document:

- those that have been opened up by science and technology (outer space, the sea-bed);
- those that go beyond the traditional physical resource concept (climate, weather, culture, information);
- those that do not lend themselves to physical appropriation (radio frequencies spectrum, geo-stationary orbit);
- those that require a long term perspective (the environment).

One more issue should be raised here. In a recent UNU mission to Europe I learned from a distinguished Third World international lawyer that there are some 57 references to the 'obligation to co-operate' in the text of UNCLOS III. Although some international lawyers take the view that the obligation to co-operate is what is known as an *imperfect obligation* it seems to me, nonetheless, to have a special meaning for oceanic micro states, particularly now that they have such vast new territories under their jurisdiction.

I should hasten to add that there is no special magic about co-operation and it has its limits and problems, as political geographer Professor David Jones pointed out in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (January 1982, pp. 11–12). I should warn that co-operation that is designed to enmesh the islands collectively in such schemes as Single Regional Organization (SRO), closer ties with ASEAN and the proposed Pacific Basin Economic Community, and other similar schemes, should be carefully weighed for they encompass many difficulties.

This Introduction would be incomplete without some mention of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to imagine, particularly in view of Secretary-General Gorbachev's 1986 speech at Vladivostok, that such a great power as the Soviet Union will allow itself to be unceremoniously excluded from this vast region where it has interests comparable to those of the United States. The Soviet navy operates in Pacific waters; it will want to continue doing so. The Soviet Union has carried out hydrographic and other surveys in the region, and will want to

continue with those too. Although there are no trade, cultural or educational exchange relationships worth mentioning between the USSR and the Pacific island states, the Soviets will try to establish such relationships. The door to diplomatic relations with the islands in the northern Pacific is closed because of the provisions in the new constitutional instruments whereby the four Micronesian entities have secured their freedom from formal US colonial rule. In the south and south-west Pacific, however, the departing colonial powers left the door open. The US is persuading newly established island states in this part of Oceania to avoid anything more than cursory relationships with the USSR. Whether that advice will continue to be heeded in the future is of great concern to the US, which, where persuasion fails, is prepared to use force – either its own, as it did in Grenada, or through proxies as, for good reasons, it is widely suspected to have employed in the recent case of Fiji.

All of these and other developments have important consequences for the future of the peoples of the Pacific islands who are now at an uneasy stage in their history – their first brush with foreign powers more than a century ago was in many ways catastrophic enough, but now a new scramble is on again with an enlarged cast of players. The early, relatively easy years of independence – neo-colonial independence – are behind them. Latent tensions have begun to develop between island states: over the pace and direction of development; over the choice of foreign friends; over the question of support for the independence of fraternal island states. Although it can be argued that the issue of a nuclear-free Pacific unites all the islands in the region it would be foolish to believe that commitment to this is as deep or as widespread as some within ‘the movement’ would have us believe. In all these tension-generating issues – and not all have been identified here – those that loom largest in my mind are to do with foreign policy and diplomacy. In this area of political life, island states must learn quickly that they have, as Lord Palmerston warned long ago, no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, just permanent interests. Formulation of the Pacific island states’ foreign policy needs to be fine-tuned, and in some cases drastically overhauled in many respects, but nowhere is there need for greater care, creativity and a sense of direction than in *the determination of what are their real interests*. This will be a long and painful process. The role of both Australia and New Zealand must be reassessed; in a rapidly changing world they both have their own interests to consider. Indonesia is a dangerous militaristic state with expansionist ambitions. Japan has not abandoned that old idea known as the Greater Asian Co-prosperity Sphere, now being reintroduced under new labels. As the Japan-US economic relationship moves from friction to integration, as Professor Tanaka Naoki has argued, Tokyo and Washington have agreed on their own private agenda for the Pacific islands.

In a world whose only constant is change and a perpetual realignment of forces based on response to change, failure to accept the view that nation states are not like pieces on a chessboard ‘with specified roles, set objectives and fixed configurations’ (Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 11) seems imprudent. On this basis, therefore, and with not a few lessons of history in mind, it is not inconceivable that in pursuit of their own national interests the USSR, China, Japan, the US,

France, West Germany and others might, at some time in the future, enter into arrangements that work against what remains of the islands' interests. That is more or less what happened a century and a half ago. At that time island leaders demonstrated a singular lack of capacity to deal with foreign governments. Put slightly differently, and perhaps a little more accurately, what happened a century and a half ago and what seems to be in the process of repeating itself now is simply this: island elites are making decisions that tend to enhance and perpetuate their own positions of privilege to the detriment of the interests of their own people.

As we move into what has been called 'the Pacific Century' contenders for political power in individual island states have begun to do battle over the substance and direction of foreign policy. In part this is what happened in Fiji in 1987: fledgling democratic institutions and processes were tested and found to be wanting. A quite limited democracy in Fiji (and all the 'independent' island states in the region are precisely limited democracies) has been replaced in that hapless country with an unlimited military dictatorship – supported by France, the US, Australia, Japan and, as far as can be ascertained, the military dictatorships in South Korea and Taiwan. New Zealand is engaged in its own version of creative ambiguity. Regional militarization has spilled over into domestic militarization of a quite pernicious kind. There is more to come.

These considerations and developments and the larger overarching threat of nuclear war, against a background of almost a half century of nuclear testing in the Pacific, are the main reasons why the contributions in this volume were written. They do not address all the issues raised here but, like the United Nations University (UNU) conference sponsored in co-operation with the New Zealand Foundation for Peace Studies, and funded by the UNU and at which the papers which appear here were presented, they are a small beginning.

Jim Anthony

Ka'a'awa, Hawai'i

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