Note: This is an accepted manuscript submitted to Routledge. The published version can be seen at:

- Lai-Ha Chan, 'Australia and New Zealand in the Indo-Pacific: How and Why the Pacific Islands Look to Authoritarian China?', in Lai-Ha Chan & Pak K. Lee (eds), *China-US Great-Power Rivalry: The Competitive dynamics of Order-Building in the Indo-Pacific* (Routledge, 2024), Chapter 4, pp. 65-90.

Australia and New Zealand in the Indo-Pacific: How and Why the Pacific Islands Look to Authoritarian China?

Lai-Ha Chan

University of Technology Sydney, Australia

Abstract

As a consequence of the Radford-Collins Agreement of 1951, Australia and New Zealand have assumed a special responsibility for the security and stability of the South Pacific. Amid the geopolitical competition between China and the US in the region, however, Australia and New Zealand have in the past few years lost their overwhelming influence on the South Pacific to China. In face of this challenge, the US has stepped up its engagement with the South Pacific states in order to fill the political vacuum left by these two Australasian leading states. This chapter discusses why Pacific island countries (PICs) have recently developed cosy relations with China, which includes the 2022 Solomon Islands-China security pact, although Canberra and Wellington have recalibrated their Pacific strategy in the hope of drawing them back into the fold of the regional 'liberal' order. It argues that Australia's and New Zealand's 'superior' Western identity and their non-commitment to the Blue Pacific – driven by their domestic economic interests and conservative ideologies – have pushed PICs to look to China's assistance. The regional island states perceive the great-power competition as an opportunity to have their voice and concerns over climate change heard and China as a third policy option other than relying asymmetrically on the condescending 'big brothers' of Australia and New Zealand.

Key words: Australia and New Zealand; Authoritarian China; Free and Open Indo-Pacific; South Pacific; Radford-Collins Agreement; Blue Pacific

Australia and New Zealand in the Indo-Pacific:
How and Why the Pacific Islands Look to Authoritarian China?

When the construction of a Chinese loan-funded port in Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, suspected to serve as a Chinese military base, was reported in 2018, Canberra and Wellington seemed to wake up to the threats that China has stepped into the South Pacific and rocked up their leadership position in the region. Four years later, a secret draft security agreement between China and Solomon Islands, also in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, leaked to social media in March 2022 (Tuilaepa-Taylor, 2022), caused a series of rolling billows over the Tasman Sea. Both Australia and New Zealand were shocked and outraged by the extension of China's geopolitical influence into their 'backyard'. Three weeks later, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the agreement, which would allow China to deploy police and military forces on the Islands, was signed (Nanau, 2022). Then-New Zealand foreign affairs minister, Nanaia Mahuta, bluntly stated that the deal showed Australia and New Zealand were suffering a 'relationship failure' with Solomon Islands (McClure T. , 2022). The Australian Labor Party, then the Opposition party, criticized the ruling Coalition government for being responsible for 'the worst Australian foreign policy blunder in the Pacific' since 1945 (ABC News, 2022). Besides, it was argued that the Solomon Islands government has become hooked on external security assistance due to the 'failures in Australia and New Zealand policy' (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022, p. 480) and that Australia would need to 're-imagine' its strategies in the Pacific (Wallis, 2021a). All in all, fingers were pointing at Canberra and Wellington's failures to exclude China from the Australasian regional order. At issue is how these 'failures' have taken place in the two states and how and why the Pacific island countries (PICs) have gradually shifted away from their age-old partnerships with Australia and New Zealand, which have historically built and maintained a regional liberal order, and instead looked to China.

According to the liberal international order (LIO)'s proponents, the LIO is supposed to be a modern 'rules-based' order, which can be understood as 'an attempt by a community of like-minded democratic states to "domesticate" the international system'. Based on a 'clear set of rules', the democratic states try to prevent 'revisionist behaviour' on the part of new rival (authoritarian) powers. The LIO envisions 'a democratically inspired and commercially linked world' to replace the illiberal practices of imperialism and economic protectionism. But advanced democratic states, according to LIO advocates, are distinct by nature from colonial

empires (Porter, 2020, pp. 34-35). After the end of the Cold War, there emerges liberal discourses of liberal democracy and human rights as the new standards of 'civilization' (Donnelly, 1998), with the world being divided broadly into 'liberal' and 'non-liberal' zones, based on states' domestic political systems and ideologies. This binary hierarchical division has justified external military/humanitarian intervention into non-Western 'rogue'/'pariah' states by the more 'civilized' 'liberal' Western powers (Reus-Smit, 2005). The 'concert of democracies' is believed to be a natural defender and vanguard of the LIO (Zhang Y. , 2021, p. 1440).

While the expansion of the LIO is regarded as a progressive movement by the protagonists of the LIO, the diffusion of the LIO to less developed, non-Westernized and post-colonial states may be regarded by the latter as not so benign but as 'colonial'/'imperial' or even 'racist'. International order *per se* is an unequal, hierarchical political formation (Heritage & Lee, 2020, p. 6). As critics of the LIO assert, ordering itself is 'an inherently imperial undertaking' in the sense that the Western hegemon exercises dominance over subordinate states' domestic politics either in the foreground or the background (Porter, 2020, p. 21). This was echoed by the late Andrew Linklater, who pointed out that 'international society has outgrown Europe but it has not exactly outgrown European or Western civilisation' (Linklater, 2015, p. 42). Sovereign equality, in practice, is a privilege enjoyed by recognized in-group – mainly European or Western – members of the LIO only.

Looking from the PIC perspective on the hierarchical nature of the Australasian 'liberal' order, this article asks: why do Canberra and Wellington fail to exclude China's influence from their traditional 'sphere of influence' in the South Pacific? Why do PICs instead look to an illiberal China for security protection? More importantly, can both Australia and New Zealand, with the recalibration of their Pacific strategy – namely, Australia's Pacific Step-up and New Zealand's Pacific Reset/Resilience – draw the South Pacific states back into the fold of the regional 'liberal' order? Can Australia and New Zealand work in collaboration with US Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy to create a South Pacific 'safe for democracy'?

'Big Brothers' with 'Advanced' Anglo-Saxon National Identities

Contemporary Pacific states were European and American colonies after European settlement which can be dated to the sixteenth century. The colonial rule did not come to an end swiftly after 1945. For example, Fiji did not achieve independence from the United Kingdom (UK)

until 1970. Papua New Guinea (PNG) was under Australian administration after the outbreak of World War I for almost 60 years until gaining independence in 1975. Solomon Islands were granted sovereign independence by the UK in 1978.

As the largest donors to the island states in the South Pacific Ocean, Australia and New Zealand were used to be the dominant powers in the region. Compared to other members in the 'Pacific family', Australia and New Zealand have far more material resources and higher GDP. While Australia is by far the largest aid donor to the Pacific region, New Zealand is also one of the top five donors. Their development aid and support to the Pacific island countries range from education and health to security and disaster relief. Combined together, they account for 26 to 36 per cent of total development aid that the South Pacific islands states received each year (Lowy Institute, 2023). Among the 'Pacific family', they are often portrayed as 'big brothers' in the region.

Geographically Australia and New Zealand are in the South Pacific (see Map 1), however, their national identities were constructed differently from other South Pacific member states. As English-speaking countries, Australia and New Zealand formed their national identities through their membership of the Anglo-Saxon international order. Their wealth and national identity set them apart from other island countries in the South Pacific. Their engagement with PICs is largely driven by a strategic imperative to maintain control over the islands, geographically close to their borders, as well as to deny those islands being controlled by other external powers (White, 2019; Morgan, 2021). During the Cold War, Australia served as a strategic partner in the US Pacific Theatre. Its connections with 'the Pacific Ocean are not central to Australian identity in the same way they are for Pacific island countries' (Morgan, 2021, p. 32). Apart from signing the ANZUS Treaty, setting up the security relations among Australia, New Zealand and the United States, they also have the 1951 Radford-Collins agreement at the operational level.

The Radford-Collins Agreement is not a treaty but a working level agreement between allies. It was designed to be a practical arrangement between the United States Navy and the navies of Australia, New Zealand and Malaya (ANZAM). The Agreement has specifically divided up the areas of maritime responsibility between the US and ANZAM to ensure the free flow of maritime trade in the event of war. While the Agreement covers all of areas in the Pacific Ocean and most of the Indian Ocean, Australia's responsibility is specified to the maritime security in

the southwest Pacific under the Agreement (Stevens, 2022; Morgan, 2021; Brown, n.d.). As a result, Australia is not only deemed as the regional power in the South Pacific but also self-perceives as the regional leader, having a 'superior' identity and status towards its neighbours. Throughout the Cold War era, its engagement with the island states mainly focused on geostrategic concerns. However, this 'superior' identity has directly impacted on its relations with the Pacific Island states. For political leaders of Australia and New Zealand, it is 'normal' for them to treat the South Pacific as their own sphere of influence and try to 'enlighten' their Pacific neighbours from the 'more civilized' Anglo-Saxon families.

How Australia and New Zealand Lose Influence within Their 'Pacific Family'?

Prompted by the uncertainties over Indonesia's future and East Timor's unclear path to independence in the late 1990s, the Australian government claimed that the country was facing an 'arc of instability' to its north. This 'arc' metaphor also encapsulated Australia's growing concerns about the security challenges facing Melanesia, a subregion in Oceania which comprises the arc of islands to the immediate north and east of Australia, PNG and Solomon Islands (Wallis, 2015; Ayson, 2007) (see Map 1). As the regional leaders bound by the Radford-Collins Agreement, Canberra and Wellington claim to have a special responsibility for the security and stability of the South Pacific. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) (2003-2017) was a good example to show their self-identification as important members in the region and taking its regional sphere of responsibility.

'Helpem Fren' or Maintaining Regional Sphere of Responsibility

A former British protectorate until 1978, Solomon Islands, like Australia and New Zealand, are a constitutional monarchy with Queen Elizabeth II (and now King Charles III) as the monarch. However, unlike Australia and New Zealand, the country has been torn by long-standing internal social and economic disparities which have generated domestic tensions among different groups. Civil unrests happen constantly. An ASPI policy report in early 2003 designated Solomon Islands as a 'failed state' because 'over the past five years [1998-2003], a slow-burning political and security crisis has paralyzed the country's capital, stifled its economic, disrupted government, discouraged aid donors, and inflicted suffering and hardship on its people' (Wainwright, 2003, p. 3). While 'failed' states were identified by Washington as a major threat to international order and security (United States, 2002), Australia was particularly concerned that South Pacific states would be vulnerable to terrorists or

transnational criminal groups (DFAT, 2004). The ASPI report concluded that it would be in Australia's interests to 'rehabilitate the country' (Wainwright, 2003, p. 41).

Besides, during the time when the United States and more broadly the international community were engaged in the Global War on Terror in the Middle East, the Howard government wanted to bolster Australia's reputation 'by being seen to maintain order in its regional sphere of responsibility' (Halvorson, 2013, p. 439). After receiving a letter, requesting Australia's assistance, from Solomon Islands prime minister Sir Allan Kemakeza on 22 April 2003, Canberra decided to intervene in the Solomon Islands crisis (Curran, 2023). The Howard government initially did not want to involve the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and planned to undertake the operation unilaterally. It was New Zealand's Helen Clark, who chaired the PIF that year, negotiated hard with the Howard government and convinced Canberra that intervention should have the approval and involvement of the regional Forum and its member states as many as possible, including the host country. Eventually Canberra agreed with Clark's proposal (Baker, 2015, p. 142).

RAMSI is the first-ever mission under the auspices of the PIF's Biketawa Declaration. It was a regional accord, signed by seven Forum countries, including Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, PNG, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Samao in the wake of five years of civil unrest in Solomon Islands in 2003. A parallel name of RAMSI is the '*Operation Helpem Fren*', which means 'help a friend' in Pidgin and was proposed by the mission in Honiara and accepted by Canberra (Wesley, 2023, p. 77). It was the largest armed intervention undertaken by Australia in the South Pacific. The mission combined a military component, with a police-building and the promotion of the rule of law and good governance as key objectives (Fraenkel, Madraiwiwi, & Okole, 2014). It consisted over 2300 personnel from different countries but most of them from Australia.

However, after 14 years of mission and despite all the acclamation by politicians during the end of this mission in 2017, Australia's leadership in RAMSI constantly attracted criticism as neo-colonialism, imposing its own agenda to its Pacific neighbours (Wallis, 2016; Fry & Tarte, 2016). From the local perspective, Clive Moore (2008, p. 401) argues that success of state-building in Melanesia relies on awareness of local conditions; conversely, 'RAMSI and Australia continue to show very little consciousness of local circumstances and still insist that their international "best practice" is suitable for the Solomon Islands'. Likewise, according to

Michael Wesley (2007, p. 185), RAMSI is 'ultimately a parable of a conservative government seduced by a radical belief in the capacity of wealthy, developed societies to remake the world beyond their shores in their own image'. In the wake of the Solomon Islands-China security pact in 2022, Jon Fraenkel, who led an independent review team examining RAMSI for the Solomon Islands government and the PIF in 2014[1], and his collaborator provide a blunter assessment about RAMSI, arguing that China got the opportunity to step in Solomon Islands mainly due to the failure of RAMSI mission and the 'failures in Australia and New Zealand policy' (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022, p. 480). This failure could be seen from two areas.

First, during the 14-year RAMSI mission, Australia treated PIF as 'an irritant and a nuisance' (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022, p. 481) and never had the intention to engage with the Pacific states via a regional architecture. As the major aid donors to other members of the Forum, Australia and New Zealand often dominated the agenda and undermined regional cooperation. Worse, in 2017 Australia abandoned this regional approach to Pacific security and replaced RAMSI with a bilateral treaty between Australia and Solomon Islands. Under this bilateral treaty, Australia provides Solomon Islands with Assisting Defence force and Assisting Police Force (DFAT, 2017). However, according to the Solomon Islands constitution, signing of international treaties does not require parliament's approval; Australia has set a bad precedent by skipping parliamentary enquiry in this regard. Australia is now paying a heavy price for its abandonment of a regional multilateral approach and has opened the door to other powers seeking to sign bilateral treaties with individual Pacific states. The 2022 Solomon Islands-China pact has not only underlined the deficiencies of Australia-led RAMSI mission but also showed that China is simply to 'follow suit', signing the deal with the Sogavare administration without the need for approval by the parliament (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022, p. 481).

Secondly, from a state-building perspective, Australia failed to build a sustainable and capable police force in Solomon Islands. According to the Sogavare government, the security deal with China in 2022 was primarily in response to the unrests and repeated riots in the capital in November 2021. For Sogavare, the most pressing risk is not Chinese military stationed in Honiara but without enough police officers to handle urban uprisings (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022). Scholars both inside and outside the South Pacific echo with Sogavare and argues that the security deal is about local needs, not geopolitics (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022; Nanau, 2022). The

[1] The independent report can be seen in Fraenkel et al. (2014).

restoration of stability and security in Solomon Islands require a strong and capable police force.

In fact, one of the key missions of RAMSI was on police-building project. However, most of the RAMSI missions were organized and done by Australian military and police officers, with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) hardly involved. RSIPF was not only pushed aside, but also described by their Australian counterpart as 'too corrupt to participate in RAMSI's operations' (Fraenkel, 2017). This condescending treatment has put RSIPF in low esteem. Accordingly, two-thirds of the original RSIPF staff were either retired, arrested, dismissed or decommissioned over the initial RAMSI decade, replacing them with young and inexperienced police force. Towards the end of the mission, RAMSI failed to equip RSIPF with capacity in managing social unrest independently. Scholars have pointed out that for those who interpret the Solomon Islands-China security deal in the context of geo-political rivalries is missing a key element about the domestic context (Fraenkel & Smith, 2022; Nanau, 2022). Obviously, RAMSI is not a shining example of successful state-building, but rather a case that has showed the 'big brothers' – Australia and New Zealand – failed their 'Pacific family'.

Non-Commitment to the 'Blue Pacific'[2]

For a long time and as far as climate change was concerned, both Australia and New Zealand have been accused of being 'out of step with the region' (Hayward-Jones, 2015). Their relationship was further deteriorated by the Australian centre-right Liberal-National coalition government's reluctance to tackle climate change during its reign in 2013-22. During the 2015 PIF, held in Port Moresby, PNG, the island states claimed that climate change has become a direct threat to their security and demanded from all members of the PIF for a policy position that would restrict global warming to 1.5 degree. Neither of the conservative ruling parties in Australia and New Zealand at that time agreed that climate change was a matter of urgency. Differences on climate change have prompted anger and frustration among PICs. Kiribati

[2] Most PICs have exclusive economic zones (EEZs) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, making them cover vast swaths of the Pacific Ocean (see Map 1). When Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele outlined the Blue Pacific concept at the UN Oceans Conference in New York in 2017, he stressed that all countries in the region are inseparable with the Pacific Ocean. The region's way of life, cultural and historical identity are directly linked with the ocean. Pacific Islanders feel they are the custodians of the world's largest oceanic continent and their leadership on issues related to the continent should be respected. The concept of 'Blue Pacific' is an attempt to rebrand the PICs' identity as large ocean states – a collection of individual states and a single, interconnected entity (Wyeth, 2018; Storey, n.d.). In the 2019 PIF meeting in Tuvalu, Forum leaders supported the development of *the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* and this Strategy was eventually endorsed in the 2022 PIF as a guiding principle for the Pacific (Pacific Islands Forum, n.d.).

President Anote Tong even suggested that Australia should leave the organization if it failed to take stronger action and would not support their positions in the global climate talks (Lawson, 2017, p. 215). Nevertheless, Australia and New Zealand eventually and successfully blocked any reference to the 1.5-degree goal in the 2015 PIF. This has forced Pacific leaders to bypass the PIF and issued their own regional climate declarations through the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) (Morgan, 2021, p. 39). PIDF, initiated by Fiji in 2013, is an island-only body, excluding both Australia and New Zealand.

Shortly after the PIF in Port Moresby, then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and his ministers held a community roundtable on the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Parliament House. While waiting for the meeting, the then Immigration Minister Peter Dutton privately spoke to Abbott that the meeting was running on 'Cape York Time'.[3] Abbot replied, 'we had a bit of that up in Port Moresby'. Dutton continued his joke, saying that 'Time doesn't mean anything when you're about to have water lapping at your door' (Medhora, 2015). This insensitive climate joke was supposedly a private conversation with Abbott but was unexpectedly being caught by a boom microphone of the mass media. Dutton's 'bad joke' not only offended Indigenous people in Australia but also Australia's Pacific neighbouring states. Indigenous leaders slammed Abbott and Dutton, calling them as 'soft bigotry', 'racist' and 'disrespectful'. '[D]ismayed' by Australian ministers' 'insensitivity', leaders of the Pacific island states also strongly criticized Dutton of his 'moral irresponsibl[e]' climate joke (News.com.au, 2015).

The discord between Australia and other Pacific Islands states over climate change was reaffirmed in the 2019 PIF in Tuvalu. Battling rising sea levels and related problems, the low-lying Pacific islands called for an immediate global ban on the construction of new coal-fired power plants and coal mines, and for all countries' rapidly phasing out the use of coal. As the world's largest coal exporter, Australia insisted that all references to coal be removed from the communique issued by the Forum.[4] In addition, Australia also tried to water down the climate language by replacing the term of 'climate change crisis' with 'climate change reality' in the communique. During the twelve-hour stand-off in the Forum meeting, the then Prime Minister

[3] Cape York time is a reference to the stereotype that people in remote and Indigenous communities in Australia take a fluid approach to punctuality (Hasham, 2015).
[4] Across the Tasman Sea, New Zealand's Labour government has since 2018 been committed to being carbon neutral and legislated a net-zero emissions target for 2050, which set Wellington apart from Canberra in the eyes of Pacific leaders.

Morrison repeatedly reminded Pacific countries of Australia's financial support for them and demanded that it be put 'on the record' (Lyons, 2019a). In a press conference, the then Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, indicated that he was 'annoyed' at calls that Australia should be shutting down all its coal sector so that Pacific islands '*can survive'*. He openly stated that 'they'll continue to survive on large aid assistance from Australian' and 'many of their workers come here and pick our fruit' (Smee, 2019) (emphasis added).[5]

This condescending manner, or even racist speech, had further widened the split between Australia and Pacific countries. There were again calls for Australia to be ousted from the PIF (Morgan, 2021). Prime minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, criticized Morrison's 'insulting' behaviour in Tuvalu, claiming that Australia's self-interested behaviour was pushing PICs closer to China. In his words, 'The Chinese don't insult us. They don't go down and tell the world that we've given this much money to the Pacific islands' (Lyons, 2019b). In a Greenpeace report, titled *Australia: Pacific Bully and International Outcast* (2021), Pacific Island leaders openly raised the issue of Australia using aid money to the Pacific as 'a bargaining chip to buy silence on climate change'. Canberra has been using this tactic in various PIFs; and have successfully diluted the PIF's official communique and blocked regional consensus on emission reduction in 2015, 2018 and 2019 (Edney-Browne, 2021). Former Tuvalu Prime Minister Bikenibeu Paeniu stated in 2021 that since he became the first Pacific leader to sign the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Australia's position on climate change has been 'highly un-human' and 'sadly, it is still the same today' (O'Malley & Perkins, 2021).

In the eyes of the Pacific states, China treats them more 'equally'. China's emergence in the South Pacific has also enabled the PICs to reduce their dependence on traditional donors. While Australia remained as the largest donor to the Pacific, between 2011 and 2019, China had already caught up as the second largest donor, offering development aid worth US$1.62 billion to the island states, well above New Zealand (Kollner, 2020, p. 3). Overall, Australia is unable to delegitimise Chinese inroads in the South Pacific because it refuses to align with the island states over their core interest, namely their existential survival due to climate change. In her

[5] Under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme, workers from 9 Pacific islands and Timor-Leste are allowed to work in Australia as seasonal workers. Most of them are hired by the industries that required low skilled and seasonal work, e.g. picking seasonal fruit. It is widely reported that many workers under the scheme were exploited by employers, receiving as little as nine dollars a day in unregulated, unsafe working environment. The scheme has been likened to 'modern slavery' and 'blackbirding' (Papworth, 2022).

keynote speech at the University of the South Pacific in Vanuatu in 2019, the then Secretary General of the PIF, Dame Meg Taylor, outlined that the region's top priority was to secure the future viability and wellbeing of the 'Blue Pacific'. While maintaining a 'friends-to-all' approach, she elaborated that "when considering the 'China alternative' in the region, I would argue that we must do so from the perspective of securing our future as the Blue Pacific continent" (Taylor, 2019). In reviewing the last 50 years' Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Declarations, Meg Keen (2021, p. 9), a Pacific islands expert, has concluded that 'Climate change has been recognized [by the PICs] as a major security challenge for over three decades. However, Australia's Pacific policy is largely driven by a strategic competition in the region. Its preferred framing is the 'Indo-Pacific', mainly about defence and security. This does not 'map' well onto their 'Blue Pacific' framing, which human and environmental security is the priority (Wallis, 2021, p. 488).

A former Australian diplomat also bluntly states that 'Australia's biggest foreign policy failure in the region– ever – is its failure to address … climate change' (Hooton, 2022). In addition, Australia's 'advanced' Anglo-Saxon national identity, viewing itself more 'superior' than its Pacific neighbours, does not help to integrate itself into the non-white 'Pacific family'. Australia is not viewed by the island states as a reliable partner for their existential battle with climate change (Doran, 2019). All in all, Canberra's climate policy and its 'advanced' Anglo-Saxon national identity has directly reduced its leverage in the South Pacific and that China has become the alternative for the region.

Chinese Belt and Road Initiative's 'intrusion' in the South Pacific

China's inroad in the Pacific originally aimed to compete with Taiwan for diplomatic recognition. Both governments engaged the region with their 'chequebook diplomacy', offering development aid in exchange for diplomatic recognition. Throughout those years, China has developed an extensive diplomatic presence in the South Pacific and become an official Dialogue Partner of the PIF since 1989. In 2006, the China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum, the highest-level bilateral dialogue mechanism on economy and trade, was established. President Xi Jinping also visited the region twice, to Fiji and PNG in 2014 and 2018 respectively; and held meetings with leaders of all PICs having diplomatic ties with China during his visits (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC, 2022). In Fiji, Xi invited the PICs to participate in China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI is the umbrella term for China's

US$1-trillion infrastructure projects, spanning more than 60 countries. It is a state-led model of economic development, stressing the role of infrastructure investment in the commanding heights of the Asian economy by state-owned or state-controlled enterprises (Author 2017; 2020).

In the South Pacific, China's development aid to the region has increased rapidly in the last few years. In 2014, China was the fourth largest donor in the region; however, in 2017 it rose to become the second largest donor in terms of money spent or the largest donor in terms of the aid money committed. In the financial year 2017-18, Beijing pledged four times more aid than Canberra to the Pacific Islands (Lyons, 2018; Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2018). By 2021, all 10 PICs that have diplomatic ties with Beijing had signed the BRI cooperation agreements with China (Parliament of Australia, n.d.). China's growing diplomatic and military presence in, and its economic and development assistance to, the region has not only provided opportunities to PICs but also enticed some of the Pacific countries into Beijing's orbit. For example, after Fijian Prime Minister Bainimarama attended the high-profile inaugural Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation – the only Pacific islands leader who attended the Forum – in Beijing in 2017, Bainimarama immediately received Beijing's consent to promote all-round cooperation with Fiji, including in support of Fiji's presidency of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s COP23 session in Bonn in November 2017 (Zhang D. , 2017/18). Financially, China also provided US$100,000 in support of Fiji's preparations for the presidency of the climate summit (Oxford Analytica, 2017).

With support from Beijing, Fiji's international profile received a huge boost in 2017, not only being the president of the UNFCCC's COP23 session but also the president of the UN General Assembly – the first time a PIC has held either role (Oxford Analytica, 2017). During the COVID-19 pandemic, China also provided Fiji with personal protective equipment (PPE) assistance, COVID vaccine supply and financial support. In 2020, China provided cash donation at least twice, US$300,000 in April and a further US$150,000 in December, to the Fijian Government in support of Fiji's response to COVID-19 and economic recovery efforts (Embassy of the PRC in Fiji, 2020a; Embassy of the PRC in Fiji, 2020b). From the Pacific perspective, China's assistance, especially infrastructure initiatives and cash donation, is tangible. When the Chinese Ambassador to Fiji, Qian Bo, presented Beijing's donation, he emphasized that 'China is a genuine friend of Fiji' (Embassy of the PRC in Fiji, 2020a). China's approach of respect, treating the Pacific island states as 'equal', is indeed an effective public

diplomacy and appeal to them. Many have concluded that the unpleasant experience with Australia and New Zealand have encouraged the PICs to choose China as an alternative. In their view, China – regardless of whether Canberra and Wellington like it or not – is here to stay (Wallis & Powles, 2023; Taylor, 2019).

Countering China's Diplomatic Influence: Strategic Denials and Pacific Step-Up/Reset

Beijing's ambitious BRI in the region constitutes a threat to Canberra's and Wellington's perceived primacy in the South Pacific. The US and its allies, Australia included, regard the BRI as a tool for China to exert and extend its influence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Maritime Silk Road, in particular, as China's 'strategic game' to control the Pacific island countries 'without consultation' (Medcalf, 2023, p. 9). To counter this China challenge, Australia and New Zealand respond with two contending strategies. Firstly, Australia and the West have tried to establish a 'China Threat' narrative. They contend that the Pacific security is under threat by their vulnerability to economic and political influence from China via its development aid; and that island states will be better off to remain webbed to traditional partners (Tarte, 2021, p. 2). The second strategy is to recalibrate their Pacific policy, offering more infrastructure development assistance to win back the Pacific islands' trust.

Ideologically the West, led by the US, has been framed the BRI as a form of 'debt-trap diplomacy'. They are worried that these debt traps will allow China to slowly build a network of strategic assets across the region. In 2018 Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, then Australia's International Development Minister, criticised China's development aid to the Pacific for being 'white elephants' (South China Morning Post, 2018). They warned that Pacific states would be sleepwalking into China's debt trap diplomacy and that China's political influence would have negative impact on their security. In contrast, traditional donors, including Australia, New Zealand, the US and Japan, could provide a more sustainable economic and development model (Tarte, 2021).

With the aim of providing an alternative to China's BRI across the Indo-Pacific, Australia joined the US and Japan on a trilateral partnership for infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific in 2018 (DFAT, Australian Government, 2018). A year later, this trilateral infrastructure fund was rebadged as a trilateral 'Blue Dot Network', which was announced on the sidelines of the 35th ASEAN summit in Thailand in 2019. Managed by the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the Japan Bank for International Cooperation and the

Australian DFAT, the Blue Dot Network is likened to a 'Michelin Guide', a rating system which grades restaurants on quality by providing stars for excellence, for Asian infrastructure investors (Japan Times, 2019). The US has committed US$17 billion to supporting infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific with about US$7 billion allocated to the Asian energy projects working with the Asian Development Bank (Kuper, 2019). What the Australia-Japan-US trilateral initiative emphasises is the need of quality and good investment standards (McCawley, 2019). Alluding to the claim of China's debt-trap diplomacy, the OPIC, which has been incorporated into the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), stated that this network would aim to 'promote *market-driven*, *transparent*, and *financially sustainable* infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region and around the world' (USDFC, 2019) (emphasis added).

In 2018, Canberra effectively forced the Chinese telecommunication giant, Huawei, out of a cable contract with Solomon Islands. The archipelagic state and PNG signed a deal with Huawei in late 2016, according to which the Chinese company would build a 4,000-kilometre undersea, high-speed telecommunications cable between the two Pacific states. After the Australian government stepped in and offered nearly AU$137 million to foot the bill, Solomon Islands eventually awarded the contract to Vocus, a Sydney-based Australian company, to manage the construction. Accordingly, DFAT would fund about two-thirds of the cost of the cable and an additional AU$2.8 million-scoping study fee has already been paid to Vocus (Doran & Dziedzic, 2018). However, just a few months later, despite Canberra's another counter-offer, PNG upheld its agreement with China's Huawei to lay a 5,457-km network of submarine cables linking its 14 coastal towns in the nation. The U-turn was seen as a crippling blow for Canberra's status in the Pacific (Westbrook, 2018).

Almost simultaneously Australia and New Zealand recalibrated their Pacific policy in 2016 and 2018 respectively. Australia and New Zealand share the strategic commitment to preserving and promoting a 'rules-based' international order in the South Pacific (Wallis & Powles, 2018, p. 2). As early as 2016, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced Australia's 'step-change' (later re-named the 'Pacific Step-up') in its engagement with the Pacific Islands during the 47th PIF in Micronesia. The *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper of Australia* devotes a whole chapter to the Pacific region and highlights that 'Stability in Papua New Guinea, the wider Pacific and Timor-Leste, for example, is vital to our ability to defend Australia's northern approaches, secure our borders and protect our exclusive economic zone'

(Australian Government, 2017, p. 99). However, the White Paper lacks specific details as to how Canberra 'steps up' its engagement with the region. Only after the revelation of the alleged construction of a Chinese loan-funded port in Vanuatu, did the Morrison government accelerate the Pacific Step-up initiative and provide more funding and details about how to engage with the island states. With more infrastructure assistance notwithstanding, this initiative has a strong security focus, aiming to make sure that the Pacific Islands would not embrace China.

Dubbed as 'Australia's own infant BRI' (Earl, 2021), the step-up involves a significant commitment to infrastructure building, including an AU$2 billion (US$1.4 billion) Australia Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific and an extra AU$1 billion (US$687 million) for the creation of the Office of the Pacific under DFAT. The main objective of this Office is to support Australia's deepening engagement with the Pacific as well as oversee the implementation of the 'Pacific Step-up' (DFAT, n.d.). In July 2020, Canberra released its defence strategic update, which mentions the 'step-up' seven times while naming China in a similar number, six times. It explicitly states that 'Since 2016, major powers have become more assertive … including China's active pursuit of greater influence' and its 'establishment of military bases' and that 'Australia must be an active and assertive advocate for stability, security and sovereignty *in our immediate region*' (Department of Defence, 2020, pp. 11, 25) (emphasis added).

New Zealand joined Australia's recalibration of its Pacific policy by launching its 'Pacific Reset' in 2018, which was also renamed 'Pacific Resilience' in 2022. Under the auspices of the Pacific Reset, the Pacific policy stresses Wellington's re-engagement with the Pacific with an aim of countering China's growing influence. Pacific Resilience also includes the effort on the collective interests in the region (Neas, 2022). It is an issues-based regional diplomacy and recognises the importance of climate action and disarmament, which aligns with PICs (Wallis & Powles, 2018). Under the Ardern government, Wellington's Pacific reset has shown a few divergences from Canberra's, especially on the priorities of climate policy.

However, although Wellington's Pacific Resilience and its climate policy has helped improve relations with PICs, its 'friendship' with Solomon Islands was seriously tested by the Solomon Islands-China security deal. The days before the deal was leaked on social media, Andrew Needs, a senior New Zealand diplomat, visited Honiara and met Sogavare. Yet, New Zealand had no clue about the deal and was 'caught off guard' by the unexpected news when it appeared

on social media (Powles & Wallis, 2022; Manch, 2022). This episode suggested that political leaders of Solomon Islands were keen to pursue the policy of multi-alignment, having security partners outside the traditional ones in the Oceania, and did not feel obligated to consult or inform New Zealand in advance of concluding the historic security agreement with China.

Creating a South Pacific 'Safe for Democracy'?

With their Pacific Step-up and Pacific Resilience, can Australia and New Zealand draw the PICs back into the fold of the regional 'liberal' order and create a South Pacific 'safe for democracy'? During the Trump administration, the US has indicated in its *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report* that the Pacific Islands plays a 'critical' role in 'the U.S. strategy in fostering a free and open Indo-Pacific' (DoD, 2019, pp. 40-42). With their broader concerns over geostrategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, Australia and New Zealand have been lining up with Washington's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.

On the other hand, China's recent attempt to create a bloc of 'China-Pacific Island' countries during Foreign Minister Wang Yi's eight-country Pacific tour in May 2022 was a sign of Beijing's ambition to redraw the region's geopolitical map. Although Pacific states rejected a sweeping regional economic and security pact with China, almost a dozen of bilateral agreements, focusing on economy, health, disaster response, and technology, were signed with PICs during Wang's tour (RNZ, 2022). The United States Institute for Peace, a US Congress-funded think tank, warned in a 2022 report that China's deepening engagement with the Pacific Islands mainly aims to enhance its power projection, with a particular eye on the US military. Beijing seeks access to ports and exclusive economic zones, and increases its intelligence gathering and surveillance capabilities across the region in order to counter US interests. The report recommends Washington to strengthen relations with South Pacific to '[constrain] China's force projection and [maintain] free and open maritime corridors in the Indo-Pacific' (USIP, 2022, pp. 8-9).

While there is no clear-cut answer as to who is winning, China's increasing outreach has silently been extended to the ordinary population in the South Pacific. After receiving funding from China, Solomon Islands' longest-running newspaper, *Solomon Star*, pledged that it would promote 'truth' about China's 'generosity' towards the Islands. Although this has raised questions about the paper's editorial independence, China has successfully strengthened its presence in the region (Smith & Mann, 2023). In his interview with *The Guardian*, Solomon

Islands prime minister Sogavare indicated that Australia is the Pacific 'security partner of choice', however, China will be called on if there is a 'gap' that Australia could not fill (Movono & Lyons, 2022).

Clearly, Canberra and Wellington are expected to address the issues that matter most to the Pacific. Treating them as equal and addressing their climate concern are two of the issues that Canberra and Wellington have to step up. However, despite self-proclaimed new policy such as Pacific 'Step-up' and 'Reset/Resilience', 'very little has changed in Australia's and New Zealand's attitude to the region', as observed by a former Secretary of PNG's Department of Foreign Affairs (Louma, 2021). To vie for influence in the region with China, Penny Wong, within a month of being sworn in as the Foreign Minister of Australia in May 2022, travelled to three PICs – Fuji, Samoa and Tonga (Hurst, 2022). In less than a year, she had travelled to the Pacific 10 times and visited all 17 PIF member states (Minister for Foreign Affairs, 2023). New Zealand's then Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern also doubled down on her warning of China's Pacific ambitions during her visits to the US and Europe in June 2022. Her successor, Chris Hipkins, welcomes the US's growing presence in South Pacific and gave 'green light' to Washington's defence pact with PNG, signed in May 2023, by claiming that the fact that the US is 'having a military presence doesn't necessarily signify militarization' (Miller G. , 2023).

However, it is a moot point as to whether the Biden administration still has confidence on the two 'Western' Australasian leaders to govern the South Pacific. Although the Radford-Collins Agreement has specifically divided Australia's and New Zealand's responsibility and leadership to the maritime security in the South Pacific, China's increasing influence across the Pacific and its security deal with Solomon Islands have showed the two Australasian leaders' failures to exclude China from the region. Instead of waiting for Australia and New Zealand to manage their sphere of responsibility or influence, the US has stepped in, re-established its link with the region and strengthened its diplomatic ties towards the island states. In 2019, Washington launched its 'Pacific Pledge' and committed a total of US$300 million funding to the support of PICs' development challenges in 2019 and 2020 (U.S. Department of State, 2020). In February 2022, during his visit in Fiji on a tour of the region, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that his country will re-open its embassy in Solomon Islands which has been closed since 1993, and would provide more diplomatic and security resources to the region as a counter to China's growing influence (BBC News, 2022).

After the conclusion of the Solomon Islands-China security pact, the US further doubled down on its diplomatic presence in the region. As part of the efforts to 'step up its game' in the region and to reverse a 'withering US presence' (Sevastopulo, 2022), the Biden administration swiftly announced the Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) – an initiative among Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States – in June 2022. The Initiative aims to help small PICs address issues of regional concerns such as climate change and illegal fishing (Sevastopulo, 2022). Although critics argue that the PBP '[rode] roughshod over established regional processes', i.e. PIF, throughout the process of its establishment (Fry, Kabutaulaka, & Wesley-Smith, 2022), three months later, foreign ministers of PBP member states, together with Pacific ministers and observers held their first meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York (Wallis & Powles, 2023). During the inaugural meeting, Blinken stated that members of the PBP have identified and will pursue six lines of effort in order to advance Pacific Countries' *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific*. These efforts include helping PICs to adapt to the impacts of climate change and providing high-quality and sustainable communications technology infrastructure (Blinken, 2022). In the meantime, Vice President Kamala Harris also made a virtual appearance at the 2022 Pacific Islands Forum in July, where she announced the US would triple its funding to the region to US$60 million a year for the next decade, pending congressional approval. Part of the funding would be spent on combating climate change. In addition, Washington will open two more US embassies in Kiribati and Tonga after Kiribati and Solomon Islands switched their diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 2019 (Miller M. E., 2022). In September 2022, the first-ever US-Pacific Island Country Summit was held in Washington D.C. According to Kurt Campbell, the US National Security Council's Indo-Pacific coordinator, the two-day Summit involved 'almost all the key players in the U.S. government who have interests in the Indo-Pacific' (Salama & Hutzler, 2022). This has demonstrated that the Pacific region is now at the forefront of the geopolitical competition between the US and China. In its Pacific Partnership Strategy fact sheet, published by the White House after the Summit, the Biden administration has not only committed to broader and deeper engagement with the Pacific Islands but also set it as a priority of Washington's foreign policy (The White House, 2022). To further woo the PICs, Biden committed to work with them on climate change and other regional challenges. In his word, 'I know your nations feel it [climate change] acutely. And for you all, it's an existential threat' (Thomas, 2022).

It did not take long for Washington to receive policy dividend. A Defence Cooperation Agreement between the United States and PNG was signed in May 2023. The Agreement was supposed to be signed by President Joe Biden after his trip to Japan for the G7 meeting in the same month. Although Biden's Asia-Pacific trip was cut short because of the need to return home to undertake debt-ceiling negotiations with the Republicans in Congress, he dispatched Antony Blinken to PNG to sign the agreement. Blinken was indeed the most senior US official to have visited PNG after General Douglas MacArthur in World War II (Economist, 2023). The defence agreement allows US troops to have access to the island state's ports and airports, including Momote Airport, Jacksons International Airport, Nadzab Airport, Lombrum Naval Base, the Seaport of Lae and Port Moresby, on the events of emergency (Nakamura & Imahashi, 2023). The second part of the pact allows the US Coast Guard to board PNG ships in managing illegal fishing and trafficking activities. This will significantly enhance PNG's maritime domain awareness capabilities, as the US will share satellite data with PNG. In the same week, the US also successfully renewed its Compacts of Free Association (COFAs) with Micronesia and Palau while the Marshall Islands is said to sign it any time soon (Grossman, 2023). COFAs allow the US military with nearly exclusive access to the signed countries' territorial waters and to deny foreign military use and access – the so-called right of strategic denial (USIP, 2022). The total territorial waters of these three freely associated states in the North Pacific cover similar size of the continental US. It has been argued that the COFA arrangement is tantamount to providing the US military with a 'power projection superhighway running through the heart of the North Pacific into Asia' (Grossman, et al., 2019, p. 9), which can effectively 'respond to potential contingencies in the Taiwan Strait, in the South China Sea, in the East China Sea or on the Korean Peninsula' (Grossman, 2023).

Canberra's Pacific 'Step-up' and its active Pacific diplomacy under the Labor government have also earned some geostrategic gains. In December 2022, an Australia-Vanuatu bilateral security agreement was signed (DFAT, n.d.). However, a similar attempt to clinch a security deal with PNG has not gained any tangible effect. In January 2023, Canberra announced that a bilateral security pact with PNG was underway and both sides were scheduled to sign it in the following June. However, on 1 June, one week after the US-PNG defence agreement was signed, PNG suddenly announced the bilateral security pact with Australia would be delayed over the concern of infringement of PNG sovereignty (Needham, 2023).

To woo back PICs and to counter China's growing influence, Australia's Labor Government in August 2023 announced a revamp of its multi-billion-dollar foreign aid policy. Although this new strategy did not come with extra funding, Canberra has committed nearly half of its foreign aid (more than US$2 billion) to climate change and gender equality in the Pacific. The main objective of Canberra's increasing attention to the climate change is to 'ensure we are a partner of choice for our region', in the words of its Foreign Minister Penny Wong (Pannett & Vinall, 2023). Her diplomacy of putting South Pacific as Australia's new foreign policy priority has been winning some PICs back to Australia's orbit. Since becoming Fiji's Prime Minister in December 2022, ending the nearly 16-year rule of Frank Bainimarama (2007-22), Sitiveni Rabuka has tried to distance his government from China, hinting that his administration might scrap the police exchange agreement with China (see below for more) and allowing Taiwan's representative office to reuse the name of the Trade Mission of the Republic of China (Taiwan). In April 2023, he cancelled a meeting with the visiting China's Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ma Zhaoxu, by claiming that he would need to mourn a close family member on the day of Ma's visit (Movono & Driedzic, 2023). In the following July, just the day before his official visit to China to attend the World University Games in the city of Chengdu, where he was scheduled to meet with Xi Jinping, Rabuka announced via his social media account that he had to cancel his trip because he had injured himself while searching for his mobile (Frost, 2023)! Rabuka's theatrical shifting position towards China could be a sign indicating that Australia's soft power has been gaining traction since the Australian Labor Party (ALP) came to power in May 2022.

After the Solomon Island-China security deal, New Zealand is also developing a maritime security 'work plans' with Solomon Islands (McClure T. , 2022). In June 2023 Sitiveni Rabuka said during his visit to Wellington that the Fiji-China police exchange agreement, signed in 2011 when Fiji was ruled by Bainimarama, was under review without ruling out the possibility that it could be terminated. Rabuka also indicated that a Fiji-New Zealand defence agreement would be signed soon (The Guardian staff and agencies, 2023).

Conclusion

This article has discussed a puzzle as to why PICs have recently developed cosy relations with China, which includes a 2022 security agreement between Solomon Islands and China, despite the fact that their traditional development and security partners, Australia and New Zealand, have expressed misgivings and concerns about the warming China-South Pacific ties. This can

be explained not because of a lack of development aid from Australia and New Zealand but because of the 'hidden' logic of order-building. As outlined above, international order *per se*, regardless of liberal or not, is an unequal, hierarchical political formation. In a nominally 'liberal' order, the more 'civilized' 'liberal' Western powers believe that they have the right to 'domesticate' junior/inferior members of the order. Sovereign equality, in practice, only exists among the more 'civilized' 'liberal' Western states.

With this mentality and belief, both Australia and New Zealand, also driven by their domestic economic interests and conservative ideologies, have not cared, and blatantly ignored, for years the legitimate concerns of PICs over the existential threat of climate change and global warming. PICs are also annoyed by Canberra's disrespectful manner in giving development aid. Australia's 'superior' identity and non-commitment to the Blue Pacific have pushed PICs to look to China's assistance. While Australia and New Zealand have warned that PICs might be sleepwalking into China's 'debt trap', the island states see that the great-power competition in their region may provide them with an opportunity to have their voice and concerns heard and a third policy option other than relying asymmetrically on the condescending 'big brothers' of Australia and New Zealand.

Apparently, the United States under the Biden administration has identified a possible weakness of both Australia and New Zealand in garnering PICs' allegiance to them. As part of its FOIP policy, the US has almost simultaneously stepped up its engagement with PICs. However, given the deep influence of the shared logic of (hierarchical) order-building, Australia, New Zealand and the US may not get to the root of the problem by meeting the common demand of the Pacific states for being respected and treated as equal partners in regional order-building and policy-making. Although Australia and New Zealand (plus the US in the foreseeable future) remain as key donors to PICs, China's clout in the region is set to grow at the expense of these two Australasian 'Western' leaders because PICs capitalizes on the China factor to resist and contest the Western-centred 'liberal' order. The trend of waning influence on the part of the West on the South Pacific is therefore hard to be reversed. The return of Trumpian nativism and climate-change scepticism in 2025, if Trump wins the 2024 election, will expedite the trend.

Map 1: Map of Oceania
[Please insert Map 1 here]

Source: CIA (n.d.)

Works Cited

ABC News. (2022, April 20). Video: 'Worst foreign policy blunder in the Pacific since the end of WWII': Penny Wong. *ABC News*. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-20/worst-foreign-policy-blunder-in-the-pacific-since/13847436

Australian Government. (2017). *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*. Canberra: Australian Government.

Author. (2017).

Ayson, R. (2007). The 'arc of instability' and Australia's strategic policy. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 61*(2), 215-231.

Baker, N. (2015). New Zealand and Australia in Pacific Regionalism. In G. Fry, & S. Tarte, *The New Pacific Diplomacy* (pp. 137-150). Canberra: Australian National University Press.

BBC News. (2022, February 12). *US to reopen solomon Islands embassy in push against China*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from BBC News: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-60359869

Brown, A. (n.d.). *The history of the Radford-Collins Agreement*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from Navy: Serving Australia with Pride: https://www.navy.gov.au/history/feature-histories/history-radford-collins-agreement

CIA. (n.d.). *The World Factbook - CIA Maps*. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from Central Intelligence Agency: The World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/resources/cia-maps/

Curran, J. (2023, March 29). *How Australia helped save Solomon Islands from itself*. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from Australian Financial Review: https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/arts-and-culture/how-australia-helped-save-solomon-islands-from-itself-20230327-p5cvje

Department of Defence. (2020, July). *2020 Defence Strategic Update.* Retrieved May 24, 2023, from Australian Government: file:///Users/laihachan/Downloads/2020_Defence_Strategic_Update.pdf

DFAT. (2004). *Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia.* Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

DFAT. (2017, August 14). *Agreement between the Goverment of Australia and the Government of Solomon Islands concerning the Basis for Deployment of Police, Armed Forces, and*

other Personnel to Solomon Islands. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from Australian Treaties: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/ATS/2018/14.html?fbclid=IwAR2nIc2R5UzU7bGgvz76zaWeDfpz3mR3sZP3kf72pGpS9i1VKNgJdysj6Iw

DFAT. (n.d.). *Australia-Vanuatu Bilateral Security Agreement*. Retrieved June 3, 2023, from DFAT: https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australia-vanuatu-bilateral-security-agreement

DFAT. (n.d.). *Office of the Pacific*. Retrieved May 24, 2023, from The Pacific, DFAT Australian Government: https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/office-of-the-pacific

DFAT, Australian Government. (2018, July 31). Australia, US and Japan announce trilatral partnership for infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific. Retrieved January 2, 2020, from https://dfat.gov.au/news/news/Pages/australia-us-and-japan-announce-trilateral-partnership-for-infrastructure-investment-in-the-indo-pacific.aspx

DoD. (2019). *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Prepareness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region.* Washington DC: Department of Defense. Retrieved June 2, 2023, from https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF

Donnelly, J. (1998). Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization? *International Affairs, 74*(1), 1-23.

Doran, M. (2019, August 19). Australia's climate change stance damaging relationoship with Pacific islands, former Kiribati president warms. *ABC News*. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-19/australia-climate-change-inaction-damaging-pacific-relationship/11426390

Doran, M., & Dziedzic, S. (2018, June 13). Deal to be inked for Solomon Islands undersea internet cable Australia stopped China building. *ABC News*. Retrieved January 3, 2020, from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-06-13/solomon-islands-undersea-cable-internet-china/9861592

Dziedzic, S. (2018, December 4). *Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga says Australia's climate change inaction undermines its 'Pacific pivot'*. Retrieved June 1, 2023, from ABC News: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-04/tuvalu-pm-says-australian-pacific-pivot-undermined-by-emissions/10579424

Earl, G. (2021, July 15). *Economic diplomacy: Little Australia spends slowly in the Pacific*. Retrieved May 24, 2023, from The Interpreter: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/economic-diplomacy-little-australia-spends-slowly-pacific

Economist. (2023, May 27). Islands in the Storm: America Is Lavishing Attention on Pacific Island States. *Economist*, p. 50.

Edney-Browne, A. (2021). *Australia: Pacific Bully and International Outcast.* Greenpeace Australia Pacific. Greenpeace. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from https://www.greenpeace.org.au/australia-pacific-bully-international-outcast/

Embassy of the PRC in Fiji. (2020a, April 26). *People's Republic of China donates USD 300K to Fiji*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from Embassy fo the PRC in teh Republic of Fiji: http://fj.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgxw/202004/t20200426_881087.htm

Embassy of the PRC in Fiji. (2020b, December 7). *China donates a futher 310,000 Fijian dollar to the Government of Fiji for supporting its response to COVID-19*. Retrieved May 25, 2023, from Embassy of the PRC in Fiji: http://fj.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/tpxw_1/202012/t20201219_880324.htm

Fraenkel, J. (2017, July 6). *Bringing the politics back in*. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from Inside Story: https://insidestory.org.au/bringing-the-politics-back-in/

Fraenkel, J., & Smith, G. (2022). The Solomons-China 2022 security deal: extraterritoriality and the perils of militarisation in the Pacific Islands. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *76*(5), 473-485.

Fraenkel, J., Madraiwiwi, J., & Okole, H. (2014). *The RAMSI Decade: A review of the regional assistance mission to Solomon Islands, 2003-2013.* Honiara and the Pacific Islands Forum. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from https://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/filemanager/pidp/pdf/Independent%20RAMSI%20Review%20Report%20Final.pdf

Frost, N. (2023, July 26). Fiji's leader decline invitation to China, saying he tripped and fell. *New York Times*. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/26/world/asia/fiji-china-invitation-decline.html

Fry, G., & Tarte, S. (2016). The 'new Pacific diplomayc': An introduction. In G. Fry, & S. Tarte, *The New Pacific Diplomacy* (pp. 3-20). Canberra: ANU Press.

Fry, G., Kabutaulaka, T., & Wesley-Smith, T. (2022, July 5). *'Partners in the Blue Pacific' initiative rides roughshod over established regional process*. Retrieved June 9, 2023, from Devpolicy: https://devpolicy.org/pbp-initiative-rides-roughshod-over-regional-processes-20220705/

Grossman, D. (2023, June 1). *America is winning against China in Oceania*. Retrieved June 3, 2023, from Foreign Policy: https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/01/china-south-pacific-oceania-solomon-islands-kiribati-papua-new-guinea-australia-new-zealand-geopolitics-military/

Grossman, D., Chase, M., Finin, G., Gregson, W., Hornung, J., ma, L., . . . Shih, A. (2019). *America's Pacific Island Allies.* Santa Monica: Rand Corporation.

Halvorson, D. (2013). Reputation and responsibilitu in Australia's 2003 intervention in the Solomon Islands. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 67*(4), 439-455.

Hasham, N. (2015, September 11). *Immigration Minister Peter Dutton caught joking about the effect of climate change on Pacific islands*. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from Sydney Morning Herald: https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/immigration-minister-peter-dutton-caught-joking-about-the-effect-of-climate-change-on-pacific-islands-20150911-gjkf0z.html

Hayward-Jones, J. (2015, September 14). *Pacific Islands Forum: Climate change obscures other serious challenges*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The Interpreter: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/pacific-islands-forum-climate-change-obscures-other-serious-challenges

Heritage, A., & Lee, P. K. (2020). *Order, Contestation and Ontological Security-Seeking in the South China Sea*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hooton, P. (2022, April 21). *Solomons security pact: Sogavare, China, and Australia*. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from The Interpreter: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/solomons-security-pact-sogavare-china-australia

Hurst, D. (2022, June 1). Penny Wong ramps up Pacific lobbying effort as she flies out to Samoa and tonga. *The Guardian*. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/01/penny-wong-ramps-up-pacific-lobbying-effort-as-she-flies-out-to-samoa-and-tonga

Japan Times. (2019, November 13). *A 'Michelin guide' to infrastructure in Asia.* Retrieved January 2, 2020, from Japan Times: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/11/13/editorials/michelin-guide-infrastructure-asia/#.Xg1sSegzaUk

Keen, M. (2021, February). Security through a Pacific lens. *Development Bulletin, 82*, pp. 5-11. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from https://crawford.anu.edu.au/rmap/devnet/devnet/DB82-final-manuscript-23-02-21.pdf

Kollner, P. (2020). *Australia and New Zealand face up to China in the South Pacific*. Hamburg: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies.

Kuper, S. (2019, November 13). Australia joins Blue Dot Network in attemp to counter Beijing's Belt and Road. *Defence Connect*. Retrieved January 2, 2020, from https://www.defenceconnect.com.au/key-enablers/5137-australia-joins-blue-dot-network-in-attempt-to-counter-beijing-s-belt-and-road

Lawson, S. (2017). Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands Forum: a critical review. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics, 55*(2), 214-235.

Linklater, A. (2015). Civilisations and International Society. In R. W. Murray (Ed.), *System, Society and the World: Exploring the English School of International Relations* (pp. 40-44). Bristol: E-IR Publishing.

Louma, L. (2021, August 11). *Pacific Step-up or business as usual?* Retrieved May 31, 2023, from Asia & The Pacific Policy Society: https://www.policyforum.net/pacific-step-up-or-business-as-usual/

Lowy Institute. (2023, May). *Pacific Aid Map*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map: https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/

Lowy Institute for International Policy. (2018). *Chinese Aid in the Pacific*. Retrieved December 30, 2019, from https://chineseaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/

Lyons, K. (2018, August 9). Huge increase in Chinese aid pledged to Pacific. *The Guardian*. Retrieved April 12, 2020, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/08/huge-increase-in-chinese-aid-pledged-to-pacific

Lyons, K. (2019a, August 16). *Australia waters down Pacific Islands plea on climate crisis*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/15/australia-waters-down-pacific-islands-plea-on-climate-crisis

Lyons, K. (2019b, August 17). *Fiji PM accuses Scott Morrison of 'insulting' and alienating Pacific leaders*. Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/16/fiji-pm-frank-bainimarama-insulting-scott-morrison-rift-pacific-countries

Manch, T. (2022, March 29). *Defence Minister 'caught off guard' by Solomon Islands-China security agreement*. Retrieved May 29, 2023, from Stuff: https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/128188767/defence-minister-caught-off-guard-by-solomon-islandschina-security-agreement#:~:text=Defence%20Minister%20Peeni%20Henare%20says,Australian%20intelligence%20anticipated%20the%20move.

McCawley, P. (2019, November 12). *Connecting the dots on the Blue Dot Network.* Retrieved January 2, 2020, from The Interpreter: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/connecting-dots-blue-dot-network

McClure, T. (2022, May 5). *New Zealand foreign minister blames 'relationship failure' for China-Solomons security deal*. Retrieved April 22, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/05/new-zealand-foreign-minister-blames-relationship-failure-for-china-solomons-security-deal

McClure, T. (2022, June 15). *New Zealand to boost maritime security with Solomon Islands amid China focus on Pacific*. Retrieved June 3, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/15/new-zealand-to-boost-maritime-security-with-solomon-islands-amid-china-focus-on-pacific

Medcalf, R. (2023, February). Sea of many flags: A Pacific way to dilute China's influence. *Australian Foreign Affairs*(17), 5-26.

Medhora, S. (2015, September 11). *Peter Dutton jokes with Tony Abbott abotu rising sea levels in Pacific nations*. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/sep/11/peter-dutton-jokes-with-tony-abbott-about-rising-sea-levels-in-pacific-nations

Miller, G. (2023, May 23). *How successful was Chris Hipkins' trip to Papua New Guinea?* Retrieved June 6, 2023, from The Diplomat: https://thediplomat.com/2023/05/how-successful-was-chris-hipkins-trip-to-papua-new-guinea/

Miller, M. E. (2022, July 12). *U.S. to open new mebassies, boost aid in Pacific as China's sway grows*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/07/12/kamala-harris-pacific-islands-us-china/

Minister for Foreign Affairs. (2023, April 19). *Visit to New Caledonia and Tuvalu*. Retrieved June 1, 2023, from Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon Penny Wong: https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/visit-new-caledonia-and-tuvalu

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. (2022, May 24). *Fact sheet: Cooperation between China and Pacific Island countries*. Retrieved May 22, 2023, from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of hte People's Republic of China: https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt_665385/2649_665393/202205/t20220524_10691917.html

Moore, C. (2008). Pacific view: the meaning of governance and politics in the Solomon Islands. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 62*(3), 386-407.

Morgan, W. (2021). Ripple effect: The cost of our Pacific neglect. *Australian Foreign Affairs, 12*, 30-48.

Movono, L., & Lyons, K. (2022, July 14). *Solomon Islands PM rules out China military base and says Australia is 'security partner of choice'*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/14/solomon-islands-pm-rules-out-chinese-military-base-china-australia-security-partner-manasseh-sogavare?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Nakamura, R., & Imahashi, R. (2023, May 14). *U.S. eyes access to Papua New Guinea naval base and airport*. Retrieved May 15, 2023, from Nikkei Asia: https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/U.S.-eyes-access-to-Papua-New-Guinea-naval-base-and-airport#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2FSYDNEY%20%2D%2D%20The%20U.S.,for%20influence%20across%20the%20Pacific.

Nanau, G. (2022, June 11). Solomon Islands-China security deal is about local needs not geopolitics. *East Asia Forum*. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/06/11/solomon-islands-china-security-deal-is-about-local-needs-not-geopolitics/

Neas, O. (2022, April 1). *Power shifts: New Zealand reconsiders Pacific role as China's influence grows*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/01/power-shifts-new-zealand-reconsiders-pacific-role-as-chinas-influence-grows

Needham, K. (2023, June 1). *Delay in security treaty with Australia as Papua New Guinea consults 'domestic processes'*. Retrieved June 1, 2023, from Reuters: https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/delay-security-treaty-with-australia-png-consults-domestic-processes-2023-05-30/

News.com.au. (2015, September 12). *Indigenous leaders slam Abbott and Dutton's 'racist' banter*. Retrieved May 12, 2023, from News.com.au: https://www.news.com.au/national/politics/indigenous-leaders-slam-abbott-and-duttons-racist-banter/news-story/24ef20194bf588aa8b311d454faa48a5

O'Malley, N., & Perkins, M. (2021, November 3). *Australia, Pacific big brother or big bully?* Retrieved May 31, 2023, from Sydney Morning Herald: https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/australia-pacific-big-brother-or-big-bully-20211103-p595kk.html

Oxford Analytica. (2017, January 25). Fiji: Suva will play outsized role in climagte outreach. *Oxford Analytica Daily Brief Service*.

Pacific Islands Forum. (n.d.). *The 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*. Retrieved June 9, 2023, from Pacific Islands Forum: https://www.forumsec.org/2050strategy/

Pannett, R., & Vinall, F. (2023, August 8). Australian aid policy to focus on climate - and countering China. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/08/australia-china-pacific-aid-policy/

Papworth, G. (2022, December 10). *The Pacific family and neo-colonialism*. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from Australian Institute of International Affairs: https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/resource/the-pacific-family-and-neo-colonialism/

Parliament of Australia. (n.d.). *Pacific Islands - Key issues*. Retrieved from Parliament of Australia: https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook47p/PacificKeyIssues#:~:text=China%20now%20has%20considerable%20economic,it%20has%20established%20diplomatic%20relations.

Porter, P. (2020). *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion and the Rise of Trump.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Powles, A., & Wallis, J. (2022, May 25). *An Albanese-Ardern alliance in the Pacific: a step forward?* Retrieved May 29, 2023, from The Strategist: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/an-albanese-ardern-alliance-in-the-pacific-a-step-forward/

Reus-Smit, C. (2005). Liberal Hierarchy and the Licence to Use Force. *Review of International Studies, 31*(S1), 71-92.

RNZ. (2022, June 4). *China's whirlwind Pacific tour a slight success with several bilateral agreements signed*. Retrieved June 1, 2023, from RNZ: https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/468464/china-s-whirlwind-pacific-tour-a-slight-success-with-several-bilateral-agreements-signed

Salama, V., & Hutzler, C. (2022, September 28). *U.S. showers diplomatic attention on small Pacific Island nations*. Retrieved June 6, 2023, from Wall Stree Journal: https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-to-expand-diplomatic-defense-footprint-in-the-pacific-11664355602

Sevastopulo, D. (2022, June 25). US and allies launch initiative to help Pacific Island nations. *Financial Times*. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://on.ft.com/3zYRzh7

Smee, B. (2019, August 16). *Pacific islands will survive climate crisis because they 'pick our fruit', Australia's deputy PM says*. Retrieved May 11, 2023, from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/aug/16/pacific-islands-will-survive-climate-crisis-because-they-can-pick-our-fruit-australias-deputy-pm-says

Smith, M., & Mann, T. (2023, August 2). China is trying to buy influence with media in the Pacific as it aims to strengthen its presence in the region. *ABC News*. Retrieved August 11, 2023, from https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-02/china-buys-influence-solomon-islands-star-newspaper-pacific/102668914

South China Morning Post. (2018, January 10). China funding white elephant infrastructure projects in the Pacific, syas Australian minister. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved December 28, 2019, from https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2127626/china-funding-white-elephant-infrastructure-projects

Stevens, B. (2022, December 14). *Time for a 'Radford-Collins' agreement for the Quad?* Retrieved May 10, 2023, from The Strategist: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/time-for-a-radford-collins-agreement-for-the-quad/

Storey, V. (n.d.). *What is the 'Blue Pacific' and why is it important?* Retrieved June 6, 2023, from Pacific Legal Network: https://www.pln.com.au/single-post/what-is-the-blue-pacific-and-why-is-it-

important#:~:text=The%20%22Blue%20Pacific%22%20is%20a,by%20the%20Pacific%20Island%20leaders

Tarte, S. (2021). Reconciling regional security narratives in the Pacific. *Griffith Asia Institute Regional Outlook*(65), pp. 1-11.

Taylor, D. M. (2019, February 8). *Keynote address by Dame Meg Taylor, Secretary General "The China Alternative: Changing Regional Order in the Pacific Islands"*. Retrieved May 15, 2023, from Pacific Islands Forum: https://www.forumsec.org/2019/02/12/keynote-address-by-dame-meg-taylor-secretary-general-the-china-alternative-changing-regional-order-in-the-pacific-islands/

The Guardian staff and agencies. (2023, June 7). Fiji Rethinks Police Deal with China amid Rising Pacific Tensions. *The Guardian*. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/07/fiji-rethinks-police-deal-with-china-amid-rising-pacific-tensions

The White House. (2022, September 29). *Fact Sheet: President Biden unveils First-Ever Pacific Partnership Strategy*. Retrieved May 31, 2023, from The White House: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/29/fact-sheet-president-biden-unveils-first-ever-pacific-partnership-strategy/

Thomas, K. (2022, September 29). *Small Pacific Islands leaders wooed by White House Summit, Assistance*. Retrieved June 6, 2023, from Wall Street Journal: https://www.wsj.com/articles/small-pacific-islands-leaders-wooed-with-white-house-summit-assistance-11664474188

Tuilaepa-Taylor, M. (2022, March 25). China-Solomon Islands security agreement leaked on social media. *RNZ*. Retrieved August 1, 2022, from https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/463957/china-solomon-islands-security-agreement-leaked-on-social-media

U.S. Department of State. (2020, October 1). *U.S. Engagement in the Pacific Islands: 2020 Pacific Pledge*. Retrieved June 2, 2023, from U.S. Department of State: https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-engagement-in-the-pacific-islands-2020-pacific-pledge/index.html

United States. (2002). *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America.* Washington D.C.: The White House.

USDFC. (2019, November 4). *The launch of multi-stakeholder Blue Dot Network.* Retrieved January 2, 2020, from U.S. International Development finance Corporation: https://www.dfc.gov/media/opic-press-releases/launch-multi-stakeholder-blue-dot-network

USIP. (2022). *China's Influence on the Freely Associated States of the Northern Pacific.* United States Institute of Peace. Washington D.C. : United States Institute of Peace.

Wainwright, E. (2003). *Our Failing Neighbour: Australia and the Future of solomon Islands.* Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Wallis, J. (2015). The South Pacific: 'arc of instability' or 'arc of opportunity'? *Global Change, Peace & Security, 27*(1), 39-53.

Wallis, J. (2016, September 21). *Hollow hegemon: Australias declining influence in the Pacific*. Retrieved April 26, 2023, from East Asia Forum: https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2016/09/21/hollow-hegemon-australias-declining-role-in-the-pacific/

Wallis, J. (2021). Contradictions in Australia's Pacific Islands discourse. *Australian Journal of International Affairs, 75*(5), 487-506.

Wallis, J. (2021a, September 6). *Pushing the limits of Australia's strategic imagination in the Pacific Islands*. Retrieved April 22, 2023, from 9Dashline: https://www.9dashline.com/article/pushing-the-limits-of-australias-strategic-imagination-in-the-pacific-islands

Wallis, J., & Powles, A. (2018, October). Australia and New Zealand in the Pacific Islands: Ambiguous Allies? (A. Carr, Ed.) *The Centre of Gravity series*(43), pp. 1-13.

Wallis, J., & Powles, A. (2023). *Smooth Sailing? How Australia, New Zealand and the United States partner in - and with - the Pacific islands.* Canberra: Australian strategic Policy Institute. Retrieved May 23, 2023, from https://www.aspi.org.au/report/smooth-sailing

Wesley, M. (2007). Reality beyond the whiteboard. *Griffith Review*(16), 175-186.

Wesley, M. (2023). *Helpem Fren: Australia and the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands 2003-2017.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing.

Westbrook, T. (2018, November 26). PNG upholds deal with Huawei to lay internet cable, derides counter-offer. *Reuters*. Retrieved January 3, 2020, from https://www.reuters.com/article/us-papua-huawei-tech-idUSKCN1NV0DR

White, H. (2019). In denial: Defending Australia as China looks south. *Australian Foreign Affairs, 6*, 5-27.

Wyeth, G. (2018, October 30). *Paying attention to the Blue Pacific*. Retrieved June 6, 2023, from The Diplomat: https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/paying-attention-to-the-blue-pacific/

Zhang, D. (2017/18). *Pacific Island countries, China & sustainable development goals.* Retrieved May 22, 2023, from State, Society & Governance in Melanesia: https://bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2017-06/ib_2017_18_zhang_part2.pdf

Zhang, Y. (2021). 'Barbarising' China in American Trade War Discourse: The Assault on Huawei. *Third World Quarterly*, *42*(7), 1436-1454.