Soviet front organizations in the region, remain. The documentation is illustrative rather than comprehensive. There is an occasional lack of coherence, as a diplomat and analyst schooled in the cold war era grapples with changing global and regional circumstances. Presumably he would have remedied some of these deficiencies had circumstances permitted.

The last time I saw John Dorrance, at a conference in 1989, he remarked that he sometimes found it difficult to do justice to the character and complexity of Pacific Island politics and simultaneously make his message comprehensible and relevant to Washington. In this book, another tension is that between the author’s commitment to accuracy and balance and his preoccupations as a former diplomat and a patriot. Dorrance tells the truth, but not always the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is a tribute to his knowledge, wisdom, and skill however that these tensions surface only intermittently. I do not share his apparent assumption that more sensitive American diplomacy and policies can resolve all the conflicts that may emerge between the island countries and the United States. Nonetheless this book, as well as being of great interest and value to students of regional affairs, offers many insights and much useful advice to Washington policy-makers.

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In Greek mythology, sailing between Scylla and Charybdis required skillful navigation and, traditionally, a little luck, because few survived. Steve Hoadley attempted a contemporary intellectual equivalent of this feat when he undertook to produce a readable general reference text on the international relations of the South Pacific. On one side he faced the broad rocky shoals of travelogue superficiality on which prowled the hungry six-headed Scylla, while on the other side lay the danger of a pedantic preoccupation with minutiae waiting to suck the unlucky author into the devouring maelstrom of Charybdis. Hoadley deserves credit for accepting the risky charter and congratulations for making the passage successfully.

*The South Pacific Foreign Affairs Handbook* is a reference book and therefore necessarily a compendium of facts. However, compiling current data about any issue from all twenty-two political entities in the ambit covered by the handbook is such an enduring problem that virtually all the region’s rich ecology of regional organizations include it as a central activity in their terms of reference. Hoadley acknowledges the reality of this challenge, and his ability to draw such a quantity of useful and useable data together is one of the real strengths of this work. For a
lay audience, these facts are likely to be more readable, and therefore accessible, than those in the classic Pacific Islands Yearbook with which it might be said to compete. Yet drawing this comparison identifies one of the potential weaknesses of the handbook as well. A book of facts inevitably becomes dated. Circumstances change, and the pace of change in the contemporary Pacific has been dramatic. Unless regular updates of this work are undertaken, the handbook will prove to have been only a snapshot of the region at the turn of this decade.

Hoadley does not intend the handbook to be read solely as a book of facts. He also wishes to convey an angle on his data: He hopes the handbook will help readers to interpret the foreign affairs of the Pacific from the perspective of the island governments. In pursuing this objective, Hoadley advances his aim to make the work more readable insofar as he gives the work a purpose. The challenge to the non-island reader to transcend conventional wisdom and look at the needs and opportunities of the regional states from their perspective adds considerable spice to otherwise bland facts. Nevertheless, unless this island perspective has some commonality to give it coherence, it becomes merely a shorthand for diverse attitudes, beliefs, and desires of polities that happen to be geographically proximate. Hoadley does not resolve this question for, although he appears to assume some useful commonality, he also acknowledges and documents the region's diversity. Perhaps there is a strong case for a concluding chapter to draw together the implications of all the country studies provided after the initial generalizations were made. The absence of this chapter makes the handbook appear to peter out rather more tamely than Hoadley's promise of an island perspective would have suggested.

Technically, the handbook is well presented, with ample tables and encapsulated chronologies to enable ready access to its extensive detail. An extensive index also contributes to the ease of access to the data. A greater use of maps would have added significantly to the book, however, and should be considered in any second edition. Nonetheless, the work meets very well the demand for some concise compendium on the foreign relations of the South Pacific. As the back cover advises, the handbook will appeal to officials, academics, and business people. It will also find a market, I believe, among serious travelers who simply want to be better factually grounded and deepen their enjoyment of what they experience while visiting the region.

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