

## **REGIONAL INITIATIVE TEMPLATE**

Please complete each section below.

### **1. Contact Details**

Please provide the following contact details:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of individual or group submitting initiative</b> | <i>World Citizens Association of Australia</i> |
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### **2. Name of Initiative**

*Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol*

### **3. Background and Rationale**

*You may consider: What is the issue being addressed by this initiative? What are the causes of this issue? Are there relevant studies that have been carried out to support the issue? Are there links to national, regional or international goals/policies?*

***Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.***

The primary objective of our World Citizens Association is to promote deeper integration and stronger governance at both global and regional levels, in order to preserve peace and promote prosperity in our global village. Following the example set by Europe, regional integration has indeed been proceeding apace. The African Union embraces all the nations of Africa except Morocco. South America has drawn up ambitious plans for a Union of South American Republics (UNASUR). Many other regional organizations have also sprung up, among them the Pacific Islands Forum.

In the Pacific, it is obvious that the smaller island states cannot provide all the facilities of modern living for themselves, but rather they must rely on co-operation with their neighbours if they are to have any hope of moving beyond a subsistence lifestyle. This alone provides strong motivation for further integration in the region.

Security priorities listed in the Pacific Plan include

- a regional strategy for maritime and aviation security;
- national implementation of the Biketawa, Nasonini and Honiara declarations;
- regional training and networks for national police forces;
- better intelligence services and strengthened relationships between regional specialist organizations.

No long-term objectives have been agreed here, and the Plan looks a little thin in this area. This is a sensitive topic which goes to core issues of national sovereignty. But there is an obvious need for some further mechanisms of common security.

On the economic side, one of the principal resources of the island states consists of the fisheries in their surrounding 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones. In total, the fishing industry earns several billion dollars yearly. The smaller island states do not have the resources to patrol and manage these fisheries on their own, and in fact one of the principal regional activities at present is the Pacific Patrol Boat Program (McCann 2013), which is intended to help perform these tasks. It would seem obvious that these activities should be co-ordinated and controlled by a single regional body.

This is a common theme in the literature. Indeed, the Australian Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee in 2010 called for “[elevating] the Pacific Patrol Boat Program into a regional initiative, supported by the Pacific Islands Forum and other donors” (Senate Committee 2010), and the Australian government promised to carry out an assessment of this idea. The Committee also called for a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre, which has come into being with the Honiara facility. A strategy paper by Herr and Bergin of the Australian Security Policy Institute (Herr and Bergin 2011) discussed the regional arrangements in considerable detail. The authors also called for a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre, and noted that *“the success of Australia’s increased investment in combating illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in northern Australian waters should now allow us to move some assets to help combat IUU fishing in the Pacific. The work would be a complementary component in support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency Regional Monitoring Control and Surveillance strategy.”*

From anecdotal evidence, there are certainly problems with the current system. Locals report a drastic decline in fishing catches over recent decades, due to overfishing by deep-sea trawlers. In the smaller island states, they often cannot afford to send their patrol boat to sea because of lack of fuel. Greenpeace is apparently deploying its flagship vessel off Kiribati for several months a year to try and fill the gap. Clearly much remains to be done in terms of better supervision and tighter regulation of the industry.

The Parties to the Noumea Agreement (PNA) have been showing the way recently. They comprise the eight island states whose exclusive economic zones account for the bulk of the tuna fisheries in the region, led by Papua New Guinea. The PNA have largely taken over management of the \$3 billion tuna fishing industry from the Forum Fisheries Agency, reaching their own agreements with foreign fishing operations and extracting substantially higher income from fishing licences.

These improvements need to be extended to the region as a whole.

## References

- Herr, R. and Bergin, A. 2011. Our near abroad: Australia and Pacific islands regionalism, Australia Strategic Policy Institute, November 2011, <[https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/our-near-abroad-australia-and-pacific-islands-regionalism/Our\\_near\\_abroad.pdf](https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/our-near-abroad-australia-and-pacific-islands-regionalism/Our_near_abroad.pdf)>, accessed 18/2/2015.
- McCann, Linda 2013. *The Future of Australia’s Pacific Patrol Boat Program: The Pacific Maritime Security Program*, Shedden Papers,

Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies August 2013, see  
<[http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/Shedden/2013/Linda%20McCann%20-%20Shedden%20Paper%20\(final\).pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/ADC/Publications/Shedden/2013/Linda%20McCann%20-%20Shedden%20Paper%20(final).pdf)

Senate Committee 2010. Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Security Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the Southwest Pacific*, 25 February 2010, Vol. 2, Recommendations 3,4.

#### 4. Description

*Please provide a brief overview of this initiative. Try to address the following: Does this initiative contribute to a positive change to the region? What makes this initiative of importance to the Pacific region as a whole? Who would implement this initiative? Who are the main beneficiaries? Are regulatory or legislative changes required at the national level to implement this initiative? How would the initiative be funded? Has this initiative been carried out previously? What are the key risks in implementing this initiative? Are there any complementary projects and programmes currently active? What is the proposed timeframe for this initiative? How would the initiative be sustained over the proposed timeframe?*

**Please limit your response to no more than 750 words.**

We suggest the establishment of a *Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol* to combat illegal fishing, piracy, drug smuggling and similar problems in the region. Such a force would probably need to involve both seaborne and airborne elements, and to make use of resources such as satellite data, and the Jindalee over-the-horizon radar installation in Australia. The means exist already in the shape of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program (McCann 2013). Using patrol boats, aircraft and retired frigates from the Australian navy, and satellite reconnaissance data supplied by Australia, the PIF already maintains a fairly sophisticated surveillance of the fishing zones from headquarters located in Honiara. The operations of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program should be placed under the control of the PIF, insofar as this is not already the case. Establishment of the Patrol would be only a small extension of previous programs.

Fishing is a major economic resource of the island nations, and the industry needs effective protection against illegal fishing by foreign vessels. The potential benefits of this initiative are enormous, in the improved collection of larger licensing fees from foreign-based trawlers, combined with the preservation of fishing stocks for future generations.

The principle should be that the Pacific islands take collective responsibility for maintaining security in their own region. The responsibilities of the Patrol should include

- Gathering and coordinating intelligence on shipping movements in the region from satellite and other data;
- Co-ordinating and directing the activities of the Pacific Patrol Boats and other facilities;
- Monitoring and patrolling the exclusive economic zones of the PIF members, and preventing illegal fishing;
- Combatting other illegal activity at sea, including piracy and drug-smuggling in the region;

The official establishment of a Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol would require an agreement from the Forum leaders. It would presumably require national legislation as well in the member states, to allow the Patrol to operate in their waters, and to agree on the allocation of licence fees as between the PIF and the member states. The licence fees should be more than sufficient to fund the initiative, once the program is established, and in fact they could potentially provide substantial funds for other Forum activities, if the leaders can agree on an appropriate allocation of the income.

Such an initiative could be implemented as soon as the leaders agree to it. It is hard to identify any risks associated with it, and the potential benefits are enormous. We have mentioned above a number of current programs and initiatives that would point naturally in this direction.

## 5. Alignment to Regional Vision, Values and Objectives

*Briefly describe how your initiative supports the vision, values and objectives set out in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism. These can be found in the Framework for Pacific Regionalism document or in the submissions guideline document.*

**Please limit your response to no more than 500 words**

### Market test

This initiative involves primarily supervision and regulation of the fishery resources of the PIF, and is not suitable for provision by the market.

### Sovereignty test

This involves a function that is much better implemented collectively, and one which the smaller states cannot provide on their own. Any infringement on national sovereignty is far outweighed by the collective benefit of shared sovereignty.

### Regionalism test

This initiative would arguably tick all the boxes:

- New shared standards/regulations for the island fisheries;
- A common position on regulation of the fisheries;
- The benefit is universal to the region;
- Overcomes capacity constraints for the smaller island states;
- Complements national initiatives in this area;
- Would facilitate economic integration

### Benefit test

The benefit would be universal, involving preservation of fishing stocks and collection of licence fees, which would be virtually impossible for the smaller island states acting alone. The benefits would be commensurate with the size of the industry, potentially amounting to billions of dollars overall.

### Political oversight test

This initiative would require the collective assent of the Forum leaders.

### Risk and sustainability test

The initiative would simply involve consolidating and rationalizing existing functions under a single 'roof', and should not involve great expense. Indeed, the benefits in terms of improved collection of licence fees could be substantial. One of the major objectives would be to establish a sustainable fishing industry for the long term.

### Duplication test

This initiative does not duplicate any existing efforts as far as we are aware, but amounts to a relatively small extension of existing initiatives.

## 6. Additional Information

Please provide or attach additional information in support of this initiative.

**Please limit your response to no more than 5 pages.**

### **The Case for a Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol**

A/Prof Chris Hamer  
President, World Citizens Association of Australia

#### *Abstract*

*A new Framework for Pacific Regionalism has recently been set up to hasten the process of regional integration in the Pacific. This offers a great opportunity to put together a farsighted blueprint for regional governance in our little corner of the world. To advance common security in the region, we make the case for a Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol. The possibility of a Pacific Islands Regiment is also discussed briefly.*

#### *Background*

The primary objective of our World Citizens Association is to promote deeper integration and stronger governance at both global and regional levels, in order to preserve peace and promote prosperity in our global village. Following the example set by Europe, regional integration has indeed been proceeding apace. The African Union embraces all the nations of Africa except Morocco. South America has drawn up ambitious plans for a Union of South American Republics (UNASUR), although those plans seem to be on hold for the moment. Many other regional organizations have also sprung up, among them the Pacific Islands Forum.

In the Pacific, it is obvious that the smaller island states cannot provide all the facilities of modern living for themselves, but rather they must rely on co-operation with their neighbours if they are to have any hope of moving beyond a subsistence lifestyle. This alone provides strong motivation for further integration in the region.

Furthermore, a number of crises have occurred in the region over recent years, including uprisings on Bougainville, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. The Regional Assistance Mission Solomon Islands (RAMSI) arrived in Honiara in 2003 to help restore order, with the consent of both the Solomon Islands parliament and the Pacific Islands Forum. It included personnel from many of the island states, giving RAMSI a truly Pacific face as representing the Forum as a whole.

Recognizing the important issues of security and governance facing the region, the Forum leaders in 2003 commissioned a review of the Forum and its operations by an Eminent Persons' Group, led by ex-Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan of New Guinea (Eminent Persons' Group 2004). They called for a new Pacific Plan to guide further integration. The review noted that security must fall within the ambit of the Plan, and that there are already a number of agreements – notably the Honiara, Biketawa and Aitutaki Declarations – providing for regional cooperation on security and law enforcement issues. It also noted, however, that there was currently no mechanism by which these declarations can be given teeth. In view of previous occurrences of governmental breakdown, insurrection and other emergencies in the region, there is a need for more effective crisis response machinery, together with conflict prevention and conflict resolution mechanisms.

Subsequently, a broad-ranging Pacific Plan was drawn up (Pacific Plan 2007, Pacific Plan Review 2013). Security priorities listed in the Pacific Plan include

- a regional strategy for maritime and aviation security;
- national implementation of the Biketawa, Nasonini and Honiara declarations;
- regional training and networks for national police forces;
- better intelligence services and strengthened relationships between regional specialist organizations.

No long-term objectives have been agreed here, and the Plan looks a little thin in this area. This is a sensitive topic which goes to core issues of national sovereignty. But there is an obvious need for some further mechanisms of common security.

### *Suggestions to enhance Collective Security*

One of the principal economic resources of the island states consists of the fisheries in their surrounding 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones. In total, the fishing industry earns several billion dollars yearly. The smaller island states do not have the resources to patrol and manage these fisheries on their own, and in fact one of the principal regional activities at present is the Pacific Patrol Boat program to perform these tasks.

Hence we would suggest the establishment of a *Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol* to combat illegal fishing, piracy, drug smuggling and similar problems in the region. Such a force would probably need to involve both seaborne and airborne elements, and to make use of resources such as satellite data, and the Jindalee over-the-horizon radar installation in Australia. The means exist already in the shape of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program (McCann 2013). Using patrol boats, aircraft and retired frigates from the Australian navy, and satellite reconnaissance data supplied by Australia, the PIF already maintains a fairly sophisticated surveillance of the fishing zones from headquarters located in Honiara. Fishing is a major economic resource of the island nations, and the industry needs effective protection against illegal fishing by foreign vessels. The operations of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program should be placed under the control of the PIF, insofar as this is not already the case.

The principle should be that the Pacific islands take collective responsibility for maintaining peace and security in their own region. The responsibilities of the Patrol should include

- Gathering and coordinating intelligence on shipping movements in the region from satellite and other data;
- Co-ordinating and directing the activities of the Pacific Patrol Boats and other facilities;
- Monitoring and patrolling the exclusive economic zones of the PIF members, and preventing illegal fishing;
- Combatting other illegal activity at sea, including piracy and drug-smuggling in the region;
- Monitoring illegal logging activities in the PIF member states

This is a common theme in the literature. Indeed, the Australian Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee in 2010 called for “[e]levating] the Pacific Patrol Boat Program into a regional initiative, supported by the Pacific Islands Forum and other donors” (Senate Committee 2010), and the Australian government promised to carry out an assessment of this idea. The Committee also called for a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre, which has come into being with the Honiara facility. A strategy paper by Herr and Bergin of the Australian Security Policy Institute (Herr and Bergin 2011) discussed the regional arrangements in considerable detail. The authors also called for a Regional Maritime Coordination Centre, and noted that “the success of Australia’s increased investment in combating illegal unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in northern Australian waters should now allow us to move some assets to help combat IUU fishing in the Pacific. The work would be a complementary component in support of the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency Regional Monitoring Control and Surveillance strategy.”

Satellite and aerial reconnaissance could also be used to detect illegal logging activities in the PIF member states. Again, this is a very serious problem, affecting a major industry in the Melanesian states. There were claims in 2008 that the forests of the Solomon Islands would be exhausted in five to seven years, at the then current rate of illegal logging [Skehan 2008], and a joint report from the University of Papua New Guinea and the Australian National University has estimated that the PNG forests would be exhausted by 2021 at the current rate (Perry 2008). Corruption at the political level also contributes to the problem: Sir Michael Somare, former Prime Minister of PNG, reportedly admitted to having financial links to logging companies (Roberts 2007).

Satellite reconnaissance data could easily be analysed to reveal the extent of logging activity in the Melanesian forests, and a Forum agency could compile the data, and compare it with estimates of what a sustainable logging regime would allow. It would then be up to the individual Forum members to act to protect their own resources.

In addition, consideration should be given to a land-based security force, perhaps a *Pacific Islands Regiment*, to carry out peacekeeping duties both within and outside the region, and if necessary to intervene in “extra-constitutional crises” in the region. Interventions by such a force would carry much greater legitimacy than a similar intervention by (say) Australian or New Zealand forces, which are always subject to charges of paternalism or neo-colonialism. It could also provide a significant source of employment for some of the smaller islands.

Such a regiment could undertake peacekeeping missions for the UN, earning income and providing employment for some of the island people. It would also be capable of spearheading any intervention to restore law and order in case of a breakdown of order in one of the island states, at the behest of the PIF council. It would thus act as guardian of their own peace and security, and would carry authority and legitimacy as embodying the collective response of all the PIF members.

In fact a Royal Pacific Islands Regiment already exists, set up in Papua New Guinea during World War II to help fight the Japanese, and incorporated into the PNG Defence Force after independence in 1971. It has already taken part in missions to Vanuatu, Bougainville and the RAMSI mission in Solomon Islands. This regiment could perhaps be recommissioned as part of a security force for the whole Pacific Islands Forum; or else a new force might need to be raised. This would require further consideration by the experts.

### *Conclusions*

Maintaining and deepening the regional integration between the members of the Pacific Islands Forum brings obvious benefits, and can do much to promote peace and prosperity in the region. The smaller island states simply cannot provide all the benefits of modern life for themselves, and must rely on help and co-operation from the larger states to provide higher education, technical skills, industrial goods and employment for their people. Trade, investment and transport are best co-ordinated at the regional level, as also is the supervision and conservation of natural resources such as the fish stocks in the ocean and the tropical forests on land. Regional organizations can help maintain stable governance in fragile member states, as exemplified in the RAMSI mission, and can help counter any undue influence from outside, foreign states. Much has already been achieved in these areas, but much more remains to be done in the future.

Australia and New Zealand (to a lesser extent) have played an active role as ‘deputy sheriffs’ for the region on several occasions, such as the military interventions in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. These actions were successful and well justified, being sanctioned by the United Nations and the Forum, respectively. There is always a danger, however, that such actions will be seen as paternalism and ‘gunboat

diplomacy', and arouse resentment among the smaller island states. Far better would be a collective response to such emergencies, carried out by regional security forces.

We have proposed strengthened regional security systems, primarily a *Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol*, to regulate a sustainable fishing industry in the region, and to prevent illegal activities such as piracy and drug smuggling in the region. While not making a formal proposal to this effect, we have also recommended consideration of a *Pacific Islands Regiment*, to restore order in case of a breakdown in one of the island states, and also to carry out peacekeeping duties and provide some employment for the island people.

## References

- Eminent Persons' Group 2004. Review of the Pacific Islands Forum, 2004. See text at <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/foreign/regions/pacific/pif03/pifreviewdocs/wayforward.html>, accessed 18/2/2015.
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- Pacific Plan 2007. See [http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific\\_Plan\\_Nov\\_2007\\_version1.pdf](http://www.forumsec.org/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/Pacific_Plan_Nov_2007_version1.pdf), accessed 18/2/2015.
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- Skehan, Craig 2008. *It's world's worst practice in the Solomon Islands*, Sydney Morning Herald 4<sup>th</sup> January 2008.