CHAPTER II

THE PACIFIC AND GREAT POWERS
The Pacific is the largest and deepest of the world's oceans, and it is the earth's largest single geographic feature. It occupies more than one-third of the globe's surface, an area greater than all of the world's landmasses combined. Within the region, there are about 25,000 islands, more than one-half of the world's total, and the discrepancy between land and sea is great. Collectively, the islands comprise more than 1.6 million square kilometres, but they are set in a sea area of more than 88 million square kilometres. The Pacific stretches about 16,000 kilometres (10,000 miles) along the equator, and the north-to-south expanse from the Bering Strait to the Antarctic Circle is approximately 15,000 kilometres.

When classifying the cultures and languages of the Pacific, anthropologists usually speak of the "insular Pacific" or the "island Pacific" as opposed to the "Pacific rim" or the "Pacific basin". The Pacific rim usually refers to the large continental masses and the large nations (or, at least their coastlines) that define the ocean's perimeters. The islands have very few cultural or linguistic connections with the rim, and they should be thought of as separate world areas. The term Pacific basin is vague and may or may not include both the rim and insular areas.

The Pacific is characterized by its great diversity. It is normally divided into three separate culture areas: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Linguistically, it is one of the most complex regions of the world. A conservative estimate suggests that Melanesia alone has about 1200 languages, and another three dozen or more are classified as Micronesian and Polynesian. Variations of a pidgin English, also known as neo-Melanesian, is also spoken in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu, providing a lingua franca and a common

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band and identify for the people of these three large Melanesian countries.²

The population of the entire insular Pacific totals approximately 5.5 million people, but again there is great diversity. Papua New Guinea, the region's giant, has the majority of the Pacific's population with about 3.5 million people.³ At the other end of the continuum, tiny Tuvalu has only 8,000 citizens. Not counting PNG, the average population of Pacific countries is about 100,000 people.

There is also a diversity of island types, and differences in types are directly related to differences in the terrestrial resources available to island nations. To oversimplify somewhat, there are four major kinds of islands. There are two kinds of "high" islands: continental and volcanic. The former are the most richly endowed and are best exemplified by the large islands of Melanesia, which are characterized by extremely rugged interior mountain ranges and precipitous interior valleys.⁴ Lower and coastal areas tend to be divided by twisting rivers, alternating swampy areas and coastal plains or narrow coastal shelves. Significantly, the topography creates barriers that keep Melanesia's populations separated and divided into its many small linguistic and political communities.⁵

With regard to high volcanic islands, Hawaii is the most familiar. Steep cliffs and mountain ranges are divided by deep valleys, the floors of which usually open to coastal flat zones of varying widths. Tahiti and many other islands in the Society and Marquises Islands, the Samoas, as well as Rarotonga in the Cook Islands, are examples of volcanic islands. Pohnpei and Kosrae are among the few high volcanic islands in Micronesia. Most islands of this kind have freshwater sources, but volcanic soils are generally poor for agriculture.

¹ Ibid. p. 15.
⁴ ibid. p. 102.
There are two kinds of "low" islands. First, there is the atoll, a series of islands that are built upward from a coral reef that encloses a central lagoon. The islets of an atoll are seldom more than three to five meters above high-tide level, and land areas are dwarfed by the sea and lagoon. Soil covers are poor and thin. Rain water is the only source of freshwater, which is either collected or, on some of the larger islands, floats as a thin lens beneath the soil and above the denser salt water that permeates the porous coral rock below sea level. The atolls are extremely vulnerable to typhoons, high seas, and droughts. Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu are the countries that entirely consist of low coral atolls.

Some atolls have been raised by undersea geological activity. Numerous raised coral atolls are scattered over the region, and they form the second kind of low island. In such cases, the central lagoon has partially or totally disappeared, and the atoll's border has been elevated above the surrounding sea. The raised atolls are not hospitable islands. Landings are difficult, and like the lower atolls, soils are poor and water is a scarce commodity. Examples of raised coral islands are the independent nation of Nauru and self-governing Niue.

**The Pacific as Third World**

The Pacific has long been thought of as a relatively trouble free area of the world. The colonization of the Pacific was completed around the turn of the century, and between the two world wars the Pacific was a peaceful and somewhat insignificant area to most of the world. The World War II abruptly changed things, but compared to many other areas a certain tranquillity was resumed with the post war years, and beginning with the independence of Western Samoa in 1962, the process of decolonization has largely been harmonious.

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1. Ibid. p. 212
3. Ibid. p. 318.
Changes have been cumulative in recent years, however, and the Pacific has begun to experience problems that have long been associated with other Third World areas. In most island countries, there are rapid population growth, unplanned urbanization, rising aspirations in a world of increased global communication and transport, and a weakening of traditional forms of social control, in a few instances, there is political instability. 10

The region's population has more than doubled since the end of World War II, and effective family planning programs are non-existent. There is every reason to believe that the current trend will continue and populations will probably double again by early next century. All countries have young populations, and for the region as a whole, over half of all Pacific Islanders are under the age group of 16. 11

Islanders are drawn to urban areas for the purpose of employment, education, medical care, and diversions not available on outer islands or in rural areas. 12 Of PNG's 3.5 million people 455,000 or 13 percent, are urban dwellers. PNG's size and its predominantly rural character skew the overall picture for the region when it is included in population figures. Elsewhere, about 26 per cent of the region's other 2 million, or approximately 520,000 people, reside in urban areas. Thus, the Pacific remains predominantly rural, but urbanization is very much a part of the contemporary scene, and urban population will continue to grow.

In urban areas, there is a trend towards smaller family units and a decline in the importance of extended families and other large kin groups. There is a lessening of social and psychological support for individuals and a loss of traditional forms of social control. Increasingly, youth are raised in urban areas. This contributes to an ever-widening

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generation gap, and skills once necessary to gain a livelihood in the island environment are being lost.

Urban development is not keeping abreast of the movement of people into urban areas. Commonly, infrastructures are overtaxed, and there are problems of sanitation, health, diet, and among the very young, malnutrition. Diseases of civilization are on the increase: hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes.\footnote{Ibid. p. 39} Perhaps as an artifact of generational expectations and differences, suicide rates of young islanders, particularly males, are abnormally high in these countries. Population growth and urbanization have several consequences. There are increased demands for social services (particularly in areas of health and education) and employment at a time when little or no economic growth have taken place. There is pressure on land in and around urban areas, and crime rates are also increasing. Generational differences are the most pronounced in urban areas.

**Political Scenario**

At the end of World War II, six colonial powers ruled the entire Pacific, and no island group had experience of a self rule. Today, without counting Hawaii and Irian Jaya and as part of the diversity of the region, there are 21 separate political entities in the Pacific. Of these, nine are independent nations, four are self-governing in free association with an independent state, and eight remain dependencies of colonial powers.\footnote{R J Evans, *Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*, London, 1952. pp. 52-79.}

In 1962, Western Samoa was the first Pacific nation to gain independence, and subsequently the pattern of decolonization in the region has been rather straightforward. With one exception, the three Commonwealth metropolitans have divested themselves of their colonial wards. The five former colonies that were administered by the United Kingdom are now independent states. Fiji and Tonga became independent in 1970.\footnote{Ibid. p. 96} The Solomon Islands and Tuvalu (formerly the
Ellice Islands) followed suit in 1978, and Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands) gained independence in 1979. In addition, Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) that was jointly ruled as a condominium by France and the United Kingdom became independent in 1980. 16

New Zealand had four dependencies. As noted, Western Samoa helped to launch the decolonization process with its independence in 1962. An entirely new political status was created to provide for the political future of two other colonies. In 1965, the Cook Islands became self-governing in free association with New Zealand. Under that arrangement, Cook Islanders gained dual citizenship. They became self-governing with regard to internal affairs and their government received a financial subsidy from New Zealand. Initially, external affairs were handled by New Zealand as requested by the Cooks, but gradually it resumed control. As the term “free association” suggests, either party can terminate the arrangement. In 1974, tiny Niue also entered into an arrangement of free association with New Zealand, but it has not been inclined to take on the responsibility for external affairs.

Neither independence nor free association has appealed to New Zealand’s other dependency, tiny Tokelau, with only three coral atolls and 3,000 citizens. It enjoys considerable self rule and is content with its political status. The people of Tokelau have free entry to New Zealand, and remains a last dependency in the region.

Australia administered three territories. Technically, Nauru was a United Nations trust territory with Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom as the administering authorities. The actual administration was provided by Australia, and in 1968 Nauru became the second Pacific state to achieve independence.17

Australia’s other dependencies were in New Guinea. During early 19th century, the Netherlands annexed the western half of the

16 Ibid. p. 102
continental island of New Guinea (It is now Irian Jaya and a province of Indonesia). The eastern half of the island was unclaimed by Europeans until 1884 when Germany took the northeastern part, and the United Kingdom claimed the southeastern part. In 1906, the southeastern part was passed to Australia as the territory of Papua. After World War I, German New Guinea became a League of Nations mandated territory administered by Australia. After a brief spell of time, during post World War II, Australia again became the administering authority, but this time under the trusteeship system of the United Nations. Papua remained a separate territory. The two were merged to form the independent nation of Papua New Guinea in 1975.\footnote{Ibid, p. 29}

France and the United States have been reluctant to give up their Pacific territories. France has three possessions: French Polynesia, New Caledonia, and Wallis and Futuna. They are considered integral parts of France and elect their own representatives to the French Parliament. France has been unwilling to consider decolonization and has come under considerable criticism from the independent and self-governing states. In part, France's stance has been shaped by its national pride, but there are other and more important factors. Atolls in French Polynesia are the sites for France's nuclear testing program in the Pacific, and thus there are strategic reasons for France's continued presence there. France claims that matters of national security also account for its rule in New Caledonia, but there are economic concerns as well. New Caledonia has the third largest nickel deposit in the world. The territory of Wallis and Futuna is different from French Polynesia and New Caledonia, and it has some similarity with New Zealand's Tokelau. Its few islands are minuscule with small populations, and the people are content with their current status and would be reluctant to go it on their own.\footnote{Ibid, p. 39}
STRATEGIC CONCERNS

The interests of the United States in the Pacific have been strategic. Around the turn of the century, it acquired three Pacific possessions: American Samoa, Guam, and Hawaii. The former two were clearly desired as cooling stations for U.S. naval vessels. While there were economic interests in Hawaii (primarily the sugar industry), the value of Pearl Harbour was not overlooked, but it was to become strategically more important only in later years.20

After World War II, the United States occupied most of Micronesia. The area had been held by Japan as a mandated territory under the League of Nations and had been fortified during the war years. The United States was given administrative authority within the framework of the UN system of trust territories. U.S. interests were entirely strategic, and this was made evident in that, Micronesia was the only strategic trust territory out of the eleven trusteeships established by the United Nations.21 The strategic portions of the trusteeship agreement allowed the United States to use the territory for reasons of its own defense and security requirements.

In the late 1960s, negotiations began regarding the Micronesians' future political status. Initially, it was envisaged that the territory would remain united and deal with the United States as a unified whole. This proved unrealistic. The territory as a political entity had always been an artifact of colonial administrations, and divisions along cultural and linguistic lines soon emerged. Negotiations were further complicated when it became apparent that the United States and the Micronesians had quite different notions as to what the future should bring. The United States wanted to keep Micronesia under its firm control, and it argued for a commonwealth status that would make the islands part of the United States, not unlike 'Puerto Rico. The

Micronesians were attracted to the free association arrangement as pioneered by New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Niue.22

During the negotiations, it also became apparent that Micronesia was to be divided into the “haves” and “have-nots”. Some island groups had more strategic value to the United States than others, and thus they had more bargaining power at the negotiating table.23 The islands of greatest value to the United States were the Marshall Islands that form the eastern boundary of the territory, and Belau (formerly Palau) and the Northern Marianas in the west. Separate negotiations began with these three entities, and the islands that were left in between, Yap, Truk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae, were treated as a fourth and separate unit, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

Thus, four entities have evolved. The Marianas opted to become the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI) and thus a part of the United States. The Marshalls, the FSM, and Belau negotiated compacts (treaties) of free association with the United States. The former two accepted the terms of the compacts, but there have been difficulties in the case of Belau. It has a nuclear-free constitution that conflicts with the strategic provisions of its compact, and a resolution does not appear likely in the near future. Belau remains as the final remnant of the trust territory.24

After Congressional approval, President Reagan decreed in 1986 that, with the exception of Belau, the trust territory had been terminated and the compacts of free association with the FSM and the Marshalls and the agreement of commonwealth for the CNMI were in effect. However, there are serious complications.

Some observers contend that the United States has not received adequate UN approval for the termination of the trust. The UN Security Council gave the UN Trusteeship Council the responsibility for
overseeing the administration of the strategic trusteeship. In contrast, the UN General Assembly gave the Trusteeship Council the responsibility for overseeing the administration of the other ten trusteeships, and they have been terminated with that Council's approval. However, there is no precedent for the termination of the one and only strategic trust, and there are differences of opinion about what is required.

In May 1986, with the support of the other metropolitan powers in the region, the United States overcame a negative veto by the Soviets and secured Trusteeship Council approval of the newly negotiated political status in Micronesia. It has been pointed out, however, that article 83 of the UN Charter requires approval of the Security Council, where the Soviet Union has veto power. Fearing such a veto, the United States has not taken the case to that body. In the Soviet view, the United States is essentially absorbing Micronesia in an act of neo-colonialism. There is some opinion among legal minds in Washington that the United States and Micronesian entities can jointly agree that the trusteeship has been ended, and with the exception of Belau, President Reagan's decree was an effort to accomplish just this.25

Two items pertaining to the termination of the Micronesian trusteeship are relevant for the future. First, while the arrangement of free association developed by New Zealand and two of its former colonies served as the initial model for the Micronesians, there are very important differences in the end results. According to the compacts, the freely associated Micronesian states are self-governing with regard to both internal and external affairs. Of crucial importance, however, the strategic provisions of the compacts provide the United States with a number of prerogatives that essentially permit it to intervene in both the internal and external affairs of the island states when American strategic and defense interests are deemed at stake. In the last analysis, the United States has the right to declare emergencies and determine when

and where its strategic interests are at risk without the consent of the Micronesian governments. In exchange, the United States provides the island states with financial subsidies that are enormous by island standards, certain services, and free access to the United States. With regard to the latter, dual citizenship is not involved. The islanders are citizens only of their own countries, but they have the legal status of “habitual residents” which allows them to freely enter the United States and engage in employment. As with the New Zealand arrangement, either party to the compacts between the United States and the FSM and the Marshalls may unilaterally terminate the agreement, though with this difference: the U.S. rights of strategic denial to other nations would remain. In the case of Belau, the draft compact provides that both sides must agree to a termination of strategic denial. The huge financial subsidies and access to the United States, however, make it very unlikely that the islanders would initiate such a process.

The second item of concern is that the termination of the trusteeship lacks the sanction of the United Nations. In the international arena, there is some opinion that the governments of the Marshall Islands and the FSM lack legitimacy. They are not generally recognized as truly self-determining states, and the passports issued to their citizens are not recognized as valid documents for international travel. Both the Marshalls and the FSM are seeking official recognition from other nations.

With regard to the United States, strategic interests have been mentioned. Focusing on the broader strategic interests during post-war years, the basic concern has been that the Pacific region should remain under Western influence and that the communist bloc be excluded. In the case of Australia and New Zealand, there is great continuity. Situated in the region, they have long been concerned about security issues, and in the nineteenth century they tried to convince the United

Kingdom to make the region not only a Western but an English-speaking lake. From their point of view, France and Germany (which lost its Pacific possessions with World War I) were unwelcome interlopers.

As indicated, around the turn of the century, strategic interests explained the American acquisition of American Samoa and Guam and were also a factor in bringing Hawaii under U.S. rule. Subsequent to World War II, the Netherlands left the region (when Indonesia gained control of Irian Jaya in 1963, the Dutch had no further interest in the islands), and the United Kingdom has largely withdrawn. Only tiny Pitcairn, inhabited by about 60 descendants of the Bounty mutineers, remains a Pacific British dependency. Thus, Australia, France, New Zealand, and the United States remain the metropolitan powers with substantial interests in the area.

Australia and New Zealand are not only located in the region, they are also well informed about the area and integrally involved in island affairs. When the South Pacific Forum was formed in 1971, Australia and New Zealand were invited to join. The Forum is composed only of the heads of governments of the independent and freely associated states, and today it has 15 members: the nine independent island states, the four freely associated states, and the two invited metropolitans, Australia and New Zealand.

The Forum leaders meet once every year, and its secretariat (formerly known as SEPC, or the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation, and recently renamed the Forum Secretariat) is located in Suva, Fiji. The Forum is quite influential in the region, and it addresses major issues. In 1978, it launched the Pacific Forum Line to provide reliable shipping service to several member nations. In the following year, it founded the Forum Fisheries Agency to conduct research, provide technical assistance, and negotiate treaties with distant-water

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29 Ibid. p. 43.
fishing nations. The Forum has challenged France's stance on decolonization and nuclear testing, and it was instrumental in the development of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty. Unofficially, the Forum is the region's voice in world affairs, and in addition to Australia and New Zealand, five of its independent nations are members of the United Nations. Australia and New Zealand are sensitive to the concerns of other Forum members, and their policies toward the region are considerably influenced by those same concerns.

France has a corps of diplomats who are reasonably well informed about the region, but it has often appeared rather insensitive with regard to island sentiments and opinions, particularly the issues of nuclear testing and decolonization. Of the four metropolitans involved in the region, the United States is the least knowledgeable about the area, and it is often viewed as being preoccupied with global issues and commitments and not particularly interested in island affairs. Part of the problem is a matter of scale. The size of the United States and the magnitude of the bureaucracy in Washington are not easily understood by island nations, and American officials often do not understand how to relate to the small island nations where personal relations are of the utmost importance and most affairs are conducted on a face-to-face basis.

The United States and France are disadvantaged in their dealings with the region for two other reasons. First, they are distant from the islands, and second, they are not members of the Forum. In contrast, they along with Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom were cofounders of the South Pacific Commission in 1947. It was essentially a research and service organization designed to serve the six colonial administrations of the postwar years. The Commission has gone through several reorganizations, and today all Pacific nations and territories have equal membership with the

30 Ibid. p. 92.
32 Ibid. p. 291.
metropolitans. Nonetheless, it carries the stigma of being a creature of
the colonial past, and it is far less influential than the Forum. Also
damaging the Commission's reputation is that political issues may not
be debated in its meetings.\textsuperscript{33}

The Pacific region has been pro-Western in its orientation.
Western missionaries were active in the area, and the roots of
Christianity are very deep. World War II, and particularly the U.S. role in
the conflict, strengthened pro-Western and pro-American sentiments.
Also, the generation of island leaders who presided over the process of
decolonization were groomed by the metropolitans to take the reins of
power, and they were committed to the West with little or no reservation.
The region, however, can no longer be taken for granted. A new
generation of leaders is replacing the old guard, and for the most part
they are better educated (many with university degrees from Australia,
New Zealand, England, and the United States), more nationalistic and
pragmatic, and more inclined to question or re-examine older loyalties
and arrangements. For their own interests, the metropolitans will have
to be sensitive to this generational shift and be prepared to deal with the
younger leadership.

Having enjoyed being the major foreign influence in the Pacific
since World War II, the Western powers have tended to over-react when
there have been perceived threats to their interests. The issue of a
potential Soviet presence in the islands first arose in 1976. In April
1976, the Soviet Ambassador resident in Wellington visited Tonga to
present his credentials. It is alleged that he offered development aid for
Tonga's international airport in exchange for rights to a fisheries base.
Nothing came of the incident, but it did cause some alarm in Australia
and New Zealand.\textsuperscript{34}

In more recent years, Russian diplomats have signaled an intention

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, p. 298.
\textsuperscript{34} Robert A. Hall, ed., \textit{Australia-New Zealand Closer Defence Relationships}, The Australia Defence Studies Centre,
to play a more active role in the Pacific. This was also implied in
Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech of July 1986, but the Russian have
made few real gains in the region. During the height of U.S. tension with
Pacific nations over unlicensed tuna vessels, the Soviet Union concluded
a one-year fishing agreement with Kiribati in August 1985. For a fee of
US $1.5 million, the Soviets were allowed to fish within Kiribati's ports or
its twelve-mile territorial sea. Kiribati, and particularly its president,
came under criticism both at home and abroad. Wellington and
Canberra expressed deep concern, and the incident brought home to
Washington that something had to be done about the U.S. tuna boat
industry. Kiribati always maintained that the only motive for the treaty
was economic, and in the following year, the treaty lapsed with the
Soviet Union wanted to reduce substantially the amount of the access
fee. Also in 1986, the Soviet Union negotiated (signed in January 1987) a
one-year agreement with Vanuatu which gave them access to shore
facilities as well as fishing rights. The treaty has not been renewed.
Papua New Guinea has agreed to allow the Soviets to open an embassy
in Port Moresby, but nothing has actually occurred.

Libya made overtures to Vanuatu during few years back, and a
dozen or so of its citizens reportedly received security training in Libya.
The relationship between the two countries never amounted too much,
and Gaddafi lost interest in the islands.

The Peoples' Republic of China has what may be described as a
peculiar interest in the region. It has embassies in Fiji, Papua New
Guinea, and Western Samoa, but it is only a very minor aid donor and
plays no major role in the region. Why it maintains the three embassies
is not clear.

The two military coups in Fiji in 1987 and the recent attempt to
unseat the government in Vanuatu have generated some fears about the

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36 Ibid. p. 29.
stability of both nations. The Fiji government under military control is even more pro-Western than the previous government, but Fiji is a tensely divided society and the potential for violent conflict remains. The difficulties in Vanuatu have been resolved by constitutional means, and the crisis was over.

Turning to the standpoint of the Pacific islands themselves, most of the region's leaders view "security" as a primarily economic issue. The emphasis in Forum thinking is on economic security as the pathway to political stability. In this spirit a number of Forum countries are being supplied by Australia with patrol boats to be used in surveillance and protection of the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zones. And there is a constant debate in Forum countries about the best way to translate aid into economic development.37

With regard to the more Western view about security as a matter of military defense, and with the exception of Papua New Guinea, concerns over matters of defense and strategic concerns are simply not major issues in the Pacific. Only four nations have defense forces. Fiji's post-coup army is the largest, with about 5,000 men.38 Papua New Guinea's army is about 3,000 strong. Tonga's Defense Services has a force of 200, and the Vanuatu Mobile Force is a 300-man paramilitary unit.39

Papua New Guinea is the only Pacific nation with a land border with another country, and Indonesia's military presence in Irian Jaya is perceived as a threat.40 The Vanuatu government views potential super power rivalry as the most serious threat to regional security and believes that a balanced involvement with all sides will serve to neutralize threats.

38 Ibid. p. 16.
40 Pintz and Pintz, p. 9.
to its own security and independence. It is the only Pacific country that belongs to the world's group of nonaligned nations.

Elsewhere, concerns over regional security have largely been absent since World War II. Island nations have generally assumed that their security was protected by the ANZUS umbrella, but even the current rift between the United States and New Zealand has caused no great concern. A general perception is that the islands are too remote and are of little interest to the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, this region is of great strategic significance for the United States. The United States military concerns in the Pacific is based on forward development and strategic denial to its adversaries. This means that the US maintain forces at sea and on land thousands of miles away from the continental United States in order to deny access to other powers in the Pacific. The greatest concentrations of American resources in the Pacific region, in terms of military equipment and troops, are in South Korea, Japan and the Philippines, but there are numerous other basis and facilities located throughout the Pacific region. The US Pacific Command Stretches from the west coast of the US into the Indian Ocean. Presently there are some 167 American bases in the Pacific, including islands and atolls left uninhabited by nuclear testing. After vacating the bases in the Philippines, the US worked on contingency plans to enlarge facilities in Guam, to base more ships in Fremantle, Western Australia, and to develop facilities on the island of Belau in the Northern Mariannas, which has a nuclear free constitution.

Further there always remain a speculation that France and the US are working together to keep the Pacific away from the Russian influence. Evidence for this is seen in the development of a French nuclear attack submarine in New Caledonia and the co-operation seen between France and the NATO alliance, a reversal of de Gaulle's 1967
decision to take France out of NATO. France feels that her South Pacific territories are vital to her maintaining the status of a world power.

Some of the important changes in the South Pacific, including New Zealand are challenging the old order and affecting the strategic concern of the US and France. Three most notable changes have been the impact of anti-nuclear sentiment, the trend towards greater self-reliant defence policies, and the penetration of external powers into region. The anti-nuclear sentiment had resulted in the breakdown of the defence cooperation between the United States and New Zealand, and produced the world's third nuclear free zone in the South Pacific.

While the hegemony of the United States and France in the South Pacific have not yet diminished, it is clearly a region increasingly open to new influences which has affected the states and character of Western alliances, and their strategic concerns. The US considers the location of the bases in the South Pacific very important for the operation of bases in East Asia, because they are technologically interrelated. As Fiji is centrally located in the South Pacific region, it occupies strategic importance for the United States.

Super Powers and the Pacific Region

Developments in superpower relations, the emerging role of Japan and China, and the issue of Pacific and Asian security generally will have an impact upon the Pacific Island region, although the area is not likely to rank high on the international agenda in the 1990s. Indeed, there is some concern in the region that the massive political changes occurring in Eastern Europe may lead to the rest of the world paying less attention to the need of the small island countries of the Pacific.43

Three major external powers will continue to demonstrate interest: France, the US and Japan. This will ebb and flow. For France, political evolution in New Caledonia and French Polynesia and nuclear

testing in Polynesia under pin enduring attentiveness. For the US, the prospects for a continued bases presence in the Philippines, the place of Micronesia as a backstop for its Pacific and Asian security stance and the choices for the FSM, the Marshalls and Palau about their respective political futures in the next ten years, will continue to engage Washington’s attention.44 Japan’s direct interest centres upon access to marine protein resources as well as a more dedicated policy aimed at expanding Japan’s political and economic influence in the region as an extension for her larger Pacific and Asian role. Japanese investment is expanding in the region.

Pacific Island countries themselves have sought, over recent years, to diversify their external connections. The desire to open up fresh sources of aid and trade, together with greater exposure to the influence of communications, tourism and travel, have produced greater responsiveness amongst Pacific Island countries to interest by external powers.45

France

France’s presence in New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna underline the fact that the process of decolonisation is not complete. The way in which France manages this process will have a direct bearing upon stability in the region.46 The 1988 Matignon Accord that have launched New Caledonia upon a ten-year path to self-determination are, in their conception, a fresh commitment to peaceful evolution. Their actual implementation however, is giving rise already to doubts as to whether Melanesian capability for self-reliance (especially in the training of administrators and others to assume responsibilities in the provincial system) is yet being enhanced. There are still several years to run. But it is absolutely essential, if Matignon is to remain a genuine

44 K.R Howe, Robert C. Kiste and Brij V. Lal., The Ideas of History: The Pacific Islands in the Twentieth Century, St. Leonard, NSW. 1994. p. 149
process, that the psychology of dependence upon France is changed through authentic programmes of development and education.\textsuperscript{47}

It is inconceivable that at the end of the day the act of self-determination could simply be a continuation of the status quo in New Caledonia. Juridically, that may be possible. Politically, it would fly in the face of the logic of political evolution, which is what Matignon is all about. A change in New Caledonia's political status must ensue. Unless that is understood and accepted by all communities in New Caledonia, and by France, the very process with the Matignon Accords scheduled for 1992 is clearly fundamental to the integrity of the process; and the continuing commitment to it by all concerned.

There are some surface parallels between the situation of New Caledonia and New Zealand itself; both are societies made up of indigenous people, of communities from neighbouring islands and Asian background, and a European community descended from settlers. These parallels must not be drawn too far.\textsuperscript{48} The absence of any basic concept in New Caledonia analogous to the Treaty of Waitangi is a central difference between the two situations. At the end of the day New Caledonia could choose a "Cook Island status" arrangement with France, which would give it a totally internally self-governing status in free association with the Metropolitan Country, but with the absolute right to move on to full independence at any time of its own choosing. The choice is, of course, for the people of New Caledonia to make.\textsuperscript{49}

The encouragement given by France to the development of links by the Provincial administrations New Caledonia with the region provides, the opportunity for programmes of cooperation tailored to the needs of those provincial administrations. The continued use of Mururoa for testing in the face of the wrong opposition of Forum Member countries overshadows any aim to constructive French involvement in

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{48} Young Whan Kehl and Lawrence E. Grinter, eds., \textit{Asia Pacific Security: Emerging Challenges and Responses}, Colorado, 1986, p. 192.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, p. 42.
the region. The significant changes now underway in broader East-West populations, and the additional implications these undoubtedly carry for the whole arms control agenda, must lead France to the fundamental reappraisal of her position. It will jeopardise whatever other intentions France has for New Caledonia and French Polynesia, which depend, now more than ever on neighbourhood goodwill.

It must be acknowledged that French awareness of the region, specially in terms of scientific and technological attainment, can make a substantial contribution. Generous French aid support both directly and through the EC channel is an important factor, and is welcomed in several Pacific island countries. These positive elements deserve emphasis, though assistance of a military nature to Fiji is not a welcome development.

**United States**

American attitudes to, and involvement in, the Pacific Island region will be shaped by events on the larger global agenda as well as in the wider Pacific and Asian region. The US has then disposed to rely upon Australia to play a leading part in the region, and has encouraged Japan to develop a more positive Pacific Island Policy.

The interaction between the US and the Pacific Island region is enhanced through the accession to Forum membership in 1987 of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI). While both FSM and RMI retain, under their compacts with the US, a special tie with Washington, both countries have deliberately set out to diversify their relationships so as to reduce the heavy dependency. Both are looking southwards, and seek to employ their membership of the Forum to enhance their international standing as well as their credentials as constructive contributors in the Pacific
Island region. There are however differences between the approaches they adopt.50

In other American Pacific territories there are developments also similar to the situation elsewhere in the contemporary Pacific Island region. The greater assertion of indigenous people's aspirations in Guam and the growing Polynesian renaissance in Hawaii are two such examples, as are the moves by Guam and the Northern Marianas to achieve some measure of greater political autonomy.51

In Palau it is difficult to prejudge the pace and direction of further political evolution. A certain 'Compact fatigue' was prevalent after the unsuccessful seventh vote on the adoption of the Compact. Palau is however, notably keen to develop Pacific relations southwards.52

Japan

The arrival of Japan as an outside power with an articulated policy towards the Pacific Island region is the most significant new development of recent years. The region will never rank high in the Japanese order of priorities but the marine resources of the region (fish and mineral) and in the area to the South, including Antarctica, lend a substance to Japan's interest.

Japan has now established itself as the number one aid donor to the region. Its aid mechanisms, delivery systems and scale of economic development thinking are better adjusted to larger economic partners, than to the micro-states of the Pacific. Japan itself recognises the need and therefore to proceed judiciously. It has sought New Zealand and Australian views about how best to establish and maintain aid relationships.53

51 Ibid. p. 51
53 Ibid. p. 72.
All will not necessarily be plain sailing in the further development of relations between Japan and the Pacific Island region. Differences in the area of marine resource management over the Driftnet Ban Convention and over the negotiation of a multilateral fishing treaty, illustrate there are sensitive issues. The Pacific Island region must use quiet diplomacy to convince Japan that it is in the shared interest to manage marine resources in the Pacific Island region to the mutual advantage of both sides. Patience and care will be needed.

It is not yet clear how far Japan will be prepared to fund regional agencies or institutions whose work might produce outcomes that are then viewed unfavourably by Japan. On the other hand, by funding only specific projects or programmes with which it is comfortable, Japan (and, indeed, other external powers) runs the risk of appearing to try to set the regional agendas of the agencies or institutions concerned. Moreover by making contributions to an agency conditional upon membership of that agency (such as SPC) Japan may also appear to be wanting to influence outcomes.

**Soviet Union / Russia**

The Russia, as a Pacific littoral power, has a legitimate interest in the Pacific Island region. This interest, to date, has been largely confined to fishing agreements, which have not prospered. The Russians have not sought to extend aid in the region, and given the foreseeable preoccupations of Moscow, are unlikely to be in a position to change that. The establishment of the first Soviet diplomatic mission on the ground in the region, in PNG, is a new departure. It is an open issue whether this in itself presages new reinvigorated Russian interest in the region. Superpower rivalry of the old kind is a diminishing phenomenon in the world. There is no reason to suppose it will suddenly emerge in the Pacific Island region at this point in time.

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54 Paul Kennedy, n.31, p. 162.
In the medium term, interest from South East Asia in the region can be expected to grow, although bigger and more important concerns in the wider Asian and Pacific Basin spheres mean the Pacific Island region will never command priority attention. Indonesia has demonstrated interest in expanding ties, and PNG does constitute a bridge between the region and Indonesia. Economic factors, including the development of fisheries industries in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, indicate that the South East Asian connection will grow. Further afield, India's growing military power will be an additional factor regional governments will need to take into account.

Other Interests

The region is subject to transnational influence that stem from foreign investment and tax haven policies, missionary activity by some of the newer religions or cults, exposure to TV and the products of other communications technology, drugs and the more baleful effects of tourism. The potentially disruptive effects of unscrupulous financiers and business people are a matter of particular concern. None of this is unique to the Pacific Island region although its impact upon the remoter island groups has probably been as direct as anywhere else in the world. Some of these newer influences pose obvious and increasing strains on the economic and social stability of the societies concerned.

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