

## Chapter 9

# Communities of Interest and Communities of Practice: The Role of Norms, Values and Principles in Training for Peace Operations

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### Executive Summary

The ambition to establish “a regional facility (for) training civilian police for international peacekeeping” is one of the outcomes of the 2013 Review of the Pacific Plan.<sup>1</sup> This chapter argues that the creation of such a facility could:

- Enhance regionalism and expand the professionalism of regional security forces;
- Become a focal point for the collection, development and dissemination of regional expertise in peace operations, including indigenous approaches to peacebuilding and peacemaking to the Pacific community of nations;
- Act as a center for development of regional leaders and assist in developing expertise areas, such as disaster response and crisis management, for security forces, with a particular focus on climate change effects in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> See Pacific Islands Forum, *Pacific Plan Review: Report to Leaders, Vol I* (Suva, Fiji, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2013), 93, <http://www.pacificplanreview.org/review-team/team-documents/>; alternative URL is <http://www.cid.org.nz/assets/Key-issues/Pacific-development/Pacific-Plan-Review-2013-Volume-1.pdf>.

## Peace Operations

Creating a facility for training civilian police in international peacekeeping is a laudable objective; however, peacekeeping is not just a police task. Former UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld once said, “Peacekeeping is not a soldier’s job, but only soldiers can do it.” The concept of peacekeeping has evolved considerably since the first operation in 1956;<sup>2</sup> modern peace operations are complex, multi-agency undertakings. From its inception, peacekeeping has been a military task. Pacific Island nations with armed forces — Fiji, New Guinea and Tonga — have considerable expertise in both international and regional peacekeeping operations. Sir Brian Urquhart, the only Hammarskjöld adviser with significant military experience, described the task of peacekeeping as dependent upon:

*“...the non-use of force and on political symbolism. It is the projection of the principle of non-violence onto the military plane. It requires discipline, initiative, objectivity and leadership, as well as ceaseless supervision and political direction. It takes time to develop the full effectiveness of a peacekeeping operation and to secure the confidence and cooperation of the conflicting parties...For soldiers, peacekeeping can be a thankless and unglamorous task, and yet we have found that most of the soldiers value the experience....”<sup>3</sup>*

These insights hold true for the role of police in modern peace operations, especially since law enforcement tasks are an integral part of many missions. It would, therefore, make little sense to exclude the military from involvement in such a training facility. Indeed, the involvement of both po-

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Dave Woycheshin and Miriam de Graaff, eds., *Comprehensive Approach to Operations – International Perspectives*, (Kingston, Ontario, Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2013), 133.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Urquhart, *A Life in Peace and War* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1987), 248.

lice and military personnel would have considerable advantages, such as enhanced regional interoperability between security forces. Additionally, such an institution has the potential to increase the professionalism of regional police and military forces through the diffusion of internationally accepted norms and standards to which personnel would be exposed during training.

Peacekeeping reforms that followed release of the 2000 “Brahimi Report” saw the United Nations adopt a holistic approach to training peacekeepers. While training security forces for peace operations is the responsibility of individual member states, all training is coordinated by the Policy Evaluation and Training (PET) Division of the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). PET provides member states with training publications and materials as well as training assistance and certification.

From its inception, a Pacific Islands Peace Operations Training Centre (PI-POTC) would be able to draw on PET’s standardized training materials and courses. This link would also make training at PI-POTC a mechanism for diffusion of internationally accepted norms and standards, because institutions focused on education and training provide a very effective means of establishing, promoting and maintaining norms. Institutions, however, are not just collections of norms. They derive their individual character and competence from a range of behavioral elements, such as procedures, rules, protocols and practices, working together with norms to produce a level of institutional performance that determines an organization’s success or failure.

A PI-POTC would have considerable advantages in terms of its access to both regional and international expertise in peacekeeping. The training center would create an environment where the existing level of peacekeeping expertise residing in regional military and police forces could interface with the international peacekeeping community. These interactions could produce regional approaches to peace-building, peace-making and peace-keeping that reflect the Pacific’s unique cultural milieu, while still conform-

ing to accepted international norms. In terms of the Biketawa Declaration's framework for dealing with regional security interventions, the creation of a PI-POTC would be within the scope of the declaration's call to support "appropriate institutions or mechanisms that would assist a resolution of regional security issues."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, a PI-POTC would represent a significant increase in the region's capacity to deal with its own problems in a credible, coherent and consistent manner.

## Communities of Interest and Communities of Practice

One interface for such an exchange of ideas and diffusion of norms is the international community of interest developed around topics of peace and peace operations. The term "community of interest" describes a group of people or organizations who share a common professional interest. In 2000, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) World Directory of Peace Research and Training Institutions listed over 1,200 organizations — either academic or private peace research bodies — in 80 countries.<sup>5</sup> By engaging with this worldwide community, a PI-POTC could further develop the level of knowledge and expertise residing within the region's security forces. More specifically, a PI-POTC would also have access to a global community of practice through interaction with peace operations training centers around the world and other organizations with a similar focus on training and educating security forces for participation in peace and stability operations.<sup>6</sup> The community could evolve to mirror the Australian Defence Force's Peace Operations Training Centre (ADF-POTC), and how it operates as a center of excellence for peace operations

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4 Biketawa Declaration (Suva, Fiji, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2000), Pacific Islands Forum, 2, <http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/political-governance-security/biketawa-declaration/>.

5 World Directory of Peace Research and Training Institutions, UNESCO, (Paris, UNESCO Publishing, 2000, 9th edition)

6 See Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Wenger is a cognitive anthropologist who, with colleagues, developed the idea of a community of practice as a group that shares a professional domain and collectively advances their professional knowledge through a process in which members learn from one another by sharing experiences, thus increasing the professional understanding of the whole community.

education and training in conjunction with a number of partner institutions and organizations, both nationally and globally.

## **Australian Defence Force's Peace Operations Training Centre's Community of Practice**

Each year, ADF-POTC engages with a range of partners at national, regional and international levels. These activities include, but are not limited to, student and instructor exchanges and the conduct of training courses and seminars. In a typical year, the Centre will work and interact with a range of organizations that comprise its community of practice:

### **National**

ADF-POTC conducts a number of courses, including the UN Military Observers Course that is attended by both Australian and foreign military students. The course's final exercise takes place in a purpose-built training facility run by the Australian Federal Police International Deployment Group (AFPIDG) at Majura in Canberra.

### **Regional**

The Centre is a member of the Association of Asia-Pacific Peace Operations Training Centres (AAPTC) and holds joint exercises with two other member nations: Thailand and Indonesia.

Exercise PIRAP/JABIRU (PJ)<sup>7</sup> is a bilateral series of exercises that commenced in 1998 and are conducted in English. PJ is held biennially and uses seminar and syndicate work for the consideration of problems. The PJ exercise scenario is a complex, multi-dimensional situation with forces operating under a UN Chapter VII mandate. This scenario serves as the basis for consideration of problems such as the roles of international, government, and non-government organizations (NGOs) in peace operations. The exer-

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<sup>7</sup> A Pirap is a Thai bird and a Jabiru is an Australian bird.

cise is designed to provide a forum for regional cooperation in peace operations and contribute to regional security through confidence building. It also includes a number of social and cultural activities to promote networking. Since 2012, PJ has involved approximately 100 personnel, including Thai and Australian police, as well as personnel from up to twenty regional nations. The theme for PJ 2014 was “*Putting Vulnerable Civilians First*.”

Exercise GARUDA/KOOKABURRA (GK)<sup>8</sup> is an Australian and Indonesian bilateral activity that aims to provide peace operations training to officers from both nations who are likely to be deployed to UN missions. GK seeks to improve their understanding of strategic and operational planning considerations for participating in complex and multi-dimensional peace operations. As with JB, this exercise series uses English as the instruction language and employs scenario-based problems and syndicate work for consideration of problems.

## **International**

In addition to engagements with the UN DPKO and partner institutions in nations such as Chile, Brazil, Canada, the United States, and in Africa states, ADF POTC is an active member of the International Association of Peace Training Centres (IAPTC). The organization holds annual conferences of member institutions. These conferences are themed around training issues. The 20th IAPTC Conference was hosted by the Indonesia Defence Forces Peacekeeping Centre in June 2014 with a theme of “Towards a Global Peacekeeping Training Architecture.”

To conduct this program, the ADF POTC has a full-time staff of six, supplemented by around fifteen military reservists. The Centre’s annual budget is \$330,000, a relatively modest figure considering the scope of its activities.

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<sup>8</sup> A Garuda is a large mythical bird-like creature from Hindu and Buddhist mythology and a Kookaburra is an Australian bird.

The ADF POTC aims to position itself as a center of excellence for peace operations training and the partner of choice for institutions in other nations looking to develop their expertise in training for stability and peace operations. This institutional ambition, Australia's membership in the Pacific Islands Forum, and its geographic proximity would make the ADF POTC a natural partner for a PI-POTC and the first link in its community of practice.

## **Other Initiatives within the Australian Peace Operations Community of Practice**

In 2012, a partnership between the Australian Civil Military Centre (ACMC) and the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) led to the development of a handbook entitled, *Same Space, Different Mandates: a civil-military guide to Australian stakeholders in international disaster and conflict response*. This publication aims to improve the collective understanding of civil-military stakeholders responding to international natural disasters and complex emergencies and to create greater opportunities for constructive engagement between them. The handbook is a guide to the principles, expectations and operational styles of key stakeholders involved in responding to natural disasters and complex emergencies. In addition to serving as a reference for military personnel, police and field workers from both government agencies and NGOs, the publication is also designed for use in education and training.

In recent years, both the ADF POTC and the Australian Command and Staff College have adopted a similar approach to fostering constructive engagement between multiple agencies involved in peace and stability operations. ADF POTC conducts a Peace Operations Seminar (POS) series that brings together personnel from various agencies and countries to consider the type of problems frequently encountered in peace and stability operations, including rule of law issues, the conduct of elections and dealing with displaced persons. The POS employs a complex scenario involving both a

natural disaster and civil unrest in a small, fragile island state.

A primary POS learning objective is conveying the primacy of the political and the need to sometimes refrain from acting, even if the capacity to act exists. A military force can often bring stability and security through its visible presence in activities, such as regular patrols. While participation of military personnel in peace and stability operations is an important factor in the success of such missions, Urquhart noted success can often hinge on “the non-use of force and on political symbolism (and)...requires discipline, initiative, objectivity and leadership, as well as ceaseless supervision and political direction.”<sup>9</sup>

During the Bougainville crisis, however, military members of the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) frequently expressed their frustration at not pursuing a more active role.<sup>10</sup> Military culture has a strong planning component and, for most military personnel, planning implies that action will follow. In scenario-based activities, the impulse of military participants is often to plan “the solution” without considering broader contexts available through discussion with multiple participants and stakeholders.

In some situations encountered in complex emergencies, military action or even a high-profile military presence is not appropriate. For example, military tasks generally don't include significant development activities, conducting elections or running refugee camps; the military may have support roles in such activities, such as the provision of transport and logistics. It is also important to expose students to organizations, such as Médecins Sans Frontières, which will reject military security because its members believe it compromises their independence and can actually endanger their field workers.

The learning model adopted by the POS and the Australian Command and Staff College aims to bring participants together rather than simply pro-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Anthony J. Regan, “Light Intervention: Lessons from Bougainville” (Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010), 80-81.

duce a solution to a problem; students consider situations' complexity and associated issues. This approach produces a more open exchange between all participants – military, police, government officials and NGOs – who exchange ideas and counter-ideas in a process that is neither competitive nor wholly consensus-building. The end result is a conversation that deepens and intensifies both the understanding and the meaning of what is being discussed.

As this brief survey of ADF POTC's activities demonstrates, a PI-POTC would have access to a well-established community of practice. From its inception, the institution could draw on a professional network with abundant connections, both regionally and globally. With most Pacific nations relying on police as their major security force, the PI-POTC would have a particular interest in establishing links with institutions such as the Australian Federal Police International Deployment Group (AFPIDG) and the New Zealand Police.

Another important potential partner is the European Union's Centre of Excellence for Stability Policing Units (CoESPU) located in Vicenza, Italy. CoESPU's institutional aims would make it a natural partner for a PI-POTC because its charter is to conduct training programs, including "train the trainer" courses, and send out Mobile Assistance Teams (MATs) to instruct on international and humanitarian law, peace support operations, rules of engagement, operational planning and procedures, and policing techniques in hostile environments. CoESPU also seeks to promote interoperability between police, military forces and other organizations, and to develop common doctrine and operational procedures for use in complex emergencies.

CoESPU's charter aspires to create a doctrinal network worldwide by interacting with a range of international organizations, academic institutes and research centers that share a similar focus on peace and stability operations. While principally focused on Africa since its creation in 2005, CoESPU has entered into a range of agreements that have seen it conduct

training in Italy, Chile, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Nepal, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

## **“Plans are worthless, but planning is everything”<sup>12</sup>**

Australia’s response to peace and stability operations, particularly regional emergencies in Bougainville, East Timor and the Solomon Islands, has emphasized the missions’ interagency nature. While East Timor was a military-led operation, civilians and police had a much greater role in Bougainville and also in the 2003 Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Much of what is now taught at ADF POTC and Australian Command and Staff College reflects the evolution of such missions over the past fifteen years, from military-led peacekeeping operations to multi-agency undertakings in response to complex political, social and economic emergencies. The lessons absorbed by Australian agencies through their participation in such missions demonstrate the importance of two interrelated factors: leadership and planning.

**Leadership** – One of the main factors in RAMSI’s initial success was the experience of key personnel. The mission was civilian-led, with Australian diplomat Mr. Nick Warner as the special coordinator. RAMSI’s initial mandate was to restore law and order. Participating police forces were commanded by Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Ben McDevitt, whose police had primacy over the mission’s military component. Both Warner and McDevitt had previous experience with complex emergencies, and both men also worked in the Pacific prior to their involvement in RAMSI. Warner had been head of the Australian Liaison Office to the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia during 1989 and 1990. He also served in Cambodia from 1991 to 1993 and was the Austra-

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11 See <http://www.carabinieri.it/Internet/Arma/CoESPU/>.

12 Dwight D. Eisenhower, speech to the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in Washington, D.C., November 14, 1957. In the Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower (Washington, D.C. National Archives and Records Service, Government Printing Office, 1957), 818.

lian high commissioner to Papua New Guinea from 1999 to 2003 during the Bougainville crisis.

Similarly, McDevitt served in various national and international law enforcement roles over three decades. His service includes time with the AFP; working as law enforcement advisor to the Bougainville Peace Monitoring Group; and deployment with UN police in Cyprus before his appointment to RAMSI. The mission's military commander, Lt. Col. John Frewen, was a skilled infantry officer who had deployed as a peacekeeper with the UN Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR).

**Planning** – Eisenhower's oft-quoted aphorism is generally truncated and worth quoting in full:

*“I tell this story to illustrate the truth of the statement I heard long ago in the Army: Plans are worthless, but planning is everything. There is a very great distinction because when you are planning for an emergency you must start with this one thing: the very definition of ‘emergency’ is that it is unexpected, therefore it is not going to happen the way you are planning.”*<sup>13</sup>

In a mission's planning stages, consideration of issues is more important than arriving at a “solution.” In the lead up to RAMSI, Australian agencies involved in the mission had ten weeks to plan the deployment of 2,200 police — civilian and military — to meet mission objectives. As McDevitt recalled, “We had a very interesting series of meetings...the military representative said securing the strategic military points would take 32 days, and then the military would be ready to withdraw.”<sup>14</sup> Putting the security problem in context, McDevitt explained “the community had lost trust in the RSIP (Royal Solomon Islands Police) and the police component of the mission could take up to 10 years.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> “Into Paradise Lost,” Australian Federal Police *Platypus Magazine* (Canberra, Australian Federal Police, Edition 114, October 2013), 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Another agency then explained that issues, such as dealing with corruption, infrastructure development, and governance reforms, would require a generation before seeing results. Different agencies eventually managed to compromise over widely varying timeframes. It is worth noting that the last rotation of Australian and Tongan troops withdrew from the Solomon Islands in August 2013. This substantiates Eisenhower's belief that in emergency situations, "it is not going to happen the way you are planning."

RAMSI has been a watershed in Australia's whole-of-government approach to complex emergencies. In 2004, for example, the AFP established its International Deployment Group (IDG) to provide the Australian government with a standing capacity to deploy police to contribute to stability and security operations. The lessons of planning and leadership from RAMSI and other recent missions have contributed significantly to the development of a methodology for responding to complex emergencies that is still evolving.

While it is prudent to create an organization with the expertise needed to deal with regional security issues, a vision for a PI-POTC might also include a role for the Centre in crisis management, with a particular focus on natural disasters and climate change. The rationale for such a role is that military and police personnel are among those expected to respond to such crises, especially on the basis of their planning and management skills. Security forces, however, also have the potential to become risk managers, particularly in relation to climate change, which can be viewed as a slowly developing disaster that will affect Pacific Island nations in the years and decades to come.

The characteristics of a community of practice, outlined above, would make security forces, along with health, transport and communications authorities (plus a range of other technical specialists), the obvious groups to work together to coordinate information, and develop guidelines and plans for managing and responding to a range of natural disasters; Such disasters

include cyclones, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and the effect of storm surges on vulnerable islands and infrastructure. By providing this institutional framework for crisis management and response, a PI-POTC would further enhance regional integration and cooperation.

## **Conclusion**

The ambition to establish a PI-POTC is something Pacific nations should consider seriously. Such an institution would be more than just an important venue for educating and training regional security forces, both police and military. The norms and values that such an institution would diffuse throughout regional security forces would be powerful mechanisms for greater integration and cooperation in the Pacific. Educating security forces in a range of internationally recognized behaviors, protocols and skills would also significantly enhance their professionalism and contribute to the region's capacity to deal with its own security problems.

The case outlined above has demonstrated developing a PI-POTC would be greatly assisted by its ability to participate in communities of interest and communities of practice that connect it to regional and global networks. These same networks would also position the Centre to develop additional expertise in crisis management and natural disaster response. In time, the institution might also serve as a place to develop leaders who share a common understanding of how to approach regional security issues from the perspective of the norms and values they absorbed from their education and experience in peace and stability operations. More importantly, it might also be the place where security forces of Pacific Island nations, schooled in these international doctrines, can begin to develop "Pacific Ways" of peace-making, peace-building and peacekeeping that have been shaped by their own traditions, values and practices.