

Joseph D. Foukona

SOLOMON ISLANDS:
A Nation of Islands in Conflict

LLM Research Paper

LAWS 533 – International Conflict Resolution

LAW FACULTY
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

2002

F7765 Foukona, J. Solomon Islands...

LAW

741
W
6
65
02



Victoria

UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

*Te Whare Wānanga
o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui*



LIBRARY

CONTENTS		<i>QUEST FOR CONFLICT SOLUTIONS</i>33
A	ABSTRACT	3
I	INTRODUCTION	4
II	BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT	6
III	HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF CONFLICT	10
A	<i>Protectorate Legacy</i>	10
B	<i>Constitutionalism</i>	13
IV	SOURCES OF CONFLICT	15
A	<i>State v Citizen</i>	15
B	<i>Development</i>	17
C	<i>Ethnicity</i>	19
D	<i>Government Policies</i>	21
V	CONFLICT TO CRISIS (1998 – 2002)	23
A	<i>Militants</i>	23
B	<i>Civilian Coup</i>	26
C	<i>Law and Order problem</i>	27
D	<i>Economic depression</i>	30

VI	QUEST FOR CONFLICT SOLUTIONS.....	33
A	Melanesian Way.....	33
B	Rule of Law.....	35
C	Peace Agreements.....	39
VII	A WAY FORWARD.....	42
A	Restorative justice.....	42
B	National Identity.....	44
C	A model for Government during conflict.....	46
VIII	CONCLUSION.....	48
B	References.....	49

A **ABSTRACT**

I **INTRODUCTION**

After British rule ended in 1978, Solomon Islands became a nation. With Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State, Solomon Islands adopted the Westminster Parliamentary system. The people gave themselves a Constitution as their supreme law. How citizens related with one another and the State was within the rule of law. Under the new nation everyone was excited that they now ran their own country. There was trust and confidence that the peoples government was going to live up to the expectations agreed and pledge in the preamble of the Constitution. Expressed in the Constitution was hope to 'uphold the principles of equality, social justice and equitable distribution of incomes' to benefit all people from different cultural traditions and islands. Sadly, for two decades, successive governments did not live up to these expectations.

Inadequate government policies, squandering of resources through unsustainable development, disrespect for people's identity and the growing inequality in social and economic benefits irritated many. The Guadalcanal people were the first to demand the State to address these issues, especially their felt grievances. After successive government inactivity to respond positively, Guadalcanal people revolted aggressively in 1998. This escalated into a conflict between Guadalcanal people and Malaitans based on Guadalcanal. Two militant groups, the Malaitan Eagle Force and the Isatabu Freedom Movement supported them.

In October 2000 a peace agreement was signed, which brought an end to the hostility. However, today an environment of insecurity exists with little progress towards stability and normalcy. Therefore, there has to be a process of reconciliation through the development of restorative justice and respect of identities. There is a way forward. A government of national unity needs to be established in order to address basic issues that are at stake. A way forward for resolving the conflict in Solomon Islands in order for people move from conflict to joy, peace, progress and prosperity.

(Word count: 14, 654)

¹ John Roughan "Solomon Islands: The Quick Easy Fix" (24th May 2001)

² <http://www.sps.gov.sb> (accessed 24th September 2001)

³ <http://www.sps.gov.sb> (last accessed 24th September 2001)

I INTRODUCTION

In 1893 an archipelago of Pacific islands of mainly Melanesian people found itself under a European administration and named the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. To the north-west was German Melanesia (New Guinea) and to the south-east French and British New Hebrides (Vanuatu). Through the treaty of Berlin 1885, Britain had gained a place in the Melanesian sun. The British Resident Commissioner, Charles Woodford at Tulaghi, developed new laws and strategies to create *comity* and sustain this emerging community under British rule.

In 1978, the granting of Independence by Britain gave international status for the newly created nation of Solomon Islands. Britain gave Solomon Islands a \$35 million dollar gift¹ as the Union Jack was lowered. The handing over of responsibility was peaceful and in a dignified manner. Not a shot was fired; nor a funeral note. There was no ethnic strife amongst the peoples of these islands. People had dreams for a better life because administration of Solomon Islands was now in their hands.

These islands deserved the description given by journalists and the media as the 'Happy Isles'. There was little crime. The police force was unarmed and there was minimal need for defence. People of different islands trusted one another and communicated peacefully through a developing 'pidgin' language. The national radio and a common Christian faith seemed to unite a people of diverse cultures and subsistence living. Though there was high mortality rate and low life expectancy, destitution was unknown. People were in control of their lives.

¹ John Roughan "Solomon Islands: The Quick Easy Fix" (24th May 2001)
<<http://www.scoop.co.nz/manson/stories/HL0205/S00132.htm>> (Last accessed 24th September 2002).

There was hope that all would benefit from the creation of a self-governing Solomon Islands. There would be equal opportunity for all and that everyone would live in unity and harmony; that diversity would be a strength. It was expected that elected parliamentarians would live by the national motto "To lead is to serve". Sadly, the ship of dreams for the future of these islands has struck a coral reef and is grounded until rescued.

Those who took the controls in this nation of islands seemed to have geared it to their own welfare at the expense of rural dwellers. Instead of their leadership as being a service to others, it appeared to be a service to self. The new capital, carved as an enclave on Guadalcanal, grew as a hub for the nation. All routes led to Honiara. The rural dweller on the Weather Coast, upon crossing the mountains of Guadalcanal and who looks down on Honiara, gazes upon a foreign sight. The third world meets the first. This contrast between those living in rural Guadalcanal and Honiara itself is huge. Most of the focus of the new nation was directed towards the national capital while other areas remained noticeably less developed.

Migrating Malaitans and people from other islands made every effort to use the available opportunities in and around Honiara while the Guadalcanal people sat back and watched. There were growing disparities in the benefits provided by the State, particularly in availability of schooling and health facilities. The Guadalcanal people felt under-served and overshadowed on their own island. Constant protest against the central government for its inaction on their behalf was fruitless, sparking aggressive resentment. This was the spark that has caused the serious economic, social and political problems escalating into conflict.

This paper seeks to explore the dynamics of the conflict in Solomon Islands in order to arrive at a way forward to its conclusion. The paper is divided up into eight parts: (I) Introduction; (II) Background of conflict; (III) Evolution of conflict; (IV) Sources of conflict; (V) Conflict to crisis; (VI) Quest for conflict solutions; (VII) A way forward; and (VIII) Conclusion.

II BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT

The conflict in the Solomon Islands started in the second half of 1998 when violence erupted on the outskirts of Honiara. The conflict was between disgruntled people of Guadalcanal and displaced people from Malaita. Disgruntled Guadalcanal people who began the violence formed Isatabu Freedom Movement. The Guadalcanal militant group revolted against the State with home made rifles and World War II weapons. During this time the government did not anticipate escalation in conflict and did not regard actions of the Guadalcanal militants as serious.

The attacks against the Royal Solomon Islands Police gradually extended to Malaitans who were living on the outskirts of Guadalcanal. The intention was to drive every Malaitan off Guadalcanal because of their dominant nature in terms of trade, business activities, settlement, education and other services. In some instance, such dominance influenced less respect against the custom of Guadalcanal people. A fine example is the increase of squatter settlements and farming on Guadalcanal customary lands. Most of the migrants from Malaita for decades used Guadalcanal land without paying any rentals or compensation. This was considered a threat to the use of resources on Guadalcanal, particularly when immigrants settled and had no respect for resource owners.

In 1999 there were attacks carried out against Malaitans that resulted in several dozen people becoming victimised. During this time there was a tremendous intensity in the build up of arms by Guadalcanal militants. They went on a rampage forcing Malaitan's from settled villages by harrassing, abducting or aggressive confrontation. In some incidents these confrontations proved fatal.² On 31 July 1999 the Royal Solomon Islands Police clashed with the Guadalcanal militants resulting in the death of four militants at Mount Austin, outside of the capital. The four had allegedly threatened a group of Malaitans working in their vegetable gardens. The matter was

² See generally Amnesty International *SOLOMON ISLANDS, A forgotten conflict* (Amnesty International, August 2000).

reported to the police, they turned with automatic weapons and shot dead the four men after they allegedly fired shots.³

Prior to the Mount Austin shoot-out the police raided a Guadalcanal militant camp in the north of Guadalcanal. They seized home made weapons and arrested one member of the Isatabu Freedom Movement. In retaliation, the Isatabu Freedom Movement raided a village on the Guadalcanal plains and kidnapped an off duty prison warden, a Malaita.⁴ The growing violence on Guadalcanal carried out by the Isatabu Freedom Movement resulted in more than 20, 000 Malaitans fleeing their homes and returning back to Malaita or became refugees in Honiara.⁵

Honiara became a Malaita stronghold surrounded by roadblocks cutting off the rest of Guadalcanal, under the control of the Isatabu Freedom Movement. Consequently, police control on Guadalcanal became restricted to the national capital while the conflict mounted. Many of these Malaitan people lost most of their properties. Following the closing down of major commercial companies such as the Solomon Islands Plantation Limited resulted in the loss of 65% of 1,800 employees.

The then Solomon Islands Prime Minister Ulufa'alu claimed that it was a political construction and blamed the opposition businessmen and politicians for encouraging the violence by Guadalcanal militants.⁶ The cause of the eruption of violence was claimed to be a result of politicisation of the different islander-identities by political leaders. For example, in December 1998, the Guadalcanal Premier Ezekiel Alebua publicly requested that settlers in Honiara must respect Guadalcanal people and their cultures. He also demanded that the national government should pay compensation for the capital, Honiara, because it was on Guadalcanal Province land.⁷

³ Peter Byrne "Intimidation against settlers continues in Solomon Islands" (13th August 1999) <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/aug1999/sol-a13.shtml>> (Last accessed 10th June 2002).

⁴ Byrne, above.

⁵ Volker Boge "Solomon Islands" in Working Paper No. 1/2001 *Conflict Potential and Violent Conflict in the South Pacific* (University of Hamburg Research Unit of Wars, Armament and Development, 2001) 27.

⁶ Amnesty International, above, 3/4.

⁷ Catherine Jun "Unrest in the Solomons" <<http://www.cs.org/internships/solomons.htm>> (Last accessed 8th September 2002).

The degree of violence carried out by Guadalcanal militias reflected the depth of emotion and intensity of resentment against settlers on Guadalcanal that has evolved for decades. The incidents since the eruption of the of conflict depicted the levels of hatred and violence that the Isatabu Freedom Movement was prepared to indulge in if their demands were not met. This could be labelled as ethnonational behaviour because the actions of the Guadalcanal militants was a pursuit of their human needs in light of confrontation with the dominant Malaitans. In response to the IFM violence campaign, Malaitan men formed the Malaitan Eagle Force.

The Malaitan Eagle Force fought against the Isatabu Freedom Movement and started to intimidate Guadalcanal people. As a result, approximately 10, 000 Guadalcanal people fled into remote areas within rural Guadalcanal due to fear of Malaitan Eagle Force reprisal.⁸ The situation became complicated because there was an ethnic imbalance in the national police service. 75% of the police officers were Malaitans.⁹ Hence, when the Malaita Eagle Force was formed the State could do little to curb the escalation of violence into conflict.

The Malaita Eagle Force on 17 January 2000 raided the police armoury at Auki, capital of Malaita Province. Later, the militant group resorted to violence to increase political pressure on the government to pay compensation for the attacks committed by IFM.¹⁰ Subsequently, the security situation gradually deteriorated because both the Isatabu Freedom Movement and Malaitan Eagle Force pressured the national government to meet their demands. The national government addressed the situation by coming up with a series of peace agreements but both militant groups continuously breached them. Revenge continued between the two groups.

On 5 June 2000, the MEF supported by paramilitary police officers acted without authorisation and carried out a coup. The then Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu was forced to resign and parliament was pressured to

⁸ Amnesty International *SOLOMON ISLANDS, A forgotten conflict* (Amnesty International, August 2000) 3.

⁹ Amnesty International, above, 7.

elect a successor. This was claimed to be a joint operation between MEF and the paramilitary police officers. However, MEF and the paramilitary later used stolen police weapons for the coup operation to increase their military operations against the IFM and Guadalcanal civilians.¹¹ On 30 June 2000, the Malaita spokesperson Andrew Nori threatened 'all out war' if there was no newly elected Prime Minister to replace Ulufa'alu. As result, Manasseh Sogavare was elected to succeed Ulufa'alu and a new government referred to as Coalition for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace was formed.¹²

Since the election of the Sogavare government the MEF continued on with what it called 'Operation Eagle Storm' against the IFM controlled territory in rural Guadalcanal areas.¹³ Law and Order gradually deteriorated leaving the population vulnerable to the excesses of paramilitary groups and criminal opportunist. The police force became dysfunctional. Militants continued with violent activities by carrying out executions, indiscriminate shootings, deliberate and arbitrary killing, torture, threats and harassment on the mass.¹⁴ In most cases, the two militant groups would carry out attacks on citizens based on their ethnicity.

¹⁰ Amnesty International, above, 5.

¹¹ Amnesty International, above, 6.

¹² Amnesty International, above.

¹³ Amnesty International, above.

¹⁴ Amnesty International, above.

III HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF CONFLICT

A Protectorate Legacy

Solomon Islanders became subject to British rule when the British Government enacted the Pacific Order in Council 1893. The interest in the Solomon Islands grew as Europeans gradually made contacts with the locals. Britain became concerned about the conflicts that occurred between the locals and its subjects, particularly those involved in labour recruiting for Queensland and Fiji.¹⁵ Subsequently, under the Western Pacific Order in Council 1877 the governor of Fiji was empowered as a High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. His responsibility was for regulating contacts involving British subjects and the people of the islands that had no European country as their ruler.

European countries gradually had an interest in the Pacific and this contributed towards the demarcation of boundaries between islands. For example, in 1886 German interest in the northern Solomons as a source of labour, and a British willingness to protect Australia from foreign neighbours constituted the dividing up of the Solomons into German and British spheres of influence.¹⁶ The division of the jurisdiction of the Solomons was enforced under the Berlin Declaration in 1886.¹⁷ Germany and Britain shared their interest over the Solomons and continued to increase their activities during the nineteenth century. Both Germany and Britain were equally concerned about how labour recruitment was carried out in the Pacific.

However, the concerns of the German and British were more for their people venturing into the Pacific and getting killed by islanders incited by the conduct of the 'slave traders' rather than the protection of local inhabitants.¹⁸ Britain moved to annex the Southern Solomons as a protectorate in 1893 and

¹⁵ Sam Alasia "Politics" in Hugh Laracy (ed) *Ples Blong Iumi: Solomon Islands the past four thousand years* (IPS, Suva, 1989) 137, 140.

¹⁶ Alasia, above.

¹⁷ Solomon Mamaloni "The Road To Independence" in Ron Crocombe and Esau Tuza (eds) *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence: The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence* (Government Printing Press, Honiara, 1992) 7, 13.

¹⁸ Mamaloni, above.

this led to administration. The annexation by Britain under the Pacific Order in Council 1893 was for the strengthening of Britain's claim on Guadalcanal, Malaita, New Georgia group, Makira, Savo, Ngnella and the Russells.¹⁹ These islands prior to British rule had their own social system to be complied with and authorities who must be obeyed. They were islands whose inhabitants were already self-sufficient with the basic requirements of life and had their own identities and entities.²⁰

The gradual merging of the islands by Britain under its demarcation strategies was mainly for administrative purposes. Notably, the declaration of the islands as a protectorate territory of Britain led to the reorganisation of the islands under one country referred to as Solomon Islands. This was a divine creation that overlooked the fact that Solomon Islands was made up of a number of small and separate 'island nations'. These are referred to as Malaita, Guadalcanal, Makira, Nende, Vanikoro, Utupua, Reefs, Tikopia/Anuta, Duff Islands, Isabel, Ulawa, Ngella, Savo, Rennell/Belona, Russell Islands, Marovo, New Georgia, Kolombangara, Simbo, Gizo, Rannonga, Choiseul, Sikaiana, Lord Howe and Shortland.²¹

The combining of these islands under one sovereign authority provided the background for Britain to administer the islands. In other words, it was for administrative convenience that the islands were combined to form the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. There was no evaluation or study of the prerequisites for creating a nation before merging the islands into one sovereign authority. Solomon Mamaloni described this as "... the Solomon Islands Community has never been a Nation".²² This demonstrated that in Solomon Islands, nation of islands existed during the pre-contact era. Britain never considered this complexity when it merged the islands.

Charles Woodford was the first Resident Commissioner who was appointed in 1893 but took residence in 1896. He was directly responsible to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific based in Suva, Fiji but

¹⁹ Mamaloni, above.

²⁰ Mamaloni, above, 14.

²¹ Mamaloni, above, 10.

distance and transport virtually accorded Woodford the authority of a Governor.²³ Woodford's economic aim to generate more revenue for the Protectorate made him to be in favour of the concept of customary land alienation. The idea to alienate customary land was embraced by an unfounded assumption and British myth that ignored the complexities that existed in relation to customary land tenure on the different islands throughout the Solomons. Woodford did not carry out any proper investigation or survey to determine the status of land ownership in the areas such as Vonavona, North New Georgia, Islands in the Manning Strait and South Coasts of Santa Isabel and Choiseul. Most of his observation was from the foredeck of the *Rob Roy* in 1899.²⁴

The first land regulation enacted under the British administration declared that land in Solomon Islands was uninhabited land or waste land.²⁵ Under the land regulations introduced by the British administrators, the concept of freehold, leasehold and perpetual estate was introduced. Subsequently, land alienation was introduced. The British administration was instrumental in facilitating the transfer of land to British subjects either as freehold if it was customary land or leasehold if it was waste-land. This was all part of the British government's administrative policy of land alienation. The policy of land acquisition under the various land laws during the protectorate era created complications in later years when Solomon Islands became independent.

For instance, in Russell Islands the alienation of land for the development of coconut plantations in the late 1800s by the Levers Pacific Ltd caused arguments between the state and the people. Land disputes emerged when, Pavuvu Island after Marving Brothers Timber Ltd, a Malaysian registered logging company started logging on the island in 1985. Prior to that, the Levers Pacific Timber, as a subsidiary of the same company

²² Mamaloni, above.

²³ Mamaloni, above, 13.

²⁴ Judith Bennett *A Wealth of the Solomons: A history of a Pacific archipelago 1800 - 1978* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989) 131.

²⁵ See generally Queens Regulation No. 4 of 1896.

was also involved in a dispute in 1981 with the land owners at Enoghae in North New Georgia. After independence alienated land remained a source of conflict on Guadalcanal and other areas such as Pavuvu and New Georgia because only marginal benefit is received from it. These problems evolved as a result of poor British government policies during the protectorate era.

B Constitutionalism

From 1960s to the early 1970s Britain was preparing Solomon Islands for constitutional independence. Britain undertook this process because Solomon Islands derived little or no economic benefit as a country. During this period Britain was encouraged the establishment of the Palm Oil Project by the Commonwealth Development Corporation.²⁶ Administratively, in 1968 Solomon Islands was divided into four districts, the Western, Central, Malaita and Eastern. Each of the districts was controlled by a District Commissioner and assisted by one to three District Officers depending on the size of the district.²⁷

In 1968 the Colonial Government introduced constitutional development based on discussions between the High Commission and the elected members of the Legislative Council. The recommendations advocated an elected majority in a single Legislative Council supported by Executive Committees. Therefore, a Governing Council was established in 1970 but lasted one term only. Open election ballot for the members of the Legislative Council was encouraged except Temotu returned their representatives through an electoral college.²⁸

All elected members were part of Executive Committees. They were directly involved in executive decision making. However, this system of government was considered as time consuming, slowed down making of decisions, discourage party politics which was basis of the Westminster

²⁶ Sir Baddeley Devesi "Independence or Dependence" in Ron Crocombe and Esau Tuza (eds) *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence; The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence* (Government Printing Press, Honiara (Solomon Island) 1992) 1, 2.

²⁷ Devesi, above, 2

system.²⁹ The Colonial Administration retained power in the Legislature with the majority of 14 official members who were Heads of Government Departments. During this period Britain accelerated its plans to give Solomon Islands independence.

The idea of a Governing Council was to encourage a 'home grown' system of government. There would be no opposition and the decisions of government would be based on consensus in order to avoid creating divisions in an already diverse nation. Those that were in favour of the Governing Council felt that such system was similar to the Melanesian way of good government because every parliamentarian would be part of the day to day running of Government both at the Executive Committee level and at the sitting of the whole house. Such government system was suitable for Solomon Islands because it avoid unnecessary arguments since every member would work together for a common good.

The colonial administrators and local politicians did not share this view. The colonial administrators did not accept the idea of a Governing Council from the start and came out with arguments to discourage the system from working by saying that it was an expensive and time consuming form of government.³⁰ They were in favour of the Westminster system because it would expedite independence and relieve them of their financial burden. It was also argue a Governing Council would not allow for the development of political parties, which were essential for a clear majority with which to govern.³¹ Therefore, when Britain granted Solomon Islands independence in 1978 a Westminster Parliamentary system of government was adopted.

²⁸ Devesi, above, 3.

²⁹ Devesi, above.

³⁰ Devesi, above, 4.

IV SOURCES OF CONFLICT

A State v Citizen

Citizens and the State of Solomon Islands relate with each other within the rule of law through the legislature, executive and judiciary. The rule of law defines the boundary upon which this relationship can prosper and flourish. Any issues that citizens wish to bring to the attention of the State must be channeled through the appropriate arms of the State. Neither citizen nor the State can operate alone in a democratic country such as the Solomon Islands.

However, after independence the competency of the State to deal with issues raised by citizens was questioned. There were cases that happened after independence, which put the State to a test in terms of how it could operate legitimately. These cases later could be argued as some of the factors that contributed towards the evolving of grievance among citizens resulting in conflict. How the State dealt with these cases seemed to have been unconventional or unconstitutional. As a result, there was gradual distrust and resentment against how the State operated. Three cases can be used to illustrate the process of grievance, which later escalated into conflict.

The first case was the Guadalcanal Province petition in 1988 for state government, return of alienated land and payment of compensation for murder committed against Guadalcanal people. The State did not deal promptly with the petitions made by the Guadalcanal Province. The petitions for state government and return of alienated land were national issues³² but the State did not consider these as serious. Compensation claim for murdered victims was dismissed by the State because appropriate State institutions such as the police and courts had already dealt with it.

The second case was the defamatory statement that caused insult against Malaitans in 1989. An unknown culprit wrote a defamatory statement at the main market in Honiara, which resulted in more than a thousand

³¹ Devesi, above.

Malaitans to violently demonstrate on the streets of Honiara and demanded compensation.³³ Speculation had it that the culprit was from Rennell and Bellona, thus disgruntled Malaitan's pressured the suspect's Provincial Government to pay compensation. The State rescued the culprit's Provincial Government by paying SBD\$200, 000 compensation to the Malaita Province³⁴ despite no police investigation or a charge laid to establish whether a crime had been committed. Neither was there any civil suit for defamation.

The third case was the rape allegation in 1998 that happened at Ruavatu Secondary School, which was owned by Guadalcanal Province. The female students from Malaita were alleging that an unknown rapist raped them. There was no police investigation carried out or conviction made for the rape allegation. Instead, disgruntled Malaitan parents or guardians approached the Guadalcanal Province for compensation. Guadalcanal Province refused to pay because there was no crime committed or civil suit brought against them. The State paid compensation instead by using the revenue sharing grants due to the Guadalcanal Province to settle the demand.

The State overlooked the legitimate process in dealing with issues raised by citizens in these three cases. This has caused suspicion and distrust among citizens. As a result of the unconventional approach by the State the Guadalcanal Province resubmitted the petitions it made in 1988. The social and cultural opinion in Guadalcanal Province was that the State has already confused the ways it should relate with the people when dealing with issues. There was no faith that the State would deal fairly with the petitions of the Guadalcanal Province. Hence, disgruntled young men from Guadalcanal resorted to violence by forcing settlers, especially Malaitans on Guadalcanal to leave. This later resulted in a conflict.

³² See Constitutional Review Committee *Constitutional Review* (CRC Report Vol.1, Honiara, 1987).

³³ See Tarcisius.Tara Kabutaulaka "The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk 1" (24th May 1999) <<http://www.geocities.com/jannicolaas/23a0699.html>> (last accessed 28th February 2002).

³⁴ Kabutaulaka, above.

B Development

Successive governments since the protectorate era devised development plans to improve the living conditions of Solomon Islanders. Initially, Britain provided a grant in aid of 1 200 pounds to fund the administration of the protectorate when a new government was established in 1896.³⁵ Therefore, Charles Woodford who was the first Resident Commissioner considered commercial plantations as a viable development paradigm that would raise extra capital for the administration of the Protectorate. As a result, Mr. Woodford encouraged foreign investors to invest in plantation agriculture. However, in order for foreign investment to progress Woodford realised that land and labour must be available.

Therefore, the British administration formulated a policy of alienating land for large-scale plantation development. Prior to independence Britain developed commercial projects such as the Tuna industry in 1972 and the oil palm project established by the Commonwealth Development Corporation.³⁶ These commercial projects generated most of the revenue to run the country during the first 8 years after independence. However, the prices of the cash crops that were the revenue generating resources during the early 1980s were weakening on the world market. Cyclone Namu in 1986 caused a lot of damage to the major oil palm and the rice ventures on Guadalcanal.³⁷

The impact of the Cyclone in 1986 gradually facilitated development to gradually take a twisting tale. National leaders opted for large scale logging practices as another avenue to generate income for the country. As result, there was tremendous export of round logs at an unsustainable rate that brought significant cash flow to the country. On contrary, between 1994 and 1997 the national government gave SBD\$109 million as duty remissions to

³⁵ Judith Bennett *A Wealth of the Solomon Islands: A History of a Pacific Archipelago 1800 – 1978* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1987) 105.

³⁶ Sir Baddeley Devesi "Independence or Dependence" in Ron Crocombe and Essau Tuza (eds) *Independence, Dependence and Interdependence. The First 10 years of Solomon Islands Independence* (Government Printing Press, Honiara (Solomon Islands) 1992) 7, 17.

logging companies at the expense of the national revenue.³⁸ However, behind this destructive development paradigm of the export of Solomon Islands tree wealth to Southeast Asia was corruption.

A few accumulated wealth from the new logging industry and became rich at the cost of many village and urban people. The national government gave subsidies to businesses, particularly logging companies and their close associates at the expense of rural based logging activities. Despite heavy criticism that the rate of logging exports were unsustainable those that were in charge, primarily the national leaders felt that the cutting down of the Solomon Islands tree wealth was the prompt avenue for generating revenue to run the country.³⁹ Despite public reaction against destructive logging practices the national government did formulate alternative policies to discourage logging.

According to the Central Bank's 1994 Annual Report it was obvious that the production of 830, 000 cubic metres of whole log exports was not progressing on a sustainable level.⁴⁰ This has created considerable concern among many Solomon Island resource owners because it was evident that Solomon Islands economy was caught in a spiral resource depletion and unsustainable development. Moreover, logging practices became focus of controversy because there was exposure of bribery paid to government Ministers from logging companies. From media reports it was revealed that US\$2.2 million was paid in bribes from the Intergrated Forestry Industry, a subsidiary of Malaysian Company Kumpulan Emas, to Ministers and other government employees.⁴¹

Significantly, the encouragement of logging practices apart from large scale commercial agriculture such as oil palm and coconut plantation reflected that how development was facilitated constituted the sustaining of

³⁷ John Roughan "Solomon Islands: The Quick, Easy Fix" (24th May 2001) (<<http://www.scoop.co.nz/mason/stories/HL0205/S00132.htm>> (Last accessed 24th September 2002).

³⁸ Roughan, above.

³⁹ Roughan, above.

⁴⁰ "Solomons Logging" <<http://archive.greenpeace.org/~comms/forestry/log.html>> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).

injustices or harms.⁴² Such injustices or harm was later transformed into aggression and violence that escalated into conflict. Coser described such conflict as:

...a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralise, injure, or eliminate their rivals.⁴³

Based on Coser's definition it could be held that how development was carried out in Solomon Islands was one of the sources of conflict.

C *Ethnicity*

Geographically, Solomon Islands has a land mass of 27, 556 square kilometres that spreads over 992 islands and is located 10 degrees south of the equator.⁴⁴ Melanesians make up 95 % of the population while the other 5% comprised mainly of Polynesians and Micronesians.⁴⁵ There are over 120 indigenous language groups and significant local differences in culture.⁴⁶ People from different islands had their own identities and entities that were self reliant as well as own social structures and authorities that they must obey.⁴⁷ When Solomon Islands became an independent state in 1978 ethnic groups were destined to be networked into a modern nation.

Solomon Islanders identify themselves more closely with their cultural or island groups than the modern nation of Solomon Islands. With such

⁴¹ "Solomons Logging", above.

⁴² John Houainamo Naitoro "Solomon Islands conflict: demands for historical rectification and restorative justice" (2000) Pacific Economic Bulletin <<http://peb.anu.edu.au>> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).

⁴³ Lewis A Coser *Conflict: Social Aspects* (Macmillan, New York, 1968) as cited in Naitoro, above.

⁴⁴ Lonely Planet "Solomon Islands" <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/pacific/solomon_islands/history.htm> (Last accessed 1st August 2002).

⁴⁵ "Solomon Islands – Country Information" <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon_islands_brief.html> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).

⁴⁶ Bob Burton *Rights- Solomon Islands: Land Tensions Spill Over, Peace Plan Shaky* <http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/july99/15_59_007.html> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).

tremendous diversity there was a struggle for national consciousness because people continued to cling on to their cultural niches.⁴⁸ People aligned themselves according to district, village or provincial level and it was through this common identity that people could have the driving capacity to express their grievance or frustrations. Donald Horowitz realised such tendency when he stated "in divided societies, ethnic affiliations are powerful, permeative, passionate and pervasive".⁴⁹

Despite the uniting of the different islands under the modern nation of Solomon Islands tensions had ebbed and flowed for some years, which erupted in 1998 constituting a conflict between people from Guadalcanal and Malaita. This signifies that ethnic difference is one of the sources of conflict in Solomon Islands because there is no common identity. Donald Horowitz explained this as:

In severely divided societies, ethnicity finds its way into a myriad of issues: development plans, education controversies, trade union affairs, land policy, business policy, tax policy. Characteristically, issues that would elsewhere be relegated to the category of routine administration assume a central place on the political agenda of ethnically divided societies.⁵⁰

The explanation given by Donald Horowitz seemed to be the case in Solomon Island where ethnic groups such as the Isatabu Freedom Movement or the Malaita Eagle Force transformed genuine issues into what could be interpreted as an ethnic conflict. Before the creation of militancy by both the Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force the core issues were the return of alienated land, state government, compensation claims and

⁴⁷ Solomon Mamaloni "The Road To Independence" in Ron Crocombe and Esau Tuza (eds) *Independence, Dependence and Interdependence. The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence* (Government Printing Press, Honiara (Solomon Islands) 1992) 7, 14.

⁴⁸ Gordon Nanau "Uniting The Fragments: Solomon Islands constitutional reforms" (2000 Development Research Symposium: South Pacific Futures (FDC) Conference, Brisbane, 22-24 July 2002) 4.

⁴⁹ Donald Horowitz *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985) 12.

development. As the conflict erupted between the two militant groups the issues raised became personalised within an ethnic spectrum.

People resorted to ethnic affiliation and then mobilised to demonstrate their frustration. The creation of the Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force are examples that show group affiliation based upon ethnicity. The involvement of these two militant groups in the Solomon Islands conflict demonstrated that the lack of national consciousness or common identity plays a role in defining the conflict.

D Government Policies

Inadequate government policies since the protectorate was another element that seemed to have caused the Solomon Islands conflict. From the historical sketch, it can be deduced that there were poor policies of customary land administration. These land policies were developed primarily to encourage the improvement of Solomon Islands domestic economy through agriculture development and large scale exploitation of natural resources. Hence, during and after the protectorate era natural resources such as logging, oil palm and the distribution of the benefits from customary land has been and remains a contentious issue.

The government's policy of land alienation for large scale cropping such oil palm and coconut plantations provided landowners to accrue benefits that were only marginal. For instance, on the Guadalcanal plains a total of 1,478 hectares of land was acquired in the 1970s for oil palm plantation by the Solomon Islands Plantation Limited. Guadalcanal landowners own only a 2 percent share in the Company, while the British registered Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) owns 68% shares and the Solomon Islands government 30%.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Horowitz, above.

⁵¹ Tarcisiu Tara Kabutaulaka "Beyond Ethnicity: The Political Economy of the Guadalcanal Crisis in Solomon Islands" (2000) <<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/tarcisiusworkingpaper.htm>> (Last accessed 10th August 2002).

Apart from the shares, landowners receive annually, SI\$100/ NZ\$30 per hectare as land rental and SI\$500/ NZ\$175 per hectare as premium. Guadalcanal landowners throughout the decades have been making efforts to increase their benefits from the alienated land.⁵² However, successive governments did not address the issue positively, thereby provoking grievance among Guadalcanal landowners against the State and other settlers. Guadalcanal landowners started to revolt against the State and force people to leave the island of Guadalcanal.

Significantly, disgruntled young men from Guadalcanal showed their frustrations by resorting to violence. Donald Horowitz explained this as:

When ethnic violence occurs, unranked groups usually aim not at social transformation, but at something approaching sovereign autonomy, the exclusion of parallel ethnic groups from a share of power, and often reversion – by expulsion or extermination – to an idealised, ethnically homogeneous status quo ante.⁵³

While the description was written about conflicts in nations in Asia and Africa it sums up what was happening in the Solomon Islands. The Guadalcanal people after more than 20 years of waiting for their grievance to be addressed constructively were the first to revolt against the policies of State.⁵⁴ Such revolt was extended against other citizens who were either squatters, settlers or people that migrated to Guadalcanal to work on large commercial plantations such as the oil palm and coconut industries. Then Malaitans armed themselves and retaliated.

⁵² Kabutaulaka, above.

⁵³ Donald Horowitz *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985) 31.

⁵⁴ John Roughan "Solomon Islands: The Quick, Easy Fix" (24th May 2001) <<http://www/scoop.co.nz/mason/stories/HL0205/S00132.htm>> (Last accessed 24th September 2002).

V CONFLICT TO CRISIS (1998 – 2002)

A Militants

The beginning of militant uprising was witnessed towards the end of 1998 after angry young men from Guadalcanal grouped and called themselves the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (later renamed Isatabu Freedom Fighters or Isatabu Freedom Movement). However, the Isatabu Freedom Fighters were not under one single unified organisation. They had no clear structures of command and control but consisted of several local groups acting independently of one another to a large extent. The two main groups are the 'Command East Coast' and 'Command West Coast'.⁵⁵

The 'Command East Coast' is a traditional fundamentalist group that existed for a long time and is based in the structurally underdeveloped and neglected south coast of Guadalcanal. The group is connected to the Moro movement that revolted against the British during the protectorate. The 'Command West Coast' group is made up of educated younger people who experienced urban life and have a good grasp of political discourse.⁵⁶ They made petitions for self-determination for the population of Guadalcanal and greater autonomy for their province. Apart from these two groups criminal elements attached themselves to the Isatabu Freedom Movement primarily to enrich themselves by through arson, robbery and taking of hostages.⁵⁷

The Isatabu Freedom Movement started to be aggressive after its formation by terrorising people, particularly Malaitans and forcing them to leave Guadalcanal. Such aggression according to the Frustration Agression theory may be due to the fact that human needs always exceed the supply, thus conflict can be traced back to an actor's failure to obtain what it needs. However, this theory was discredited by the Social Learning theory, which is based on the assumption that aggression is not innate or instinctual but

⁵⁵ Volker Boge "Solomon Islands" in Working Paper No. 1/2001 *Conflict Potential and Violent Conflict in the South Pacific* (University of Hamburg Research Unit of Wars, Armament and Development, 2001) 30.

⁵⁶ Boge, above.

⁵⁷ Boge, above.

actually learned through the process of socialisation. Therefore, based on the Social Learning theory it could be explained that the aggressive behaviour by the Isatabu Freedom Movement militants was due to the process of socialisation.

Many young men that joined the Isatabu Freedom Movement grew to witness their people have become second class and land-losing citizens on their own island.⁵⁸ Malaitans had migrated to Guadalcanal and became the dominant group. They sought employment in the modern sector, on the plantations, in the fishing industry, in the only goldmine of the country,⁵⁹ in trade and above in the public service.⁶⁰ Malaitan inhabitants became the business and political elite on Guadalcanal.⁶¹ In the country's highest learning institution, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Malaitans make up 75%.⁶²

Social inequality was inevitable with the influx of Malaitans and this has made the indigenous population of Guadalcanal, particularly young men to feel disadvantaged. As a result, there was a growing feeling of resentment and frustration evolving for decades that influenced young Guadalcanal men to be aggressive. One could sense the depth of emotion and sheer intensity of aggression from comments made by the Guadalcanal people as result of the social inequalities. Take for example the words of one of the IFF/ IFM leaders, George Gray:

[w]e want all Malaitans in Guadalcanal repatriated back to their land. We want them gone...if [this demand was] not met ... we can mount an attack on Honiara and kill all the Malaitans, wipe them out.⁶³

⁵⁸ Catherine Jun "Unrest in the Solomons" (2000)

<<http://www.cs.org/internships/solomons.htm>> (Last accessed 8th September 2002).

⁵⁹ Gold Ridge Mine.

⁶⁰ Boge, above, 27.

⁶¹ Jun, above.

⁶² Marilyn Pryor "Marist priest observer at Solomon Islands elections in December" (February 2002) *Wel-Com* Wellington and Palmerstone North 9.

Subsequently, the Isatabu Freedom Movement pursued with force the interest by burning houses, attacked villages inhabited by Malaitans. Thousands of Malaitan who settled on the out skirt of Honiara were driven from their homes by Guadalcanal militants who armed themselves with home made rifles and antique rifles excavated from World War II caches.⁶⁴ In response to the IFM's violent campaign against the State and Malaitan settlers on Guadalcanal, Malaitan men living in Honiara and those who fled from IFM operations in rural Guadalcanal formed vigilante groups on the outskirts of Honiara. Malaitan men who had evacuated their families to Malaita after many lost jobs and homes joined the vigilante groups, thus the number increased in mid 1999.⁶⁵

The vigilante groups were reportedly trained and armed by serving or former Malaitan police officers. The groups gradually became active after it was perceived that the government was not actively dealing with their grievances as a result of the violence committed by IFM. On 17th January 2000 members of the vigilants groups raided the police armoury at Auki, capital of Malaita and later publicly announced that they represent the Malaita Eagle Force. This was a militant group formed by aggrieved Malaitan people who claimed to protect the interest of Malaitans by pressurising the government to pay compensation for Malaitans loss of lives and property from IFM attacks.⁶⁶

In February 2000 the Governor General, Sir John Ini Lapli declared both the IFM and MEF as criminal organisations. This resulted in the MEF refusing to attend any peace talks until the ban was suspended. However, months after the formation of the MEF skirmishes and revenge killings between the militant groups started to build up. As a result, there were cases of human rights abuses but the police responded to the emerging conflict with

⁶³ Peter Byrne "Solomon Islands accord paves the way for further conflict" (6th July 1999) <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/jul1999/solo-j06.shtml>> (Last accessed 17th September 2002).

⁶⁴ Catherine Jun "Unrest in the Solomons" (2000) <<http://www.cs.org/internships/solomons.htm>> (Last accessed 8th September 2002).

⁶⁵ Amnesty International *SOLOMON ISLANDS, A forgotten conflict* (Amnesty International, August 2000) 4.

restraint and hesitation because internal ethnic division, lack of equipment, transport and training.⁶⁷ Consequently, the State became handicapped in dealing effectively with the conflict insurgence. Hence, law and order gradually deteriorated.

B Civilian Coup

The militant uprising eventually resulted in the Malaita Eagle Force staging a coup on 5 June 2000. The Malaita Eagle Force put the Prime Minister and Governor General under house arrest and demanded the Prime Minister to resign.⁶⁸ The Malaita Eagle Force spokesman, Andrew Nori, claimed that the Prime Minister failed to contain ethnic violence on Guadalcanal. Therefore, the aim of the coup was to 'restore law and order and confidence in the Government'.⁶⁹ This seemed to be the result of inconsistency in terms of the government's policy of *peace before justice* and demands of displaced Malaitans for justice in the form of compensation before peace.

The staging of the coup demonstrated Malaita Eagle Force's objective was to take control of the State apparatus. Generally, seeking control of the State through actions such as the coup indicated that Malaitan militants were prepared to ensure that their needs were met.⁷⁰ Malaita Eagle Forces gained control of Honiara as if they were the masters and had the power to manipulate of the State apparatus to their advantage. The demand for the resignation of the Prime Minister and the installation of a new government after the coup was a political move that would give the MEF more benefit in terms of their demand for compensation.

⁶⁶ Amnesty International, above, 5/6.

⁶⁷ Amnesty International, above, 9.

⁶⁸ "Solomons fall to violent coup, civil war a possibility"

<<http://www.adventurere.co.nz/collection/news/solomons/profile.html>> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).

⁶⁹ "Solomons fall to violent coup, civil war a possibility", above.

⁷⁰ William G. Cunningham Jr. *Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

The coup that was engineered by Andrew Nori and the Malaita Eagle Force on 5 June 2000 undermined the democratic principles of electing a new government. The police aided Civilian Coup was a quick way of changing a government that was gingerly pushing for greater transparency, financial accountability and fairness.⁷¹ These were issues that were not to the liking of the architect of the coup and their campaigners. The coup was carried out to help a few gain, especially Malaitan militants, at the expense of many citizens. This undermined people's trust in the government.

The justification for the carrying out of the coup was to save Honiara from militant invasion, claims for compensation for lost possessions in the social unrest of 1999 and 2000 be paid and finally avenge the 20,000 plus displaced Malaitans driven out by Guadalcanal militants.⁷² However, the hidden agenda behind the coup was to install a new government into power through a barrel of a gun, a government that would be more easily persuaded to follow orders. The Isatabu Freedom Movement initially did not recognise the new government that was formed after the coup because it was believed to be a Malaita Eagle Force construction. Many people did not perceive the government after the coup as legitimate. As a result, there was widespread lawlessness and looting.

C Law and order problem

The militant appraisal was the contributing factor behind the breakdown of law and order in Solomon Islands. The Guadalcanal militants were blamed for creating a sense of statelessness. However, their activities were carried out on the outskirts of Honiara. It was after the 5th of June 2000 that caused complete chaos because there was no effective mechanism to provide law and order. The MEF, supported by paramilitary police officers used stolen police weapons and equipment to fight against the IFM and Guadalcanal

⁷¹ John Roughan "Country's Coup Costs" (10th June 2001)

(<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).

⁷² Roughan, above.

civilians. Since the coup the MEF used State owned weapons for its 'Operation Eagle Storm' against the IFM controlled territory of rural Guadalcanal.⁷³

Militant activities have created a law and order vacuum in Honiara and throughout other islands. Prior to the coup there was no sign of massive criminal activities because only one group of people, particularly Guadalcanal militants use violent means to demonstrate their grievances and frustration. When the Malaita Eagle Force responded and took over the State apparatus criminals took advantage of the situation and benefited. There was no effective policing because the Malaita dominated paramilitary Police Field Force that was, changed sides.⁷⁴ Rather than maintaining loyalty to the State, much of the Police Field Force yielded to provincialism and ethnicity.

The civilian population of Solomon Islands suffered most as a result of the break down in law and order. All parties to the conflict were responsible for such chaos.⁷⁵ The break down in law and order caused the civilian population to be vulnerable to the excesses of paramilitary groups and criminal opportunists. Internally displaced people, ethnic minorities, women and teenage girls were the ones vulnerable to human rights abuses or common crimes because there was no effective policing to provide security and protection.⁷⁶

It was evident that after the coup the criminal activities in and around Honiara were alarming. The coup seemed to be catalyst for this entire uncontrollable criminal uprising because like the IFM the Joint MEF/ Paramilitary group was not lawfully established since there was no legislative enactment. Therefore, when the Joint MEF/ Paramilitary group took over Honiara other legitimate police posts in other Provinces were cut off resulting in the encouragement for an increase of criminal activities. Maintaining discipline by either IFM or Joint MEF/ Paramilitary was not possible. As a

⁷³ Amnesty International *SOLOMON ISLANDS: A forgotten conflict* (Amnesty International, August 2000) 6.

⁷⁴ Amnesty International, above.

⁷⁵ Amnesty International, above.

⁷⁶ Amnesty International, above, 7.

result, criminal elements that were part of these groups went on a rampage by stealing vehicles, harassing citizens and indulging in other criminal activities.

A disciplined and an effective police force to curb these criminal activities was missing. Therefore, the State was handicapped to adequately provide protection and security to its citizens. The rising in criminal activities was described by the High Court ruling in *Bartholomew Ulufa'alu v Attorney-General* as "... [There was] widespread looting, stealing, harassment and intimidation of innocent citizens in the Capital, with the absence of an effective police force ..."⁷⁷ Even after the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement the rate of robbery⁷⁸ and murder cases⁷⁹ remained high. The division in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force along provincial or ethnic lines caused inefficiency to enforce the law by arresting the law-breakers or providing security.

While there has been a newly elected government since December 2001, the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement and the gradual return of arms there is still a law and order problem. Therefore, the democratic relationship between citizens and the State remains uncertain. The break down in law and order has made some gain more, through compensation payments, at the expense of others. Extortion through the form of compensation claims has become a major source of income for some. This has caused tremendous impact on the countries economy and the socio-political structures. As a result, social inequality remains an issue that needs to be dealt with constructively or else Solomon Islands will continue to be prone for more conflict.

⁷⁷ (9 November 2001) High Court of Solomon Islands, Civil Case No. 195 of 2000, Palmer ACJ.

⁷⁸ See for example Pina Nius Online "Solomon Islands: Armed gang rob ship in Honiara" (5th March 2002) <<http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm22002/pinadefault.cfm?pinaid=3840>> (last accessed 6th March 2002).

⁷⁹ See Michael. Field "Solomon Islands Slipping into Anarchy" (9th March 2002) *The Dominion* New Zealand 25.

D *Economic depression*

Since the militant appraisal towards 1998 Solomon Islands economy has experienced a sharp decline. The conflict has created residual effects because the tourist industry and export economies have been ruined. Warnings issued by overseas countries to their citizens not to travel to Solomon Islands caused a downfall in tourism. The Solomon Islands Plantation Limited that contributes a fifth of the country's SBD\$370 million GDP from the export of palm oil was closed resulting in thousands of Malaitans unemployed.⁸⁰

Not only did the palm oil industry shut down, the Gold Ridge Mine and the Solomon Taiyo, the largest fishing company of the Solomon Islands, faced the same fate. Even the Malaysian timber firms withdrew all business operations completely.⁸¹ The Australian and New Zealand governments first forbade their nationals to visit Solomon Islands and then ordered evacuation of resident nations. Plains and ships provided free passage to Brisbane.

Solomon Islands' economic depression went from bad to worse. Approximately, 8000 jobs were lost as a result of the conflict. The gross national product dropped by around 40% and fish production dropped from a peak of 49,000 tons in 1998 to 21,000⁸² tons by 2000 constituting more than 75%.⁸³ The country's debts were estimated to be approximately SBD\$1 million, which was almost twice the national budget. The central government's debt at the end of 2000 reached about 75% of GDP and 65% of this was external debt and the gross external reserves were about US\$6.5.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Catherine Jun "Unrest in the Solomons"(2000)

<<http://www.cs.org/internships/solomons.htm>> (Last accessed 8th September 2002).

⁸¹ Volker Boge "Solomon Islands" in Working Paper No. 1/20001 *Conflict Potential and Violent Conflict in the South Pacific* (University of Hamburg Research Unit of Wars, Armament and Development, 2001) 38.

⁸² Satish Chand "Conflict to crisis in Solomon Islands" (1 May 2002) 17 *Pacific Economic Bulletin* 155.

⁸³ Boge, above.

⁸⁴ Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "Solomon Islands Defence Force: Who is the Enemy?" (July 2001) <<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 8th June 2002).

These figures indicated that the Solomon Islands conflict since 1998 had an adverse effect on the country's economic survival.

Investors' confidence and the country's budget were affected tremendously as a result of the conflict. The financial sector experienced the largest impact from the conflict because Solomon Islands' risk premium increased sharply, contributing to high interest rates on borrowing. Such pressure on the interest rate was further compounded as a result of the urge to fund growing budget deficits created by rising outlays largely to fund compensation payments to aggrieved groups, couple with falling revenue.⁸⁵ The consequence of such trend was the sharp decline in investment than the fall in production. This suggested that the recovery in output would be slow in the short to medium term.

The conflict has caused the Government debt now account for close to a third of the total assets of the domestic financial sector. However, the government was unable to service its debt commitments and this has made domestic financial institutions such as the National Provident Fund to be exposed to a high risk as well as holders of treasury bills. Such climate exposed the treasury to the difficult task in trying to manage cash flow. The Solomon Islands Treasury during the conflict period was also burdened with the task to ensure sufficient revenues for the payment of salaries of public servants because aggrieved parties drained the government budget by demanding compensation.⁸⁶

The pressure on the government's budgetary revenues in 2001 has forced the public sector to issue duty remissions as an alternate form of compensation payment that gradually made the government insolvent. This trend of duty remission began during the Mamaloni era (1994 – 1997) when \$109 million was squandered by giving massive duty remissions to logging

⁸⁵ Satish Chand "Conflict to crisis in Solomon Islands" (1 May 2002) 17 Pacific Economic Bulletin, 155.

⁸⁶ Chand, above.

companies, both foreign and local.⁸⁷ In 2001 the issued duty remissions that was worth more the SBD\$7 million on beer and cigarettes.⁸⁸

The maintaining of responsible monetary policy became impossible during a time of conflict. The credibility of the State was questioned after the restructured bonds sponsored by the World Bank Structural Adjustment Program in 1999 failed. The Central Bank on a daily routine continues to protect the foreign reserves by capital controls, including on current transactions. The lending rates during the first quarter of 2001 was 15.5% with deposit rates at 0.5% implying an interest rate margin of 15 percentage points. This is high both by international standards and in the context of a depressed economy.⁸⁹

The conflict has exacerbated the nations' ability to recover its economy and production output. Consequently, the level of social inequality will continue to remain a contentious issue because the advantaged group will continue to manipulate power and resources to their advantage. Those in rural areas will continue to remain under developed while the political elite continues to exploit the wealth of the nations. This was the very reason for the militant uprising, which sparked the conflict.

⁸⁷ John Roughan "Blame the Victim!"

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/Analysis%20archive.asp>> (Last accessed 8th June 2002).

⁸⁸ John Roughan "It's not Money but Trust"

<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/Analysis%20archive.asp>> (Last accessed 10th September 2002).

⁸⁹ Satish Chand "Conflict to crisis in Solomon Islands" (1 May 2002) 17 Pacific Economic Bulletin 155.

VI QUEST FOR COFLICT SOLUTIONS (1999 – 2002)

A Melanesian Way

When the conflict started towards the end of 1998 as a result of violence action taken by Guadalcanal militants the government considered the 'Melanesian Way' to resolve the conflict. This was the local way of settling disputes whereby a meeting would be called and traditional leaders would mediate. An open discussion would be used to determine the claims of aggrieved parties followed by a compromised solution and payment of compensation. The custom of compensation is a method of reconciliation that concerns two persons or parties. It involves exchange of food and other traditional valuables, such as shell money, for the restoration of peace and harmony whenever a wrong has been committed. Such an exchange would demonstrate genuine contrition rather than buying someone out of trouble.⁹⁰

This was the approach that the Ulufa'alu government favoured in resolving the conflict when it initially started. The government facilitated a meeting referred to as the Honiara Cultural Centre Meeting 23 May 1999 and the 1999 Marau Communique' 1999.⁹¹ This was the first attempt by the State in trying to restore peace and harmony and it involved the exchange of traditional valuables of shell money, pigs, yams and many other items. However, the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army now referred to as the Isatabu Freedom Movement breached the 'Melanesia Way' of dispute resolution by looting, driving out the inhabitants and burning Malaitan villages.⁹² In doing this the militants did not respect the traditional means of dispute resolution.

⁹⁰ *Regina v Asuana* [1990] SILR 201, 202 Ward CJ (HC).

⁹¹ John Roughan "Typed as I listened to SIBC" (7 July 2000)

<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).

⁹² Roughan, above.

It transpired that the reconciliation gestures did not address the underlying causes of the conflict. There was serious doubt about the good faith of both the Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force because there was a significant lack of correct, accurate and reliable information about the two groups.⁹³ The breach of the 'Melanesian Way' of resolving the conflict during the early stages might be due to the lack of understanding why the militant groups were formed. Had there been an understanding of why the militant groups were a peaceful resolution would have been reached in order to maintain a stable society.

Such interpretation of why the 'Melanesian Way' of dispute resolution failed can be explained by the use of the Human Needs Theory. This theory is based on the hypothesis that humans have basic needs that have to be met in order to maintain stable societies. John Burton summarised this as:

We believe that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs – needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. They strive increasingly to gain control of their environment that is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these. This struggle cannot be curbed; it is primordial.⁹⁴

From the Human Needs Theory it could be claimed that had the 'Melanesian Way' of dispute resolution taken into account what was the needs of the militants a peaceful resolution would have been reached during the early stages of the conflict. The Human Needs Theory is related to the Frustration – Aggression Theory, which is based on the premise that frustration of not satisfying needs leads to aggression and later conflict.

⁹³ John Roughan "December's Up Coming Election" (27th Oct. 2001) <<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).

⁹⁴ John Burton "Conflict Resolution as a Political System" in Vamik Volkan and others (eds.) *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work*. (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991) 82/3 as cited in William G. Cunningham Jr.

However, the Human Needs Theory not only concerns absolute requirements or needs but also wants and desires. As explained by Burton:

Now we know that there are fundamental universal values or human needs that must be met if societies are to be stable. That this is so thereby provides a nonideological basis for the establishment of institutions and policies. Unless identity needs are met in multi-ethnic societies, unless in every social system there is distributive justice, as sense of control, and prospects for the pursuit of all other human societal development needs, instability and conflict are inevitable.⁹⁵

Significantly, the Human Needs Theory recognises and legitimises the underlying needs that forms the basis of influence for the creation of militant groups such as the Isatabu Freedom Movement and the Malaita Eagle Force. An understanding by the government of the needs that these two militant groups fought for would have created a sense of respect for the 'Melanesian Way' of dispute resolution. The conflict in the Solomon Islands is much more complex than just the payment of compensation and exchange of gifts. Therefore, the 'Melanesian Way' should not be taken for granted just because it is the customary way of conflict resolution.

B Rule of law

The rule of law provides the boundaries regarding how the State and citizens should relate with one another in addressing issues. During the last two years the conflict in the Solomon Islands has put the rule of law to a test. Aggrieved parties in the conflict pressurised the government to pay compensation. Many argued that peace could be achieved if compensation is paid. As a result, after the coup on 5 June 2000 the newly elected Sogavare

Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland
<<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

⁹⁵ Burton, above, 21 as cited in Cunningham Jr, above.

government that replaced the old Prime Minister embarked on a series of compensation pay outs as a means to resolving the conflict.

The Premier of Malaita, Mr. David Oeta received SBD\$5 million compensation from the Guadalcanal Province for the slurs levelled at the province during the Cultural Centre peace talks in 23 May 1999.⁹⁶ The Premier of Malaita Province also received a cheque of SBD\$1.8 million from the national government for missing Malaitans, claimed to be killed, during the conflict.⁹⁷ The Guadalcanal Province received SBD\$13 million from the national government for claims made by the province. These compensation payments were an attempt to clear the way for peace talks and calm down people's emotions. This was a normal procedure in Melanesian culture.

However, the adopting of 'Melanesian Way' in an attempt to win peace made the government look like an insurance company. Here the government was perceived as taking up the role of a traditional leader and acting like the peace - maker by using money as the bait for ensuring that aggrieved parties stop fight and let peace prevail. Ironically, such action by the State opened the compensation floodgates because citizens gradually developed the attitude of demanding the State for any wrongs committed by other citizens. The table below gives an illustration of such trend:

Some Compensation Figures⁹⁸

Name	Amount	Pay detail	D/ Paid	Payment
<i>Property claims</i>				
F. Diau	\$190, 000	Chq. No. 42192/42550	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
L. Mamuligeli	\$150, 000	Chq. No. 41886	Mar. 01	Committee, MNURP
D. Dausabea	\$120, 000	Chq. No. 40281	Feb.01	Committee, MNURP
F. Orodani	\$50, 000	Chq. No. 39668	Jan. 01	Committee,

⁹⁶ John Roughan "Typed as I listened to SIBC" (7 July 2000)

<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).

⁹⁷ Roughan, above.

⁹⁸ The figures reveal 10% of the report received.

				MNURP
J. Daurara	\$31, 800	Chq. No. 41155	Feb.01	Committee, MNURP
<i>Injury claims</i>				
R. Marahare	\$150, 000	Chq. No. 39706	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
B.G. Saenamua	\$130, 000	Chq. No. 41938	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
Morris Joe	\$50, 000	Chq. No. 40265	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
Paul Kukiti	\$20, 000	Chq. No. 41789	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
David Rosalio	\$10, 000	Chq. No. 41874	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
Eric Vagorau	\$3, 000	Chq. No. 42672	May.01	Committee, MNURP
<i>Danger claims</i>				
Hon.M. Garo	\$43, 200	Chq. No. 42466	May.01	Committee, MNURP
Hon. D. Oeta	\$50, 000	Chq. No. 39670	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
Mala. Assembly	\$231, 000	Chq. No. 38991	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
<i>Vehicle claims</i>				
L. Holosivi	\$120, 000	Chq. No. 41799	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
F. Maesala	\$75, 000	Chq. No. 40262	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
M. Peter	\$70, 000	Chq. No. 40250	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
J. Wale	\$50, 000	Chq. No. 39654	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
A. Teho	\$41, 600	Chq. No. 41832/42447	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
<i>Professional claims</i>				
Bridge Lawyers	\$515, 720	Chq. No. 38194 x 3/ 37711	Sep/Nov .00	Committee, MNURP
Attorney-General	\$200, 000	voucher no. 275974	Feb.01	Committee, MNURP
Crystal Lawyers	\$140, 000	Chq. No. 39298/37505	Nov/Dec .00	Committee, MNURP
J. Tebolo	\$125, 000	Chq. No. 407550/39669	J/Feb.01	Committee, MNURP
Solicitor-General	\$100, 000	voucher no. 275975	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
<i>Boat claims for MEF use</i>				
Maofafia Ship	\$126, 2500	Chq. No. 40249	Jan.01	Committee,

Co.				MNURP
Olifasia Ship Co.	\$65,000	Chq. No. 39929/39961	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
Redly Gilbert	\$50,000	Chq. No. 39931	Jan.01	Committee, MNURP
Reimbursement/Rev. loss/ business loss claims				
Hon. A Kemakeza	\$79,000	Chq. No. 38625	Dec.00	Committee, MNURP
Adea John	\$48,000	Chq. No. 40279	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
P. Universal	\$20,000	Chq. No. 42692	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
Theft and damage claims				
M.M Construction	\$133,850	Chq. No. 42081/39660	Jan/Apr. 01	Committee, MNURP
K. Construction	\$4,300	Chq. No.41830	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
Harassment claims				
J. Maesala	\$71,000	Chq. No. 41897	Mar.01	Committee, MNURP
F. N.& Family	\$20,000	Chq. No. 42525	May.01	Committee, MNURP
R. Baokosu	\$2,000	Chq. No.42696	Mar.01.	Committee, MNURP

Source: (Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, 2001).

From the table it is apparent that there is inconsistency in terms of how the compensation is paid out. Most of the claims are related to areas of law such as the Commission of Inquiry Act,⁹⁹ Death and Fire Inquiries Act¹⁰⁰ or the Workman's Compensation Act.¹⁰¹ Claims for things such as injuries, harassment, and damage to property or loss of earnings are common law claims.¹⁰² Therefore, the courts had the jurisdiction to deal with these claims. Ironically, it was the State that paid compensation. This raises the question of whether the dollar did buy justice.

The figures showed that the dollar was not the means to achieve justice. All the claims were lodged outside the expected legal process that

⁹⁹ Cap 5.

¹⁰⁰ Cap 9.

¹⁰¹ Cap 77.

¹⁰² See Jennifer Corrin Care "Rationality or Intuition? The assessment of the quantum of damages for personal injuries in Solomon Islands" (1996) 2 NZACL Yearbook 237 - 258.

was supposed to be followed. The State used an unconventional approach in dealing with people's demands during the tension. Consequently, extortion was inevitable and a few became overwhelmingly enriched at the expense of the depressing economy. Millions of dollars have been paid out as compensation money but it was evident that the underlying causes to the conflict remained unsettled.

C Peace Agreements

There were many peace accords signed from when the conflict started to the cease-fire stages. The peace accords and other signings were as follows: (1) Honiara Cultural Centre Meeting 23 May 1999, Marau Communique 1999; (2) Honiara Peace Accord 18 June 1999; (3) Panatina Agreement 12 August 1999; (4) Aruligo Resolution 5 December 1999; (5) Buala Peace Conference 5 May 2000; (6) Auki Commitment to Peace 12 May 2000, Pre-cess-fire Guidelines 22 May 2000; (7) Tobruk Peace Signing 7 July 2000, Conditions for Cease-fire 3 June 2000; and (8) Townsville Peace Agreement 15 October 2000. It was after seven peace accords and signings that the militants managed to come to reach final peace agreement.

The number of peace accords and signings revealed that the government's repeated peace attempts. They were not successful because of several factors. First, there was no common ground for both militant groups to negotiate. Secondly, both militant groups had serious suspiciousness about each other and there was considerable doubt whether the signing of the accords was done in good faith. Thirdly, the breach of the peace accords might be because there was uncertainty by both militant groups regarding how genuine were the peace accords. While there might be peaceful gestures exchanged in the signing of the peace accords it was apparent that these gestures did not address the underlying causes of the conflict.

The peace accords and signings seem to indicate that the State was trying to facilitate managing and then settling the conflict. This appeared to

be the case because initially the State paid compensation to the aggrieved parties as a way for calming the tension and then asked the warring parties to negotiate a peace deal. According to John Burton there is a distinction between conflict resolution, management and settlement. He defined conflict management as an alternative dispute resolution skill and can confine or limit conflict while settlement is by authoritative and legal processes and can be imposed by elites.¹⁰³

The peace accords and signings seemed to be what Burton categorised as conflict management and settlement. These were not same as conflict resolution, which Burton explained as:

... conflict resolution means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or 'settlement', points to an outcome that, in the view of the parties involved, is a permanent solution.¹⁰⁴

Based on Burton's explanation it seemed that the breaching of the peace accords and signings by the militants was because there was no analytical method that got to the root of the problem. In addition, the peace accords and signings might be perceived as not pointing to an outcome and that the suggested solutions might not be permanent.

The cessation of fighting between the Isatabu Freedom Movement and Malaita Eagle Force happened after the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement, 15 October 2000. Australia and New Zealand facilitated the peace agreement between the militant groups and the government. Under the TPA there were clauses that stipulate development to take place on Guadalcanal and Malaita, disarmament and the government to find funds to meet the demands of aggrieve citizens who were affected by the conflict.

¹⁰³ John Burton "Conflict Resolution as a Political System" in Vamik Volkan and others (eds.) *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991) 73 as cited in William G. Cunningham Jr. *Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

Significantly, the TPA attempts to address the causes of the conflict but realistically that is not the case.

The deadline for the surrender of arms was 30th November after the signing of the TPA. It was later postponed to 31st December 2000 and then again a later date in 2001. The final deadline was set at 31st May 2002 but still militant groups showed very little commitment to the disarmament deadline despite the noble intention of the TPA that surrender of arms would give both militant groups the opportunity to rebuild trust and confident. The justification given by militants who did not want to surrender the arms was because of fear of future ethnically driven attacks.

This has caused a continued security threat to the public because there are members of the militant groups that use arms to manipulate the payment of compensation payments as well as benefit from duty remissions. Significantly, the architects of the TPA did not anticipate that disarmament of militant would be difficult.¹⁰⁵ However, the Melanesian Brothers¹⁰⁶ effected a significant influence in the disarmament and peace process. They were able to mediate between the militant groups as co-equals and peers. Such sterling involvement deserves public acknowledge and gratitude. This indicated the beginning of a way forward.

¹⁰⁴ Burton, above, 72 as cited in Cunningham Jr, above.

¹⁰⁵ Neither did the TPA specify how the development project agreed upon during the signing would be funded.

¹⁰⁶ The Melanesian Brothers is a local religious group of the Anglican Church of Melanesia.

VII A WAY FORWARD

A Restorative Justice

Since the signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement on 15 October 2000 it was evident that Solomon Islands was still far from security, order and peace. Take for example, the brutal murder of a former Isatabu Freedom Movement Commander, Selywn Saki on 23rd September 2001 and the recent massacre of eleven gunmen from Malaita by the ex-militia and Commander of IFM, Harold Keke.¹⁰⁷ There are other incidents carried out by ex-militia after the signing of the TPA. In Honiara, Gangs of armed militia roam the streets in stolen vehicles and wait for someone to insult them, their family or friends so that they can retaliate and demand compensation. Extortion has become an epidemic after the signing of the TPA.¹⁰⁸

Such trend reflects a lack of real conflict resolution that would cater for justice and true peace. John Burton in an attempt to define conflict resolution stated:

Whatever the definition we have of conflict, wherever we draw the line, right down to family violence, we are referring to situations in which there is a breakdown in relationships and a challenge to norms to authorities ... [Conflict] is due to an assertion of individualism. It is a frustration based protest against lack of opportunities for development and against lack of recognition and identity. Whether the tension, conflict, or violence has origins in class, status, ethnicity, sex, religion, or nationalism, we are dealing with the same fundament issues.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Philip Vine "The Back of a Shark" (31st August 2002) *Listener* New Zealand 26, 28.

¹⁰⁸ Vine, above.

¹⁰⁹ John Burton "Political Realities" in Vamik Volkan and others (eds.), *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991) 20 as cited in William G. Cunningham Jr. *Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

What is experienced in Solomon Islands after the TPA is the continued break down in relationships. If the ex-militants could begin to recognise that there is a break down in relationships and that fundamental similarities exist, then the process of abstraction will enhance their objectivity. Such process would enable the participants to come to the understanding that all the participants have legitimate needs that must be satisfied in order to resolve conflict. It is also vital to develop an analytical process to facilitate the changes required to create a political and social system in which these needs can be addressed.¹¹⁰

John Burton further developed that conflict resolution concerns a process of political change, social and economic systems. It is an analytical and problem solving process that takes into consideration such individual and group needs as identity and recognition. This also includes institutional changes that are required to satisfy these needs.¹¹¹ These approaches should be adopted in resolving the conflict in Solomon Islands because the underlying causes to the conflict are to do with development, identity and respect, loss of life and property. Both militant groups in the conflict in Solomon Islands have something tangible to bargain for therefore the application of Burton's conflict resolution theory is appropriate.

It seems the way forward to resolve the conflict in Solomon Islands is through restorative justice. This involves a process of reconciliation that provides an avenue for rebuilding of relationships between those involved in the conflict, their families, their communities and the nation of Solomon Islands. The process of rebuilding of relationships must cater for those who did wrong to admit their faults and be held responsible. In addition, those who were made victims of such wrongs must be apologised to and given the chance to forgive and come to grips with their loss. The restoring of relationships through the process of reconciliation must take into

¹¹⁰ Cunningham Jr, above.

¹¹¹ John Burton "Conflict Resolution as a Political System", above, 71 as cited in Cunningham Jr, above.

consideration every person at all levels of society. Only then can there be confidence and trust amongst citizens.

B National Identity

The fragmentation of Solomon Islands has created divisions and differences for decades. Solomon Mamaloni, the first Chief Minister of Solomon Islands realised such complexity when he mentioned:

All these small "islands nations" were independent entities long before the northern explorers found them. Their cultures differed from each other.

While such diversity may be a source of conflict achieving national unity is important for policy formulation reasons, national wealth in general and development.¹¹²

Therefore, there is a need to develop a national identity. This does not mean that every Solomon Islander has to give up their identities within their own islands for the creation of a national identity. The encouraging of national identity should be seen within Solomon Islands' diversity. The diversity of Solomon Islands is not a source of conflict. It is the disrespect for these identities within diversity that has caused problems. The national identity should be found within the respect for the different identities.¹¹³

The militant appraisal towards the end of 1998 by disgruntled Guadalcanal men was a result many settlers not respecting the customs of Guadalcanal people in relation to land occupation and use. There was an increase in squatter settlements and farming on Guadalcanal by settlers that had no intention to pay rent or compensation. Hence, resentment and

¹¹² Gordon Nanau "Uniting The Fragments: Solomon Islands constitutional reforms" (2000 Development Research Symposium: South Pacific Futures (FDC) Conference, Brisbane, 22-24 July 2002) 6.

¹¹³ Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk Part II (1999) <<http://www.geocities.com/jannicolass/23b0699.html>> (Last accessed 10th June 2002).

grievance was developed resulting in conflict. Such conflict could be described as:

These identity groups, whether formed around shared religious, ethnic, racial, cultural, or other characteristics, will act to achieve and insure their distinctive identity within society. When they are denied physical and economic security, political participation, and recognition from other groups, their distinctive identity is lost, and they will do whatever is in their power to regain it.¹¹⁴

Therefore, while the Enemy System and Human Needs Theories may provide an explanation of conflict and using the John Burton's Conflict Resolution Theory to map the way forward, track two diplomacy should be considered because the conflict in the Solomon Islands also has an identity dimension. Track Two Diplomacy is considered as:

...an unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aims to develop strategies, influence public opinion, and organise human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflict. It must be understood that track two diplomacy is in no way a substitute for official, formal, "track one" government to government or leader to leader relationships.¹¹⁵

The issue of national identity in the Solomon Islands is lacking because there is less respect for the diverse of peoples. Diversity is a source of strength for unity because within that diversity Solomon Islanders can

¹¹⁴ Edward E. Azar, "The Analysis and Management of Protracted Conflict" in Vamik Volkan and other, above, 95 as cited in William G. Cunningham Jr., above.

¹¹⁵ Joseph V. Montville "The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track Two Diplomacy" in Vamik Volkan, and others (eds.), *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991) 162 as cited in William G. Cunningham Jr. *Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

find, establish and express the essence of being a Solomon Islander".¹¹⁶ There are two different militants Since the conflict in the Solomon Islands involves two militant groups from Malaita and Guadalcanal, track two diplomacy could be considered.

C A Model for Government during Conflict

Government in Solomon Islands is based on the Westminster system of democracy. Since the beginning of the conflict, the government has been unsuccessful in addressing the issues surrounding the conflict. The government's ineffectiveness in addressing social and economic instability and the law and order problem has weakened the State. This worsening situation has allowed the media to describe Solomon Islands as a "failed state". However, close to the truth this may appear to these observers, the description can be interpreted as an insult to the Head of State, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

When faced with conflict as at W.W.II, the Queen's father King George VI was advised by his Ministers to declare a state of crisis for Great Britain and the Dominions of the British Empire and created governments of national unity. No loyal opposition was permitted because the main concern at that time was national defence and survival. Significantly, this could be a precedent model for government in Solomon Islands during the present conflict period. There are basic issues such as "peace, progress and prosperity", social and economic development, the restoration of transport and general infrastructure that must be considered. There is no time to be opposing one another over details when basic issues of security and survival are at stake.

Hence, it seems to be appropriate for the representatives of the Head of State's, the Governors General of Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and New Zealand, to meet and advise the Queen to acknowledge that

¹¹⁶ Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk Part II (1999) <<http://www.geocities.com/jannicolass/23b0699.html>> (Last accessed 10th June 2002).

Solomon Islands is a nation in conflict. They should propose a temporary government of national unity. The Governor General of Solomon Islands representing the Head of State would call parliamentarians to get and select a cabinet. Government decisions would be based on consensus until the conflict is resolved. Such a model for government blends in well with the traditional Melanesian system of good governance. Instead of being seen in the eyes of the world as a weak and failing State, Solomon Islands could be seen as a nation prepared to resolve its crisis.

The underlying causes of the conflict in Solomon Islands should be addressed using Burton's theory of conflict resolution. This is because the theory provides a framework for problem solving rather than problem prevention. Conflict resolution is a method that addresses the problem and defines it. Such resolution is suitable for resolving the conflict in Solomon Islands because it is a decision making process that avoids relying on power or enforcement by getting to the source of the problem and resolving it to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.¹¹⁷

Many lives have been lost, many people displaced and many properties damaged during the conflict years. Despite the signing of The Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2001, there exists an open wound of hatred and distrust amongst citizens that may take many years to heal. Therefore, a way forward for Solomon Islands is to encourage restorative justice so that its citizens are able to rebuild trust and confidence in one another again. This calls for respect of peoples' identity and the promotion of good government that serves in order to lead Solomon Islanders from conflict to unification.

Then, the islands will once again be "happy Isles", and its people will sing the National Anthem's prayer for "joy, peace, progress and prosperity that will always be ours, our nation, our, our Solomon Islands".

¹¹⁷ John W. Burton, "Conflict Resolution: Towards Problem Solving", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 19(1) (1975), 1-15.

VIII CONCLUSION

The conflict in Solomon Islands has created socio-economic and political instability. The causes of the conflict are embedded in its history. They evolved around issues such as land, development, identity and politics. The relationship between citizens, primarily those from Guadalcanal and Malaita was broken because of the disagreements over resource allocations, roles, rights and identity. According to Burton, these are basic needs that can not be traded off against one another, but have to be respected in any negotiation process.¹¹⁷

The underlying causes of the conflict in Solomon Islands should be addressed using Burton's theory of conflict resolution. This is because the theory provides a framework for problem solving rather than problem preventing. Conflict resolution is a method that addresses the problem and defines it. Such resolution is suitable for resolving the conflict in Solomon Islands because it is a decision making process that avoids relying on power or enforcement by getting to the source of the problem and resolving it to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.¹¹⁸

Many lives have been lost; many people displaced and many properties damaged during the conflict years. Despite the signing of The Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000, there exists an open wound of hatred and distrust amongst citizens that may take many years to heal. Therefore, a way forward for Solomon Islands is to encourage restorative justice so that its citizens are able to rebuild trust and confidence in one another again. This calls for respect of peoples' identity and the promotion of good government that serves in order to lead Solomon Islanders from conflict to contentment.

Then, the islands will once again be "Happy Isles", and its people will sing the National Anthem's prayer for "*joy, peace, progress and prosperity; that men should brothers be; let nations see, our Solomon Islands*".

¹¹⁷ John W. Burton "Conflict Resolution: Towards Problem Solving"
<www.colorado.edu/conflict/transform/burton.htm> (Last accessed 10th Sept. 2002).

B REFERENCES

1. Amnesty International *Solomon Islands, A forgotten conflict* (Amnesty International, August 2000).
2. Catherine Jun "Unrest in the Solomons" (2000)
<<http://www.cs.org/internships/solomons.htm>> (Last accessed 8^t September 2002).
3. Bob Burton Rights- Solomon Islands: Land Tensions Spill Over, Peace Plan Shaky <http://www.oneworld.org/ips2/july99/15_59_007.html> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).
4. Constitutional Review Committee *Constitutional Review* (CRC Report Vol.1, Honiara, 1987).
5. Donald Horowitz *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (University of California Press, Barkely, 1985).
6. Edward E. Azar "The Analysis and Management of Protracted Conflict" in Vamik Volkan and others (eds.) *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991).
7. Gordon Nanau "Uniting The Fragments: Solomon Islands constitutional reforms" (2000 Development Research Symposium: South Pacific Futures (FDC) Conference, Brisbane, 22-24July 2002).
8. Jennifer.Corrin Care "Rationality or Intuition? The assessment of the quantum of damages for personal injuries in Solomon Islands" (1996) 2 *NZACL Yearbook*, 237 - 258.
9. John Burton "Conflict Resolution as a Political System" in Vamik Volkan, and others (eds.) *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work*. (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991).
10. John Burton "Political Realities" in Vamik Volkan, et al (eds.), *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991).

¹¹⁸ Burton, above.

11. John W. Burton "Conflict Resolution: Towards Problem Solving"
<www.colorado.edu/conflict/transform/burton.htm> (Last accessed 10th September 2002).
12. John Houainamo Naitoro "Solomon Islands conflict: demands for historical rectification and restorative justice" (2000) Pacific Economic Bulletin <<http://peb.anu.edu.au>> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).
13. John Roughan "Solomon Islands: The Quick Easy Fix" (24th May 2001)
<<http://www.scoop.co.nz/manson/stories/HL0205/S00132.htm>> (Last accessed 24th September 2002).
14. John Roughan "Country's Coup Costs" (10th June 2001)
<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).
15. John Roughan "Blame the Victim!"
<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/Analysis%20archive.asp>> (Last accessed 8th June 2002).
16. John Roughan "It's not Money but Trust"
<<http://www.sibconline.com.sb/Analysis%20archive.asp>> (Last accessed 10th September 2002).
17. John Roughan "Typed as I listened to SIBC" (7 July 2000)
<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).
18. John Roughan "December's Up Coming Election" (27th Oct. 2001)
<<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1>> (Last accessed 20th June 2002).
19. Joseph V. Montville "The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track Two Diplomacy" in Vamik Volkan, et al (eds.), *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Volume II: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work* (Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1991).
20. Judith Bennett *A Wealth of the Solomons: A history of a Pacific archipelago 1800 - 1978* (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1989).
21. Lewis A Coser *Conflict: Social Aspects* (Macmillan, New York, 1968).

VUW Law Research Papers:

**There is no PAGE 51
in this document**

36. "Solomon Islands – Country Information"
http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/solomon_islands_brief.html (Last accessed 8th August 2002).
37. "Solomons Logging"
<http://archive.greenpeace.org/~comms/forestry/log.html> (Last accessed 8th August 2002).
38. "Solomons fall to violent coup, civil war a possibility"
<http://www.adventurere.co.nz/collection/news/solomons/profile.html>
 (Last accessed 8th August 2002).
39. Solomon Mamaloni "The Road To Independence" in Ron Crocombe and Esau Tuza (eds) *Independence, Dependence, Interdependence: The First 10 Years of Solomon Islands Independence* (Government Printing Press, Honiara, 1992).
40. Takashi Inoguchi, Edward Newman and John Keane (eds) *The changing nature of democracy* (United Nation Press, Tokyo, 1998)
41. Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk 1" (24th May 1999) <http://www.geocities.com/jannicolaas/23a0699.html>
 (last accessed 28th February 2002).
42. Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "The Guadalcanal Issue: A Frank Talk (Part II)" (1999) <http://www.geocities.com/jannicolass/23b0699.html> (Last accessed 10th June 2002).
43. Tarcisiu Tara Kabutaulaka "Beyond Ethnicity: The Political Economy of the Guadalcanal Crisis in Solomon Islands" (2000)
<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/tarcisiusworkingpaper.htm> (Last accessed 10th August 2002).
44. Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka "Solomon Islands Defence Force: Who is the Enemy?" (July 2001)
<http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/solomonsarticles.htm#1> (Last accessed 8th June 2002).
45. Volker Boge "Solomon Islands" in Working Paper No. 1/20001 *Conflict Potential and Violent Conflict in the South Pacific* (University of Hamburg Research Unit of Wars, Armament and Development, 2001).

46. William G. Cunningham Jr. *Conflict Theory and the Conflict in Northern Ireland* <<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/conflict/cunningham.htm>> (Last accessed 18th September 2002).

LAW LIBRARY

A Fine According to Library
Regulations is charged on
Overdue Books

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY
OF
WELLINGTON

LIBRARY

Du	423721
PLEASE RETURN BY 28 MAY 2010	
TO W.U. INTERLOANS	

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON LIBRARY



3 7212 00706376 9

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
LAW LIBRARY

AS741
VUW
A66
F765
2002

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN

