Weapons destroyed on the Weathercoast of Guadalcanal

Shock Without Awe

Military Lessons of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

BY ANTHONY BERGIN & KARL CLAXTON

Launched in July 2003, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was widely hailed as a textbook case of a sophisticated multinational intervention to stabilize a failing state.

Its tenth anniversary prompted a flurry of retrospectives on the extent to which the mission really was such a success story. Most experts continue to give RAMSI high marks for providing the circuit-breaker that halted serious violence and allowing rebuilding to begin. However that acclaim is increasingly accompanied by complaints that such a long and expensive intervention left some of the underlying political, social, and economic causes of the original crisis in place.[1]

The recent re-evaluations largely neglect military aspects of the mission. This is understandable since "the only thing all assessors agree on" in evaluating RAMSI is that getting guns off the street was crucial, done quickly, and well.[2] It is nevertheless a pity since studies of the military dimension are largely confined to works by practitioners who were personally involved early on in the mission.[3] Although a book-length U.S. analysis from 2007 focuses on security questions, its assessment period ends before severe problems re-emerged in 2006-07, and it squeezes the RAMSI experience slightly awkwardly into a counter-insurgency (COIN) framework more suited to the sort of higher intensity complex operations then underway in the Middle East.[4]

A fresh look at the military component of RAMSI indicates that Combined Joint Task Force 635's (CJTF 365) performance mirrored the strengths and limitations of the wider RAMSI mission. By leaving executive authority in the hands of Solomon Islands' elected politicians rather than transferring sovereignty to an interim administration (an idea that never had much regional support)[5] the overall intervention model kept unsustainable logging, localized money-politics, and uneven governance at the heart of the country's "patronage state."[6] That, however, provided a durable basis for the Solomons elite to accept "cooperative intervention" long enough to cement key state-building objectives, reject force as a tool for political competition, and establish what

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appears to be a durable political settlement.[7] A more intrusive mission would have become unwelcome much sooner.

Similarly, the way CJTF635 used irresistible military overmatch to deter rather than confront and defeat armed resistance—described as "shock and awe without the violence"[8] —deprived the mission of a climactic encounter with which to stamp its authority. It is nevertheless highly uncertain that RAMSI would have retained the legitimacy to prevail if its military component had sought decisive battles.

Instead, CJTF635 and RAMSI as a whole provided space and some new tools for Solomon Islanders to put violence behind them. Challenges remain, but peace seems more likely than not to endure.

The Causes and Course of "the Tension"

Solomon Islands is a country of just over half a million people in the southwest Pacific Ocean. Nine major island groups stretch across a 1,500 km chain, approximately 2,000 km to the northeast of Australia. Sixty-three distinct languages and numerous local dialects are spoken, with English the official language and Solomons Pijin a lingua franca. More than half of its population lives on the large islands of Guadalcanal and Malaita. A British protectorate from 1893 until Independence in 1978, Solomon Islands was a site of bitter fighting
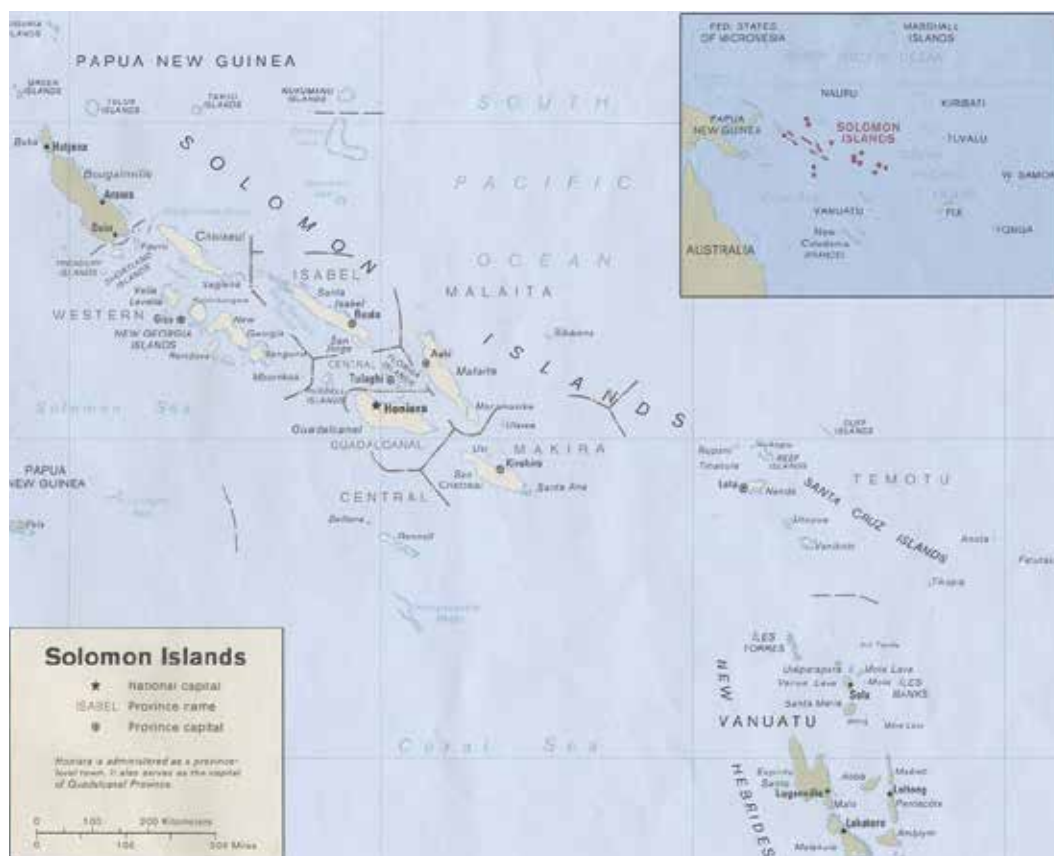
Map courtesy of the US Central Intelligence Agency

between Allied and Japanese forces during the Second World War, after which the capital moved to Honiara on Guadalcanal for its wartime infrastructure.

After the war, many settlers from densely populated Malaita Island, who see themselves as more assertive and entrepreneurial than their Guale neighbors, moved to take advantage of the greater economic opportunities available in Honiara and elsewhere on Guadalcanal.[9] The start of a violent campaign of harassment by Guale militants against Malaitans and other "outsiders" around Honiara in 1998 took most observers by surprise. Up until then, deft politics by community leaders had kept pressures in check for over a decade, during which time periodic strains and demands had been partly a product of genuine resentment but were also sometimes engineered to serve political objectives.[10]

Key ingredients of "the tension" included the weak authority and capacity of the postcolonial state; rapid social change; internal migration; inequality and jealousies over land issues and development disparities; Guale concerns about Malaitan dominance of government and business institutions; the presence of many underemployed and frustrated young men ("masta lius"—experts in the art of wandering aimlessly); inter-generational conflict over resource-distribution; leaders' instrumental use of "ethnic" divisions to promote their own popularity; the demonstration effect of the 1988-98 conflict in neighbouring Bougainville; and the disruption of patronage networks by declining demand for log exports due to the 1997 Asian financial crisis.[11]

As the harassment and intimidation spread, unrest quickly hardened into organized violence by militias. A Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA) claiming to represent the indigenous people of the province against unwelcome, disrespectful and disruptive guests became the more structured Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) that waged a violent campaign against Malaitans and demanded "compensation," while the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) arose in January 2000 to protect the interests of the initial targets of violence.

Although casualties of the fighting were quite low by the standard of many conflicts, over 20,000 people were displaced, and government services and the economy ground to a halt. The Government effectively lost control of Guadalcanal, with Malaitans dominating the capital and Guale militants dominating the countryside.

In June 2000, the MEF, supported by elements of the Malaitan-dominated police force, forced a Malaitan prime minister they regarded as insufficiently pro-Malaitan, Bart Ulufa'alu, to resign at gunpoint and took control of the government. Following the coup, a ceasefire was negotiated between the MEF and IFM on 2 August 2000, followed by the signing of the Australian and New Zealand (NZ)-brokered Townsville Peace Agreement on 15 October. This led to the deployment of a small,unarmed International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) which withdrew, four months earlier than planned, in mid-2002 having done all it could. The signing of the Marau Peace Agreement on 7 February 2001 ended inter-ethnic violence on Guadalcanal (though a key Guale militant, Harold Keke, and his group kept up a violent campaign against all-comers along the rugged Weathercoast of Guadalcanal).[12]

With the end of the ethnic conflict however, the militant groups' command structures eroded, and undisciplined armed gangs emerged which turned to crime, pay-back

violence, compensation demands and extortion against the Finance Department, producing a near collapse of the national government and economy, around 250 murders, very high levels of sexual violence and a breakdown of law and order in Honiara. The country continued to spiral downwards.

Requests in 1999 and 2000 to lead a more forceful intervention were declined on the grounds of the longstanding practice that Australia is not a neo-colonial power and could "not presume to fix the problems of South Pacific countries."[13] As late as January 2003, Australia's Foreign Minister argued that sending Australian troops to occupy Solomon Islands would be "folly in the extreme," as it would be resented in the Pacific, difficult to justify to Australian taxpayers, and would not be successful as foreigners did not have the answers to the Solomons' deep-seated problems.[14] On 22 April 2003 Honiara made another such request.

"Cooperative Intervention"

Following receipt of advice that Australia might this time be interested in helping, Prime Minister Allan Kemakeza, who had been elected in December 2001, flew to see Prime Minister John Howard on 5 June.

Although suggestions that RAMSI was conceived as a "convenient exit strategy" for Canberra from operations in Iraq (which Australia had invaded as part of the U.S.-led Coalition in March 2003) are overstated,[15] it was shaped by the post 9/11 and 2002 Bali bombings security environment.[16] While Australia had led major regional stabilization missions in Bougainville (1998-2003) and Timor Leste (1999-2013) before the start of the "national security decade," Foreign Minister Alexander Downer described the decision to

embark on a potentially decade-long "cooperative intervention" without an exit strategy in Solomon Islands as a "very important policy change" that set aside the bipartisan approach that had existed since 1975.[17] Canberra was determined not to "have a failed state on our doorstep."[18]

Although planning was already underway when the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) published a report on 10 June calling for action,[19] preparations for that report had helped prompt officials' thinking and reframed the problem as a threat to regional security that engaged Australia's interests.[20] Canberra decided to intervene, subject to a formal request from Solomon Islands and Pacific Islands Forum support, on 25 June.

For the 14 other states of the Forum beside Australia and NZ—many of whom face complex challenges, are recently de-colonized, and wary of external interference—Honiara's request for help nevertheless resonated with a sense that regional countries must work together to address security and development challenges.[21] The Forum Foreign Ministers met on 30 June to consider intervening. The UN also supported the mission though it did not occur under UN auspices.

Governor General Lapli wrote to formally request help on 4 July; the Solomon Islands Government agreed to the mission on 11 July; special legislation setting the terms and conditions of the assistance package (the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act*) was endorsed by the Solomons Parliament on 17 July; and on 24 July, in Townsville, seven member states of the Forum including Australia, NZ, PNG, Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Solomon Islands – signed the RAMSI Treaty authorizing RAMSI.

Shortly after dawn that morning, the first C-130 Hercules touched down in Honiara with

lead elements of the 1,400 troops, 300 police and officials from the nine Forum countries that were initially contributing. Troops also came ashore from the amphibious ship HMAS Manoora, crossing "Red Beach" where U.S. Marines had landed in August 1942.

Operation *Helpem Fren* was the local name given to RAMSI. The first Special Coordinator, Nick Warner, referred to it as a "unique and complex operation" as it came about as the result of an invitation from a democratically elected government, had a major focus on police work, enjoyed regional endorsement and participation, and was complex because of the mission's mandate to not only restore law and order but to rebuild the nation.[22]

The mission was multinational and multiagency from the start. Charged with orchestrating all RAMSI's components on the ground, Warner was from Australia's Foreign Affairs department. Police rather than military units led the security operations (though visibly supported by a capable military combat and logistics element) in order to signal that resistance would be a criminal matter. Technocrats drawn from the region's capital cities but particularly from Canberra were a key ingredient. RAMSI's eight defining characteristics were to be preventive, permissive, regional-in-nature, nationally led, supported by the United Nations, non-sovereign, police-led, and light in touch.[23]

RAMSI personnel were deployed as advisers and in-line across the three pillars of law and justice, economic governance, and machinery-of-government, through seven distinct phases. CJTF 635 was most prominent in the first and fourth phases:

■ **Phase One "commencement" stage:** Restoring security and budgetary stabilization were the most urgent tasks to be performed in RAMSI's opening phase.

Although conceived primarily as an ambitious state-building project, RAMSI took a "security-first" approach. In the planning
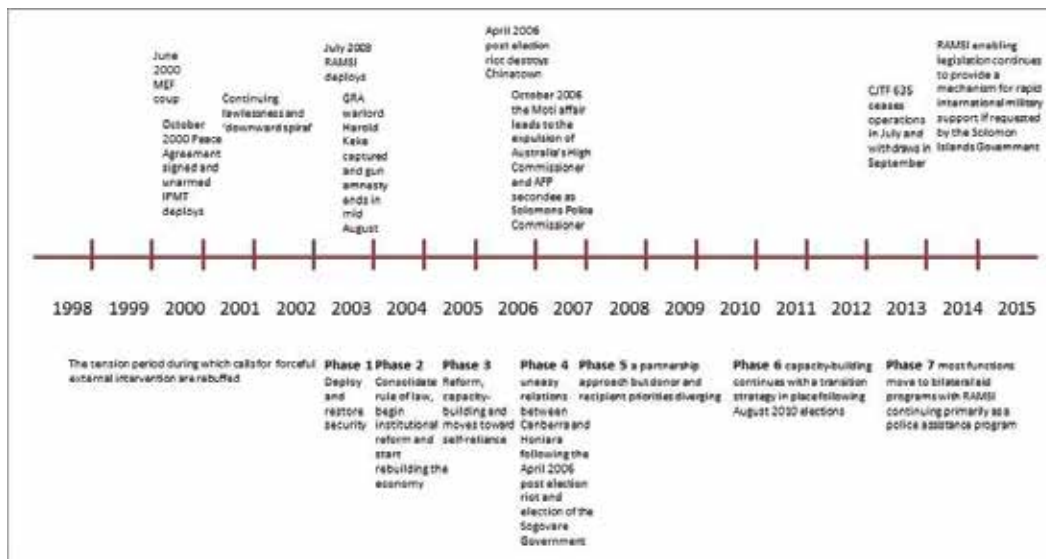
Timeline of RAMSI key events and phases

stages, the NZ Government had suggested an unarmed mission, which had worked well on Bougainville. But given the IPMT's experience as a "toothless tiger," and the lawless environment into which RAMSI would enter, planners opted for a muscular posture, designed to visibly signal that change was unstoppable. That approach worked. Some 3,730 firearms, including 700 high-powered weapons stolen from police armories, were destroyed during RAMSI's first year, with all but five of those surrendered during a 21-day amnesty, which removed the rationale that communities had to hang onto their guns for safety.[24] Despite the importance of RAMSI's military component, the military was never in the lead. Rather, it provided security backup and logistic support to unarmed Solomons' police and the international Participating Police Force (PPF) to remove weapons, demobilize militia, and provide basic physical safety. Seventeen regional police posts were established in all nine provinces within the first 100 days – including six in the first month – partly constructed, supplied, and wholly guarded at the seven "accompanied" stations, by military troops.

A key breakthrough occurred on day 21 of the mission with the arrest of the Weathercoast warlord, Harold Keke, who had shunned peace efforts and remained at large terrorizing communities with horrific acts committed by his highly disciplined, if eccentric, militia. Public displays of military might, important to deterring resistance throughout the first phase,[25] were particularly important in Keke's surrender. The sight of a huge amphibious ship offshore and medium helicopters overhead allowed Warner and the PPF commander, Ben McDevitt, to take some calculated risks, such as allowing Keke to walk away from meetings

where he could have been arrested, which ultimately led his whole gang to turn itself in. Although military planners had gamed various scenarios, there was no specific Plan-B should Keke take his gang into the bush to wage a guerrilla campaign, beyond requesting a special forces operation that would be expected to prevail though not necessarily quickly or without bloody fighting

- **Phase Two "consolidation" stage**: The second phase focused, throughout 2004, on the consolidation of the rule of law, cleaning-up the Solomons Police (removing 400 – a quarter – of its officers and arresting 88), beginning institutional reform, and commencing measures to revive the economy via a three-pillars approach.[26]

- **Phase Three "sustainability" stage:** Commencing in 2005, RAMSI's third phase built on the commencement of technocratic assistance by focusing on moves towards future self-reliance. These efforts emphasized capacity-building, training, and bedding down systems and reform.

- **Phase Four "a prickly" stage**: RAMSI entered a difficult period in April 2006 with poor preparations for the initially inconclusive national elections and unanticipated major riots that occurred when Snyder Rini, a former finance minister perceived to be especially corrupt, won. This was followed by a series of bitter rows between the Australian and Solomons Governments.

Rini's victory was met with public dismay and stoked much anger, possibly also partly incited by his political adversaries, which triggered two days of riots.[27] The riots targeted Honiara's Chinatown due to public suspicions about links between Rini and prominent businessmen of Chinese origin and Taiwanese

officials conducting cheque-book-diplomacy. RAMSI and Solomon Islands police were criticized for their response – widely seen as an "intelligence failure" for not predicting, preparing for, and preventing the looting and arson, and for the tactics of riot police.[28] The PPF and CJTF 635 had not been sufficiently supplemented for a possibility that, in retrospect, seemed all too likely, and during the event the response force on standby was not activated until too late to be effective.[29] China arranged a civilian air evacuation of people of Chinese origin and Rini resigned, replaced by Manasseh Sogavare.

As Sogavare was unsympathetic to Australia and held reservations about RAMSI, it was difficult for the mission to make progress during this period. The "Moti affair," involving Sogavare's choice of Attorney-General, saw an ill-advised raid on the Prime Minister's office by Australian members of the PPF, in addition to a series of episodes that poisoned Canberra's relations with PNG.[30] Sogavare did not seek to eject RAMSI, which remained popular with Solomon Islanders, and in some senses the mission continued on, but Australia's High Commissioner, the Australian head of the Solomons police, and other officials were expelled, and focus was distracted from RAMSI's efforts on institutional-strengthening.

- Phase Five "incremental" stage: With new governments in place in both Canberra and Honiara, a fifth phase commencing in early 2008 saw efforts on both sides to take a more patient, partnership-based approach, with neither side wanting to push the other too hard, but also saw priorities diverging. Successive Solomons governments appeared ever less interested in state-building and increasingly focused again on the usual preoccupations with rural development and "acutely clientelistic" politicking.[31] The latter centered on leaders dispensing largess to supporters and, for the most part, neglecting to govern the country, using ever-growing constituency development funds, Taiwanese aid, and logging money to pursue highly localized rather than national causes.

Suggestions that RAMSI's military element was no longer truly required appeared probable, since CJTF 635 had taken a low profile to emphasize civil policing. RAMSI took a cautious approach, however, having been stung in April 2006. The ADF and NZDF contingents were, in any case, largely comprised of Reservists, and the deployment helped build the capacity of the PNG and Tongan contributors.

- Phase Six "transition" stage: By early 2010, the NZ Government felt it was time to start winding RAMSI down in favor of bilateral aid programs, and, following a reasonably smooth election in August, a transition strategy that had flagged the year before was put into place. The mission sought to balance the risk of leaving too soon with that of staying too long.

- Phase Seven "residual" stage: Defense personnel finally withdrew and RAMSI reconfigured primarily as a police-assistance program in mid-2013, ten years after it began. The RAMSI Treaty and its enabling legislation could, with some quick legal footwork, still help facilitate a rapid international military response (most likely by elements from 3 Brigade's Ready Battalion in Townsville – deployable within 24 hours) should the Solomons request urgent support again.

Lessons Learned About Integrating the Management of Conflict

Any assessment of RAMSI's value as an example of integrated security efforts between police and military forces, uniformed and civilian officers and officials, government and civil society, and regional security partners, for use elsewhere in the world, depends on an evaluation of the mission's success.

Overall, there is little argument that RAMSI arrested the unravelling of the state and re-established a stable environment that allowed it to collect revenue, stabilize its finances, and start delivering services again. It also enabled businesses to trade and invest. RAMSI Treasury and Finance officials helped resurrect the Solomons' economy, which had been contracting before 2003 but has since achieved record rates of growth – albeit mostly driven by unsustainable logging exports.

RAMSI has, however, been an expensive endeavor at $2.6 billion (and the cost of two servicemen), and real concerns remain over continuing poor governance and growing economic dependence on fast disappearing forest resources in Solomon Islands. Experts are therefore obliged to ask whether different approaches might have achieved a greater return on RAMSI's substantial investment.

The key criticism made by some scholars is that RAMSI failed to address the root causes of the conflict and to change patterns of political behavior. According to that view, a top-down, technocratic focus on reform was not the only possible model, and may not have been the best option, for promoting enduring stability. Writing early in the mission, Tarcisius Kabutaulaka warned that RAMSI's emphasis on shoring-up a perennially weak central government, and its inattention to other pillars of society, could undermine its ability to achieve either the well-being of Solomon Islanders or security for the region, and might create a crippling dependency.[34] Writing five years later, John Braithwaite and his co-authors judged RAMSI a qualified success but felt it had for the moment "contained conflict but shelved specifics that fuelled conflict."[35] The two most prominent recent re-evaluations of RAMSI, by Jenny Hayward-Jones and by Jon Fraenkel and his co-authors, each suggest that a more modest state-building project that avoided creating parallel bureaucracies, or an alternative government for Solomon Islanders frustrated with their own leaders, would have been preferable.

Yet the decision by Howard and Downer to act against official advice, "with a spirit of state-building until the job was done, without any exit timetable," reflected their conviction that there is no exit strategy from our own region and that it is worth paying a premium for regional leadership.[36] It is unlikely that stabilization would have been nearly as quick or durable without the prospect that things would get better under a longer-term state-building program. In addition, since the law and justice pillar accounted for 83 percent of the cost of RAMSI,[37] less ambitious state-building efforts would have yielded only limited savings.

Concerns that RAMSI would deepen dependency, weaken the impetus for Solomons leaders to address challenges themselves, and introduce perverse incentives that entrench dysfunction have been partly borne out.[38] But is dependency a valid criterion by which to judge RAMSI? Tobias Haque argues that economic self-sufficiency is not a useful goal, given the Solomons' immutable economic geography as a small, isolated market recovering from collapse.[39] For him, and others,

dependency does not diminish RAMSI's achievement but does demand further innovation. As for the complaint that RAMSI did not try hard enough to transform local political behavior, its social license to operate rested on an understanding – partly tacit, partly reflecting RAMSI's mandate – that the mission would not interfere too much with unsustainable logging or associated localized money politics.[40] That reality not only constrained what could be achieved but also defined the bounds within which Solomons leaders were willing to let RAMSI rebuild the country's machinery of government over a long period. RAMSI arrested over 3,000 people, but the uncertainty of its welcome in 2006-07 suggests it would have achieved less, not more, had it attempted to drastically transform society.

Nor was there any appetite among Solomons politicians (or in the Pacific Islands Forum) for an interim administration to assume sovereignty even temporarily – RAMSI and the Solomons Government had to operate in parallel.

Criticizing RAMSI for not acting more decisively to try to reshape Solomons political and business practices seems akin to chiding CJTF 635 for deterring rather than seeking out armed clashes. While decisive encounters might, in theory, have been more transformative than impressive shows of strength not accompanied by deadly force – initial shock without much lasting awe – in practice, such violence would more likely have quickly sapped the force's moral authority (on which its efficacy partly depended.)[41]

If RAMSI is considered a success, what lessons might we draw for other stabilization missions? Ten military implications stand out:

- **Innovate**. The first lesson of RAMSI might be not to actually draw too many lessons from it, given the value derived from taking a fresh approach to unique circumstances. At the operational level, flexibly combining solid planning with inspired improvisation and willingness to accept sensible risks helped achieve crucial early wins such as Keke's surrender.

- **Harness the power of whole-of-government**. The ADF's operational tempo in mid-2003 (with commitments in the Middle East, Timor-Leste and elsewhere) produced an imperative for Defence to draw-down as fast as possible that sat slightly at odds with other agencies' acceptance that RAMSI was a long-term project. Nonetheless, preserving a unified whole-of-government voice – for example by sticking to a single daily reporting cable rather than multiple separate lines of communication to home agencies – allowed the four main (Foreign Affairs, Australian Federal Police, Defence, and AusAID) and other contributing Australian agencies in Honiara (such as Attorney-Generals, Treasury, and Finance) to accommodate such differences, and to avoid being micro-managed by Canberra. That collegial approach was a function of personalities, professionalism and leadership, but also benefited from habits of interagency cooperation formed in Canberra. Many officials had served together before. Such links can be fostered via secondments, exchanges, joint training, and Staff College.

- **Draw on the power of international partnerships**. RAMSI demonstrated that there are operational as well as political/ legitimacy advantages to working in a multinational coalition. Although different forces' doctrines, capabilities, and styles needed to be understood and managed, the CJTF was able to utilize the strengths of each

contingent – such as the ability of the Melanesian platoons to develop a quick rapport with Solomon Islanders – to be more than the sum of its parts.[42]

■ **Pre-deployment training is especially critical for interagency and multinational operations.** The tight planning timeframe for RAMSI, and its innovative composition, meant that an early war-game was crucial to work out what effects the Special Coordinator wanted to achieve by specific milestones through the critical first month, and how to deliver those effects.

■ **Strategic communication can shape outcomes and save lives.** The use of a deliberate information campaign and messaging to signal the CJTF's edge over potential adversaries helped persuade some those who might otherwise have sought to conceal weapons beyond the gun-amnesty to hand them in, according to its first Commander, LTCOL John Frewen. Displays of strength, radio broadcasts, and community meetings were important in the Solomons.

■ **Seize opportunities at the ripe moment.** Notwithstanding their different scale, RAMSI occurred at a more opportune time than when the IPMT arrived following the 2000 Townsville Peace Accord, at which point the MEF was ascendant and war-weariness had not hit rock-bottom. At an operational level, RAMSI's recognition of Keke as a center-of-gravity, and the investment of effort to apprehend him, paid off.

■ **A deployable police capability complements the military as an instrument of national power.** The Australian Government judged the AFP's contribution to RAMSI so

Village children gather on the beach to watch the amphibious ship HMAS Manoora anchored in Lambi Bay at the start of RAMSI

useful that it created a standing, nearly bat-talion-sized, International Deployment Group trained and ready to be quickly dispatched to complement the ADF's different skills in order to promote regional stability (the ADF includes seven regular infantry battalions plus two Special Forces regiments). Notwithstanding their very different planning and operational styles, the two forces cooperated well.

■ **Force size has a quality all of its own.** The re-emergence of instability in Timor-Leste and Fiji, as well as Honiara in 2006, at a time when the ADF was heavily committed in the Middle East, underscored the value of putting sufficient boots on the ground. This contributed to the Government's decision to establish two extra regular infantry battalions. Drawn straight from his role at the head of the ready battalion of Army's "first-response" 3BDE, the Commander of the CJTF in charge of the initial military deployment was always likely to be a capable leader. And having a mid-ranking ADF officer helped signal that Defense was not in the lead. But the military mission's success probably came down to good fortune as well as good management; with a single O5 level officer initially commanding a multi-service and multinational force of nearly 2,000 personnel, since he was also heavily involved in in RAMSI's overall command team. A more senior ADF headquarters would have reduced risk.

■ Troops conducting stabilization missions need relevant training and equipment. The 2006 riots and death of an Honiara local man shot by RAMSI troops responding to a drunken brawl showed that infantry battalions require basic crowd control capabilities, notwithstanding the separation of police and military powers.[43]

■ Even open-ended major interventions eventually wind-down. For countries that invite intervention, RAMSI shows that requesting international security assistance need not entail even a temporary forfeiture of sovereignty and executive authority.

Conclusion: Strong Military Performance is Insufficient but Necessary

Solomon Islands was a low-income country before the tensions and remains so now, but the existence of poverty and inequality do not dictate that violence will return. CJTF 635 helped offer space for Solomon Islanders to break the cycle of violence, perhaps for good. Challenges remain – especially with turbulence likely to accompany the end of logging – but stability seems at least as likely to endure as violence is to return.

Australia retains the motive and ability to promote positive Solomons responses to the full range of transformations underway within, above, and beneath the state.[44] Honiara's reasonably effective response to severe flooding last April (including unrest by residents of some evacuation centers[45]) and preparations for well-run elections in November indicate that the success of conventional capability-building supported by foreign aid, although hardly inevitable, is far from impossible. Scholars and development professionals are also, however, suggesting innovative approaches to economic,[46] migration,[47] aid,[48] land,[49] and other challenges likely to be intensified by the end of logging and ever-deepening money-politics.[50] Any successes will be relevant to fostering peace and prosperity both in and beyond the Solomons. PRISM

Notes

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26 Elsina Wainwright, *How is RAMSI faring? Progress, challenges and lessons learned* (Canberra, ASPI 2005) p 3.

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29 Government of the Solomon Islands, Second Interim Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the April 2006 Civil Unrest in Honiara', 7 September

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[36] *Ibid*, p 50.

[37] Hayward-Jones, *Op Cit*, p 4.

[38] Tobias Haque, 'The Influence of Culture on Economic Development in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM discussion paper, 2012, p 1 and p 8.

[39] Tobias Haque, 'Economic transition in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.

[40] See Shahar Hameiri, 'The inconvenient truth', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) pp 17-19; and Terrence Wood, 'The causes and consequences of local voting in Solomon Islands', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.

[41] Whalan, *Op Cit*.

[42] Hutcheson, *Op Cit*, pp 51-52. Other national contingents may have lamented a relaxed attitude to unit-discipline by the Fijian 'rock-stars of international peacekeeping' but usually conceded they brought a particular flair to community engagement, for example.

[43] Ilya Gridneff, 'Honiara man shot dead by RAMSI soldiers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 2010.

[44] Matthew Allen and Sinclair Dinnen, 'Solomon Islands in transition', in Terence Wood and Stephen Howes (eds) *Debating Ten Years of RAMSI* (Canberra, Development Policy Centre, 2013) pp 31-33.

[45] Richard Ewart, 'Calm in Honiara after two nights of rioting', Radio National *Pacific Beat*, ABC, 19 May 2014.

[46] Haque, 'Economic Transition', pp 1-2.

[47] Matthew Allen, 'Long-term engagement: The future of RAMSI', Canberra, ASPI, 2011, pp 11-13; and David Craig and Richard Bedford, 'Labour mobility and Solomon Islands Development', ANU SSGM In Brief, 2013.

[48] Wood, 'Lessons learnt on the role for aid', pp 35-37.

[49] Marcus Pelto, 'High value urban land in Honiara for sale – deep, deep discounts available to the right buyer', *Development Policy*, 16 December 2013.

[50] Although most candidates in last year's election campaigned on a "time for change" platform, the apparent connection between sitting members' increased discretionary constituency development funds and more incumbents being returned than usual points to the further entrenchment of a cycle whereby rational choices by voters seeking leaders' personal assistance contribute to poor governance and reinforce those choices in turn. The problem isn't so much that leaders and voters don't take seriously the national motto – "to lead is to serve" – but rather that they do so at a profoundly local level. It might be unfair to condemn candidates' provision of solar panels, roofing iron, school fees, or small-scale water and sanitation projects to constituents as "frittering away" national wealth, since such help can be of real benefit to the poor (reducing deprivation as a potential spur for instability). But the seemingly vast SI \$6 million (nearly U.S. \$1 million) available to each Member of Parliament (often supplemented by income from business-favors, and sometimes allegedly from corruption) only translates to about U.S.\$50 per citizen each year – not enough to be individually transformative but cumulatively enough to sap state funding for roads, schools, and hospitals. It also diverts leaders from dealing with difficult national issues, such as resolving commercial and landowner issues preventing the de-watering of a dangerously over-full mine tailings-dam – see Matthew Allen, "Gold Ridge Standoff Deepens," *DevPolicy*, 20 February 2015.