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- High Commission for Malaysia
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- Pacific Cooperation Foundation
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- Singapore High Commission
- Soka Gakkai International of NZ
- South African High Commission
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As prime minister I have overarching responsibility for New Zealand’s national security. That covers a wide range of threats and risks, from earthquakes to espionage, and cyber-attacks to conflicts between states. It is about protecting our way of life and the values that shape our society.

The government takes its national security obligations very seriously. We have an obligation to ensure New Zealanders are safe at home or abroad. We have an obligation to maintain the integrity of our democratic system, our institutions, and the systems and processes of government. We have an obligation to secure our sea, air and electronic lines of transport and communication into and out of New Zealand. We decide who comes here and on what conditions, and we decide who can make use of our resources.

We have an obligation to support stability in our region — in the Pacific, the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean. And we have an obligation to support stability and the rule of law internationally.

New Zealand is known for its integrity, reliability and independence, and I am very grateful for the endorsement we received from the international community in our recent election to the United Nations Security Council. Given the nature of national security, I do not give many speeches about it. But I want New Zealanders to know about how our risk and threat profile is changing, the challenges we face, and how the government is responding to them.

Rapid rise

Much of that is due to the rapid rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS. Over the last two years the Sunni extremist group has seized substantial territory in northern Iraq and northern Syria. It claims to be the leader of the entire Muslim world and has decreed borders between Islamic countries to be invalid. New Zealanders will have seen the brutal and distressing methods ISIS uses, including beheading displays and mass killings. These deserve the strongest condemnation.

ISIS’s ability to motivate Islamist radicals, as well as its growth, ambition, resources and methods, make it a brutal threat, not only to stability in the Middle East, but regionally and locally too. ISIS is well-funded and highly skilled at using the internet to propagate extremist material and gain recruits. It has amassed financial resources by seizing banks and oil resources, effectively taxing controlled areas, kidnapping for ransom, and drawing upon an international financing network. It is widely regarded as the richest terrorist entity in history. It is estimated ISIS has around 12,000 to 15,000 foreign terrorist fighters, of which as many as 3000 hold Western passports from a range of countries.

The rise of such a well-resourced, globally focused terrorist entity, highly skilled in recruitment techniques utilising social media, is a game changer for New Zealand. I do not want to overstate the risks, but they are real and we should not shy away from acknowledging the facts. ISIS exposes us to a type of threat that we lack both the legislative tools and resources to combat.

Two strategies

We need to have both a short-term strategy, designed to deal with the immediate threat to our national security, and a longer-term strategy, designed to deal with the root causes of extremism. I intend to outline, as clinically and clearly as I can, the nature of the immediate threat to national security.

As in other Western countries, ISIS has been successful in recruiting New Zealanders to its cause. Government agencies have a watch list of between 30 and 40 people of concern in the foreign fighter context. These are people in or from New Zealand who are, in various ways, participating in extremist behaviour. Some of those on the watch list have travelled to Syria to engage in fighting and remain there. Others are ISIS supporters who

New Zealand faces a changing security environment. It can no longer rely on its distance from the world’s trouble spots for safety. The rapid rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIS, is a game changer for this country. A well-resourced, globally focused terrorist entity, highly skilled in recruitment techniques utilising social media, it exposes us to a type of threat that we lack both the legislative tools and resources to combat. The government will promote a range of legislative measures to bolster its ability to deal with this threat. It will also consider means of providing military training for the Iraqi armed forces.
have tried to travel to Syria or Iraq to fight, and who have been prevented from leaving by cancellation of their passports. Some are people involved in funding terrorism, people who are trying to radicalise others, and people who themselves are becoming radicalised and interested in fighting for ISIS.

While what I can say is necessarily of a limited nature, it is important to note that there are individuals here who are attracted to carrying out domestic attacks of the type we have seen prevented in Australia and recently take place in Canada. Our agencies do everything in their powers to prevent that happening here and to keep New Zealanders safe.

I want to stress that none of these people are representative of the New Zealand Muslim community as a whole. The Muslim community is a peaceful one, which makes a valuable contribution to New Zealand. I know the vast majority of Muslim New Zealanders are as distressed by the actions of ISIS and its violent extremist message as anyone.

Preventing departure
As a government we are doing what we can to prevent New Zealanders going off to fight for ISIS and brutally killing innocent civilians in Iraq and Syria. Some may ask why we cancel their passports and prevent them travelling rather than just letting them go. But I think most New Zealanders understand that we do not want to have a reputation for exporting foreign terrorist fighters to places that already have more than enough of them. And there is a Security Council resolution on taking action against such people that New Zealand is required to comply with.

Should they return to New Zealand fully radicalised and skilled in fighting, they would represent a significant threat to the safety of New Zealanders. So we have been cancelling people’s passports where necessary. But even those radicalised New Zealanders who have been prevented from travelling are a distinct threat to our safety and security.

People who are prevented from performing terrorist acts abroad can turn their minds to terrorist acts at home, as the people of Canada experienced in recent weeks. In addition to those on the watch list, there are another 30 to 40 on a list of people requiring further investigation. These people could well be added to the watch list or even given a clean bill of health. We will not know until those investigations can be properly carried out.

Raised level
Recently, officials took the decision to raise our national threat level from ‘Very Low’ to ‘Low’. That means that while previously the threat of a terrorist attack was assessed as unlikely, it is now assessed as possible but not expected. The threat level is still below those of our partner countries, although from time to time we see specific threats emerge that we deal with on a case-by-case basis.

I want to assure New Zealanders that our agencies are doing everything they can to monitor the potential threat posed by radicalised individuals. But as prime minister, and minister for national security and intelligence, I would not be doing my job if I did not ask whether there was more we could do to address this risk. My government will ensure the agencies have the resources and tools they need to do this work.

Shortly after the election, I established an urgent review of legislative settings in relation to foreign fighters. It was narrow and tightly focused, looking only at measures that can add to the safety and security of New Zealand in the short term. A more comprehensive review of legislative settings will occur in a broader intelligence review that is required under law to begin by the middle of next year. The Cabinet has signed off on a series of proposals for law changes in the short term — ones that cannot wait for the longer review due to the rapidly evolving environment.

Limited legislation
I intend to seek broad political support to pass very limited legislation in a responsible way. First, it is my intention to give the minister of internal affairs the ability to cancel a passport on the grounds of national security for up to three years. At the moment, he or she can only do that for up to one year. There will be safeguards built into the extended period, including a periodic review every twelve months that the person involved will be able to submit to. As is the case now, the person would retain the ability to appeal or seek a judicial review of the minister’s decision. It is my expectation that applications for the cancellation of a passport for a period of longer than a year would be rare.

Second, I intend to allow the minister of internal affairs to suspend a passport or travel document for a temporary period of no more than ten working days. This power would be used in circumstances where urgent action is required but time is not available to prepare a full package of information to support a cancellation. It would allow agencies to take action to prevent foreign fighters from travelling should information come to light late in their planning phase. The passport suspension would allow time for a full cancellation process to follow.

Third, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service will be given a funding injection of almost $7 million across the current and next financial year to increase the number of staff it has available to work on monitoring and investigating foreign terrorist fighters. As I noted above, while we know of between 30 and 40 individuals who are on the watch list, there is also another group of people who require further investigation. The funding injection for the SIS will allow it to continue to focus on the highest risk individuals but also strengthen its understanding of the potential threat posed by others.
Video surveillance

Finally, I also want to update one particular aspect of the SIS’s surveillance powers, in relation to video surveillance. It may surprise some people to hear that the SIS cannot generally undertake visual surveillance in a private setting or which would involve trespass onto private property. This means, for example, that the SIS cannot install a video camera in a private premise even if it was for the purpose of observing activities of security concern, like people training with weapons. This issue was dealt with on the Police’s behalf in the Search and Surveillance Act in 2012.

I am proposing that the SIS be given the power under warrant, modelled on the existing Search and Surveillance Act. I am also proposing that the SIS be given an emergency surveillance power for a period not exceeding 48 hours, where it could, at the direction of its director and subject to the inspector general’s oversight, conduct urgent surveillance before a warrant can be issued. This would allow the service to investigate urgent situations while paperwork is prepared for the full warrant process.

In order to use this power, the director will have to be satisfied that the threshold for issuing a warrant would be met. I also expect the SIS to report publicly on an annual basis how many times it has used this power. There are further technical changes I am proposing, but these are the five main outcomes of the review.

These changes will strengthen our national security settings and I trust other political parties will recognise them as responsible and narrow. They will also be subject to a sunset clause.

Short-term measures

So that is the first response I want to talk about here — the package of short-term legislative and funding measures. The second response to ISIS is New Zealand’s contribution to the international coalition opposing that terrorist entity. We have discussed the threat of ISIS with many countries in the Middle East and elsewhere, including with our Five Eyes partners, and that has provided a base for our decision-making.

So I want to address that Five Eyes relationship briefly. Our partnership with Five Eyes started in the Second World War and since then has provided New Zealand with global information and reach on international security and intelligence issues that we could never have achieved on our own. The information and support of our Five Eyes partners will be an important part of how we deal with the threat of ISIS at home and abroad.

But I can be completely clear: Five Eyes does not cost us our independence. We have carved out our own independent foreign policy over decades now. We take pride in our independent foreign policy. As a small trading nation, our prosperity depends on the international rules-based system. We do not shy away from taking our share of the burden when that system is threatened, but we make independent decisions that suit our principles, role and size. That is what shaped our contributions in places like Afghanistan and East Timor, and we will also take an independent, New Zealand approach to any decisions we make about ISIS.

Four areas

There are four areas where New Zealand is preparing to make a contribution to the coalition against ISIS. The first area that we are looking at carefully is intelligence. To manage a threat like this we need to be well informed and share information with our partners. This is exactly what our intelligence agencies are for. We will be stepping up our contribution to intelligence operations that offer opportunities to further understand and potentially disrupt ISIS. And we will build our capability to monitor threats from any offshoots of ISIS that threaten us at home. I am not going to go into the details of that intelligence response.

The second area I want to address is diplomatic. ISIS is not a short-term threat — there is a lot of work to be done and it is a long game. Defeating ISIS will mean winning the hearts and minds of those vulnerable to its destructive message. New Zealand as a good international citizen, and as a country now elected to serve on the UN Security Council, needs to play its part in ensuring that the longstanding and some would say intractable problems of the Middle East are addressed.

There is little doubt that lack of movement towards a two-state solution in relation to Palestine, and the recent high number of civilian casualties in Gaza, serve to make the task of recruiters to extremist causes a significantly easier one. The unresolved issue of Iran’s nuclear capabilities hangs over the region as well. We
also need to redouble efforts towards reaching a political solution to the violent stalemate in Syria. This has been another cause of ISIS’s rise, and has seen almost 200,000 killed, and led to more than 3 million Syrians fleeing their country.

Council opportunity
Over the next two years we have the opportunity to attempt to ensure that the United Nations Security Council, designed to address these major issues of stability and security, lifts its game. In our region, too, there is an opportunity for greater diplomatic effort, including working with our close friends and neighbours in Indonesia, Malaysia and others in the region, which have Muslim populations that are targets for extremist recruiters. They too are looking for ways of dealing with this threat. We have already taken steps to lift our diplomatic efforts with these neighbours, and to play our part in a more focused regional counter-terrorism effort. We will continue that work.

Thirdly, I want to address humanitarian assistance. We must not lose sight of what is happening now on the ground. The situations in Syria and Iraq are humanitarian emergencies at the most extreme scale with millions of people displaced by conflict. New Zealand has provided $13.5 million in aid to the region since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011 and I am pleased to announce a further $1 million contribution today towards the needs of refugees and the internally displaced. We will be looking at further assistance to meet the needs of Syrian and Iraqi refugees fleeing their countries.

Finally, there is the question of whether New Zealand is prepared to play its part in the capacity-building that is clearly required if Iraq is to have a future as a law-abiding democratic country that treats all of its citizens with respect. In this regard we need to remember that the seeds of ISIS’s success lie in the failure of the Maliki regime to adhere to acceptable standards of governance, and to treat all citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion, with respect. It would, in my view, be highly unrealistic for us to expect those features to dramatically improve under the al-Abadi government without significant international support.

General willingness
And it would be unreasonable for New Zealand to expect that international support to be provided without our country being prepared to play our modest part. Quite what this means in relation to the development of good institutions — better police, courts, parliamentary process and the like — will only become clear later. But I believe we should signal a general willingness to play a part.

In relation to the more immediate task of assisting in building a disciplined and efficient military to maintain peace and security, we have a more complex decision to make. While building a modern Iraqi military is clearly important, New Zealand cannot, and should not, fight Iraqis’ battles for them. So I am ruling out New Zealand sending SAS or any troops into combat roles in Iraq.

Our military can, and may well, play a part in building the capability and capacity of the Iraqi forces. It is what we are good at and we have a proven track record of doing such work in Afghanistan. Should New Zealand military personnel be deployed in Iraq they would be behind the wire and limited to training local forces in order to counter ISIS and legitimately protect innocent people. Cabinet has asked for further advice from the military on this training option that would be filled by regular forces. The further advice will take some time to be completed. It will involve the assessment of how safe and secure a training location is and whether our security requirements could be met.

Further talk
We are talking to our longstanding partner Australia about what they are doing to help train the Iraqi forces and how we might help. New Zealand military planners will travel to the Middle East to assess the training option and then provide further information to Cabinet. We are also looking at where our partners have relocated resources to address ISIS. All of this will be carefully thought through before final decisions are made and we are not yet committed to any military option.

What we will do is make a contribution that is in the best interests of New Zealand and in line with our values and skills. I have no doubt some will argue when we do so that we increase risk to our people domestically, regionally and internationally. My view is that there is already risk in all of those areas. And the risk associated with ISIS becoming stronger and more widespread far outweighs that.

New Zealand has long been portrayed as having a benign threat environment. It gives me no pleasure to state that that situation is changing. As a government we are focused on responsibly addressing the risks that the rapid rise of ISIS presents to us locally, regionally and internationally. New Zealanders can be sure we are taking careful and responsible steps to protect their safety and security and we will continue to do so. Our national security is something that affects all New Zealanders and all of them have a stake in it.

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Getting around the Security Council table

Terence O’Brien reflects on the challenges that face New Zealand following its election to the world security body.

New Zealand’s success in securing a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2015–16 is a significant foreign policy accomplishment. It is a tribute to all those who campaigned. For only the fourth time in the 70 years of the United Nations’ existence, New Zealand will assume a seat at the council.1 We take our place at a precarious moment internationally. A combination of deep-seated political tensions in the Middle East coincides with brutal divisions inside Islam. Our campaign for membership emphasised a New Zealand record for conscientious international involvement and capacity for independent judgment. Those qualities will now be tested.

A well resourced, media savvy organisation employing harsh inhumane methods, the Islamic State (ISIS) has emerged committed to redrawing the map of the Middle East through cold blooded creation of a new country — a caliphate — which involves cruel persecution of fellow Muslims and of non-Muslim faiths. Christian leaders, including in New Zealand, voice dismay, while Muslim communities, including in New Zealand, denounce ISIS methods, which defy basic Islamic teaching about justifiable war. It is crystal clear that this issue and the character of the response by the international community, will cast a shadow over the New Zealand tenure on the Security Council. That is not to say, of course, that other crises will not intrude, like that surrounding Ukraine, where complex judgments are involved in the sense that none of the principal parties has a monopoly on virtue.

The immediate origins for this present Middle Eastern turmoil lie in the tragic 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq (which New Zealand wisely opted not to join), involving doctored intelligence and disastrous post-conflict decisions on the part of the victors that helped divide Shia from Sunni Muslims and dismantled much of Iraq’s administrative system and its armed forces. Subsequent disintegration has been fuelled, too, from Syria, where political, regional, tribal and religious antagonisms that splinter that country in ways that almost defy outside understanding spilled across the border in the form of ISIS.

Key decision

The international community once more agonises over how or whether to intervene in this latest chapter in Middle Eastern perdition. Confronted by the prospect of an open-ended conflict and hard on the heels of an unprecedented prolonged commitment in Afghanistan, New Zealand rightly has taken time to formulate a response in keeping with our means. A final decision one way or another should not be taken before New Zealand assumes its Security Council seat and absorbs the full magnitude of the council workload. We must remain clear in our own minds that a decision to commit SAS troops, no matter how much embodied by claims to a training or protection role, is a decision to enter combat. Special forces are now contingents of choice favoured by major powers and have been deployed by coalition governments in both Afghanistan and Iraq. There was ultimately no win in either place. Special forces on their own or even in combination with aerial strikes are not proving sufficient for victory. A final New Zealand decision should not be founded in expediency but conditioned by just how wise it is to participate militarily.

Diplomatically New Zealand must, of course, continue to condemn vigorously ISIS methods, show readiness to assist with diplomatic intercession and generosity with inevitable post-conflict humanitarian rehabilitation. Notwithstanding the shockingly inhumane ISIS cruelty on display, our basic approach must be conditioned by a realisation that in the last analysis regional governments and religious communities in the Middle East must themselves bear the lions’ share of responsibility to thwart or accommodate ISIS. There are undeniably serious moral principles involved. Modern secular governments from outside the region need, nonetheless, to think very carefully about committing to fight in someone else’s open-ended religious conflict, which is bound up with deep-seated ethnic, tribal, separatist and warlord anarchy that confound, for outsiders, the very difference between friend and foe.

Terence O’Brien is a senior fellow in the Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. A former diplomat, he sat on the Security Council during New Zealand’s previous tenure in 1993–94.

Following its outstanding success in achieving election to the United Nations Security Council, New Zealand must now contemplate what it might achieve on the world body. There is no doubt that it will face many challenges not only in addressing the wide-ranging issues likely to come before the council in the next two years but also in finding the resources properly to back its effort in New York. New Zealand’s capacity for independent foreign policy thinking on the Security Council is likely to be severely tested as it grapples with complex issues and seeks to advance its own causes, which include reform of the use of the veto by permanent members and changes in the composition of the council.
Basic causes

The New Zealand capacity for independent foreign policy thinking on the Security Council will, therefore, be severely tested. It is important to us that international legitimacy and moral principle of any joint international action is preserved to the extent achievable, including in Syria. The political and the religious dimensions of Arab or Muslim grievance are inextricably connected. Resolution of the present crisis cannot, for example, ignore Iran’s legitimate interest in any international blueprint for reconciliation. Pressures must be applied strenuously upon Israel and Palestine to heal deep divisions. Nuclear disarmament must be reinforced to include Israel as well as Iran. Saudi Arabia and Gulf states must be discouraged from funding variously favoured insurgencies and causes in the region. Egypt must be persuaded to moderate forcible oppression of the Muslim Brotherhood. Sale and provision of sophisticated foreign weaponry to favoured regional clients must be curbed.

The very idea that Western policies of prolonged intrusion in the Middle East might actually also provide strong circumstantial explanation for basic political causes of all, or most, of the present turmoil is substantively unacknowledged. The original simplistic post-9/11 interpretations proclaiming an irrational radicalised Islam driven by weakness, disillusionment and envious resentment over its eclipse by Western success resonate still in some Western capitals. The brutal methods of ISIS not surprisingly reinforce these preconceptions. But precarious self-deception persists as a problem even while major powers strive once again to summon a coalition of like-minded to pull chestnuts from Middle East conflagration re-ignited and fuelled by 2003 blunders in Iraq.

Ambitious objectives

Amidst all of this New Zealand’s stated objectives for its Security Council tenure are ambitious. We are committed to pursuing reform of the use of the veto by permanent Security Council members (P5) and to seeking change in the composition of the council and fairer rotation for non-permanent members. Veto reform is not a new proposal, and ideas about membership were scripted last time New Zealand served, to no avail. In the current climate pursuit of veto reform must be carefully even-handed. It is perfectly reasonable for New Zealand to deplete the prospect of vetoes by Russia and China, both for their own reasons, of Security Council collective action on Syria. It is equally regrettable that the council conspicuously failed to adjudicate the latest savage outbreak of Israel–Palestine enmity in Gaza. A continual American veto exists over council decisions on this longstanding tragedy with its obvious connections to radical jihadism of ISIS and its individual foreign sympathisers. Any suggested New Zealand formula for veto reform that might appear to condone use by certain permanent Security Council members but not others would be fraught with an unconscionable double standard.

The workload for New Zealand on the Security Council will be inordinate and will test professional agility as well as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade capacities in Wellington to brief and support the Security Council delegation. There are in fact some 53 country and regional issues preoccupying the council with varying degrees of urgency and complexity. Unforeseeable crises can, of course, add to that list. New Zealand has to have a policy position on each and every issue. A glance at the Security Council agenda for October 2014 is sufficient to reinforce the point. The council was due to consider Syria, Ukraine, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Mali, Haiti, Israeli/Palestine, Western Sahara, Congo and Lebanon, as well as devote attention to UN peacekeeping, to the security implications of communicable disease (Ebola) and to the issue of women, peace and security, to debate the council’s working methods and to hear a report from the International Court of Justice.

The extent to which the ten non-permanent members on the 2015–16 council will be able to make common cause in ways that influence the five permanent members, individually or collectively, should not be overrated. Different interests and ambitions will obviously influence the ten, although pursuit of greater transparency and democracy in the council’s informal deliberations provides some measure of shared interest amongst them all, which New Zealand could promote as part of its small country Security Council credentials.

Wider responsibilities

The basic briefing book which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade must supply to the New Zealand council delegation will be pretty voluminous and must allow, of course, for unexpected change in respect to any of the crisis issues involved, as well as include issues that New Zealand itself will want to propose including Security Council reform. (During its last tenure New Zealand pursued the safety of UN peacekeepers as one of its council objectives.) All of this requires perception, understanding and forward thinking throughout the various MFAT directorates and effective co-ordination at the senior level. That challenge is amplified by the as yet untested full impact of reforms inside MFAT to install a ‘business model’ for operations and policy advice that served to deplete levels of experience.

At the same time, New Zealand will require to keep up with the pace of activity inside the wider multilateral system beyond the Security Council. International economic issues, including trade and investment liberalisation, are obvious priorities,
although with trade the focus is more likely at the regional than global level for as long as the World Trade Organisation is paralysed. But refugees, child protection, climate change, disaster response as well as health pandemics like Ebola are areas where New Zealand must remain more widely and constructively engaged, alongside Security Council responsibilities. On climate change New Zealand’s decision to distance itself from the second Kyoto Protocol has resulted in diminution of its mediator role in international negotiation. On disarmament New Zealand will be the only member on the Security Council of the six-nation so-called New Agenda Coalition (NAC) dedicated to the elimination of nuclear weapons. As a co-founder New Zealand must consult with other NAC members whenever the Security Council addresses in 2015–16 nuclear non-proliferation either comprehensively or in respect to individual delinquents. The concern of the permanent five council members is invariably (but understandably) to halt further spread of the weapons into new hands but with rather less weight attached to actual disarmament of their own arsenals, despite the universal Non-Proliferation Treaty that directly link both dimensions. That is a link that New Zealand on behalf of NAC should strive wherever possible to preserve around the council table, as well as urging full P5 compliance with the Nuclear Test-ban Treaty.

Asian connections

The need more generally for New Zealand to retain good lines of diplomatic communication during 2015–16 beyond the council itself has larger relevance. Given Security Council preoccupation with the immensely complex issues arising from ISIS in the Middle East and the wider implications, it will be important to retain close interaction with those Asian countries with significant Muslim populations — Indonesia (the largest Muslim country in the world), Malaysia and India, for example — both in New York and through our diplomatic missions in capitals in order to share perceptions and understanding. Malaysia has also been elected to the council for 2015–16 and will assume chairmanship of ASEAN in 2015. These happy coincidences provide opportunity for appropriate New Zealand collusion with ASEAN on Security Council business. It is important, above all, that New Zealand multiplies its points of reference for the intricate challenges presented by radical Islam, and does not depend solely on the judgments and interests of Atlantic powers alone, important as those are.

The need as a member of Security Council to keep good lines into Asia is obviously a reflection, too, of the way the balance of New Zealand’s external interests has shifted, particularly since our last Security Council tenure in 1993–94. Institutionally, diplomatically and economically, our relationships in the region have now magnified appreciably in the past twenty years, no more so than with China. There is a mild irony, shared with Australia, in the fact that we remain categorised inside the UN electoral system in New York as a member of the ‘West European and other group’ (WEOG) while the balance of our external interest is shifting elsewhere. It will be an exceptional experience for New Zealand to deliberate issues of global security on the Security Council in the presence of both China and the United States, given our status as friend but not formal ally of either. That amplifies the challenge for our diplomatic dexterity. We do not want to be forced to choose sides. This may at certain times, however, become unavoidable, and New Zealand will then perform rely upon the intrinsic quality of both New Zealand bilateral relationships and the skill of professional diplomacy to navigate a way ahead. China’s relationships with other Asian countries that New Zealand also values as partners (including Malaysia, which also is on the council), will likewise condition the New Zealand approach. We need, too, to leverage council membership as far as we can to embellish New Zealand/South Pacific relationships at a time when, along with Australia, we confront signs of a disposition to modify the institutional arrangements in the region.

Peacekeeping focus

Finally some of our reformist zeal for the New Zealand Security Council tenure should also be directed to improving the whole UN peacekeeping effort. New Zealand has conspicuously fallen off the pace in its support (from previously being well ranked as a contributor we are now 97th on the list). Our preferred involve- ments are now with NATO, which will have five members on the 2015 Security Council and strives to be an alternative, or even rival, to the United Nations in international peace support, although its priorities remain strictly those of the Atlantic world.

The practical result is that international peace support has become a two-speed system with governments of Asia, Africa and the Middle East bearing the burden of UN peacekeeping, while NATO governments and friends concentrate in areas and on issues of direct security interest to themselves, with or without Security Council authorisation, employing latest weapon technologies and special forces. New Zealand has, in effect, fallen in with this preference.

There remains a real need to strengthen UN capacities; and for Western governments to commit contingents and resources to UN peacekeeping. As a Security Council member New Zealand should now champion that cause, more especially since improved peacekeeping would help extend our own scope for interoperability with Asian militaries (among the P5 China is the leading peacekeeping contributor), something which dovetails with New Zealand’s broader political and economic interests.

NOTES

1. New Zealand served two-year terms in 1953–54 and 1993–94. It also occupied half a term, one year, in 1966. In 1982 New Zealand was defeated in a bid by Malta, when African nations opposed the candidature because of New Zealand sporting ties with apartheid South Africa.


4. Established in 1988, it comprises Brazil, Mexico, Ireland, Sweden, South Africa and New Zealand.
Towards an all-hazards approach

Jim Rolfe discusses New Zealand’s approach to security in the 21st century.

In early November 2014 Prime Minister John Key gave an address to the nation that was billed in advance as a major speech on ‘New Zealand’s National Security’. In the event, the speech focused on the threat to New Zealand of events in Iraq and Syria and the dangers presented by New Zealand based sympathisers of the so-called Islamic State. The speech also announced a range of measures to combat this security threat. By using the speech in this way, the prime minister singled out one (no doubt important) issue, but, on the assumption that he does not believe that New Zealand’s security is solely tied up with the threat of Islamic terrorism, begged the question as to what New Zealand’s security is all about. Clearly, there is more to New Zealand’s security than threats from one version of international terrorism.

Until about 40 years ago it was possible to discuss New Zealand’s national security in terms almost completely of threats from another country. The armed forces were responsible for countering the threats from foreign military enemies and thus for the ‘defence of New Zealand’, as the Defence Act 1990 phrased it. The more covert foreign enemies who exercised their skills through the arts of espionage, sabotage and subversion were the responsibility of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, supported by the Police if an arrest was considered necessary. Security in this context, defined in the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service Act 1969, was the protection of New Zealand from acts of espionage, sabotage, and subversion, whether or not they are directed from or intended to be committed within New Zealand. These definitions have been amended slightly and added to over the years, but from the legislative perspective the sense has remained more or less unchanged.

This was a world of certainty as to the nature of the threat, if not as to how best to counter it. Periodically, the Defence system would produce a white paper, outlining and explaining the policy for the use of the armed forces to counter threats from other armed forces. The more covert threats were rarely discussed, and the Security Intelligence Service’s enabling legislation was not at all explicit as to the methods that would be used to counter those threats. It was a given that the threats existed and that the state should deal with them quietly.

Other events, floods, earthquakes, economic slump, were accepted as being important, even dangerous, indeed even as threats to national stability, but were not treated as ‘security issues’ and were the responsibility of the appropriate agency. In this system, agencies stuck to their knitting and worked with other agencies only when necessary, normally when responding to a specific event.

Changed discussion

From the mid-1970s in response to a changing and, many believed, more uncertain international environment (US defeat in Vietnam, the 1973 oil shocks) the discussion changed. The economy was recognised as a security issue and then issues such as energy and food reserves and national measures for coping with major earthquakes, flooding in Whakatane in 2004,
The last US troops leave South Vietnam in 1973 under the watchful eye of a Viet Cong observer.

National security issues are complex in their character, have unclear boundaries as to their effects and involve stakeholders with both domestic and international agendas. The national security system must, therefore, deal with the issues on a system-wide rather than issue-by-issue basis, be resilient enough to absorb any initial problems and be able to adapt to changing situations. All this within an environment that balances the rights of the individual with the intrusive and coercive needs of the government. New Zealand has been working for nearly 30 years to achieve this state. The process is well advanced, but there is still much to be done.
also began to be seen in the same light. Underlying this ‘comprehensive security’ approach was the idea that security was too important a concept to be considered only in military terms.

Despite the recognition that security should be considered comprehensively in concept, by and large the specific components were still treated discretely. Responses to identified security threats were still generally based on specific agencies with responsibilities for the specific areas.

New Zealand changed its approach to thinking about security formally in 1987 with the establishment of an ‘Office of the Coordinator of Domestic and External Security’. The coordinator, a senior public servant, reported to the prime minister but operated outside formal departmental structures. The system, within which the coordinator was intended to act as the name implied, was to ‘assist the orderly government of New Zealand in the face of any threat to the well-being of the nation’.1 The principles to be followed in ensuring that New Zealand was secure included:

- the policy should be comprehensive;
- essential powers should be in place;
- there should be criteria for the allocation of resources to ensure security;
- there should be a small central co-ordinating structure;
- existing lines of authority and accountability should not be altered.2

In terms of the transition of thinking about security, the idea that not only should the concept be comprehensive but also so too should the responses was fundamental.

Possible threats to New Zealand’s security were identified under headings such as: military; economic; terrorism, whether of external or internal origin; espionage, sabotage or subversion; threats to public order, including, for example, large-scale refugee movements and international organised crime; physical danger of external origin; and physical dangers of internal origin. No assessment was made at this stage of the risk any of these threats posed. In other words, there was as yet no overall attempt to think systematically about what security should mean for the country.

**Complex environment**

Since 1987 we have seen a security environment that has become ever more complex, ever more opaque and ever more inter-dependent as issues in one area have effects far beyond the initial issue. To a large part the change in the environment is a consequence of increasing ‘virtual globalisation’ in which information, ideas, people and even materiel can be moved at speeds greater than government bureaucracies can easily deal with. Also in part, the change is due to an increasing sense within societies that they should be free of fear of any kind and almost to any degree.

Most obviously, the 9/11 terrorist attacks of September 2001 led to a social demand, enthusiastically accepted by most governments, for protection against any conceivable threat at almost any cost, financial or in-kind. Linked to the change in demand for security (even though it is an open question as to whether there is any objective increase in the supply of threat) has been the developing understanding of both the vertical and horizontally integrated nature of security issues. A health threat, for example, emanating from West Africa or Central Asia is not merely an issue for the health system. It is also a matter for international agencies, border agencies, transport agencies, potentially the education system (if schools need to be closed), economic agencies (if economic activity has to be restricted) and possibly the welfare and defence systems. Information as to the likely path of the disease itself is fundamental, and introduces another range of agencies with a role in collecting and analysing information. Not only will central government be involved, so too will international partners, local government, the private sector and, no doubt, civil society in the form of interest groups, each with its own interest in and responsibility for process and outcome. Similar chains of consequential relationships can easily be constructed for almost any significant issue, whether of domestic origin or international.

A first public attempt at developing an understanding of

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1. P425

2. P426

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The 1973 oil shocks threatened New Zealand’s economic security

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York in 2001

The aftermath of the French terrorist attack on the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in Auckland

The 1973 oil shocks threatened New Zealand’s economic security

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York in 2001

The aftermath of the French terrorist attack on the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in Auckland
the risks, in terms of both likelihood and consequence faced by New Zealand has been undertaken by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in the successor to the coordinator of domestic and external security’s office. That analysis first defines security on the basis of policy rather than legislation in terms of citizens within their society being ‘able to go about their business confidently’. It then defines key objectives that include the preservation of ‘sovereignty and territorial integrity’ and ensuring that ‘public safety’ is maintained, but also include the need for economic prosperity, a rules-based international order and a protected natural environment.

Underlying understanding

Underlying this set of objectives seems to be an understanding that a security issue is one with either or both international and domestic antecedents and either or both international or domestic consequences. Very rarely will any issue have no consequences for New Zealand. The issue is whether the consequences need to be addressed as a matter of security.

There is always the possibility that a government will direct resources at salient headline-grabbing issues rather than objectively perhaps more important but less sexy issues. To guard against this, the first step must be to try and determine what should be considered as priorities. Using a standard matrix, balancing likelihood against consequence, the government has determined an indicative range of security threats from those that will occur often but which will have relatively minor consequences (local flooding for example), through those that will occur less frequently (perhaps only once in a thousand or more years), but which will be devastating in their consequences (the re-emergence into activity of the Auckland volcanic zone perhaps). In the middle is a group of events that could occur every ten to 100 years (and thus likely enough to occur to gain our attention) and that will also cause significant damage if not prepared for. In this middle category are events such as a major animal disease, a major pandemic or a major failure of national infrastructure. Likewise it is indicative only, but are nonetheless an essential first step in planning.

The second step is conceptual. An approach that plans only for identified hazards or threats suffers from the high probability that the event, when it occurs, will be different in kind or degree to what had been planned for and thus that the plans will not be relevant. Instead and as well, the system must be able to deal with the issues on an ‘all-hazards’ basis. That is, the national security system must be able to consider the threats not just as discrete events, but also as classes of event distinguished by their complexity and their significance. They get attention because of their significance, but their complexity is what determines the planning approach.

Important difference

The difference between a system that plans only against a comprehensive listing of events and one that plans for ‘all-hazards’ is the difference between the hedgehog, which knows one big thing and protects against that, and the fox, which knows about a lot of different factors and uses the range of its understanding to adapt to the current situation. The hedgehog is fine so long as it is dealing with its major risk but is vulnerable to anything else. The fox will not always be protected against a specific event, but will generally find a way to deal with it. The fox is resilient. Ideally, risk will be managed for discrete events simultaneously with the development of resilience across the system.

The 1987 changes to the national security architecture were a recognition that security issues are often inter-dependent, that the environment within which they occurred is complex and that there are many unknowns within the system. In the subsequent three decades the system has remained more or less true to the principles defined in 1987, even as the structures have evolved somewhat. Today, the Cabinet has a streamlined ‘National Security Committee’, supported by a group of chief executives, and the Officials’ Domestic and External Security Committee, who meet regularly to examine issues of the moment and to prepare advice for the government. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has a deputy chief executive responsible for ‘security and intelligence’ with subordinate directors responsible for systems, policy, communications, intelligence and assessments and cyber matters. The system is more centralised. The deputy chief executive acts as the coordinator did previously and the system is based around a whole-of-government understanding of ‘we’re all in this together’.

Ultimate judgment

All systems are judged ultimately by their success when needed in crisis or emergency. No matter how good the ‘business as usual’ process of planning and preparation, if they do not work when needed, no matter how complex the issue, the system will be judged as a failure. The system will also be judged a failure if it is not seen as relevant to the needs of society, if it is seen as focusing on irrelevant menaces, ‘Reds under the bed’ perhaps, in an environment where the bed is completely safe, but the front-room is in danger of being flooded.

The system can be judged, subjectively at least (and it is a

A street scene in Christchurch after the earthquake in February 2011 and (below) flooding in the suburb of Bexley in its aftermath
weakness that there are no objective evaluation or accountability measures in place) against the kinds of criteria already discussed:

- **A systems approach:** Yes, in part. There is a centralised and coherent government system designed to examine the environment, develop resilience and ensure proper responses can and do occur. The system is strongest within central government and weaker the further away from central government you get. In some areas, the civil defence sub-system for example, the relationships are more wide-ranging, and relationships are developing between the government and the private sector in the sub-system dealing with cyber security.

- **Evidence led:** Yes, certainly in terms of capability. Part of the central system is the national intelligence collection and analysis process. The agencies in the central system are supported by a considerable departmental-based collection and analysis capability focusing on agency (Primary Industries, Customs, Immigration for example) rather than wider national needs. These national agencies are supported by the longstanding international intelligence sharing arrangement known as ‘Five Eyes’ and a range of other international intelligence partnerships of varying levels of closeness. Given the international nature of many security threats, international intelligence partnerships would seem to be essential. Of course, all the information in the world is useless unless it is interpreted accurately and taken into account when decisions are made. We do have to take the governments ‘trust me’ approach on some sensitive issues because no government is inclined to reveal its intelligence and security secrets. For example, in his November speech John Key asserted that a relatively small number of citizens were of interest to the intelligence and security agencies. We have to take the assertion as to their links to international terrorism and the risk they pose to us at face-value.

- **Responsive:** Following the 2010 Christchurch earthquake, the relevant committees, both official and political, met and the central response was activated within hours. This is the general experience now. Also, the system is now designed to look ahead to major international events to attempt to determine the degree of risk to the event itself (if New Zealand held) and to New Zealand.

- **Adaptive:** That no plan survives contact with the enemy is a military truism. As events unfold the system has to adapt more from operating within standard procedures to developing new and relevant processes. This is especially so in short-notice crises. The system did not work well following the grounding of the ship *Rena* off Tauranga in 2011, and adaptation was slow in occurring. In contrast, the complete natural disaster command and control system was adapted within days of the Christchurch earthquake, and continues to be adapted with the announcement that the recovery process is to be absorbed in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

- **Resilient:** Resilience is the capacity to adapt and keep operating in times of crisis. It is at the heart of the approach to dealing with complex security issues. It is based on principles rather than procedures and emphasises flexibility and adaptation. The evidence is that New Zealand’s system is resilient. It has been tested to considerable strain with recent natural and industrial disasters. The fact that the system has kept working and that lessons from events are fed back into the system indicate its resilience.

- **Proportionate:** There is always a danger that demands for ‘security’ will lead to attempts to put resources into areas that appear to give security, but which are disproportionate in terms of the resources used against the gains likely to be achieved, or disproportionate in terms of the restrictions on civil liberties in the name of security needs. In part, this means that policy-makers have to be aware of the consequences of their actions and have to ensure that they do not succumb to sector-based demands, whether of the public or of international partners, without assessing the evidence surrounding the demands. It is possible, for example, that in his November 2014 speech John Key signalled relatively limited measures to deal with the threat of Islamic terrorism because more would have been disproportionate given that the threat is ‘tiny’, albeit real.

- **Legitimate:** If security measures are to be seen as legitimate they must be legal, relevant and appropriate. By and large, the government has made the case for its actions across a range of security events. In part, though, legitimacy rests on the ways the government gets its message to the public. The prime
minister’s November speech is likely to be followed by more such events. So too it is likely that there will be more media interviews with the leadership of the intelligence and security agencies along the lines of the interviews given by Rebecca Kitteridge, director of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, in late 2014. Depending on one’s perspective, these are either legitimate approaches to government communication or a part of the ‘theatre of security’, designed to soften us for more restrictions on our liberties. Ultimately, the public will decide whether government activities in this area are legitimate and it will make its opinion known through the electoral process.

**Sufficiency issue**

New Zealand’s security system has come a long way in recent years, as it has moved from a focus on certain and discrete security threats to an understanding of the problems of complexity and incomplete knowledge. But there is still a long way to go before it is completely coherent. There is no way yet of setting and trading-off budgetary priorities between competing needs within an integrated security system, there is a mish-mash of legislation dealing with the system and there are no evaluation or accountability mechanisms to help determine whether what is being done is sensible, effective, useful, or something else.

These are all necessary, but they may not be sufficient. Ultimately, the New Zealand public has to accept what is being done in its name and often the public has no basis for knowing what actually is being done. Perhaps we are ready for a ‘Security white paper’ rather than, as is customary every five or ten years, a Defence white paper. That would be a first step in demonstrating to the country not only that security is important but also that security is an integrated system of systems, rather than a grouping of discrete systems.

**NOTES**

2. Ibid.

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Global diplomats: the second tier

Ken Ross reviews the global diplomacy performance of eleven post-war New Zealand prime ministers other than the four standouts.

“The way in which foreign policy is conducted depends very largely on the personality and interest of the Prime Minister of the day…. The Prime Minister tends to play an important, often a decisive, part in decision-making on foreign policy issues.”

(George Laking, 1984)

In assessing the global diplomacy of New Zealand prime ministers since 1945, I have already highlighted the main characters — Norman Kirk, David Lange, Jim Bolger and Helen Clark. This article focuses on the other players, a prime ministerial XI.

How each in this team slots into the story of our high standing as a progressive small state, with a deep internationalism central to our national identity, is caught in brief pen-sketches that pin-point what is most relevant to each prime minister’s global diplomacy. The most recent measuring stick of New Zealand’s high worldwide standing has been our resounding election to the United Nations Security Council for 2015–16.

When he died in January 2008, George Laking had observed all of the prime ministers since 1945, including working in close proximity to the first four. Laking, who led the foreign ministry for six of its most fascinating years (1967–72), excelled in addressing the public on how we needed to be more aware of world affairs. His speeches became a savvy contribution to the ‘unbuttoning’ of New Zealand’s intellectual and diplomatic talent. Laking handed the baton to Frank Corner just days after Norman Kirk began his prime ministership in December 1972. This article benefits from Laking’s ruminations about these prime ministers, which are scattered about, including in this journal — a collected edition of them would be helpful for our diplomatic intellectual capital.

Peter Fraser (1940–49): Fraser’s dynamic internationalism is well summed up by Professor Fred Wood’s ‘small state rampant’, the title of the final chapter of his The New Zealand People at War: Political and External Affairs (1958). A half-century later Wood’s portrait of Fraser was re-validated by Gerald Hensley’s Beyond the Battlefield: New Zealand and its Allies 1939–45 (2009).

The story told in my forthcoming book commences when the war ended in September 1945. By then Fraser’s best global diplomacy, including his outstanding effort at the San Francisco conference that established the United Nations, had played out. Fraser’s ‘small state rampant’ mantra heralded the aspirational brand that Kirk was subsequently to institute. Fraser’s failure to bed it in leaves little lustre on his final four years as prime minister, when his progressive global diplomacy had been largely garaged. In the post-war years Fraser’s global diplomacy was driven, in Keith Sinclair’s words, by his having ‘become a cold war warrior before the hot war ended; psychologically he was ready for an anti-communist crusade’. Ian McGibbon has finely detailed Fraser’s Cold War preoccupations.

Uninterested trio

Sid Holland (1949–57): Holland is the first of a trio among these eleven who match Frank Corner’s observation of Keith Holyoake that he ‘had little interest in international affairs and put his standing in New Zealand above New Zealand’s standing in the world.’

Bruce Brown tells us Holland ‘was something of an ignoramus in international affairs, in which he also had little interest.’ Brown says of Holland that at his first attendance at a Commonwealth leaders’ meeting, he took the line that he was a new boy who had come to learn. The veterans thought this appropriate modesty. But when he repeated a similar approach at his second meeting, the reaction was less indulgent.

The most detailed account of Holland’s prime ministership is

Norman Kirk, David Lange, Jim Bolger and Helen Clark — the prime ministers who have best promoted global diplomacy for New Zealand since 1945 — have already been highlighted in previous issues of this journal. The other players, a prime ministerial XI, are this article’s album of record. Collectively, this eleven have contributed to our high standing as a progressive small state, with a deep internationalism central to our national identity. The most recent measuring stick of this high worldwide standing is our recent resounding election to the United Nations Security Council.
in Barry Gustafson’s *The First 50 Years: A History of the National Party* (1986). There is no mention there of any global diplomacy by Holland. Malcolm Templeton’s *Ties of Blood and Empire: New Zealand’s Involvement in Middle East Defence and the Suez Crisis 1947–57* (1994) tells the tale of Holland’s miserable performance throughout the 1956 Suez Crisis. Immediately following Sir Anthony Eden’s ignoble departure from 10 Downing Street in January 1957, Holland arranged for Eden to converse in New Zealand. When the Edens arrived in Auckland after their sea voyage, Holland ensured that they were welcomed as heroes.

**Walter Nash** (1957–60): Nash, 75 when he became prime minister, had by then an impressive pedigree in world affairs, largely from his time as Fraser’s deputy between 1940 and 1949. For a New Zealand prime minister Nash had unprecedented access to world leaders, yet he rarely accomplished anything with them beyond tea and conversation. Keith Sinclair’s Nash biography heads a full house of quality commentary. Robert Chapman, Malcolm Templeton, David McIntyre, Malcolm McKinnon and Sonja Davies all tell us about Nash’s many international perambulations. Harold Macmillan has given his reflections on his encounters with Nash when they were both prime ministers. Nash was widely derided for his unwillingness to face the issue of an all-white All Black tour to South Africa in 1960. The picture of a muddling Nash, from his first day as prime minister, is snapped brilliantly by Ian McGibbon.

Nash’s dismal prime ministership had a serendipitous upside — it was a critical ‘training ground’ for Kirk as he headed towards his own prime ministership twelve years later. Kirk learnt the most crucial lesson was to be match-fit for global diplomacy on day one.

**Hawkish dove**

**Keith Holyoake** (1957, 1960–72): Corner’s observation of Holyoake — already used in regard to Holland — is further illuminated by Laking’s insight that Holyoake shared the same instinctive attitudes to foreign policy issues as Holland, at least at first. But while he was scarcely less contemptuous of the Department, he was much more perceptive. His perceptiveness, however, failed to galvanise his decisions. Instead his Delphic nature lost his officials: Laking has briefed us on that predicament. If Holyoake had engaged better with officials, and more forthrightly led his ministers, he would no doubt have handled his major issue more ably.

New Zealand’s entanglement in the Vietnam War increasingly dominated Holyoake’s global diplomacy as well as intruding heavily in domestic politics. When the war escalated in 1965, alongside our military commitment, the country’s longstanding foreign policy bipartisanship began to break down and was gone by 1972. Holyoake has been labelled the ‘most dovish of the hawks’, a term formulated by Ralph Mullins, a leading intellect in the foreign ministry, who was at the heart of advice on the war. After sifting through the material more recently published, I suggest that Holyoake could be better tagged as the most hawkish of the doves.

Holyoake’s prime demerit in global diplomacy illustrates Corner’s observation. Faced with his own Cabinet’s support of Ian Smith’s rebel regime in Southern Rhodesia, Holyoake shamed New Zealand internationally. He decided to let one of our 1966 UN Security Council votes give comfort to the breakaway regime in Rhodesia, even knowing that the vote would alienate the Africans and many other governments. Domestic politics had trumped his global diplomacy. It was another crucial moment for Kirk, learning from Holyoake’s predicament.

**Futile initiative**

**Jack Marshall** (1972): Marshall is deservedly best appreciated for his pre-prime ministerial negotiations with successive British governments to ensure New Zealand’s access arrangements when Britain joined the European Economic Community. Following Holyoake’s stepping aside, Marshall’s nine months as prime minister was bereft of opportunities to do anything other than endeavour not to lose his job at the general election he had to call. Prime Minister Marshall’s main diplomatic initiative was futile — ‘building bridges’ with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

**Bill Rowling** (1974–75): Rowling’s fifteen months as prime minister saw him striving to continue Kirk’s global diplomacy. But Kirk’s pace was not maintained: while he was outstanding, Rowling and his colleagues were not. Russell Marshall’s quip that ‘the lights rather went out in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Kirk’s death’ catches the diminished dynamic. Yet, Rowling did stand firm with the Kirk brand, forcing Muldoon’s hand, and then helping ensure the brand re-emerged with the next generation of Labour leaders, David Lange and Helen Clark. Finally, he ably represented New Zealand, including his prime minister Lange, when ambassador in Washington, 1985–88.

**Robert Muldoon** (1975–83): Muldoon’s reactionary posturing throughout his public life is well documented. In his 2006 memoir, *Final Approaches*, Gerald Hensley gives the most astute perspective we have on Muldoon’s prime ministership. Hensley had earlier categorised Muldoon’s global diplomacy with
when you think about Sir Robert Muldoon his foreign policy does not readily come to mind. Whatever else he will be remembered for it will not be his achievements on the world stage. 

Hensley then concluded ‘yet there was a Muldoon foreign policy…. It was as scrappy, instinctive and matter-of-fact as the man himself.’

On becoming prime minister Muldoon was determined to reverse the iconic components of the Kirk brand by encouraging sporting contacts with the white South Africans and having the United States Navy visit. Ironically, Muldoon’s intense efforts were instrumental in the Kirk brand’s resurgence as the country kicked back at those reversals. He wears responsibility for our sole failed Security Council bid: in 1982 — we were beaten out by Malta, a late entrant prompted by the many member states outraged at Muldoon’s countenancing the previous year’s Springbok tour.

Rich year

Geoffrey Palmer (1989–90): Palmer’s year as prime minister was rich in global diplomacy. A gold star is appropriate for when, at the 1989 Commonwealth leaders’ meeting, Palmer cast the New Zealand vote for Emeka Anyaoku to be Shridath Ramphal’s successor as Commonwealth secretary-general. Malcolm Fraser, Anyaoku’s opponent, was being strongly promoted by Bob Hawke. Hawke was beside himself when Fraser was decisively beaten; more so with the realisation that New Zealand had not supported the Australian. Palmer’s decision that New Zealand should not vote at the United Nations to condemn the United States’ invasion in Panama is the major negative: that vote ranks as our second most notorious United Nations’ moment after the 1966 Security Council vote that comforted the rebel Rhodesian regime. On 29 December 1989 the UN General Assembly voted 75 to twenty, including New Zealand, to condemn the US military intervention as a flagrant violation of international law. Palmer is silent on this episode in his Reform: A Memoir (2013).

Palmer’s assignment as Lange’s deputy throughout the nuclear/ANZUS disputes has been intensely and extensively raked over. He was not a principal player in how those developments unfolded, but he supported his team, and he, like many others in this engagement, was out of his comfort zone. Subtle diplomacy was the quintessential prerequisite. As part of Palmer’s tidying up after Lange resigned, he delivered the order to Canberra for the first two (and ultimately only) ANZAC frigates — a commitment that Lange had squirmed out of concluding.

Palmer’s international accomplishments subsequent to his time as prime minister warrant a separate assessment of him as an outstanding New Zealander — for example, in international whaling talks and as chair of the United Nations investigation into the Israeli storming of a Gaza peace flotilla boat in May 2010.

Zero diplomacy

Mike Moore (1990): Moore’s seven weeks as prime minister saw zero global diplomacy — he had a general election to lose. The glorious moment in his global diplomacy scrap-book has to be when he was Palmer’s foreign minister. His 1 March 1990 cordial encounter with the United States’ Secretary of State James Baker forced Jim Bolger’s National Party to adopt the non-nuclear bipartisanship to ensure electoral victory later that year. An important consequence was that the time-line of the Kirk brand dramatically lengthened and remains cemented in, so far.

Jenny Shipley (1997–99): Shipley’s global diplomacy performance was a rare standout in her miserable prime ministership. Her signature moment was hosting APEC leaders in September 1999. During her two years as prime minister Shipley closely followed Jim Bolger’s stance on foreign policy. Don McKinnon was her foreign minister, and Alan Williams, her foreign policy adviser. Simon Murdoch was there for her first year. That trio proved to be an outstanding ‘protection team’ for her, as they had been for Bolger. With the APEC summit commitment already in place Shipley’s international agenda was largely locked in when she was sworn in. She seldom travelled overseas. Her final year was focused on readying for the APEC leaders. She was the first head of government worldwide to host Vladimir Putin, deputising for the ill Boris Yeltsin. The concurrent focus on East Timor’s turmoil boosted Auckland’s profile as the APEC gathering became the venue for key international discussions. Her most treasured diplomatic ‘snap’ has to be of her husband and President Clinton golfing at Millbrook.

Unwired leader

John Key (2008–): Key is the third in the trio who fit Corner’s
already mentioned perspective of Holyoake — ‘he had little interest in international affairs and put his standing in New Zealand above New Zealand’s standing in the world.’ John Roughan’s light-touch biography John Key: Portrait of a Prime Minister (2014) explains Key’s master class act in domestic politics.

In contrast, Key is not wired for global diplomacy. This shortcoming, which is well recognised overseas, has been little appreciated at home — cushioned by New Zealand’s lack of quality broadsheet journalism on foreign policy. There has been a dearth of insightful assessment of his international travels. After his first sixteen months, when he had the usual flurry of international travel enabling foreign interlocutors to size him up, his global diplomacy dried up. Subsequently, he has been usually an ‘also in attendance’ at multilateral gatherings, such as APEC, East Asia Summit, Pacific Islands Forum, Chogm and the nuclear security summits.

When Key became prime minister bipartisanship on foreign policy, particularly the non-nuclear stance, was his default position. He had learned when he became the opposition leader in 2006 while Helen Clark was prime minister that to play with the nuclear issue in particular and international affairs in general was a perilous path. Key had watched, as David Capie has described, the fraying of the bipartisanship of the past years while Bill English and Don Brash led National. (Capie considered that ‘the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 brought an abrupt end to this “long peace”).’

For Capie the 2005 general election reminded us that ‘the nuclear free issue retains much of its potency and that, despite the enormous changes in the world since 1985, much of the New Zealand public is not enthusiastic to revisit the policy.’ So, ahead of the 2008 general election, Key shut down the issue by asserting his government would stick with the status quo — déjà vu: Bolger in 1990. Foreign policy had no part in the 2011 and 2014 general elections. Thus Key’s bipartisanship declaration should still be alive, and the world has not changed — it remains as unruly now as it was six years ago.

Landslide election
When he addressed the UN General Assembly in September 2009 Key re-committed New Zealand’s candidature for a term on the Security Council in 2015–16. At the time he declared forthrightly that we are a ‘proudly nuclear-free nation... that has been at the forefront of this debate (on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation) since the 1970s, New Zealand stands ready to play its part’.

For the campaign for the Security Council seat, luminaries such as Jim Bolger and Don McKinnon, who were at the forefront last time, were engaged to validate that Key was locked into New Zealand’s good international citizenship brand and that their highly regarded 1993–94 term would be the template for this time. And bipartisanship of the bid was cemented by the Opposition’s foreign affairs spokesman, David Shearer: his mana around the United Nations’ quad, including the world’s ‘wild hinterlands’, firmed up unexpected votes that produced the 145-vote ‘landslide’ in the first ballot. Helen Clark’s initial ownership of the bid and her continuing keen interest in New Zealand’s global reputation added lustre. All up it was a crowded house — Key was surrounded by those who best exude our good international citizenship credentials. They were intent on us getting to the ‘top table’ again.

So we have generated expectations. Key is now in an exciting and exacting spot. There is no prospect that this term will replicate our first in 1954–55, when the council did not meet for several months at a time. New Zealand has to perform well when called to wrestle from day one (1 January 2015) with the rush of issues that the council handles. Among the final deliberations in late 2016 will be finding Ban Ki-moon’s successor.

NOTES
9. In the next issue of this journal I will expand this thought in an article that will range across our prime ministers’ encounters with United States presidents.
Searching for Pacific climate change solutions

Vikas Kumar discusses the impact of climate change on the future of the Pacific region’s microstates.

The micro-island states of the Pacific region suffer from adverse geographical conditions and, in some cases, political instability. Their precarious sovereignty is contingent upon a benign international system that has so far assured them of aid and emergency support. But the looming climate crisis has completely altered the nature of their problems at a time when the international system is itself unstable. Unfortunately, these states do not have sufficient resources to deal with the challenges facing them, even as their ethno-linguistic heritage, bio-diversity and, in a few cases, even existence are endangered. In light of this, the never-ending climate change negotiations and the doubtful efficacy of belated implementation of adaptation/mitigation solutions necessitate exploration of other solutions to the existential crisis facing these microstates.

A state’s capacity to deal with climate change depends among other things on its geographical conditions, economic development, and international relations. We can classify the microstates of the Pacific region in a number of ways, each relating to vulnerability to climate change or to the capacity to deal with it.

Size: The area of a state affects its capacity to withstand climate change risks on its own because it places constraints on resettlement within its territory. We will treat a state as a microstate if it has an area of less than 10,000 square kilometres and/or a population of less than a million. In this region, there is one large state (Australia), two medium-sized states (New Zealand and Papua New Guinea), a small state (Fiji), and ten microstates (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). Most of these microstates have much higher population densities than their larger neighbours.

Division and dispersion of landmass: A small state divided into numerous widely dispersed islands is particularly vulnerable to rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions. Depending on the division of landmass, these states can be classified as follows: a few large islands (Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea), a few small islands (Nauru, Palau, and Samoa) and archipelagic (the rest). We can also classify them in terms of the ratio of exclusive economic zone (EEZ) to area, a measure of dispersion of landmass, as follows: 1–10 (Australia and Papua New Guinea), 11–100 (Fiji, New Zealand, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), 501–1000 (Tonga), 1001–5000 (Kiribati, Micronesia, Palau, and Tonga) and more than 5001 (Marshall Islands, Nauru, and Tuvalu).

Elevation: Given the rising sea level, a classification based on elevation (maximum) is crucial: 0–10 metres (Marshall Islands and Tuvalu), 11–100 metres (Kiribati and Nauru), 101–1000 metres (Micronesia and Palau) and more than 1001 metres (Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu). Note that Kiribati, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Tuvalu and Tonga include low-lying coral islands.

Economy: The overall size of an economy and per capita income limit the resources available to deal with crises. According to income, these states can be divided into three groups: Australia and New Zealand; Micronesia, Tonga, Marshall Islands and Palau; and the rest.

Ethnic composition: Ethno-linguistic divisions within a region limit international collective action to deal with shared problems. These states/dependencies can be divided into four broad ethno-linguistic groups: English-speaking European origin (Australia and New Zealand), Micronesian (Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and Palau), Polynesian (Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands and Niue) and Melanesian (Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea). With 8.5 million

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The never-ending climate change negotiations and the doubtful efficacy of belated implementation of adaptation/mitigation solutions necessitate exploration of other solutions to the existential crisis facing the microstates of the Pacific region. We can think of at least five alternatives, namely: legal action against major polluting countries, natural depopulation, planned resettlement, a grand federation of microstates and federation/free association between one or more microstates and a larger state. Of these federation/free association with a larger state is the best alternative. Only Australia and New Zealand satisfy all the criteria that make a larger country a suitable federation/free association partner.
people speaking about 15 per cent of all known languages, Melanesia is the world’s most diverse region.

**International relations:** The nature of international relations affects a state’s ability to seek help from other states in times of crisis. According to their international relations, these territories can be classified as follows: dependencies of a sovereign state (Cook Islands and Niue), sovereign states in free association with another state (Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau), and the rest. These states can also be classified according to their international economic relations. The Micronesian states use the currencies of either Australia or the United States, whereas the Melanesian and Polynesian states have their own currencies.

**Considerable overlap**

There is considerable overlap between the above classifications. The ‘English–European’ states have the lowest population density and highest per capita income, while the bulk of their landmass is distributed among a few large islands. They are relatively invulnerable to climate change. The Melanesian states are divided among a few islands, whereas the Micronesian and Polynesian groups consist of either archipelagic or one/two island countries. Moreover, most Micronesian and Polynesian states (except Samoa) consist of at least a few coral islands. The Micronesian states have disproportionately large EEZs and very high population densities and are tied to larger neighbours through free associations and/or use of their currencies. With high population density, archipelagic states like Tuvalu (Polynesia) that consist of small, low-lying coral islands are particularly vulnerable to a rise in sea level and change in sea temperature.

The aforesaid differences notwithstanding, these microstates are alike insofar as their sovereignty is precarious. Location exposes them to seismic risks and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events adds to their woes. A rising sea level threatens to damage drinking water sources as well as arable land and submerge vital coastal infrastructure. Natural disasters often simultaneously affect a number of key sources of income. For instance, major storms can damage tourism, fishing, and agriculture sectors. Furthermore, a number of these states have a small population spread over a very large area, which makes planning and administration difficult. For instance, Kiribati, the only country in all four hemispheres, has a population comparable to Andorra’s spread over an area comparable to the European Union. Neighbouring Vanuatu’s weak state has struggled to hold together one of the most diverse populations of the world, speaking about 110 languages and spread over more than 800,000 square kilometres.

**Income sources**

Agriculture, mining, fishing, tourism, international development aid and remittances have so far been the main sources of income in the region. Marine wealth is, however, vulnerable to climate change, while mineral wealth, particularly phosphates reserves, has been nearly exhausted. Interestingly, the EEZs of these states are at least 50 times larger than their landmass and are comparable to the EEZs of some of the largest countries; for example, Kiribati’s EEZ is one and a half times the size of India’s. Yet they are trapped in a low investment-income cycle by infrastructural bottlenecks, a shortage of skilled workers, remoteness from international markets and vulnerability to natural disasters. The resultant small tax bases push their governments to unusual sources of income, like sale of diplomatic recognition and immunity, national internet domain names, stamps and coins; lease of islands for military bases and asylum detention centres; and offshore money laundering. While half of these states belong to the United Nations’ least developed countries category, none of the microstates in free association with the United States — Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau — falls in this category.

In light of the above, we can argue that the independent existence of these microstates depends on an international system that recognises the independence of small countries and provides them with aid and emergency support. But the current instability in the international system and the growing uncertainty caused by climate change make continued reliance on the existing system unreasonable, at least for the Pacific microstates, which may need to relocate parts or the whole of their populations in the foreseeable future.

**Way forward**

Free association arrangements between Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau and the United States provide the former with access to economic assistance, disaster management programmes and trust funds to smooth the stream of income in the foreseeable future. This potentially assures the microstates of necessary support to deal with climate change exigencies. New Zealand’s dependencies like Cook Islands and Niue enjoy similar benefits. In the rest of the discussion we will examine options available to

**Typhoon Haiyan devastated the island of Kayangel in Palau’s north in November 2013**
the hitherto absolutely sovereign microstates.

**Legal Action against Polluters:** This is not a reliable option for a number of reasons. First, the international legal process is extremely time-consuming and non-binding. Second, microstates have neither the financial resources nor the skilled manpower to pursue this option. Third, major polluting countries are unwilling to acknowledge their contribution to climate change, a prerequisite for apportioning liability. Fourth, even if timely compensation can be obtained, the funds might be insufficient to secure microstates against climate change. Fifth, it leaves unaddressed the problem of dealing with catastrophic events while litigation is in progress. Sixth, apportioning compensation among the microstates will be difficult because some of them might require total resettlement. Also, the problem of finding a suitable site for such resettlement remains unresolved.

**Natural depopulation:** One of the easiest options is to allow gradual depopulation through usual economic out-migration, hoping no one is left on the ground before the doomsday predictions come true. This leaves the people at the mercy of other countries’ willingness to absorb migrants. A number of other issues need attention.

First, even if timely depopulation is achieved, this approach will lead to later conflicts over the nearly abandoned territories. Until the issue of ownership was resolved, the policing of these islands and their enormous exclusive economic zones to prevent the entry of poachers and smugglers would suffer because of problems in achieving collective action problems among the major powers.

Second, the roadmap from economic migration to citizenship of another country will remain uncertain in the absence of changes in international and domestic immigration and refugee laws. But microstates have no means of influencing the pace or outcome of the evolution of international law and domestic legislation of other countries. Moreover, necessary legal reforms might have to wait until the conclusion of climate change negotiations.

Third, the problem of dealing with catastrophic events will remain unaddressed. Even a reformed refugee law will call for absorbing migrants without providing any guidelines to deal with the immediate fallout of catastrophic events that might trigger exodus. Finally, individual-level migration will unravel communities and adversely affect languages and cultures.

**Resettlement option**

**Planned resettlement:** While voluntary, unorganised migration of individuals/families is not a solution, planned resettlement of whole communities elsewhere on purchased land may not help much either. The settlers will have no voting rights in the destination country, while in the aftermath of a major catastrophe the home state will practically cease to function. So, the resettled population will remain citizens of a dysfunctional or non-existent state for an indefinite period. Also, it is not clear who will fund the resettlement and which country will accept settlers planning to form a de facto state.

**Federation/free association:** A political merger with another country to mitigate the disadvantage of small size avoids the shortcomings of the above solutions. There are three possibilities:
- a grand federation of microstates
- a federation between a number of microstates and a large state
- federations between individual microstates and large states.

A grand federation of microstates cannot address their existential crisis. Multilateral merger negotiations among similarly sized but ethnically different states could be very divisive and time-consuming because of haggling over power-sharing and symbols of the state, official language and location of the capital. One is reminded of the separation of the ethnically different Gilbert (Kiribati) and Ellice (Tuvalu) Islands in the 1970s. Also, any assortment of microstates will inherit the severe capacity constraints of individual microstates and will also be unable to pool risks because prospective constituents will face correlated risks.

In other words, federation is an answer to their problems only if microstates join a large state. Such a federation will benefit the microstates by mitigating domestic political and economic instability and relieving them of the burden of maintaining the paraphernalia of sovereignty. It will also allow access to a much larger labour market and cheaper and better quality public goods, including disaster management. Mergers would, in fact, obviate the need for desperate rescue operations by allowing phased, preventive relocation of vulnerable communities to safer locations within the federation. The microstates stand to gain if they bargain jointly. But, as mentioned earlier, multilateral negotiations are time-consuming. So, the second merger option is also ruled out. This leaves us with the third option involving bilateral mergers in the form of federation/free association.

**Prospective partners**

We can now identify the conditions a large state needs to satisfy to be a suitable federation/free association partner. A prospective partner should fulfil all the following criteria:
New Zealand International Review

The sources of information about vital statistics of different countries include The World Factbook, Sea Around Us, and Ethnologue.

No problems

The proposed federations/free associations are unlikely to cause adjustment problems. A number of these microstates use the Australian dollar and Australia and New Zealand are their most important trade and tourism partners. The combined GDP of the microstates is less than 1 per cent of the GDP of Australia or 5 per cent of New Zealand’s GDP. So, they are too small to significantly impact the economy of the larger partner in the federation/free association. Australia and New Zealand can freely harness the marine resources of the microstates after merger and offset the costs of administering the microstates. Otherwise, even without merger, Australia and New Zealand have little choice but to intervene at their own expense because of the potential political unrest and economic instability that would ferment on their doorstep if they did nothing. In fact, they are already supporting Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu through international trust funds and have in the past intervened in politically fragile Vanuatu and Solomon Islands.

The distribution of microstates between Australia and New Zealand should be based on the preferences of the people of the concerned countries, the New Zealand navy’s reach and New Zealand’s demographic sustainability. Shared sovereignty over microstates is, however, undesirable as it could lead to collective action problems. Furthermore, the existing free associations (Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau), overseas territories (Pitcairn, Wallis and Futuna Islands) and unincorporated territories (Guam) of permanent UN Security Council members (France, the United Kingdom and the United States) should not be disturbed as the proposed solution will then fail to secure the assent of the UN Security Council. Moreover, that will open a Pandora’s box by adding a large number of territories to the problem set, which Australia and New Zealand might not be able to handle.

We can conclude that of all the available alternatives, federation with a large state is the most suitable solution to the existential problems facing the microstates of the Pacific. Only Australia and New Zealand satisfy the entire set of criteria that make a state eligible to federate/freely associate with these microstates. The proposed federations/free associations will resolve the microstates’ existential crisis and raise their standard of living without causing any serious adjustment problems. Further, given that climate change negotiations are gridlocked and reliable long-term commitments from the international community to aid the microstates remain absent, the international community has a moral obligation to support the proposed federations/free associations as well as necessary caps on immigration.

NOTE

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Nauru Island which has an elevation 11m to 100m above sea level

- Distance: It should be located close to the microstate.
- Geo-climatic: It should not be located in a geo-climatic region that is substantially different from that of the microstate.
- Risk: It should not be exposed to similar climatic risks as the microstate. Even if it is exposed to correlated/shared risks, it should be relatively invulnerable.
- Size: It should not be small in terms of area and economy.
- Income: It should have a relatively high per capita income.
- Experience: It should have experience in managing territories in the Pacific.
- Democracy: It should be a stable multi-party democracy.
- Institutions: It should be a common law jurisdiction and should have English as one of its main languages (as most microstates follow common law and use English as the first/second language).
- Ethnicity: It should be a multi-ethnic/religious country.
- Constitution: It should have an identity-neutral constitution that protects the cultural, linguistic and land rights of minorities.
- Geo-politics: Its foray into the region should not evoke protest from other countries.

Australia and New Zealand, which together account for more than 70 per cent of the region’s population, 90 per cent of its land and almost the entire economic output, are the only countries that fulfil all the above criteria. Merger negotiations will not be cumbersome because the people of the microstates need full citizenship rights (including the right to relocate in the worst case) and the rest will be taken care of by the constitutions and the administrations of Australia and New Zealand. But, why should Australia and New Zealand agree?

The larger federating/free-associating state will have to draw down population of islands through resettlement to sustainable levels. In the worst case scenario, even if the entire populations of the most vulnerable microstates (Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu) have to be relocated to, say, Australia, then the latter has to stop immigration from other parts of the world for about half a decade, assuming the current overall immigration rates to be sustainable. But even without a merger New Zealand, and to a lesser extent Australia, is already accepting migrants from the microstates under the recognised seasonal employer scheme, the Samoan quota and the Pacific access category. This also means that the people of microstates have experience of living in Australia and New Zealand as students and workers. In other words, even in the worst case the demographic impact of the proposed federations/free associations will be limited. Furthermore, Australia and New Zealand could legally limit immigration from other regions of the world to assure their existing citizens that climate change refugees will not overwhelm them.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

COMBATTING STATELESSNESS

Claire Achmad reports on the First Global Forum on Statelessness held recently in The Hague.

Statelessness, despite being a global problem affecting an estimated 12 million people worldwide,1 remains a somewhat niche area of international law and an oft-ignored blight on the international affairs landscape. To highlight the problem and bring together people and organisations working on the issue, the Statelessness Program at Tilburg University (the Netherlands) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recently co-hosted the First Global Forum on Statelessness.2 The forum was held from 15 to 17 September 2014 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, providing an occasion to examine the causes and impacts of statelessness, and an opportunity to discuss good practice and develop solutions for statelessness prevention and the protection of stateless people.

Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes that everyone has a right to nationality; furthermore, states have an international obligation to prevent statelessness. As the UNHCR succinctly states, ‘to be stateless is to be without nationality or citizenship’.3 Being without nationality or citizenship triggers a myriad of practical problems ranging from restricted freedom of movement to difficulties accessing social services such as health, education and welfare support. Statelessness as a concept has a long history. However, the fact that statelessness persists in the 21st century is anachronistic, given that it is a problem which is wholly preventable via comprehensive birth registration and nationality legislation and policy which complies with international law norms and standards. Despite this, universal birth registration remains unequalled (although all children have the right to registration at birth).4 Discriminatory national legislation on citizenship and nationality continues to exist in many countries. Others, meanwhile, have not closed gaps within and conflicts between their nationality laws or have responded inadequately to the effects of state succession. The two international treaties specifically dedicated to the issue of statelessness — the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness — remain under-ratified and under-implemented, despite their adoption being testament to the depth of the international problem.

The global forum acknowledged that statelessness is a preventable problem, and that it is within reach of the international community to find solutions within the foreseeable future. The forum’s sub-title, ‘New Directions in Statelessness Research and Policy’, indicated the forward-looking focus of its programme. Centred on three core themes, ‘Stateless Children’, ‘Statelessness and Security’ and ‘Responses to Statelessness’, the programme featured inspiring plenary keynote addresses, thought-provoking and in-depth parallel thematic panel sessions and cross-theme panels and workshops. The programme was complemented by lunchtime side-events (such as the launch of a new collected volume on statelessness and nationality)5 and poster presentations covering a range of issues in statelessness. The three forum themes reflected the most pressing statelessness issues today:

- an estimated 5 million stateless persons worldwide are children
- the nexus between statelessness and security and the role of statelessness as a root of insecurity requires better understanding, and
- positive responses to statelessness must be shared widely to engender innovative, global responses and solutions.

New dynamism

The first day of the forum focused on galvanising delegates to deal with the problem of ending statelessness, whilst not under-estimating the gravity of the challenge. In his opening address, Volker Türk, the UNHCR’s director of international protection, stated that ending statelessness is an imperative for the 21st century. In this call to action, Türk identified three subsidiary imperatives: the ethical imperative, the rule of law and development and peace-building. Despite significant achievements in the fight to end statelessness in the past ten years (for example, the granting of nationality to four million stateless people and 40 accessions

Claire Achmad, a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Child Rights, School of Law, Leiden University. At the invitation of the organisers, she addressed the First Global Forum on Statelessness in The Hague on the topic of statelessness and the rights of the child in international commercial surrogacy. Her travel to and attendance at the forum was generously supported by a grant from the New Zealand Netherlands Foundation. Email: c.i.achmad@umail.leidenuniv.nl
to the statelessness conventions over the past three years), creative-thinking is needed to find solutions to the problem of the remaining millions of stateless people. Türk observed a new dynamism, renewed energy and commitment around the issue of statelessness; citing the global forum as evidence of this, he highlighted the need for it to be a platform for harnessing and consolidating this new momentum.

Something voiced strongly in Türk’s address — and a strong thread running through the entire forum — is the reality that stateless people, because of their lack of nationality, can effectively fall into a void of virtual non-existence. This was echoed by the powerful and confronting images in the exhibition ‘Nowhere People’ by photographer Greg Constantine, on display in the Peace Palace as part of a world tour. Türk noted that in being stateless, people are discriminated against; their lack of recognition amounts to a manifest injustice, an affront to equality and human dignity.

**Eradicating statelessness**

Nils Mužničeks, European commissioner for human rights, delivered the second keynote address of the forum’s first day. Entitled ‘Eradicating statelessness in the Council of Europe member states: recent achievements and remaining challenges’, it was wide-ranging, drawing on Mužničeks’s own experiences in working with stateless people. He called on states to collect better data about the problem, because without it statelessness remains invisible. Again, this became a repeated thread running through the wider forum, with discussion often returning to the need to gather more comprehensive state-specific data to build an accurate global picture of statelessness and identify effective interventions. Mužničeks placed particular focus on the situation of children, identifying them as an especially vulnerable group in the context of statelessness and stating that, as part of his mandate, he is ‘advocating for the rights of children and prioritising their needs’. Giving insight into his own approach, he stated that he always begins with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as a platform for advocacy, since he finds it to be the most solid human rights basis on which to address states. The reason for this, he observed, is that (in the statelessness context) it is impossible to justify that the best interests of children are served by their not having nationality. In his view, the best solution is for states to grant children nationality upon birth if they would otherwise be stateless, consistent with the internationally agreed standards and norms.

The thematic parallel sessions on day one of the forum traversed a number of issues within statelessness. Some focused on children’s rights, such as children’s experiences of statelessness, birth registration and statelessness; others looked at broader issues such as denationalisation as persecution and the importance of collaboration to prevent statelessness. Across the three days of the forum, the thematic panels featured three to five panellists each. This meant that each panel topic was addressed from a range of perspectives (often cutting across theoretical, research, legal, social, anthropological and country- or region-specific field-work perspectives), the panellists providing a true depth of insight, making for many productive discussions amongst delegates and panellists during discussion time following the conclusion of each panel session.

**Giving voice**

Arguably the greatest strength of the global forum was its incorporation of a number of sessions built on the views and personal testimonies of people who have experienced statelessness. These deeply enriched the forum, serving to place theory in context. The commitment of the forum organisers to giving real weight and prominence to the voices of stateless or formerly stateless people ensured that such people were not left invisible and voiceless because of their status. These sessions, which featured at various points over the three-day forum, powerfully punctuated the theoretical and conceptual discussions with evidence of the true face and cost of the very human problem of statelessness in practice.
They had the effect of encouraging all forum delegates to ‘walk the talk’ in ensuring that in their own work stateless people are given a voice and visibility.

The first session of this kind, following the opening address on day one of the forum, was a roundtable discussion on experiences of statelessness led by journalist Adrian Gill, who has written on the situation of Rohingya stateless people. As part of the roundtable, a Bhutanese refugee discussed his experiences of being stateless and then gaining nationality, and a woman born in Kazakhstan when it was part of the former Soviet Union talked about her experience of being stateless for more than twenty years. Both spoke of the despair and anguish they have experienced, the discriminatory treatment they have endured because of their lack of nationality and their feelings of worthlessness and invisibility as stateless people. When Gill asked why having a nationality is important, the response that ‘it means to be someone, to be able to tell people who I am, to have a home, to belong somewhere, to be able to make plans’ clearly had an impact on forum delegates.

The moving nature of these sessions was also apparent on day two during the roundtable ‘Statelessness and Empowerment’, chaired by UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador and opera singer Barbara Hendricks. This roundtable involved four stateless or formerly stateless people, originating from Thailand, Japan, Pakistan and the Dominican Republic. They highlighted some of the central questions all stateless people variously grapple with: ‘Who am I?’, ‘Where do I belong?’ and ‘Where do I exist?’ Each shared personal stories of finding empowerment despite being stateless, with all agreeing on the importance of believing that one day they would receive nationality. Their testimonies revealed the resilience and courage of stateless people; their strong desire to not be ‘nowhere people’; and the strength of human spirit in overcoming seemingly insurmountable and insoluble situations. Forum delegates were again palpably moved by this session, which concluded with Barbara Hendricks singing a haunting song from the time of slavery, underscoring the strong belief in overcoming held by many stateless people.

**Technical focus**

The thematic panels on day two of the forum focused on more technical, legal and rights-based approaches to issues within statelessness. This included panels on topics such as ‘The nexus between stateless persons, refugees and international protection’, ‘Statelessness, the right to education, work and health, and the nexus with human trafficking’, ‘Exploring the utility of statelessness determinations’ and ‘Statelessness and strategic litigation’. Because of the wideranging choice and the appeal of all sessions, many delegates struggled to choose between the parallel thematic panel sessions.

Some current large-scale statelessness situations — such as Syria, Iraq and Crimea — received repeated attention throughout the forum, particularly in the thematic panels. Inevitably the Syrian situation was to the fore, given that at least half Syria’s population is now forcibly displaced, and at least 3 million Syrian refugees have fled because of the civil war. A particular problem in this context is the discriminatory nature of Syrian nationality law and practice, which provides for children to only receive nationality paternally; this is at odds with the reality that over half of Syrian refugee households are now women-headed. UNHCR officials described this situation as ‘a recipe for a statelessness epidemic’. A protection gap also exists regarding birth registration in the Syrian context, given, for example, that 77 per cent of Syrian refugee births in Lebanon are unregistered, leaving children without proof of parentage, age or nationality status. The Syrian situation is illustrative of the cross-cutting nature of the three forum themes and the urgent need for a holistic approach in addressing these issues.

**Specific situations**

Day three of the forum featured cross-theme panels on specific situations of statelessness (Europe’s Roma, Myanmar, Dominican Republic, Malaysia), and cross-theme regional workshops (Europe, Asia, Americas, Africa). These sessions were a chance for delegates to either learn about statelessness in a different region of the world or to engage with statelessness issues in their own backyard. These cross-theme panels and workshops highlighted that no region of the world is immune to statelessness. Whilst common themes exist across the regions, each statelessness situation differs in extent and has its own political, geographic and demographic peculiarities posing (not insurmountable) obstacles to solutions.

Certainly from an Asia–Pacific perspective, these parts of the global forum were revealing; here the statelessness problem stretches across Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar; is inter-generational in nature; and requires intensive mapping and data-collection to raise visibility and develop effective solutions. ASEAN could play a critical role in main-lining an approach to ending statelessness throughout this region of the world; the ASEAN Committee on the
Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children will each have an important part to play.

New directions and issues in statelessness were identified and discussed during the course of the forum, one such example being the issue of statelessness and international surrogacy. This was covered during a thematic panel session featuring presentations by a representative of the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law (currently examining the viability of a future international convention on international surrogacy, including nationality and parentage issues), a law professor from ITM University, New Delhi, and a New Zealand lawyer (the author of this conference report) undertaking a doctorate on international commercial surrogacy and the rights of the child in public international law.

New cause

International surrogacy as a cause of child statelessness is particularly interesting. It is a new cause of statelessness (developed over the past ten years) that is at odds with the goal of ending statelessness. Additionally, it is a cause of statelessness that is preventable, if ‘commissioning parents’ ensure that a future child born through international surrogacy is entitled to nationality either under the law of the country the child is born in or to receive the nationality of the commissioning parents. Currently, these checks are not systematised. International surrogacy remains unregulated at the international level, nationality and citizenship laws varying from state to state regarding their view of children born through international surrogacy.

The upshot of this inter-national regulation gap and the resulting conflict of laws situation is that children born through international surrogacy are born into the very real risk of statelessness. As a new statelessness issue, this presents a problem from a legislative and policy perspective at both national and international levels. Surrogacy is a vexed issue from a moral, ethical and legal standpoint, but the nationality issue can be solved, thereby preventing further children from being stateless when born through international surrogacy.

Potential solutions

The final day of the forum considered the protection of stateless people and potential solutions to statelessness. Irene Khan, director-general of the International Development Law Organisation, delivered an outstanding final keynote address. Entitled ‘Stateless persons: Ensuring protection, finding solutions’, it had four central messages. Firstly, Khan argued that law and the rule of law play a crucial role in addressing statelessness; through effective use of law and adherence to the legal framework, the problem of statelessness can be resolved. She asserted that equality is the key principle underpinning the rule of law, but statelessness pushes people outside the ambit of the rule of law. Therefore, states must refrain from manipulating legal systems and recognise that often it is their own failure to respect and uphold the rule of law that causes statelessness. Strong international organisations promoting the rule of law are essential to upholding the rule of law and ending statelessness.

Secondly, Khan highlighted the ‘notorious gap between accession and implementation’, arguing that if the international community is serious about protecting stateless people and preventing statelessness action must be taken at the national level to strengthen constitutional safeguards, citizenship laws, and national institutions of the state that establish and protect rights-based standards. Highlighting the intersection with national counter-terrorism strategies, Khan argued that denationalisation must not be used as a tool (for example, as proposed by the UK government regarding UK nationals fighting for ISIS, and potentially envisaged by New Zealand) as it will not solve but rather aggravate the situation.

Coupled with state-level actions to prevent statelessness, appropriate action at the international level is necessary. Here the significance of the post-2015 development framework was noted as significant in efforts to eradicate statelessness. This is because the post-2015 agenda provides an opportunity to look at the most vulnerable and marginalised populations on a global scale; stateless people should be recognised as such.

Human problem

Thirdly, the international community must recognise statelessness as a human, inter-generational problem, and one with hugely political and emotive aspects. Therefore, Khan advocated for measures that render stateless people agents of their own destiny. To do this, the international community must adopt a strategy that enables and supports stateless people to overcome disenfranchisement and marginalisation and to gain dignity, recognition and
equality. Empowerment must be recognised as a tool for protection and stateless people must be at the centre of action as change-agents.

Fourthly, the importance of building both horizontal and vertical partnerships is the key, and good practice on preventing statelessness must be more readily shared. As part of this, Khan called for funding increases to help end statelessness, noting that the statelessness problem lurks behind the refugee problem. She warned that ‘today’s statelessness problem might become tomorrow’s refugee problem’. In this respect, she advocated using the rule of law and the international human rights system as both a shield and a sword, emphasising the need for innovative approaches to combatting statelessness.

Bringing together 300 delegates from 70 countries, the forum was truly global in coverage with all regions represented. Delegates were national policy-makers and legislators, judiciary members, academics, UN officials, non-governmental organisation and media representatives and stateless people themselves. This diversity amongst the delegates and speakers led to an array of views, perspectives and experiences regarding statelessness. Most experts working on statelessness do so in quite a narrow (geographic or demographic) slice of the statelessness issue, therefore, the forum provided the opportunity to broaden knowledge through learning about wider issues in the field and good practices and to contribute ideas to solutions-based approaches.

**Rich setting**

The venue of the Peace Palace provided a setting rich in international legal history, as well as being the site of many significant discussions and decisions about nationality and citizenship. It provided a thoroughly fitting venue for discussions on such an important topic in contemporary human rights and international affairs. It was an added bonus for forum delegates to engage with the old and new history of the building as they moved between the Peace Palace and The Hague Academy wing of the precinct.

The forum concluded with comments by two of the main organisers, Dr Laura van Waas (Tilburg University) and Mark Manly (UNHCR). They emphasised that the forum was valuable in bringing together a diverse range of people working on statelessness issues. It had shown that stateless people can find empowerment and that we must develop the conditions for this. The forum, they stated, had underscored the human impact of statelessness on communities, families and individuals, and was a positive vehicle for sharing good practices. On some issues, such as international surrogacy and child statelessness, consensus had emerged among forum participants that action is needed to clarify existing standards and develop new standards. Forum delegates generally agreed that this had been an inspiring, invigorating and unique gathering that will lead to real progress on long-neglected statelessness issues.

The conclusion of the forum was also an opportunity to highlight the UNHCR’s new campaign to eradicate statelessness by 2024. The key aims of the campaign are to focus international attention on the problem of statelessness, to secure political commitment to resolve longstanding statelessness situations and to stop new situations of statelessness occurring. Multiple methods will be utilised to achieve these goals, such as empowering stateless people and strengthening international multi-stakeholder partnerships. Complementary to this campaign, it was fitting that at the conclusion of the forum the establishment of the new Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion was announced. This institute, founded by three statelessness experts, is an independent non-profit organisation, serving as a partner, expert and catalyst working on issues of statelessness and aiming to lead a response to statelessness and exclusion that is interdisciplinary and integrated.

Highlighted these new initiatives provided a fitting end to the First Global Forum on Statelessness, a reminder of the work still to be done and the approaches needed to rid the international landscape of a problem that should not exist in the 21st century.

**NOTES**

1. The UNHCR estimates that there are at least 12 million stateless people worldwide. See UNHCR, *Preventing and Reducing Statelessness*: The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (Geneva, 2010), at p.2. This website, and all those listed below, were accessed on 1 Oct 2014.

2. See for the website of the First Global Forum on Statelessness: www.tilburguniversity.edu/research/institutes-and-research-groups/statelessness/news/forum/. Presentations from the forum will be available online in due course. The forum was covered by a range of international media outlets, including in an episode of Inside Story on Al Jazeera, and a Thomson Reuters Foundation special series of stories, at www.trust.org/spotlight/stateless-the-worlds-most-invisible-people/?source=dpagereflspot.


7. A.A. Gill, ‘When I die, someone will have to write a certificate, they will have to say that I was here, that I lived’, *Sunday Times*, at www.thetimes.co.uk/sto/Magazine/article425837.ece.

8. For example, the decision of the International Court of Justice in the *Nottebohm Case (Lichtenstein v Guatemala) (second phase)*, Judgment of April 6th, 1955: I.C.J. Reports 1955, p.4.


10. The institute’s website is www.institutesi.org/.

Stateless in Kuwait
I watched three young Americans suit-up and fly off to take part in a foreign war. Well actually, I watched their screen doubles during a film-shoot about three lads who joined the British forces before America’s entry into the First World War. Their motivation, according to the title, was for ‘God, Yale and Country’.

My men were just three of thousands who joined the Entente powers, some in a combat capacity, others as medical volunteers. They had moral support from some sections of American society. Once the United States entered the war in 1917, there could be no question: they were heroines and heroes.

One thing puzzles me. I hear nothing of young Americans joining the Central Powers. There must have been some who chose the losing side. Were they traitors? Were they just counted as German or Austrian? Did survivors slink back to America, or make their lives abroad?

Were both groups of volunteers ‘radicalised’? Or was it only those elusive losers who were at odds with the direction taken by their country? Perceptions change. In 1914 America decided the war in Europe was not their problem. In 2014 almost everything is perceived as America’s problem — and by extension New Zealand’s problem?

**Key difference**
The difference between my fly-boys and jihadists of present concern is that the aviators were ‘radicalised’ to join in a conflict while Westerners turned jihadists are reportedly radicalised from: that is away from and against Western societies in which some live. In their perspective, ‘the West’ has not delivered, whether in economic or life-style terms. It has not delivered as a society where they personally belong and are respected. That is why they might perform violent acts in our country.

The majority of jihadists from traditionally Islamic countries are also radicalised against societies that themselves have undergone widespread radicalisation, that is, by copying Western patterns. Turkey exemplifies a traditional Islamic state that secularised, but Turkey is now treading very carefully. Other ‘Westernised’ states, whether Saddam Hussein’s Iraq or the Shah’s Iran, did not last too well. That sort of radicalisation came from the West — capitalism, communism, democracy — and the perception is negative.

For almost a century intervention by Western interests has increased resentment and anger. There have been temporary successes, such as the restoration of Kuwait and the establishment of prosperous Gulf states. These successes have benefited some, but in other cases have increased dispossession and further radicalised the dispossessed.

An Islamic view, which goes well beyond ISIS, is that we, the West, are the radicalising ones.

**Radical premise**
It seems to me we need to be a lot more critical in the use of the term ‘radical’. Word derivation takes us to ‘roots’ of a plant, and on to a host of foundational meanings. By transference, radical came to be applied to an attitude or programme that goes to the root of the problem without messing around. Sadly, not all radical approaches do actually get to the root of the problem. The radical premise may be wrong, or the problem more complicated than expected, or forces beyond the radical’s control may thwart entirely sound and well-considered intentions.

Historically, the radical element in British politics was institutionalised in the Liberal Party — the Whigs — until Labour outflanked their programme of change. In democracy, change is acceptable and non-violent.

Radical is not a synonym for ‘violent’, although there is a tendency to use it in that way. That said, ‘radical’ often has connotations of the sudden or unexpected — policy did not evolve along an even path, but went off at a tangent, perhaps even a u-turn.

To leave home to volunteer for some foreign war is socially abnormal behavior — definitely radical. It is not part of a Kiwi’s socially accepted and expected OE. Whether it is personally abnormal behavior is a different issue. People volunteered for the Spanish Civil War, for example, out of long-held and consistent personal values.
If people want to fight in some foreign war, surely that is their business? Setting out the government’s security position on 5 November, Prime Minister John Key stated that it is not. It is not internationally acceptable for a country, such as New Zealand, to simply let potential jihadists go and good riddance. Further, jihadists would be a problem if they commit violent acts in this country, whether instead of or after fighting in the Middle East.

Who are these persons of concern? John Key was asked if persons on the current ‘watch-list’ have criminal records or associations. He responded rather that a risk existed through exposure to and fascination with pervasive propaganda.

Why are they susceptible to radicalisation? Elements in the profiles of recruits seem to include loners, people with introverted and perhaps secretive personalities. A sense of personal grievance and alienation from the dominant — ‘Western’ — society combines with a quest for a group or culture to belong to. There is a fascination of being drawn towards the perceived inner circle of an esoteric value system. Some or all of these elements clamour for resolution in a violent way. Relatives of recruits from the United Kingdom and Australia repeatedly state that the young convert had little interest in religion before ‘being got hold of’.

Win–win situation?
In the following day’s Dominion Post, a headline suggested Key’s security programme may fire up terrorism. The same day Winston Peters alleged that ‘New Zealand had declared war on ISIS’. Peters’s assertion is valid insofar as we have taken a position hostile to ISIS and overtly friendly with the main international opposition to it.

Are we playing the terrorist’s game by giving more prominence to a perceived threat than it really merits? The probability is that a violent death in New Zealand will be in a domestic, work-place or road accident. We live with these, and will have to live with some level of potential terrorist violence. The probability remains that most violent acts will continue to be perpetrated from criminal motives or personal frustration.

Jihadists want to set up a ‘win–win’ proposition, already familiar to us from other insurgency situations. If a hostage is ransomed, the radical movement gains prestige and money. If the hostage is killed, the West is motivated to action that will further raise resentment. As a further benefit, support is drawn away from ‘moderate’ or ‘pro-Western’ leadership in the countries concerned. These obscenities are theatre. Our reactions may be what ISIS actually intends.

Long game
John Key spoke of a long term. President Obama has warned that there is a long struggle ahead. From US intervention in Lebanon — 1958 is an arbitrary start date — this has already been a long struggle. The next phase of the struggle is to do... what?

It is salutary to remember that the First World War was precipitated by over-reaction to a terrorist act. Is military technology, even advanced American military technology, more likely to win than it did in Vietnam, in Afghanistan or in earlier campaigns in Iraq? BBC polls in October this year concluded that only about 45 per cent of Americans feel that Western intervention in Afghanistan has made their own country safer. In the United Kingdom, the figure was only 27 per cent. This public perception is a hard swallow for leaders under pressures to take a tough line.

Justin Welby, archbishop of Canterbury, has enunciated a more radical view, in the correct meaning of ‘radical’. Stating that air strikes alone will not succeed, the archbishop continued:

The current situation is neither a war on terror nor a conflict of civilizations. Instead, it is a terrible mix of ethnicity, economics, social unrest, injustice between rich and poor, limited access to resources, historic hatreds, post-colonial conflict and more. These need to be tackled ideologically.

In other words, at the roots.

No attempt
Some might have expected a major Christian leader to have squared up to Islam theologically, or to have sought a dialogue, perhaps even a concord, with his Islamic counterparts. Beyond underlining peace as the aim of Christians, and hoping Muslim leaders continue explicitly to reject extremism, the archbishop has not done so. He has not done so for two reasons. Firstly, doctrinal debate is — to say the least — unhelpful in this situation. Secondly, personal identity, rather than ‘orthodox’ religion, appears to be the spiritual motivation of jihad.

The archbishop knows — none better — that directives bishops issue are accepted in varying degrees throughout their churches. Muslim leaders are in the same position. Though split on Catholic/Protestant or Shia/Sunni divides, both faiths have strong central bodies of fundamental belief and practice, fringed with small dissenting groups variously classified as separated-brethren, non-conformists, sects or heretics.

Outside central beliefs, there has been a rise of ‘do-it-yourself religion’ in both Christianity and Islam. Christianity has an array of non-traditional churches that tend to highlight certain traditional elements that suit the mood of the followers. A group emphasising different elements is likely to be treated with reserve, if not suspicion.

Literalist approach
Islam appears to have experienced a similar explosion of DIY religion. Simplistic to a degree, such groups may be termed ‘fundamentalist’, but in practice are less interested in the broad doctrines fundamental to their historic faith than in taking the bits that suit their mind-set. ‘Literalist’ is probably a better description than fundamentalist, and as peoples of their book both Christian and Islamic faiths are vulnerable to conveniently selective literalism.

What is to be done? If the archbishop is right, and I think he is, there is a lot of ideological unpacking to be done.

- For example, the convention that we do not mess with national boundaries. Is that convention sustainable?
- For example, development should take in distribution and fulfilling life style, as well as economic indicators.
- For example, how best should military action be used to protect refugees, and how best can they be integrated into a strange society? A tiny fraction may be vipers in our nest.
- For example, are we too inclined to offer military support to moderate regimes and insufficiently generous to the refugee pressures that also threaten to destabilise them?

I think there are positives. Liberal Western societies need to hold their ground and their values. They have delivered vastly beneficial life-styles. They have withstood terrorist violence. However used and abused, the religions in question are fundamentally peaceful. In the long game we need to concentrate our minds, and mind our language.
The Pacific region was the last of Britain's imperial enterprises to be wound up, completed only in 1997 if you count the special case of Hong Kong. Islands could be annexed by a lieutenant going ashore with a flag, but disengaging from them became a decades-long headache for London. David McIntyre, well-known as an expert on Commonwealth and Pacific history, looks at how Britain came slowly to terms with the awkward problems decolonisation posed for its multitudinous island territories in the Pacific.

Ending the world's largest empire could never be simple, but, once the pattern had been established in India and Africa of the rise of nationalist movements and the more or less graceful concession of independence, the process could roll on across the globe as if on tram lines. The trouble was that Pacific territories did not fit this model. They were often a pattern of small islands scattered over the wide ocean; there were no organised nationalist movements to speak of, and in most cases few resources with which to sustain an independent state.

So during the rush to independence in the 1950s and 1960s the Pacific stayed at home. Independence, it was universally agreed, was not possible for most island territories. Distinguished committees in Whitehall looked at the difficulties from time to time. If the colonies were regarded as a profit and loss account it was clear they should go, but the Colonial Office stoutly upheld British obligations to the peoples they had taken over. Ingenious ideas were turned over: creating larger island federations, regional associations, persuading Australia and New Zealand to accept responsibility for some, even getting the United Nations to take over as trustee. All were ideas that perhaps looked hopeful to policy-makers in London but had no appeal to Pacific islanders who had little perspective beyond their own island horizons and were not comfortable with larger groupings. Australia, though earlier interested in annexing some of Britain's Pacific empire, had decolonisation problems of its own; New Zealand was always strongly resistant, horrified by the thought of becoming responsible for Fiji and unresponsive even to suggestions about the Polynesian islands that became Tuvalu.

The reviews and intellectual doodling came always to a full stop over the assumption that independence was impossible for small territories; if Britain had to subsidise the budgets of many of them how could they manage on their own? The difficulties deepened when the effect on international institutions like the Commonwealth and United Nations was considered. If small states were admitted to the Commonwealth its nature and usefulness would be radically changed. A choice would have to be made, between 'the RAC or Boodles' (two London 'gentleman's clubs') in Harold Macmillan's jaunty phrase, between the cosy club it had hitherto been a larger and more unwieldy body.

The worry was not just Britain's. U Thant, the UN secretary-general, expressed concern about the world organisation being swamped by small states, and Washington also pressed London on the need to avoid this. Growing Soviet interest in the Pacific increased anxieties about the vulnerability of small states. The Whitehall committees scratched their heads again, with talk of 'limbo' states that would be left outside the international bodies, and 'mezzanine' ones which might have a second-class Commonwealth or UN membership. But all these ideas obstinately refused to come to life. Once independence had been given to Ghana and other African states, it became the marker for all subsequent aspirants and for the anti-colonial majority in the United Nations.

The deadlock was in the end broken by New Zealand. The independence of Samoa in 1962, though disapproved of by all its friends, settled the argument. If a country of 100,000 could make a success of independence, the seemingly insoluble problem of size became much easier. Then in pioneering the new status of 'free association' for the Cook Islands, New Zealand opened up a possibility for even smaller territories, though in fact the only other Pacific examples apart from Niue were the US territories of Micronesia.

When Nauru became independent in 1968 with a population of only 5000, the long agonising was over and the race was on. Britain, anxious to be an Atlantic and European power rather than a colonial one, settled on a programme of 'accelerated decolonisation' for the Pacific. Tonga, the easiest, recovered its independence in 1970, with Fiji, long thought especially difficult, later that year. Five years later Papua New Guinea became independent, as did the Ellice Islands, to become Tuvalu.
Gilbert Islands, complicated by disputes over the phosphate island of Banaba, took four years more to emerge as Kiribati, and in 1980 even the Anglo-French condominium of New Hebrides became Vanuatu. Unless one counted Pitcairn, Britain’s Pacific decolonising was done.

There were, of course, some costs to this sudden breaking of the dam. Whitehall was aware that the Westminster model for independence was ‘somewhat alien to the Pacific mind’, but it was the only one to hand and there was no time to see what else might evolve. There were immediate strains in places like the Solomon Islands, which had had little prior experience of representative government. Although there was talk of the ‘Melanesian way’ for the Solomon Islands, one of the first ministers found little guidance on how to act and said they often had to ask themselves what Gladstone or Disraeli would do.

As the colonial twilight faded the indigenous cultural outlook came more to the fore, sometimes with awkward consequences, as with the attempted secession of Bougainville and the coups in Fiji. There were also advantages which the British planners had not counted on. Australia and New Zealand, which had resolvedly avoided any constitutional involvement, now stepped in to play a larger role in aid and, when necessary, in peacekeeping. And where artificial regional associations had never been welcome, the voluntary association created by the Pacific Forum supplied the collective support needed in managing larger issues like trade, shipping and control of fish stocks.

Professor McIntyre’s book, one of the histories planned to supplement the wider five-volume Oxford History of the British Empire, has drawn on new sources, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office files, to fill a gap in our understanding of the recent history of the Pacific. If it is a sobering account of how ‘events overtook the policy-makers’, it also tells an encouraging story of how a group of small colonial dependencies overcame the prejudice about size to become stable Pacific states.

GERALD HENSLY

OUT OF BOUNDS:
Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine

Author: Matthew Abraham

Matthew Abraham is an associate professor of English at the University of Arizona and a man on a mission. It is a mission that resonates with this reviewer. The question of academic freedom and the rights and duties of an academic engaged in research and teaching on the Palestine/Israel dispute has long been fraught. In Abraham’s view the struggle is intensifying. Two events during 2014, neither of which could be covered in the book, provide evidence for Abraham’s thesis. One occurred very recently during Israel’s assault on the Gaza Strip codenamed Operation Protective Edge (July–August 2014). Further to the 2000-plus death toll, one prominent non-military casualty was US citizen of Palestinian descent Steven Salaïta. A well-published and popular teacher, Salaïta was fired by the University of Illinois for pro-Palestine commentary during the campaign. In a contrasting case closer to New Zealand, Associate Professor Jake Lynch at the University of Sydney’s Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies prevailed in a high-profile legal case brought by an Israeli non-governmental organisation on account of his support for the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign. The Salaïta and Lynch cases attest to the timely value of Abraham’s study; this is a moment in which anyone engaged with the Palestine/Israel conflict is keenly aware that public speaking and media supportive of Palestine are pretty much certain to generate brickbats and quite possibly worse.

Abraham’s stance is indicated by his dedication to the International Solidarity Movement volunteer Rachel Corrie, a young American woman crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer in southern Gaza more than a decade ago. And he is personally invested in the subject matter. In 2006 Abraham found seed funding for the project that became this book, awarded then promptly rescinded by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. One year or so after that and now a faculty member at DePaul University in Chicago, Abraham witnessed first-hand the highly controversial decision to deny tenure to the respected academic and pro-Palestine activist Norman Finkelstein. Marked by these events, Abraham sets out to ‘interrogate the degree to which academic freedom and the activities it supposedly protects are shaped and mediated by forces external to the university, specifically with respect to the Israel/Palestine conflict’. This is a question born of bitter experience in the United States.

Primarily an edited collection of earlier work, the opening two chapters plus chapter 7 set up and explore a theoretically, politically and historically informed discussion of four case studies of critical scholars in US academe: Finkelstein (chs 3–4), Edward Said (ch 5), Noam Chomsky (ch 6) and Fouzi El-Asmar (ch 8). The key topic of academic freedom is pondered at length; interpretations range from the transmission of received wisdom (and the impulse to hold down a job) to fomenting revolution. Whatever the interpretation, Abraham demonstrates effectively that the concept of academic freedom is, above all, a social construct and as such remains subject to the economic, social and political forces prevailing at a given time and place. Furthermore, academic freedom remains a corporate freedom routinely manipulated to protect the institution rather than an individual scholar. The danger specific to scholarship critical of Israel arises from vested interests intent on perpetuating a self-serving status quo (principally intelligence gathering and weapons testing) through protection of the US–Israel alliance. In such interests inheres the power to shape narrative — and with it the bounds of academic freedom — regarding the Palestine–Israel conflict.

In the United States, a bad situation deteriorated further post-9/11; the mass media having long been lost, academia now comes into view as ‘the final site of contestation’. However, before we
all lose hope entirely, Abraham notes that the very fact that such vigorous endeavours to police the academy are underway ‘signals that Zionism is in crisis’.

There is much in this book to recommend it: the smart but always accessible discourse-based approach; the courage to tackle a topic rendered almost bewilderingly sensitive in the United States; and guidance from four exemplars (noted above) on how to resist effectively in the face of potent incentives to quit. If one were to find scope for critique it might be in considering whether or not Abraham has overstated his case: the pro-Israel narrative police have certainly secured some notable victories, but parts of US academe still seem to hold up pretty well. From a purely anecdotal perspective, in 2013 your reviewer attended the annual conference of Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) in New Orleans. The abstract conceptualised Israel as a settler–colonial state and the paper delivered a great deal of (evidence-based) criticism of Israeli policies and actions in occupied East Jerusalem. Even so, it was reassuring to be able to board a plane and promptly return to New Zealand.

NIGEL PARSONS

OUT OF THE COLD:
The Cold War and its Legacy

Editors: Michael R. Fitzgerald and Allen Packwood

This volume is a collection of papers from a large number of officials and academics who attended a landmark 2009 conference at the Churchill Archives Centre at Cambridge University. The officials involved were primarily close to three main decision-makers when the Cold War ended: Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev. As with most edited volumes, the contributions are varied, but much of this assessment of the Cold War is quite thought provoking. The reader is immersed in competing perspectives, including those of former adversaries.

There are a lot of themes that emerge from the multiple contributors to this book. Starting with one of the most frequent, who actually ‘won’ the Cold War? Grigoriy Karasin, deputy foreign minister of Russia, has a view on this, and the answer is decidedly not President Reagan. Alexander Likhotal, former adviser to Gorbachev, is keen to note that Gorbachev had a choice, and he chose reform, yet he could have chosen to continue with a broken system. Susan Eisenhower (granddaughter of President Eisenhower and noted Russia expert) is also inclined to dismiss the pressure that a programme like the Strategic Defense Initiative (‘Star Wars’ in the press) really had on the Soviet system. Former Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, a key figure in Capitol Hill Cold War policy-making, sees it very differently and credits the Strategic Defense Initiative and other arms buildups as bringing the Soviet Union to the table. Other British and US commentators are more inclined to give credit to Reagan (and Thatcher) for standing up to and bankrupting the Soviet Union. Or perhaps more dispassionate observers will see that both sets of factors were at play, including giving substantial credit to President Gorbachev for withholding Soviet intervention in Eastern Europe in stark contrast to his predecessors. It is hard, though, to give Gorbachev credit for foresight, as his attempts at recasting the communist system resulted in the (unwitting) demise of the Soviet Union. Doubling back to Karasin, Western ‘triumphalist’ views have not been helpful from his point of view, nor are notions of who ‘won’ or ‘lost’. One will infer that this sense of prestige (or loss of it) runs deeply for Russia. Conversely, for Britain’s Sir Anthony Brenton (prominent British diplomat), the ‘Iron Lady’ arrested decades of post-imperial drift (or ‘trauma’, as Brenton actually has it) and transformed the country both economically and globally. Another British diplomat, Victor Ashe, notes Poland’s national identity too, particularly its sense of loss and grievance; easily the single most devastated country of the Second World War (on a per capita basis), it has an overriding sense of concern over its giant neighbour and historical rival to the east.

Who then ‘started’ it? Again, we have multiple voices here. David Reynolds (Cambridge University) notes that the 1939 non-aggression pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union was a ‘bombshell’ in London, something that was to cause deep mistrust before, during and after the war. From the Russian viewpoint, however, Western powers had attempted to undermine the Soviet revolution, subsequently used Hitler as a buffer, then through a lack of nerve failed to contain him, thereby exposing the Soviet Union to tens of millions of war dead and the great bulk of the fighting. Stalin would accuse the United Kingdom and the United States of delaying opening the western front at the expense of Soviet lives. These matters could be argued back and forth endlessly, almost to the point that the conclusion is reached (as by many prominent historians) that the strategic stand-off was an inevitable process of competing political systems and blocs. Russia’s devastating losses, paranoia over foreign influences and need for a security buffer — all found fertile ground in post-Second World War Soviet Union and resulted in the unabashed imperial control of Eastern Europe. One can sense the insecurity dilemma that came into play at the time.

Still, it was not always the case that Stalin was a mistrusted figure, and Hugh Lungi, a British translator at Yalta and Potsdam, recalls that the Soviet leader was seen, and portrayed in a well-marshalled press, as a very ‘heroic’ figure during the course of the Second World War. (Lungi also recalls some of Stalin’s personality — polite, with ‘Victorian manners’, but very tough on his own officials.)

There are other important insights here. The role of nuclear weapons is a major feature that kept this conflict ‘cold’ (except where they did not, in numerous wars between proxies worldwide). Perhaps as an important anecdote to the hindsight view of the Cold War as supposedly ‘stable’, intelligence historian Christopher Andrew is keen to remind readers of the terrible fears of ordinary people. Margaret Thatcher herself (still alive at the time), in a letter that opened the conference,
said ‘the dangers to mankind during the Cold War years were horrendous and urgent’. There is some discussion here about the role of the Cold War in the Third World, with Vladimir Pechatnov raising the accurate point that the Soviet Union pushed hard for influence worldwide without much of a strategy and at huge expense. In fact, much of the struggle in the Third World is left aside in this volume. This is despite the fact that many of the most high profile insoluble conflict situations still with us either have their origins during or were exacerbated by the Cold War, and more than a few of these snagged the United Kingdom as it retreated from Empire but retained links broadly with the Commonwealth.

One emergent issue that this volume gives strong insight into concerns the Cold War’s legacy on Europe. Although there has been an unfortunate lag between the conference this book is based on and its publication, some issues are foreshadowed that have played out more fully. Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin’s chapter contains a warning about the expansion of NATO and urges a supposedly pumped-up West not to force Eastern Europe to make choices between great powers. So that leads to yet another question, when did the Cold War end? Most would see the fall of the Berlin Wall as the emblematic end of the struggle, and there is no real argument that it has resumed, but it is obvious that strong traces remain.

ANTHONY SMITH

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Scott Gallacher has withdrawn from the Standing Committee.

Prime Minister John Key addressed a meeting on national security at Victoria University on 5 November. (The text of his address can be found elsewhere in this issue.)

On 18 November Ambassador Robert Carvalho Azevêdo, the director-general of the World Trade Organisation, gave a presentation on ‘Bali One Year On: What Next for the WTO?’ He assessed progress since the agreement on 7 December 2013 on a package of issues, including a landmark multilateral trade facilitation agreement designed to streamline trade, allow developing countries more options for providing food security, boost least developed countries’ trade and help development more generally.

A panel discussion on ‘Trade Negotiations in the Twenty-first Century: What’s at Stake?’ was held at VUW on 11 December to mark the twentieth anniversary of the completion of the Uruguay Round. This meeting was co-hosted with the New Zealand Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, APEC Business Advisory Council, Business NZ and ICEL. Panellists included Chris Carson (Ministry of Primary Industries), Ken Geard and Catherine Graham (Fonterra), Alastair Macfarlane (NZ Seafood Council), Tim Ritchie (NZ Meat Industry Association), Mark Trainor, David Walker and Penny Ridings (MFAT), Scott Champion (Beef and Lamb NZ), Chris Nixon (NZIER), Charles Finny (NZ Trade and Enterprise) and Phil O’Reilly (Business NZ).

Auckland

On 10 November Aaron Y. Zelin (Richard Bowor fellow, The Washington Institute) addressed the branch on ‘Islamic State and the Wider World’.

Christchurch

On 4 November Karim Pourhamzavi, a post-graduate student in Canterbury University’s School of Social and Political Sciences, addressed the branch on ‘The Situation in Gaza and the Two States Solution’.

Nelson

Since early April the branch has held seven meetings. On 14 April Professor Natalia Chaban of Canterbury University, who was born and educated in the Ukraine, spoke about Russian actions in the Crimea and in eastern Ukraine. This was followed on 12 May by a joint presentation on New Zealand’s relations with South Africa: former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon Russell Marshall provided a historical assessment of the relationship in the days of apartheid and the high commissioner of South Africa, Zodwa Lallie, assessed recent events and our current relationship.

On 16 June the chair of Tourism New Zealand, Kerry Prendergast, gave us a wide-ranging survey of the remarkable growth of the tourist industry covering both international visitors to New Zealand and internal domestic tourism.

In August we welcomed two senior foreign diplomats from Wellington. On 7 August Ambassador Yong Kyu Park of the Republic of Korea assessed the state of the relationship between North and South Korea and reviewed developments in the bilateral relationship with New Zealand, with a particular focus on the recent free trade agreement. On 27 August the high commissioner of Australia, Michael Potts, gave us a very frank and thorough assessment of the importance of trans-Tasman relations.

On 30 September Firooz Zadeh, a retired Iranian/American university lecturer and writer, spoke to us about developments in the Middle East with particular reference to Iran. This was followed on 21 October by a presentation by Hugh Steadman, a former British Army officer and writer on international affairs, who has contributed to the NZ International Review. He questioned our traditional alliances and called for a reassessment of our interests when supporting the Western alliance in response to contentious international events. This led to a lively debate among members about New Zealand’s possible involvement in the struggle against the Islamic State.

Tauranga

Jen Scoular has replaced Murray Denyer as branch chair.

Waikato

On 15 October HE Ravdan Bold (Mongolia’s ambassador to New Zealand) addressed the branch on ‘Foreign Policy of Mongolia: Opportunities and Challenges’.

Wairarapa

The branch AGM was held on 22 October. The following officers were elected:

Chair — Scott Thomson
Deputy Chair — Ian Grant
Secretary/Treasurer — Aileen Weston
Committee — Paul Harris, Ross Ireland, Derek Milne, Chris Pinfield, Chris Peterson, Margaret Smith, Ray Stewart.

Following the AGM, new chair and NZIIA Life Member Scott Thomson addressed the branch on ‘Islands Adrift: Small Islands — Big Trouble’.

Wellington

The following meetings were held:
30 Sep Prof Caroline Ziemke-Dickens (director, Centre for Defence Security Studies, Massey University), ‘Wheels Within Wheels: The Security Landscape in West Africa’.

CORRIGENDUM

In the byline to the review article on page 24 of the last issue (vol 39, no 6), we inadvertently misspelt the author’s name. It should be ‘Shlapentokh’, not ‘Shlapentoph’.
AN INVITATION

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