

systems. Yet perhaps the major theme of the book is the way official land-tenure systems, probably not surprisingly, have been unable to adapt to the strains of commercialization of agriculture, the monetization of many economic relations, and population growth and dispersal. People have adopted their own practices, such as leasing, which are frequently illegal but often hark back to precolonial practices. Such practices have allowed limited, and rarely uncontentious, accommodation of new commercial demands and aspirations within broadly communal structures. Reform of the legal structures of land tenure may be necessary, and pressing, in response, yet it will not come without considerable social upheaval and political conflict.

This is an excellent book. The richness of its case study material is complemented by the depth of its thematic analyses and the quality of its presentation. It is not suitable as a textbook, and its hardcover format and cost may keep it off most private bookshelves. But it deserves to be a standard reference work on land tenure in the Pacific Islands, and its central concerns are likely to endure as relevant issues well into the twenty-first century.

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The Pacific Island States: Security and Sovereignty in the Post-Cold War World, by Stephen Henningham. London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1995. ISBN 0-312-12513, xxiii + 174 pages, tables, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US\$59.95; NZ\$140.00.

The twenty-first century has been widely predicted to be the century of the Pacific—in contrast to the twentieth century's focus on the Atlantic, and the earlier concentration on the Mediterranean. If indeed the world's economic, security, and environmental concerns take on a Pacific focus there will be a growing need to expand the past preoccupation with the Pacific rim states to include the many small island states that occupy the central Pacific. Although most are tiny in land area and population, they have vast maritime economic zones, which are likely to grow in both economic and strategic significance. This important study—the first single-authored book-length analysis of the international relations of the Pacific Island states—makes an impressive contribution to the process of understanding the challenges and tensions of the region. It should be of interest not just to students of Pacific Island politics and foreign policy—for whom it is essential reading—but also to all who are concerned about future developments in the world's largest and most dynamic ocean.

Stephen Henningham is well qualified to provide this analysis. He has made a career of Pacific Island affairs, dividing his time between Australian government and academic positions. He has served as a diplomat, analyst in

the Office of National Assessments, and researcher at the Australian National University.

Henningham's combination of practical experience and scholarship combine to provide for a cautious and somewhat pessimistic assessment. While he expresses his hope that Pacific Island states "will become more economically self-reliant, will enjoy improved living standards, will adapt their culture and traditions creatively to changing circumstances, will maintain more or less liberal-democratic forms of government, and will protect their natural environment," he recognizes that tensions between these goals makes their realization difficult and, for most Pacific Island states, unlikely. Certainly the record to date has been one of foreign aid—crucial to maintaining living standards—producing dependency rather than self-reliance. The region is enjoying a cultural renaissance, but its political expression may take the form of increasing challenges to "foreign" liberal-democratic forms of government, which may be justified by claims of restoring traditional authority structures. There may also be a growing number of attempts to secede from the "artificial" structure of states whose boundaries reflect the convenience of former colonial powers rather than realities of culture and geography. Finally, to return to Henningham's points, while major environmental threats come from outside the region, there are examples of island governments sanctioning the unsustainable exploitation of resources.

The book provides an excellent discussion of these major challenges, the

serious nature of which leads Henningham to conclude that the region could produce its own African-style "failed states." However he also foresees—but does not specify—"one or two" success stories, "though not without conflicts and upheavals along the way."

For all of its problems, the region has the very real advantage of being largely free of direct external threats. The fact that the island states consider their security mainly in economic and environmental terms helps to underline the absence of the sort of military threats that face many countries in other parts of the world. The end of the cold war further reduces the possibility of such threats developing.

Papua New Guinea's troubled relations with its neighbors is the exception. The long and bloody civil war over the future of Bougainville has spilled over into the Solomon Islands. The book covers the background to the conflict and past efforts to resolve it, but foresees no early resolution. A promising regional initiative was undertaken in 1994, when, with Australian and New Zealand assistance, a Pacific Island peacekeeping force, made up of troops from Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu, was assembled, but was unable to carry out its work. The prospects for regional peacekeeping and conflict resolution are subjects that warrant further close analysis, which Henningham's short book was not able to provide. If the region is unable to resolve its own problems, outside powers may be tempted to intervene.

As Henningham recognizes, a regional approach is important in order to avoid the impression—real or unreal—that Australia and New

Zealand wish to form the regional police force. In any case, there are, as the title of one of the most interesting chapters encapsulates, severe “limits on power” of either country to determine events. This was well illustrated at the time of the 1987 coups in Fiji.

However, Henningham’s account of New Zealand’s response is misleading. He cites senior New Zealand military officers as being concerned about possible resistance from Fiji’s “well trained and well equipped” army to New Zealand’s plans to dispatch a small force in response to the hijacking of an Air New Zealand aircraft and concern about the safety of New Zealand nationals. This reviewer worked as an adviser to New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange at the time, and I can report that there never was any intention to dispatch the small number of troops without clearances from Fiji authorities, which in effect meant the colonel who ran the coup, Sitiveni Rabuka. There certainly was never any New Zealand intention to seek to reverse the coup by force. The point is an important one, as Henningham records the assertion of Fiji’s current president, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, that Australia and New Zealand would have invaded Fiji if they had not been dissuaded by the island governments. At least as regards New Zealand, this is nonsense. It is also very damaging, as it portrays a New Zealand seeking to impose its will on island neighbors, rather than playing a constructive role in the Pacific Island community of states. In hindsight, Lange’s rhetoric condemning the coup may have been excessive, but it was as necessary for New Zealand to pro-

claim its defense of democratic rights as it was for Rabuka to affirm indigenous rights.

One of the problems of Henningham’s chapter on Australia’s and New Zealand’s relations with the region is that it tends to assume a greater overlap of interests and concerns than actually exists. The book is, unashamedly, an Australian analysis (although a useful attempt is made to include Pacific Island perspectives). Australia sees itself as a “middle power,” and remains preoccupied with its close Asian neighbors. New Zealand’s smaller size, remoteness, and significant Polynesian population give it an identity with Pacific Island concerns not shared by Australia. My own prediction is that New Zealand—but not Australia—will increasingly come to see itself—and be accepted—as a Pacific Island state.

The book concludes with a reflective chapter on the region’s “uncertain” future. This will increasingly involve a greater interaction with Asia as Pacific Island governments “look north.” The “new assertiveness” of Pacific Island leaders is noted, and it is likely that they will increasingly insist on making their own decisions on future directions. Stephen Henningham has provided a most useful analysis of the range of issues and pressures the region’s leaders will confront. They will need help and understanding from their neighbors in both the south and the north.

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