BETWEEN TWO NATIONS
The Indonesia — Papua New Guinea border and West Papua Nationalism

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PREFACE

In 1969, in an event referred to by Indonesia as the ‘Act of Free Choice’ (*Perpera*), but by some others as an ‘act free of choice’, 1,022 delegates appointed by the Indonesian administration to represent the people of Irian Jaya voted to become formally part of the Indonesian Republic. Although official and unofficial observers were critical of the manner in which the United Nations’ Temporary Executive Authority was brought to an end, few outside Irian Jaya itself seriously contested the outcome of the act. Within Irian Jaya, however, some Melanesian nationalists actively resisted the authority of the Indonesian government, while others ‘voted with their feet’ by crossing into Papua New Guinea.

On the other side of the border, Papua New Guinea progressed to independence in 1975, and though leading Papua New Guinean politicians often expressed sympathy for the position of their Melanesian neighbours, successive Papua New Guinea governments maintained the broad policies of the colonial government, seeking to discourage border crossing while dealing sympathetically with ‘genuine refugees’, and giving high priority to the establishment and maintenance of good relations with Indonesia.

Between 1975 and 1984 refugees continued to trickle across the border into Papua New Guinea and a number of border incidents precipitated recurring short cycles of tension and self-conscious cordiality between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. Nevertheless a basic border agreement, negotiated on Papua New Guinea’s behalf by the colonial government in 1973, was successfully renegotiated in 1979 and 1984, official visits were exchanged, joint border development plans were discussed, and machinery was established to deal with the problems of border administration. Despite the recurring problems along the border it appeared that both governments were anxious to promote good relations between their countries.

In 1984 the border situation deteriorated markedly. Following an attempted local uprising by West Papuan nationalists in early 1984, and subsequent repressive action by Indonesian military authorities, a flood of refugees began to pour across the border into Papua New Guinea and a series of border violations by Indonesian troops and aircraft created new tensions between the two countries which the machinery set up under the border agreement proved inadequate to cope with. By mid 1985 there were about 12,000 border crossers in camps along the border in Papua New Guinea, few of whom showed
any inclination to cross back, and repatriation - and broader questions of Papua New Guinea's attitudes to the circumstances which had given rise to this influx - had become salient in Papua New Guinea's domestic politics and a subject of some concern internationally.

In 1979 a group of interested observers met in Canberra to discuss recent developments on the border. The results of this discussion were published in that year as Working Paper No. 2 of the Department of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University (May 1979b). In late 1983 an update of this volume was commenced, but the exercise was overtaken by events. Instead, the present volume has emerged as a substantial reexamination of the border situation and Papua New Guinea-Indonesia relations over the border. Chapters by Prescott, Mackie, May and Herlihy present material included in the 1979 volume updated to take account of developments since 1979. Verrier presents an account of developments to 1969 which was lacking in the earlier volume. New contributions by Osborne, Arndt, and Smith and Hewison look respectively at the OPM, transmigration, and border crossers. Hastings, who contributed an introductory chapter in 1979, provides a concluding overview.

Those who have followed discussion on this subject over recent years will appreciate that this publication brings together contributors of quite widely diverse attitudes and opinions. Editorially I have tried to ensure that the historical and factual content of the volume is consistent, and to avoid excessive overlap between chapters. But no attempt has been made to suppress the diversity of attitudes and sympathies among the contributors. It is for readers to arrive at their own judgements.

In putting the volume together I am heavily indebted to Claire Smith and Hilary Bek for their customary excellence as typists, proof-readers and occasional sub-editors, and to Jo Costin for her assistance in the final preparation of the manuscript and index. Photographs were kindly made available by The Times of Papua New Guinea, through Rowan Callick, South Pacific Post Pty Ltd (Post-Courier), Sydney Morning Herald, through Peter Hastings, Niugini Nius, Mark Baker, Hank di Suvero and Robin Osborne. Except for those supplied by Victor Prescott (1.1-1.3), all maps were drawn by Keith Mitchell, cartographer with the Australian National University's Department of Human Geography. The title of the volume was largely the inspiration of Beverley Blaskett.
FIGURE 1  The border area
CHAPTER 1

PROBLEMS OF INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE BOUNDARY
BETWEEN INDONESIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

J.R.V. Prescott

The relations between modern states reach their most critical
stage in the form of problems relating to territory (Hill
1976:3).

There are no problems of boundaries. There are only prob­

These two quotations emphasize the importance of boundary ques­
tions and the fact that they are one part of the totality of states’
relationships. It would be equally true to say that there is no boundary
disagreement which could not be readily solved given goodwill on both
sides, and that there is no boundary which would not furnish a cause of
dispute if one country wished to force a quarrel on another.

This essay is divided into three main sections. First, a short intro­
ductive passage identifies the principal types of boundary disputes.
Secondly, each of these categories is examined in detail, and their
occurrence in the borderland between Indonesia and Papua New
Guinea is considered. Thirdly, the conclusions of the second section
are listed.

Throughout this essay the terms boundary and border are used in
their precise senses. A boundary is a line and a border is a zone in
which a boundary is located. It would be possible to define the width
of the border according to a number of different criteria; if a particular
border was defined by an economist, an anthropologist, a geomor­
phologist and a general, it would be surprising if all the limits selected
coincided.
The principal types of boundary disputes

The general term boundary dispute includes four distinct kinds of disagreements between countries. Territorial boundary disputes occur when one country finds part of the territory of an adjoining state attractive and seeks to acquire it. Somalia's claim to the Haud and Ogaden areas of Ethiopia and Guatemala's claim to Belize provide examples of such disputes. Positional boundary disputes occur when there is a disagreement over the exact location of the boundary, probably because of a controversy over the interpretation of a phrase in a treaty or over the correct intention of parts of previous agreements. The disagreement between China and Russia over the course of their boundary in the vicinity of the confluence of the Amur and Ussuri Rivers, and the quarrel between Argentina and Chile concerning the location of their common boundary in the Beagle Channel provide examples of positional boundary disputes. In territorial and positional disputes success for the claimant state will involve a change in the position of the boundary and therefore the transfer of some territory from one country to another. The amount of territory involved would usually be less in the case of a positional dispute than in the case of a territorial dispute.

Governments will normally find it most convenient to apply certain functions, relating for example to immigration and trade, as close to the international boundary as possible. Sometimes the nature of these functions or the manner in which they are applied may give a neighbouring country cause for grievance. Disagreements of this kind can be called functional boundary disputes. Iraq's occasional interference with Iranian shipping on the Shatt-el-Arab and Benin's closure of boundary crossing points into Togo in October 1975 typify such boundary disputes. Because boundaries are lines they will often intersect discrete resources such as rivers or an oil field which the countries on both sides of the boundary will wish to use. Conflict over the use of such features form a separate category of resource boundary disputes. The quarrel between India and Bangladesh over the diversion of Ganges waters at the Farraka Barrage is representative of this kind of boundary dispute. In resource and functional boundary disputes the claimant state can be successful without any alteration in the location of the boundary; in each case what is sought is an agreed set of regulations which will alleviate the administrative problem.

Territorial boundary disputes

Territorial boundary disputes can be divided into two main clas-
ses. First there are legal disputes when the claimant country insists that
the territory desired is improperly owned by its neighbour. The Philip­
pines' abandoned claim to part of Sabah and Kampuchea's claim to the
temple of Preah Vihear in Thailand, which was upheld by the Interna­
tional Court of Justice in 1962, were both territorial claims based on
legal grounds. Secondly, there are all the other cases when a country
asserts that it would be more appropriate if part of its neighbour's ter­
ritory passed to its own sovereignty. Lesotho's claim to part of South
Africa and the Argentine's claim to the Falkland Islands are typical of
this large group of territorial boundary disputes. There are many
grounds on which countries will make claims against the territory of
neighbours; the arguments will be based in history, in geography, in
economics, and in ethnology. Usually the claim will be buttressed by as
many different arguments as possible. For example, Afghanistan's
persistent territorial claim to parts of western Pakistan, which is thinly
veiled as support for a separate state of Pushtunistan, has at least four
strands. First there are the legal and moral arguments that Afghanistan
was forced to sign the 1893 agreement, which produced the Durand
Line, under duress. Secondly, historical arguments are deployed to
demonstrate that Afghanistan once ruled over areas of west Pakistan,
and it is true that the Durrani Empire controlled some of the claimed
area for seventy-six years prior to 1823, when Peshawar was lost. The
third set of arguments is based in the witness of ethnologists that
Pathans in Afghanistan and Pakistan form a single cultural group.
Finally, it is asserted on geographical grounds that the proper bound­
ary of the Afghanistan uplands lies closer to the Indus River, along the
Sulaiman Range.

Although in most cases when territorial disputes originate the
claimant state genuinely hopes and expects to acquire additional territ­
ory, there are cases when territorial claims are made to serve some
domestic or international policy. Presidents Nkrumah and Amin, at
different times, have made claims against Togo and Tanzania respec­
tively, when it was obviously useful to distract attention from pressing
domestic problems of an economic and political nature. When the
Philippines claimed parts of northern Sabah it was suggested by some
observers that the chief design was to delay the formation of Malaysia.

When the border between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea is
considered there does not appear to be any likely territorial claim from
either side. The agreement between Australia and Indonesia on 12
February 1973 fixed the boundary in a clear manner which does not
allow any territorial claims. However, it should not be assumed that a claim could not be manufactured by either side if changed political circumstances warranted it. Once it was fashionable to classify boundaries into two major classes called artificial boundaries and natural boundaries. Artificial boundaries included those which did not correspond with any of the major divisions of the physical or cultural landscape, while natural boundaries were distinguished by their coincidence with rivers or watersheds or lines of tribal separation. The fashion was abandoned because it was recognized that it was still necessary to select a specific line within the river or the watershed or the frontier between two tribes. This realization underlines the point that in the vicinity of a boundary there will be other limits which will be more or less obvious. Some will concern the physical landscape of plants, geological structure and hydrology, while others will relate to human occupance and include differences in language, systems of land tenure, and patterns of trade. Because the present boundary formed by the two meridians and the Fly River does not correspond consistently with possible physical and human divisions in the border it would be possible for either country, by emphasizing one of these dividing zones, to call for a rectification of the boundary.

There is a number of changed political circumstances which might persuade a country to challenge the location of a settled boundary. For example, there might be a desire to provide an external focus for national sentiment at times of difficult economic conditions; or the temptation to take advantage of a weakened neighbour might prove irresistible; or it might be decided to raise the boundary issue to show displeasure with some policies or attitudes being adopted by the adjoining state.

It must also be recognized that population distributions sometimes change, and if alien settlement occurs on a significant scale across a boundary it can later provide the ground for a demand to redraw the boundary. It was the major immigration of Chilean workers to the guano and nitrate fields of southern Bolivia which strengthened Chile’s determination to acquire that area.

Fortunately, in the case of the border between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea there is no evidence that either country has the slightest wish to raise territorial claims against the other. It must also be a matter of satisfaction to both governments that their maritime boundaries have been settled. Maritime claims have been a fruitful source of discord in a number of regions, but that risk has been avoided
by Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. The boundary in the Arafura Sea was settled by Australia and Indonesia in 1971 and 1973 on terms which proved entirely acceptable to the independent government of Papua New Guinea. On 9 September 1983 Indonesia and Papua New Guinea extended the short boundary which Australia and Indonesia had agreed in 1971 into the Pacific Ocean. That boundary has now been fixed to separate the seabed and exclusive economic zones claimed by the two countries, to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the nearest land. It was based on equidistant principles.

Positional boundary disputes

While the basic cause of territorial boundary disputes is superimposition of the boundary on the cultural or physical landscape, which allows one or both sides to canvass the greater merit of alternative lines, positional boundary disputes arise because the evolution of the boundary is incomplete. It is a defect in the definition of the boundary, in a text, on a map or in the landscape, which is critical in the case of positional disputes. They will often arise during the process of demarcation when joint survey teams are striving to match the boundary defined in a treaty text with the features of the landscape. For example, the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1896 stipulated that the boundary between the areas now known as Iran and Pakistan would follow the Tahlab River to its junction with the Mirjawa River. Eight years later it was discovered that Tahlab and Mirjawa are two names for the same river and there is no point where usage changes from one to the other. Often the problems arise because the boundary was defined by diplomats in imperial capitals, working with inaccurate maps. Sometimes the errors arise because of the errors on the map, on other occasions confusion is created because the diplomats tried to make assurance doubly sure and defined a single point in two ways which were found later to be quite different. For example, the first boundary between Bolivia and Peru was defined as passing through the confluence of the Lanza and Tambopata Rivers which lay north of parallel 14 degrees south. The surveyors had no trouble finding the confluence, but unfortunately it was south of 14 degrees south.

Positional disputes can also arise in situations where a boundary has been demarcated through an unpopulated border which subsequently becomes more intensively used. The movement of new settlers into a border and the use of virgin land close to the boundary
provide an acid test for the completeness and accuracy of the boundary definition and demarcation.

Sometimes positional boundary disputes arise because the line is made to coincide with some unstable feature in the landscape. Some rivers make very poor boundaries because rivers tend to change their course in two ways. First, rivers can change their course gradually, and generally imperceptibly, by accretion and erosion. The downstream migration of meanders falls into this category. Secondly, river courses can be changed suddenly by cutting through the neck of a meander. The first case does not usually call for any special arrangements because over the long term both sides will lose and gain approximately equal areas. However, in the second case the area of land enclosed by the meander is suddenly switched from one side of the river to the other. It is then a nice point to decide whether the boundary follows the new course of the river or continues to follow the abandoned course. The question of river islands can also be difficult because the deposition of silt will sometimes join islands to one of the banks. This latter problem has been particularly serious on the River Mekong where it forms the boundary between Thailand and Laos. The Franco-Thai treaty of 1893 gave France title to all the islands in the river and problems of jurisdiction arose when some of the islands become attached to the Thai bank through the deposition of alluvium. A commission was established in 1926 to rule on all future problems of this nature but the decolonization of Indo-China and the determination of Laos to own all the islands, as France did before it, has caused a fresh round of problems.

Many boundary architects have been deceived by apparently exact representation of rivers on maps and have decided that such precise features would make excellent boundaries. Unfortunately the actual rivers possess a width which makes it necessary to select some particular line within the river. Lines which can and have been used in rivers include the bank, the line of equidistance or median line, and the thalweg. If a bank is used then the entire river belongs to a single country, but an added advantage is that water levels change and so does the position of the bank. Further, the banks of some rivers in very flat country might merge into swamps before reaching firm ground. The median line can be easily constructed if the banks are clearly defined, but of course the line will change in location as the banks are eroded or extended by alluvial disposition. Further, the median line might intersect the navigable channel of the river and create problems for com-
mercial use. The thalweg is the line of the deepest continuous channel in the river. While this line will also change it does mean that countries on both sides will be able to claim navigation rights for their citizens.

Turning now to the boundary between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea it seems that the only scope for a positional boundary dispute concerns the section of the Fly River used for the international boundary. The meridians north and south of the Fly River have been marked by ten and four monuments respectively. The maximum distance between any two markers is the 56 nautical miles between monuments MM11 and MM12 (see figure 1.1). Such a distance would mean that it would be difficult for a person to know exactly where the boundary lay in the intervening area, but it is understood that all major tracks have been signposted and the exact location of each adjacent village has been computed. Modern survey techniques would make it a comparatively easy matter to fix more monuments on the line if that was deemed essential. The 1973 agreement defines the boundary along the Fly River as the waterway, which is shown in parentheses to be the thalweg. The distance between monuments MM10 and MM11, which mark the termini of the section of the Fly River which forms the boundary, is 34 nautical miles, but the course of the river will be much longer because it meanders widely over the flat, marshy plain (see figure 1.2). Maps of the region show very clearly the abandoned meanders along the river's course, and in some cases the boundary has moved as much as 3.5 kilometres when the neck of a meander was breached (see the meander marked B on figure 1.3). The map evidence suggests that the Fly River has an unstable course which makes it unsuitable for use as an international boundary. If the border in the vicinity of the river ever became intensively used it would prove to be a very difficult line to monitor.

An early feasibility study of the Ok Tedi mining project in the Star Mountains of Papua New Guinea recommended that meanders should be breached in an effort to improve the opportunity for barge navigation on the river. Unfortunately it will prove a very difficult and expensive engineering operation to contain the Fly River between fixed banks. The river's catchment in high mountains with heavy rainfalls generates a large sediment load, which cannot be carried when the low gradients are reached south of parallel 6 degrees south.
FIGURE 1.1 The boundary between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea
FIGURE 1.2 The Fly River section of the boundary
FIGURE 1.3  *Section of the Fly River showing course changes*


Functional boundary disputes

A functional boundary dispute is created when one country's authorities decide that national interests have been adversely and unfairly affected by the activities of a neighbouring country along the boundary. These activities will obviously be concerned with movement across the boundary of people, or stock, or goods, or ideas, and the complaint can take two major forms. In the first case the plaintiff state might consider that its neighbour is unreasonably interfering with trans-boundary movements. For example, Pakistan, in retaliation against Afghanistan's support for the Pathan secessionist movement, required Powinda herders to produce certificates of health for their animals before admitting them on their annual transhumance movement to the Indus plains at the beginning of winter. It proved impossible to satisfy this new regulation and the Powindas and their herds had to winter in Afghanistan. More recently Tanzania has prevented Kenyan lorries from operating between Kenya and Zambia along the roads through the west of Tanzania. Tanzania claims that this heavy traffic is damaging its unsealed roads; Kenya believes that Tanzania is unwilling to see Zambia's dependence on Dar es Salaam reduced. The imposition of tariffs is another device by which one country can hinder trans-boundary trade; while the withholding of work-permits is one method of obstructing immigration into a country.

In the second case the plaintiff country might be dissatisfied because its neighbour is not preventing illegal trans-boundary movements. For example, in the last year the export earnings of both Uganda and the Central African Empire were seriously reduced because diamonds, cotton, cocoa and coffee were smuggled out and sold in neighbouring countries. Countries might also complain if a neighbour fails to enforce health standards which result in animal or human diseases being introduced across the boundary, or fails to prevent a flood of refugees into the plaintiff's part of the border. Some of the most serious functional boundary disputes arise when one country fails to prevent its border being used as a base for dissidents attacking the authority across the boundary. Such attacks may be launched as military campaigns in the style of the POLISARIO raids into Mauritania from Algeria, or they may simply be propaganda attacks by radio transmitters.

Functional boundary disputes have not attracted the interest of scholars to the same extent as territorial or positional disputes. This
situation may be due either to the prompt settlement of most functional disputes or to the fact that serious and persistent functional disputes occur only between hostile countries which display their antagonism in more obvious and often more threatening ways. It seems likely that the chance of functional disputes developing will be greatest when the traffic across the boundary is mainly in one direction, whether it is legal or illegal. This is because in such situations there will be little or no opportunity for retaliation by the plaintiff state. If there is a flourishing traffic in both directions across the boundary any country which considers itself to be adversely affected by its neighbour’s actions in the border can adopt similar measures. The introduction of new regulations or the more stringent application of existing rules which precipitate functional disputes, will often be made for sound strategic or economic reasons. However, it is also possible that they may be introduced or intensified in order to show displeasure with the policies or attitudes of a neighbouring country.

While it is possible that functional boundary disputes will arise between the two countries, the chances have been significantly reduced by the agreement on border arrangements which the two governments concluded in October 1984. An agreement on administrative border arrangements had been reached by Australia and Indonesia on 26 November 1974 and Article 13 of that agreement required it to be reviewed in 1979. The review was undertaken during that year and an agreement of twenty articles was signed in December 1979. This agreement was in turn reviewed (as required by Article 19) in 1984 and a new agreement, of twenty-two articles, was signed in October 1984.

This agreement has no effect on the location of the boundary; it is concerned with the functions of governments in the border, and it is designed to avoid problems and to provide mechanisms for solving any problems which do occur.

The border area, within which residents on both sides have certain rights and responsibilities, is defined as the Kecamatan-kecamatan Perbatasan in Indonesia and the census divisions of Papua New Guinea which extend to the boundary. It has been agreed that both sides will produce maps of their section of the border area and that the area can be changed after consultation.

Articles 4, 5 and 9 deal with the indigenous population of the border area. Those residents are entitled to cross the boundary for traditional activities associated with social contacts and ceremonies such as marriages or funerals. They are also permitted to cross the boundary
to carry out farming, hunting and fishing under the terms of traditional rights held in areas of land or water in the neighbouring state. The articles conferring these rights stipulate that such crossings will only be of a temporary nature and must not involve permanent resettlement. In order to reduce the chance of future problems both countries have agreed to discourage the construction of new villages within 5 km of the boundary. This is not an absolute prohibition but special approval is required from the government concerned before such settlements can be established.

Cross-boundary customary trade will be facilitated by the two governments, although it is restricted to residents of the border area to satisfy their needs and it may not include items prohibited by either government.

Crossing of the boundary by people who do not reside in the border area, and by those residents not engaged in traditional activities, is regulated by Article 6. This article provides for the designation of crossing points and the exchange of information about migration laws and policies between the two governments.

Other articles describe actions which governments must take. For example, Article 7 requires both governments to prevent any part of their territories, in or near the border area, from being used for hostile or illegal actions against the other. The authorities have agreed to cooperate if any disaster or major accident occurs in the border area and to promote the maintenance and extension of air, road and radio communication across the boundary. Finally, Article 12 deals with the continuance and development of cooperation to prevent dangerous plant, animal and human diseases from crossing the boundary.

Articles 2 and 3 deal with the mechanism which will keep the agreement running smoothly. A joint Border Committee of senior officials will meet at least once a year to produce guidelines for the effective implementation of the agreement and to review the success of cooperation. Arrangements are also made for liaison between officials at various levels of national and local administration.

This mechanism was tested in April 1983 when surveyors of Papua New Guinea discovered that the trans-Irian Jaya highway appeared to cross into Papua New Guinea in two places. The highway, which is being built by Japanese contractors, appeared to cross the boundary twice, a few miles south of parallel 8 degrees south. One section of road was reported to be 3.5 km long and to have penetrated 0.5 km into Papua New Guinea; the other section was 4.5 km in length and penet-
rated 1.5 km. The country in this region is low and swampy and Papua New Guinea’s member for North Fly, Mr Warren Dutton, told news­men that he believed the roadbuilders had been following the top of a ridge which led them into Papua New Guinea. There were no bound­ary markers in this area.

A meeting of officials was organized in Merauke within a week. It lasted three days and arrangements were made for satellite fixings of the road near the border to be made on 11 and 12 May 1983. A more detailed survey was arranged for August 1983 and it was agreed that the entire boundary line would be resurveyed in three sections by 1985. Despite the attempts of some politicians in Papua New Guinea to make political capital out of these events, the matter was handled calmly and swiftly by both governments. The offending sections of the road were formally closed in August 1984. It was a joint performance which augurs well for the future.

Resource boundary disputes

Not all trans-boundary resources will provide possible causes of resource boundary disputes. For example, it is unlikely that a valuable, pure stand of hardwoods which straddled the boundary would cause any difficulties, providing the exact position of the boundary was known. The mining of ore bodies in the border will only call for coop­eration and discussion when the construction of shafts and galleries might produce drainage or flooding problems for a mine on the other side of the boundary. The most common source of resource boundary disputes are water bodies, such as lakes or rivers, which mark or cross the boundary. Two main cases can be distinguished. First, there are those situations where the boundary is drawn through the lake or along the river. In that case each state has equal access to the same stretch of the river or lake for navigation, fishing, water supplies and irrigation. It is usual for treaties producing such boundaries to stipulate that each side has equal rights to use the river or lake, but that such use must not be to the detriment of the other user. Plainly any country which allows a breakwater to be constructed into a river without consultation with its neighbour runs the risk of fomenting a dispute if the altered flow of the water begins to erode the neighbour’s bank. Equally it would be against the terms of the general clause described above if one country allowed developments along a tributary of a boundary river to pollute that boundary river and perhaps spoil the fishing for people on both banks.
The second situation arises when the river basin is divided by the boundary and the states have successive use of the waters. In such a situation the downstream state can adversely affect the upstream country by building a dam which floods back into the neighbour’s territory. Such flooding will reduce the neighbour’s capacity to use that land. The construction of the Aswan High Dam resulted in flooding in the Sudanese border and the Egyptian government agreed to share the cost of resettling those villagers whose lands were inundated. The downstream country can be adversely affected if the upstream state builds a dam which alters the regime of the river or diverts large volumes for irrigation, which reduces the flow in the lower sections. When Kariba Dam was built it was necessary for what are now Zambia and Zimbabwe to guarantee a minimum flow along the Zambezi into Mozambique. Many international agreements have been reached to deal with the successive ownership of rivers; the Indus Waters Agreement shows that even countries which exhibit a high level of mutual suspicion, such as India and Pakistan, can reach a satisfactory solution to this kind of problem.

The other obvious resource which could create problems is a hydrocarbon deposit of natural gas or crude petroleum. Such a deposit, given the right structural conditions could be trapped from either side of the boundary. For this reason most current seabed boundary agreements require consultation between the parties if any hydrocarbon deposit is found to straddle the boundary. In some cases this consultation is required for any deposit found within a set distance of the boundary.

The Indonesian and Papua New Guinea governments were evidently aware of the risks of functional disputes along a boundary which cuts in an arbitrary fashion across the landscape when they negotiated the 1979 and 1984 agreements. Four articles deal with such issues.

First, in Article 13 provision is made for free navigation for nationals of both countries along the Fly River where it forms the boundary. This section is referred to as the Fly River Bulge. Further, provision is made for each government to have the right of navigation along a shared river, for the purposes of a national development project. This provision will be of most use to Indonesia, in respect of the Fly River, but Indonesia seems to have settled for less than it was entitled to under the terms of the fifth article of the 1895 Convention between Britain and the Netherlands. That article guaranteed both parties free navigation on the Fly River except for the carriage of warlike
stores. The latest agreement restricts Indonesian rights to transit navigation for the purposes of a national development project. It is not clear why Indonesia made this concession. The fact that this article would also apply to the Sepik River does not seem adequate compensation, because only quite small craft would be able to reach the border along this river at times of highest flow. It is possible that Indonesia made the concession because the matter was deemed to be one which was too difficult for the government of Papua New Guinea to sell to its electorate.

Article 15 deals with the major development of natural resources. It specifies that governments will keep each other informed when such developments are planned, and the governments have also agreed that they will cooperate with each other to facilitate major developments within either of the countries. The Ok Tedi mining project is nominated as a major development. There is also provision for the exploitation of single accumulations of liquid hydrocarbons or natural gas or any other minerals which straddle the boundary and which can be tapped from only one side. The governments have agreed to consult on the exploitation of the resource and the distribution of profits in an equitable manner.

Article 16 provides that when mining, industrial, forestry, agricultural or other projects are carried out in the border area care will be taken to ensure that pollution of trans-boundary areas does not occur. There is a similar reference in Article 17, which is concerned with the use and conservation of water, forests and wildlife. Such projects will be designed to avoid adverse effects on trans-boundary regions.

Conclusions

This review of the four kinds of boundary disputes suggests a number of conclusions regarding the boundary between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

First, the land and sea boundaries have been defined and are free from ambiguity. Further survey is required along the land boundary, and it is encouraging that more detailed work will be completed by 1987. It appears inconceivable, in the present climate of friendly relations between the two countries, that a territorial dispute could develop.

Secondly, the Fly River Bulge appears to be the only sector where positional disputes could occur because of the capacity of that river to
meander across its flood plain. The problems would become more acute if there were major developments in this area, including closer settlement and perhaps the discovery of fields of hydrocarbons.

Thirdly, the recent agreement on border arrangements provides an excellent framework for building enduring good relations in the border. The speed with which the problem of the errant road-builders was solved gives the promise that there will be no serious boundary problems between the two countries in the foreseeable future.
CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE BORDER PROBLEM
AND THE BORDER STORY TO 1969

June Verrier

A
n Indonesian nationalist movement developed in the early years of the twentieth century but had gained few concessions from the Dutch by the time of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Japan’s occupation of the Netherlands East Indies was thus at first welcomed by the nationalists. However Japan was to prove little more receptive to the nationalists’ cause, at least until their increasing military defeats from the end of 1944. On the eve of their surrender on 15 August 1945, Japan appeared willing to grant independence: two days later the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed.

The Dutch refused to recognize Indonesia’s independence and set out to reassert their authority by force. A bitter struggle followed which lasted for four years. At a Round Table Conference in The Hague in 1949 the Dutch eventually agreed to the transfer of sovereignty from the former Netherlands East Indies to the Republic of Indonesia, with the exception of the territory of West New Guinea whose future was to be decided in negotiations between Holland and Indonesia within the following year. The talks broke down, and by 1952 the Dutch appeared determined to retain this last outpost of their former empire in the East Indies. In the subsequent decade the Dutch went on, deliberately and contrarily, to develop a sense of separate West Papuan nationalism which was destined to come into head-on collision with the assertive nationalism of an Indonesia, under President Sukarno, determined to return West New Guinea to the ‘fatherland’ from which the Dutch had, in its view, illegally excluded it. Through the 1950s, therefore, President Sukarno escalated the campaign against the Dutch for the return of West New Guinea, and by the
end of 1960 was sending ‘volunteers’ to the territory to procure that end.

Australia, which had supported the Indonesian nationalists in their struggle against the Dutch, thereby laying down firm foundations for good relations with the new Indonesia, was nonetheless made increasingly nervous by the emerging nature of Sukarno’s regime. Although it had entertained a sporadic concern for the security of the region to its north for more than a hundred years, it had had little to do with it in practice, at least until the Second World War. It was therefore the force of traditional fears and phobias, rather than the exigencies of contemporary realities which required Australia to live and work with Indonesia as a good neighbour, that led Australia to support and encourage Dutch retention of West New Guinea until forced to a turnaround in 1961.

Developments in Indonesia in these years appeared to make the judgement a correct one. A deteriorating domestic economic and political situation in Indonesia, which included a struggle for power between the communists and the army, encouraged President Sukarno to a foreign policy adventurism which included the acquisition of West New Guinea, by force if necessary, and then the confrontation of Malaysia. Australia’s worst fears appeared to be founded; its nearest neighbour looked increasingly unstable as a battle for political dominance was fought at home between the Communist Party and the army.

In the circumstances Indonesia’s even closer presence to Australia in West New Guinea - already opposed by Australia’s agricultural interests as a threat (from disease) to Australia’s major exporting industries - was out of the question. One solution was to engage in an administrative cooperative relationship with the Dutch for the joint development of their territories in New Guinea. A united New Guinea proceeding to independence together was one option held open.

Such plans as there were, however, were overtaken by events. Different views were held by the governments of Holland and Australia of the pace of progress towards joint development, and external developments exerted pressures. As Sukarno escalated his campaign for the return of West New Guinea, and seemed to fall increasingly under the influence of the communists at home, the United States came to determine that West New Guinea was a small price to pay to keep Sukarno out of the communist camp abroad. In
1961 the United States therefore exerted pressure on the Netherlands and Australia to change their policies with the result that in August 1962, with the New York Agreement, the administration of West New Guinea was transferred to a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority. Seven months later Indonesia succeeded to administrative authority in the territory pending an Act of Free Choice which was to take place at some time before 1969.

Australia’s extreme apprehension about the implications of an Indonesian presence in West New Guinea, at a time when Indonesia had gone on from the West New Guinea campaign to confront Malaysia, was illustrated by its closure of the border in New Guinea, the pursuit of a defence and development programme designed to turn the orientation of the people determinedly eastwards, and a defence build-up in Australia itself. The West New Guinea crisis had been an undoubted shock bringing home to Australia both the realities of its alliance relationship and some realities of the region in which Australia lived. The process of adjustment consequently called for by Australia’s foreign minister, Garfield Barwick, was slow to be made. In Indonesia’s case it was not until President Suharto replaced President Sukarno following the coup in 1965, and the subsequent western effort to stabilize Indonesia in 1967, that Australia set about mending fences with Indonesia. This included better management of the border mending fences with Indonesia. This included better management of the border in New Guinea.

All international borders contain within them the potential for trouble between neighbours. Whether they do so or not depends on a host of factors - historical, geographic, ethnic, economic - but most obviously on the state of relations between the countries concerned. In the case of Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, the existence of a border problem is the product not of relations between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia per se, for both have declared the best of intentions towards each other. Rather it is a problem which, in its essence, they inherited from their colonial predecessors, the Dutch and the Australians, and from the kinds of policies they pursued both separately and together in their respective halves of the island of New Guinea. The border problem in New Guinea thus arose not simply out of the geography and ethnography of a remote and ill-defined border, nor even out of the economics of uneven development which gave rise to the argument in some quarters that refugee movement across the border from West New Guinea was in fact primarily economic in origin.
Rather it arose out of the policies of the administrative powers which developed a sense of separate West Papuan nationalism and held open the prospect of a united New Guinea.

The Indonesia-Papua New Guinea border is a classically arbitrary product of colonial history. The problems that have arisen on account of the border since are equally a classic result of the assertiveness and sensitivity of newly independent nations and, once Papua New Guinea became the sovereign power, an illustration of the limits of small states’ diplomacy. This chapter sets out to show that the character of the border problem in New Guinea is also the product of a particular history.

Australian-Dutch administrative cooperation in New Guinea

In 1545 Inigo Ortiz de Retes took possession of the island of New Guinea in the name of the king of Spain and in 1606 the Kingdom of the Netherlands first laid its claim to the western half of the island. Dutch interest in West New Guinea was as a buffer, to prevent another European presence which could challenge its monopoly of the lucrative spice trade of the Indies. Hence the Dutch government did not establish its first settlement in West New Guinea until 1828, and then in response to anticipated British interest and intrusion. With the exception of the highland areas, major exploration of West New Guinea had been undertaken by the start of the Second World War, but the extent of contact was slight until the Dutch decided to develop the territory in the early 1950s.

Following West New Guinea’s exclusion from the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands East Indies to the Republic of Indonesia, Australia’s diplomacy was directed to encourage the Dutch to retain the territory when the Dutch had not yet determined to do so (Haupt 1970; Feith 1962). Speculation about joint cooperation or condominium accompanied Australia’s effort, which resulted in a Dutch decision, by mid 1953, to hold on to the territory and develop it towards self-government and independence, and a corresponding decision to enter into a cooperative relationship with Australia.

With Australia’s own postwar extended development programme for Papua New Guinea, Australian officers on the spot saw advantages in some level of cooperation with their Dutch counterparts across the border. Colonel J.K. Murray, administrator of the then Territory of Papua New Guinea, was proposing as much to the secretary of the
Department of Territories as early as March 1949\(^1\) (he had particularly in mind plant and animal quarantine to protect Australia's major exporting industries). Although Murray was cautioned for his over-enthusiasm for joint cooperation and restrained from initiating it, it was Australia, initially, which proposed the formalization of cooperation with the Dutch in New Guinea. Following talks which took place in July 1953, Australia's foreign minister, R.G. Casey stated:

> In view of the similarity between the peoples of the Australian and Netherlands territories in New Guinea, and of the problems faced by the two administrations, discussions were held on practical measures of cooperation at administrative level between the TPNG and NNG (Current Notes on International Affairs [CNIA] 24 (7) July 1953:396-397).

Although there had been little contact between Australia and the Netherlands in New Guinea until the Second World War, before the July 1953 arrangements were made there had already been considerable practical cooperation between the two administrations. This had taken place on such questions as the movement of peoples across the undefined international border, at a time when the loss of scarce potential labour had become a serious issue to the Dutch now set upon the development of the territory. Under the 1953 arrangements, Port Moresby and Hollandia were given a mandate to discuss land laws, labour, and border control with a view to the development of consonant policies in the spheres of the economic, social and political advancement of the people, and to discuss district services with particular reference to the exchange of information between patrol officers in border regions. In addition, there was to be a similar exchange of information and consultation, as well as of research experience, in and between the departments of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, Health, and Education, and also in geological data and land use surveys.

There is some evidence to suggest that there was pressure from agricultural and defence interests in Canberra for the extension of the administrative cooperation relationship. The former saw New Guinea as an extension of the Australian production unit and believed that Australia's agricultural industries required the quarantine guarantees

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\(^1\) J.K. Murray to J.R Halligan, Secretary, Department of Territories, 26 March 1949. PNG Archives, File: CA38-6-8, Hollandia: Telecommunications.
a cooperative relationship was expected to bring; for the latter, defence considerations required the Dutch to remain in West New Guinea rather than be superseded by what was seen to be an inevitably unstable Indonesia. In August 1955, therefore, cabinet instructed the ministers for Territories and External Affairs to reexamine administrative cooperation in New Guinea in order to develop proposals for its extension, paying particular attention to the question of a common language. At a subsequent meeting between Brigadier Cleland, then administrator of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, and the officials of the departments of Territories and External Affairs, the importance of a common language was declared to be that the adoption of English 'would further the Eastward and Pacific orientation of the Dutch territory.2

The language question was to continue to be considered at the administrative cooperation conferences which followed the Australia-Dutch Joint Statement on Administration Cooperation of November 1957. The purpose of the pursuit of a common language was made clear in the conclusion of the secretary for Territories following his visit to West New Guinea in 1959. In his view it appeared only logical that east and west New Guinea should be in a position where they could, if they wished, eliminate the artificial border between them; one of the greatest aids towards this would be the existence of a common language.3 The Dutch agreed. Meanwhile Australia made some concessions to Dutch language with its inclusion in the syllabus of the first two senior high schools which were to open in Port Moresby and Rabaul in 1960 (South Pacific Post 29 January 1960).

The language question is important for what it suggests about intentions at this stage. Earlier, the politics of administrative cooperation had been more important than their substance, the arrangements signalling support for Dutch retention of West New Guinea as much as anything else for in practice they essentially duplicated the role played by the South Pacific Commission for the exchange of information and advice in such areas as public health, social welfare and education. The

2 Cabinet Decision No. 482 noted in the record of the meeting at the Department of External Affairs on 3 August 1955 between Cleland and officials of the Departments of External Affairs and Territories, forwarded with Hasluck's letter to Casey, 4 August 1955, PNG Archives File: AD 92-3-13: His Honour's Visit to Hollandia.

arrangements therefore represented a commitment, and a firm and valuable one according to Alfred Stirling, Australia’s ambassador at The Hague. In this way administrative cooperation between the eastern and the western halves of the island of New Guinea contributed to the then growing Dutch interest in their territory as well as reflected it, as did the subsequent Australian-Dutch Joint Statement on Administrative Cooperation in New Guinea of 1957. Motivated by a deteriorating situation in Indonesia, Australia proposed furthering administrative cooperation in New Guinea with the joint statement, which was to produce a qualitative and quantitative change in the administrative cooperation relationship. Its institutional innovations were described by the minister for External Affairs in the House of Representatives in February 1958 (CNIA 29(2) February 1958:109-110). They were the appointment of liaison officers, the assigning of an attache to the Netherlands embassy in Canberra to deal exclusively with New Guinea affairs, and the introduction of the more-or-less annual conference on administrative cooperation, the first of which was to take place in Canberra in October 1958.

The agenda of the Canberra conference ranged from legislative structures and administrative organizations, through agricultural issues to conditions of labour employment, native local government, public health and administration, and the exchange of planting materials of economic importance. The extent of cooperation to date was recorded, including the coordination of patrols along the border and the cooperation concerned with surveying the border: the area was being photographed preparatory to mapping, Australia working in the southern half and the Netherlands in the north.

At the close of the conference, a statement was issued which drew attention to the fact that the mandate of the conference was limited to discussion and the submission of recommendations on these subjects (CNIA 29 (10) October 1958:654-655). The records themselves reveal that recommendations were made for the furtherance of cooperation in administrative organization, in problems met in increasing indigenous participation in the public service, in the administration of native peoples, in land laws, and in technical training matters. A resolution on indigenous participation in measures of cooperation was also adopted and it was proposed that there should be a joint committee to collect and analyse information activities in the two territories.

As far as education was concerned, the prospect of sending students from West New Guinea to secondary schools and training
institutions in Australia was to be examined. In the field of specialized training, joint training centres for indigenes for common technical, vocational and professional training were proposed, as was the reservation of places for West New Guinea officials at ASOPA (the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney), at which Dutch lecturers would also be invited to participate in instruction. It was suggested, too, that Australian New Guinea make use of the Nautical Training School established in Hollandia three years previously.

These recommendations were accepted by the conference, along with those for an annual meeting and the pooling of technical skills.

There was a persistent theme running through Australia’s presentations and its working papers for the conference, that the object of the exercise was to strive for ‘consonant’ developments. There was to be, for example, the ‘development of consonant educational policies for both administration and mission schools’, ‘consonant forestry policies’ and ‘consonant policies in relation to land laws’. Some sections of the Australian press, at least, deduced from this that as a result of the conference there was an agreement on a programme of ‘parallel development’ which was to be recommended to the governments both of the Netherlands and of Australia.

Whether, or to what degree, the Australian government pursued a policy of administrative cooperation with the Dutch in order to lay the foundations for the emergence of a Melanesian Federation remains debatable. Suffice it to recall that the 1957 joint statement declared that it was designed to leave the way open, if the inhabitants of the island one day so chose, for a united New Guinea. More important for this discussion is that the nature of both Dutch and Australian policies had the effect, if not always the intention, of creating both a nationalist identity in West New Guinea and a feeling for a united New Guinea, both of which were to be at the base of the border problem which developed with Indonesia’s administration of the Territory from 1962 and which, in one form or another, continues to this day. It is to this extent that in their different ways the governments of both the Netherlands and Australia were responsible, not for creating the problem - since all borders present the potential for problems - but for sharing the kind of problem which was to characterize this border from 1962 on.

Meanwhile, by the time of the second conference on administrative cooperation, which took place in Hollandia in March 1960, Australia had downgraded the significance of administrative coopera-
tion. One reason for this change of Australian policy was Paul Hasluck’s attachment to the policy of gradualism for the development of Australia’s own New Guinea territories. Otherwise a hawk on Indonesia who could be expected to support policies designed to deny her West New Guinea, and so to support the joint statement and the prospect of a Melanesian Federation, this minister for Territories was a persistent opponent of the kind of cooperation with the Dutch that interfered with his own view of an appropriate programme for the advancement of the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

Australia and the Netherlands had quite different views of colonial development even from the early 1950s, for the Dutch encouraged the emergence of a local elite with the sponsorship of trade union activity, political participation and localization at all possible levels. Hasluck, by contrast, was opposed to the creation of elites and pursued a policy of ‘uniform development’ which had at its foundation the view that it would take years before consideration could be given to the political shape and size of Papua New Guinea. The 1957 joint statement, and the subsequent Dutch programme for the rapid acceleration of the political development of the people in their half of the island, threatened this gradualist view of Papua New Guinea’s development. With the Dutch announcement in 1960 of a ten year plan for the development of West New Guinea to self-government (which was in fact a decision to leave West New Guinea gracefully without conceding the Indonesian claim to the territory), therefore, Hasluck visited the Netherlands and expressed the view that, as far as the political development of New Guinea was concerned, the slower the better (The Age 27 May 1960). It was Hasluck’s object to see Australia dissociated from the Dutch resolve to move the territory rapidly towards self-government in association with Australia and related Pacific territories. From this time the Dutch replaced the Australians as prime movers in the promotion of the kind of administrative cooperation which was designed to promote the ultimate goal of a united and independent island of New Guinea.

More important than Hasluck’s influence on the thrust of administrative cooperation between the first and second conferences in 1958 and 1959, however, were accelerating international developments. International developments in the West New Guinea dispute, particularly the decision of the United States to improve relations with Indonesia, and Australia’s decision to follow suit by inviting Dr Subandrio to visit Australia, were the key determinants of the changed status
of administrative cooperation in New Guinea.

The Casey-Subandrio joint statement of 15 February 1959 which resulted from the visit of Indonesia’s foreign minister to Australia stated that:

It followed from their position of respect for agreements on the rights of sovereignty that if any agreement were reached between the Netherlands and Indonesia as parties principal, arrived at by peaceful means and in accordance with internationally accepted principles, Australia would not oppose such an agreement.

Publicly this was received as a change of policy, though the government denied that it was so. The fact is that it was Spender’s position in 1950 that West New Guinea was vital to the security of Australia and that Australia should be consulted on any change in its status, while Casey put on the record in 1959 Australia’s willingness to recognize an agreement reached by peaceful processes between the parties. But whatever shift this represented, Australia in 1959 still recognized Dutch sovereignty, supported the principle of self-determination for the Papuans, and refused to encourage those negotiations which could only have one result. It took the worsening crisis of the next two years, and the emergence of a real prospect of the use of force by Indonesia to secure its claims, to push Australia, like America, to overcome resistance and reluctance at home and change policy still further to promote negotiations between the disputants. Meanwhile the prospect of an independent West New Guinea was kept alive, and with it the belief in the possibility of a Melanesian Federation.

**Indonesian policies: compounding the problem**

To speak of Papuan political opinion in Netherlands New Guinea is to speak of the opinion of a tiny proportion of the community which in West New Guinea at the relevant time numbered 700,000 - 800,000. Given the limited time for their execution, Dutch development programmes were to take only the few fast to the front of modernity. The elite was thus little more than a handful, mostly urban dwellers in the few enclaves which dotted the coast. They either left for Holland, returned to the village, or threw in their lot with Indonesia following the signing in August 1962 of the New York Agreement, which transferred West New Guinea to a temporary UN administration and there-
between two nations

Indonesia began enthusiastically enough in West New Guinea, lauding the return of the territory to its rightful place in the Republic. The enthusiasm carried through the 1 May 1963 takeover from the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) but lasted little longer than a year. It was followed by the curtailment of political liberties in the territory, its closure to the outside world, and the increasing involvement of what had now become West Irian in the rhetoric of the Malaysian Confrontation campaign.

In spite of Indonesian reports of great progress in the education and welfare of the territory, Justus M. van der Kroef, writing the history of the development of resistance in Irian, concluded that the situation had already deteriorated to such an extent by late 1964 that minor clashes between Papuans and Indonesian civil and military personnel were becoming almost daily occurrences, and that by early 1965 there were reports of major disturbances (van der Kroef 1968). A catalyst was Indonesia’s exodus from the United Nations at the turn of the year, and President Sukarno’s subsequent announcement that a plebiscite in West Irian would not now take place after all. Allegations of Indonesian atrocities and accounts of Irianese uprisings now characterized both the reports coming out of West New Guinea and the complaints of the Free Papua Movement abroad.

Some admission of maladministration in West New Guinea came with the coup which toppled Sukarno in September 1965, Adam Malik’s subsequent visit to the territory, and FUNDWI’s report on the development prospects and needs of the Territory thereafter.
(FUNDWI 1968). The new regime announced that Irian would have its Act of Free Choice after all. But FUNDWI's recommendations could not be implemented immediately, nor Adam Malik’s pragmatic reformism have its effect in a situation in which Indonesia was now caught up with the first necessity of implementing an effective Act of Free Choice.

Sarwo Edie, Indonesia’s administrator in West Irian, himself subsequently conceded that the security situation deteriorated in 1965, but stated that it was largely for economic reasons. He also conceded that there were troubles in a number of parts of the province, in Merauke, Kokonau and Fak Fak as well as Manokwari, one result of which was increasing movement across the international border into Papua New Guinea. He added that operations against troublemakers had been ‘hindered somewhat by the existence of the border’. The troubles in Irian accelerated prior to the Act of Free Choice, causing Indonesia to bring in four extra battalions, raising the estimated total of troops in the territory to 9,000 (South Pacific Post 24 July 1968). By this time, however, the Australian government was less alarmed by this state of affairs than it might have been; this was because of the metamorphosis in its own policy towards West New Guinea from one of border build-up against Indonesia in 1962 to one of border cooperation with her by the time the Act of Free Choice eventually took place in 1969.

Australia’s reaction to Indonesia’s accession to the administration of the Territory of West New Guinea: border development and demarcation

With the Casey-Subandrio joint statement of 1959 Australia stepped out of the front line of the West New Guinea dispute and away from any claim to be a party-principal. Thereafter Australia’s concerns concentrated increasingly on the threat of the use of force. Against the backdrop of regional instability with Indonesia’s confrontation of Malaysia, there was a very real fear for Australia’s own security and that of her New Guinea territory as the West New Guinea dispute deteriorated in circumstances of continuing Dutch arms buildup, Indonesian arms acquisition, and the beginning of infiltration into the territory of West New Guinea. One result was that the defences of Australia were built up rapidly from 1962, as were those of Papua New Guinea in spite of the chiefs of staff’s reassessment of its strategic sig-
nificance for Australia in December 1961.

At some stage in this period the Australian government appeared to realize that the outside help which it had believed would be forthcoming in the event of Indonesian hostilities in West New Guinea would not in fact materialize. In a statement in explanation of the New York Agreement in the House of Representatives, Australia’s minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, had emphasized that Australia could not have acted alone in the West New Guinea dispute and that no other country was prepared to make a military commitment to maintain the sovereignty of the Netherlands:

If any should have contemplated a military adventure, none of the countries of the west, and particularly of those with whom Australia has the closest association, were at any relevant time willing to maintain Netherlands administration by military means (Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers III 1962-63:781-785).

In explanation of Australia’s vote on the New York Agreement in the General Assembly that September, he added that the agreement was ‘a part of history with which we must live’, and that it created for the first time:

A common land frontier... with a people of Asia. But although new arrangements may need to be made, it would be wrong... to begin this closer association with Indonesia in any sense of foreboding or recrimination (Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers VII 1962-63:759-764).

The reality, however, was to be different. The United States had by this time requested an Australian contribution to the defence first of South Vietnam and then of Thailand. The New York Agreement was also ‘a major actor in the decision of Australia, announced towards the end of 1962, to embark upon a $1.5 billion defence expansion programme’ (Stebbins 1958-62:209) which included the formation of a second battalion of Papua New Guinea’s Pacific Island Regiment. In May 1963, when he announced Australia’s further defence increases, Sir Robert Menzies pledged Australia’s determination to defend Papua and New Guinea ‘as if they were part of our mainland’: Australia would not be stampeded out of Papua New Guinea (Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Debates (CPD) H. of R. 38:1668-1672, 22 May 1963). His guarantee received wide publicity (see Neale
1963:145), as did the addition to it of American support. In June that year, Averell Harriman said that the USA would regard an attack on Papua New Guinea as an attack on Australia itself. Menzies repeated Australia’s guarantees on the occasion of his visit to Papua New Guinea in September 1963 (South Pacific Post 10 September 1963), following a year in which a number of notables, including the minister for Territories, the minister for the Army and the secretary of the Department of External Affairs did likewise.

Moreover, some military experts did not accept the strategic downgrading of Papua New Guinea and urged the improvement of its defences. They saw Papua New Guinea as more liable than Australia to minor infiltration and to major assault (paper presented to a seminar held by the Council on New Guinea Affairs, Sydney, December 1964, by Dr T.B. Millar). The government responded accordingly. From 1962, as part of the flurry of activity which took place in defence and development in Papua New Guinea:

The Papua New Guinea Training Depot was opened at Goldie River, near Port Moresby, in 1964 to train recruits for the PIR and to give advanced specialised training which is not provided by the PIR itself. In September 1963, the Australian Government announced a general expansion of Army strength in the territory, involving the construction of new barracks, the raising of additional administrative and service staff units, and the addition of another battalion to the PIR. The Second Battalion was raised at Wewak from two of the companies of the First Battalion on 3 March 1965. The Second Battalion took over the Vanimo outstation and the First Battalion now has an outstation at Lae. A multiracial cadet battalion has also been raised (O'Neill 1971:3).

In addition, there was a reactivation of the Manus naval base and the beginning of a Papua New Guinea navy, the improvement of air facilities at Boram near Wewak (to take F1-11s), and at Daru, Mount Hagen and Nadzab. A host of border airstrips was established or upgraded and there was widespread acquisition of land in ‘strategic areas’ for future purposes. Although options on much of this land were not in fact taken up, although, too, some of the plans and projects for the increase of Papua New Guinea’s defence did not materialize, and although there are no separate estimates for Papua New Guinea
defence expenditure, nevertheless, according to one commentator, by the end of September 1965 Australian defence spending in the border areas of Papua New Guinea amounted to 40 million pounds and there was more to come.

What happened on the border itself as a result? For Papua New Guinea the changed status of West New Guinea meant that the policy of administrative cooperation between east and west New Guinea, which to all intents and political purposes had ended by 1960, was now ended in a practical sense as well. 'Unless it could be established', said Hasluck, 'that ENG and WNG were moving towards a single objective, there was no case for administrative cooperation as we had known it up to date but only a case for trying to maintain friendly relations as best we can with the people next door' (Hasluck 1976:371). There was therefore a border freeze designed to prevent movement across it, quarantine concerns reappearing as the primary reason, and development of the remotest regions of Papua New Guinea adjacent to the international border was upgraded in importance. Development, in this way, became the other side of the defence coin, which also meant an effort to delimit the border itself. One important result was that the alarm these developments reflected on Australia’s part created a corresponding alarm among Papua New Guinea’s upcoming elite who thereby emerged into a world in which the enemy, very clearly, was Indonesia.

**Border demarcation and development**

In his description of the origins of Papua New Guinea’s boundaries Paul van der Veur describes the remarkable lack of activity or urgency to demarcate the western boundary on the ground. He notes that apart from the occasional exceptional incident, such as that of the Tugeri incursions into British New Guinea in the 1890s, followed Sir William McGregor’s vigorous objections which contributed to the 1895 convention redefining the southern sector of the boundary, little was done even up to 1960 (van der Veur 1966). But there was some concern about Papua New Guinea’s border with West New Guinea from the time when the status of the latter was called into question in 1949. This contributed to the first of a series of spurts of interest in the border region on the part of the Australian government and the TPNG administration over the next two decades. Efforts to control the border areas and then to develop them and secure their political allegiance
reflected developments in the western half of the island. In 1950 the urgency was only moderate and was conditional upon resources being available. Later, as Sir Paul Hasluck has recorded in his account of his years as minister for Territories:

When change of administration in WNG had seemed certain, I had directed that a chain of new patrol posts be established in the border region, so that... we could be in touch with all the people on the Australian side of the border region and, either by direct observation or by reports from the village people, be sure of knowing what was happening at any time and have landing strips and administrative centres from which we could work in any emergency, such as a cholera epidemic *sic*, unusual movements of population or the unwelcome activities of strangers (Hasluck 1976:370).

Border development therefore began in earnest in the Western and Sepik districts adjacent to the international border as a result of the settlement of the dispute in Indonesia's favour. An unprecedented supplement to the *Western District Annual Report* in August 1962, for example, reported that progress had been made on the establishment of new patrol posts at Nomad and Maka, and that work had begun on a post in the Star Mountains. In addition, a programme of extensive patrolling was initiated in the Western District to bring all its inhabitants into close contact with the Australian administration, and efforts were made to improve its economic prospects. However by 1964-65, in part because of the World Bank Report (which advised concentration of effort where the potential was best) and the Five Year Development Plan which followed it, it was realized what little economic reward there was from efforts to bring development to the Western District.

Except as a source of labour, the potential of the Sepik District was to prove to be little better. The area was more sensitive, however, because of the proximity of the West New Guinea capital and its greater political awareness on account of its exposure to the outside world. The Japanese had occupied parts of the Sepik from the end of 1942 to May 1945, whereas the Western District had escaped the impact of war. Before that, there had been German rule, as afterwards there was Australian, and then greater contact with the Dutch and with West Papuans in circumstances in which it was mostly from the Sepik that exchanges of schoolchildren and of sports teams had been made under
the administrative cooperation programme. Perhaps as a result, even before the New York Agreement was signed there was increased patrolling of the border areas, an extension of educational opportunities, and the encouragement of the development of local government councils. And it was to be in the Sepik, at Vanimo, that the second battalion of the PIR would be based.

For the Sepik, therefore, the result of the border development programme in 1963 was, according to the district commissioner, that an ‘astounding’ amount had been achieved:

All stations on the border have been manned during the year and a big development programme is underway. Permanent housing is now going in, schools, hospitals and aid posts .... agricultural extension has increased ... Timber cutting equipment is installed at Pagei, Imonda and Amanab. During the year Vanimo and Pagei LGCs have gone ahead. By the end of the year it is hoped to have low level councils established at Green River, Imonda and Amanab. All in all, the Border Development Plan is going ahead according to schedule.

Further:

As to the future, we should have something for our neighbours to think about. However ... the development of border stations is causing dissent in other parts of the District ... the border people are looked upon as ‘new natives’ who have not worked for or with the Administration as have those with years of contact ... the border has been given everything (North Sepik District Annual Report 1963-64:36-37).

‘Traditional’ movement, border trouble spots and border demarcation efforts

On account of its larger population and their relative sophistication, its less deterring topography, and the proximity of a greater proportion of the district to the largest West New Guinea metropolis, the Sepik was to be the source of greater rebel and refugee movement, and consequent Australian attention, through the 1960s. The most significant border movement took place over the years on the Hollandia/Kotabaru/Sukarnapura/Jayapura-Vanimo north coast axis, although there was another notable trouble spot in the Sepik District around
Skotiau, Waris and Jafi. In the Western District the major border movement came from the hinterland of Merauke to that of Daru in the Bensbach Census Division around Weam and Morehead near the south coast, although there was an additional particular problem at the bulge of the Fly around Ningerum, Opka and Ingembit. Both this and the second Sepik trouble spot were areas of relatively heavy population concentration and, more importantly, were areas where the Dutch, in less tense times and for agreed expedient reasons, had exercised administrative control on and across the international border.

At first the problem was largely one of accelerated traditional movement across an unmarked border. Movement of the traditional kind, to which Australia had in the past taken a necessarily lenient view, increased in the different and disturbed circumstances on both sides of the border as Indonesia's administration in the west created new problems on the border itself. Officially, as we have seen, the greatest fear was for quarantine; in fact, just as great was the fear of incidents with Indonesians, whose patrols pursued peoples from the much more populous side of the international border into Australian territory. By the time of Indonesia's formal assumption of administrative authority in West New Guinea, therefore, the situation was such that Australian patrols into the Trans-Fly Census Division inland of the border, for example, were without the services of interpreters and agricultural fieldworkers 'on account of the situation on the border' a situation in which all those reinforcements of personnel which could be spared from less pressing posts had been sent in.

I have described details of the border incidents which took place in the Sepik District and the Western District from 1962 elsewhere (Verrier 1976); these highlighted the need for border demarcation. Concerned about the loss of labour, the Dutch administration had initiated an agreement at Ingembit in 1954 which discouraged labour recruitment across the border but, more importantly, established which villages in the border region fell under what administration. Some twelve villages were listed as falling under Australian control and another seven straddling the border as remaining Dutch. One result was that in the course of a patrol to carry out astro fixes in five border villages at the end of 1962, Opka, administered by the Dutch,

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was found to be a quarter of a mile inside Australian territory and Ingembit, where the Dutch flag was flying, to be on the border.

The Ingembit agreement and subsequent meetings smoothed a few ruffled feathers in Hollandia but failed to remedy the essential problem, that of an ill-defined border where there was still very little control. In 1956 there were meetings in Hollandia and in Merauke on respective border differences. However, little progress was made and the problem was shelved pending the establishment of a border demarcation commission. Hasluck records that a Technical Border Commission was established consequently in November 1958, convening after inordinate delay at Delft in November 1961 when it recommended the creation of a Dutch-Australian Border Commission (Hasluck 1976:369).

In July 1962, after a number of border incidents, Hasluck obtained cabinet approval and funds to start aerial mapping of the international border in New Guinea and to establish a priority for this work. However, progress was unsatisfactory and there remained doubt as to where the border was at the time of the Indonesian takeover (ibid.). Some of the difficulties were revealed in a patrol report of November 1962, where it was reported that weather conditions had limited their operations from five border villages to two. The prospects of armed Indonesian bands wandering across the border simply because there was no means of ascertaining its position, and of resulting incidents, were raised (The Age (editorial) 1 October 1962). In a question directed to the minister for Territories on 4 October 1962, one member of the House of Representatives asked whether the boundary between West New Guinea, East New Guinea and Papua had been surveyed and accurately defined and, if not, when the government intended to undertake this task. In reply, the minister outlined the history of demarcation. He recalled that there were two international agreements, the first made in 1895 between the Netherlands and Great Britain and the second in 1936 between Australia and the Netherlands. In 1958 agreement had been reached between the

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5 Van der Veur (1965-66:92) reports that the meeting in Hollandia produced a 'gentleman's agreement' to maintain the status quo 'temporarily' and for 'practical purposes' (the quotation marks are his).

Netherlands and Australia on the division of responsibility for photographing and mapping the border; consequently most of the border had been photographed and the remainder would be completed when weather permitted (CNIA 33(10) October 1962:86). In addition, Hasluck explained that the Australian government had approached the Indonesian government about border demarcation in December 1962, but Indonesia preferred to leave its consideration until its assumption of administration the following May.\(^7\) Van der Veur has described the result:

> By early 1962, Dutch authority was still exercised in some 23 villages in the Waris enclave and some 17 villages in the Jaffi enclave.

Moreover:

> The flags of the Netherlands and West Papua were the recognised symbols of authority; Malay was the *lingua franca*; and six subsidised and seven un-subsidised schools were maintained by the Catholic mission (van der Veur 1965-66:90).

It was this situation which led to the western orientation of some border villages, their resentment of Australian intrusion (which included prevention of their flourishing trade with the urban areas of West New Guinea, and their subsequent sympathy and support for Irianese refugees.

Out of this border confusion, and the conflicting loyalties and resentments to which it gave rise, another problem of a more serious nature arose. Its character was indicated in reports on the circumstances of the establishment of Pagei patrol post. This post was established for border surveillance on account of activities at Skotiau, a village within the borders of Papua New Guinea but which had been administered by authorities in the west and at the end of 1962 was reported to be completely West New Guinean in attitude.\(^8\) A West New Guinea 'camp' was found here, which was dismantled following

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7 The subject was raised in a television interview with Indonesia's ambassador, Mr Suadi, which was reported in the *Canberra Times* 7 May 1963; see also Indonesia's response in the *Canberra Times* 8 May 1963.

the establishment of an administrative presence in Skotiau.\textsuperscript{9}

By December 1963 there were reports of armed Indonesian patrols pacing the border and sometimes being found many miles inside Papua New Guinea. Agreement had been reached in Jakarta in September to ‘the placement by Australia of temporary markers on Australian territory on tracks and pathways crossing the border indicating the approximate position of the border and this was to be done in advance of the completion of the survey and permanent marking of the border’.\textsuperscript{10}

However, in November an Indonesian patrol had torn out survey markers and driven back an Australian survey team at gunpoint. Barnes, as minister for Territories, stated that border marking activities had been suspended, as a result of this incident, while the situation was being clarified ‘at the diplomatic level’ in Jakarta (\textit{The Age} 21 December 1963; \textit{South Pacific Post} 24 December 1963). In January 1964, Dr Subandrio agreed that the work of marking the border should continue (\textit{New York Times} 1 January 1964) and Australia’s ambassador to Indonesia explained that the marker incident had been a mistake.\textsuperscript{11}

The incident was nevertheless serious enough to galvanize Australian and Indonesian authorities to action. Discussions followed between the Australian and Indonesian governments and, in August 1964, the Australian Department of External Affairs released a statement issued by the Indonesian foreign minister and the Australian embassy in Jakarta at the conclusion of border talks. It agreed that a joint Australia-Indonesian reconnaissance team should visit the border as soon as practical to prepare the way for the subsequent concurrent astronomical surveys by both countries; correlation of the results of these surveys would clear the way for the permanent marking of the

\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Ibid.} No. 2 63/64, R.L. O’Connell to Pagei CD, from 4 June to 1 August 1963.

\textsuperscript{10} Senator Gorton, the minister representing the minister for External Affairs in the Senate, answering a question on the subsequent border marker incident on 19 March 1964 (\textit{CNIA} 35(3) March 1964:48).

\textsuperscript{11} Mr Shann stated on his return to Canberra to discuss this matter that Dr Subandrio and Sir Garfield Barwick had agreed to the placing of markers and that authorities in West New Guinea had simply not been informed that this was the case. His comments were reported in \textit{The Age} 7 March 1964, as they had been in the \textit{Indonesian Observer} 25 February 1964, which also agreed with his interpretation of the situation.
border (CNIA 35(8) August 1964:28). Shortly thereafter, Australia’s minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, answering a question in parliament about demarcation progress, said that it had been good and that the work, planned to proceed over a period of two or three years, would be set in train in due course (CNIA 35(9) September 1964:38). He also assured his questioner that there was no dispute with regard to the border and that the only matter requiring attention was its marking on the ground. Mr Hasluck could add little more in answer to a similar question a year later (CNIA 36(9) September 1965:598). There had been no progress in a situation in which Australian-Indonesian relations had reached their lowest ebb and in which, at the same time and for the same reason, the need for border demarcation in New Guinea was greatest.

A report from Port Moresby carried in the Canberra Times on 20 April 1965 stated that refugees were now crossing into Papua New Guinea weekly and that their flight had occasioned shootings. It continued that although Australian officials had only admitted two incidents - the first of the border marker and the second of the crossing in 1964 at Vanimo of John Djakedawa and his family (who were subsequently granted permissive residence) - at least twenty-seven refugees had crossed. The report concluded that neither Pacific Island Regiment fortnightly patrols along the length of the border, nor Hasluck’s assurance that Indonesian behaviour so far had been ‘quite correct’12, nor even Subandrio’s statement that there was no border problem and that there would be demarcation as soon as the wet season was over13, resolved the problem. Effective border cooperation had to await the eventual overall improvement of Australian-Indonesian relations which followed the coup which toppled Sukarno.

The new regime dispatched Colonel Pranoto Asmoro, Indonesia’s director of topography, to Canberra with an entourage of four to discuss details of the plans for border demarcation (Canberra Times 21 May 1966). The first stage of the project, involving the place-

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12 This comment was volunteered in answer to a question in the House of Representatives on 28 September 1965. It asked whether Indonesia had the same right to use the Fly River as the Netherlands had had as a result of an agreement with Britain in 1895 (CPD H. of R. 48:1298, 28 September 1965.)

13 Subandrio had made this statement after talks with Shann in December 1965, and went on to state that there was no border problem between Indonesia and Australia (Indonesian Herald 2 December 1965).
ment of six meridian markers in the northern sector of the international border, was successfully completed shortly thereafter in 1966. The remaining eight markers for the southern sector of the border were planned in talks which took place the following year. The second stage was announced completed on 29 September 1967 (CNIA 38(9) September 1967:393-394). It was hailed as a diplomatic success and also as, ‘probably’, the first joint project successfully undertaken by Australians and Indonesians in cooperation (Pacific Islands Monthly December 1968:64). The degree of cooperation that had been achieved was again underlined on the occasion of the signature of the survey of meridians report prepared and submitted by the Indonesian director of topography and the Australian director of national mapping in February 1970 (CNIA 41(2) February 1970:68-69).

1965-1969: A ‘political’ border problem and a change of Australian policy

The border problem in the island of New Guinea began as an irritant between mostly friendly adjacent administrative powers. The problem lay in the border’s remoteness, its arbitrariness and the fact that it was not clearly demarcated. ‘Traditional’ movement across it was common and resented by the Dutch only when it was seen as a potential loss of scarce labour after it was decided to develop the territory in earnest. With the departure of the Dutch from West New Guinea in 1962 and the effective accession of Indonesia, the problem was at first essentially the same, although the response to it differed. Australia closed the border and engaged in a defence and development programme designed to resist incursion from the west and to orient the border peoples clearly eastwards.

A third stage developed around 1965 when the border problem became far more ‘political’ than to date it had been. There were at least two reasons. First, there was an acceleration of political movement across the border; movement neither of a traditional kind nor of an economically motivated kind, but rather a flight of rebels and refugees resisting Indonesian rule, some to camps operating from the Papua New Guinea side of the border. One consequence was an increase in border incidents, some of which involved Australian administrative personnel. Secondly, the border problem became political on account of the policies Australia adopted in response. Australia was thoroughly alarmed by these border developments, though the government denied the problem or downplayed it in order to avoid embar-
Exiled OPM leaders Seth Rumkorem (left) and Jacob Prai signing the 'Port Vila Declaration' of 11 July 1985.

Former OPM district commander, Yance Hembring, standing in front of the West Papua flag. Photo—Hank di Suvero
An OPM camp in the border area. Photo—Times of Papua New Guinea
rassing Indonesia and eventually went on to cooperate with Indonesia in a border management programme. As border movement increased in the months immediately before and after the Act of Free Choice, Australia took a tougher line on border crossing even of the traditional kind which had been tolerated in the past. Contrary to official public statements, the majority of Irianese who crossed the border in 1968 and 1969 undoubtedly did so for political reasons, just as most of them were undoubtedly sent back also for political reasons.

In 1965, at the same time as disturbances were occurring in West New Guinea, the Papua New Guinea press carried reports of the flight of refugees across the border in both the Sepik and Western districts, along with denials that a clash of PIR and Indonesian troops had been involved (South Pacific Post 25 June 1965). In 1964 Skotiau became the subject of special attention by the administration (as it had been earlier and was again later), when a patrol set out to investigate the appearance in the village of several villagers dressed in Indonesian uniforms. In the light of such incidents Minister Barnes made a statement of policy in the House of Representatives in September 1965:

Instructions to all officers of border stations through the District Commissioners for the Sepik and Western Districts are substantially as follows:—Every person crossing the border into the Territory of Papua-New Guinea (other than cases of people living astride the border who may continue their normal local movement) is to be interviewed and if he can give no reasonable grounds on which he could claim special consideration for the granting of permissive residence in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, he is to be fed, well looked after and returned across the border as expeditiously as practicable. Any with an apparent case for consideration as political refugees are to be closely questioned and reported on, and held for the time being at a nearby border station pending decision. (Senator Gorton, the Minister representing the Minister for Territories in the Senate, in reply to a question upon notice from Senator McManus, CPD S. 29:654, 28 September 1965).

In 1966, on the occasion of a visit to Papua New Guinea, Barnes added that ‘factors of common humanity’ would influence Australia’s decision on refugees (South Pacific Post 17 January 1966), but he stated that their numbers were so far few: 128 had crossed in 1964/65 and con-
siderably fewer since then. Of these 90-95 per cent were of native
groups straddling the international border; there had been only eleven
applications for political asylum, of which one had up till then been
granted (South Pacific Post 19 January 1966).

By this time, however, patrol reports were recording ‘bursts of
migration’, sometimes of whole villages, across the border and, more
seriously, the establishment of resistance camps on the Papua New
Guinea side of the border. Patrol reports reveal that in the first case
newcomers were sent back across the border.14 The solution was not as
easy in the second. Large-scale and frequent patrolling had resumed in
1968 with the specific objective of border assessment, including, by this
time, ascertainment of the location of refugee camps and of the pre­
sence of unauthorized Irianese.

The problem this represented is illustrated by the case of the bush
camp centre at Skotiau. For long uncooperative with the administra­
tion on such matters as the establishment of a local government council
in the area, its headman, Yundun, was also suspected of harbouring
OPM sympathizers and supporting raiding parties into West Irian.
Originally more pro-Indonesian, Yundun eventually came to welcome
Irianese in his village and to speak frankly of Indonesian atrocities in
the west. A patrol contacted a group of twenty in bush camps at Simi
near Skotiau at the end of 1968, all of whom claimed that they were
wanted men whose safety would be endangered by their return.
Nevertheless, the patrol claims to have succeeded in convincing them
that the administration would not tolerate their establishment of
centres of opposition to Indonesia on the Australian side of the border.
A patrol officer therefore reported: ‘We destroyed the campsite ... to
prevent the people returning to it as soon as we left them .... and then
accompanied them for about half an hour on the Skofro track’.15 Any

14 Instructions as given to M. Eggleton and M.A. Richards, 16 July 1969, Western District
Patrol Report Ningerum No. 1, 69/70 to North Ok Tedi CD and part of South Ok Tedi
CD, from 18 July to 28 July 1969.

15 Sepik District Patrol Report Pagei No. 7, 68/69, R.R. Fairhall, Special Purpose Border
Security to Sekotchiau-Niau-Wutung Border Area from 3 December to 19 December
1968 accompanied by fifteen members of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary
(RPNGC). Instruction for the patrol from ADC T.R. Bergin to Fairhall, 25 November
1968, was to return any refugees found camped on the eastern side of the border or villa­
gers living there. This was to be done without force; ‘nor is there to be any destroying
of houses and barracks (sic) or camps in which refugees may be found'.
doubt about the camp's nature was dispelled when the district commis-
sioner proposed a further patrol to the area in the first week of
December and noted that 'reports indicate that it will be about this
time that an attack will be made on Sukarnapura, and if the attack fails,
as it must, we could have considerable numbers of West Irianese trying
to cross back into this territory …'. 16

By this time the public attention that the border situation
attracted had changed official statements from low-key announce-
ments of the type still common in August (for example, that a handful
of Irianese had crossed the border at Wutung and Pagei and were
returned, South Pacific Post 21 August 1968) to the full statement of
both the legal and practical situation that was made by the secretary for
law in Papua New Guinea's House of Assembly in September (HAD
II(2):359-360, 4 September 1968) and again in November (HAD
II(3):589-590, 20 November 1968). Answering questions, Mr Watkins
stated that 217 refugees had crossed to date, 27 had returned voluntar-
ily and one had been returned (HAD II(2):478-479, 11 September
1968). Shortly thereafter the administrator, David Hay, elaborated
further in the light of the 'small but steady trickle of illegal squatters in
the past few months with the numbers building up in recent weeks'
border crossers unable to give adequate reasons to support an applica-
tion for permissive residence were told to return and were warned of
the consequences of illegal entry. However, he added that the
administration was aware that cases may occur where internationally
recognized principles of humanity required a grant of permissive resi-
dence. The conditions of permissive residence included acceptance of
settlement away from the border areas and abstention from political
activity.

Hay's statement was followed by a number of reports from the
border on refugee camps and conditions. There was, according to Jack
McCarthy of the South Pacific Post, a string of camps along the Papua
New Guinea side of the border at such places as Wutung, Waris,
Skotiau and Korfor, some of them two years old. Their inmates were
all qualified people - academics, missionaries, politicians, policemen

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16 My emphasis. Wakefield to the director of the Department of Native Affairs (DNA)
25 November 1968 recommending a follow-up patrol to that of Sepik District Patrol
Report, Pagei No. 6, 68/69, ADC Bergin to the Sekotchial-Niau Border area from 29
September to 6 October 1968.
or mechanics - none of whom was allowed to use his skill in Papua New Guinea. They asked the minister for Territories for land to grow food and were told that they must integrate or return; Australia could not allow minorities to develop (South Pacific Post 6 November 1968).

That the camps attracted Indonesia’s attention was made clear by the incidents at Wutung and Kwari. Of the first, Barnes stated in parliament that on 26 April 1969 a small group of armed uniformed Indonesians had entered Papua New Guinea at Wutung in search of Irianese who had crossed the border from their bush camp, and in the process shots were fired at the Australian officer-in-charge, Tony Try, two native constables and an interpreter, none of whom was armed. After a prolonged discussion with Try, during which a man held by the Indonesians was released, the intruders left. The situation had since returned to normal. A second incident took place three weeks later at Kwari in the Western District when fifteen Indonesian soldiers raided a camp nineteen kilometers inside Papua New Guinea on 18 May. A patrol set out to investigate and on 29 May district officer Arthur Marks was shot by a group of Indonesians when being paddled along the Baro River by six Irianese who dived into the water. Only three of these subsequently turned up at Kwari and two bodies were found. The official statement announcing these events went on to add that in the sixteen very difficult square miles of country south of Kwari patrols had found 254 Irianese (29 men, 48 women and 177 children) who lived in six camps scattered throughout the area (TPNG Press Release No. 532A, 5 June 1969).

One result was that Adam Malik subsequently protested that offensive action was being directed against Indonesia from Papua New Guinea and indeed Australia’s own account acknowledges that this

17 In a report from Jakarta, the Sydney Morning Herald 28 May 1969 recorded Malik’s statement to the press that Indonesia would be grateful if Australia would prevent the existence in Papua New Guinea of ‘refugee camps that might be used as training camps’ as ‘a necessary part of a good neighbour policy’. Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro, Indonesia’s deputy foreign minister in charge of Pepera, had made the accusation in May. (Although Hastings concluded in the Australian 9 May 1969 that Sudjarwo had a ‘mild obsession’ about the master-minding of operations from Papua New Guinea, he also concluded there was no doubt that OPM activities were conducted from there, although their main function was to send on mail, brochures and propaganda to and from the OPM in West New Guinea, Holland and New York. It is interesting to note that Indonesia subsequently saw the liaison arrangements as cooperation to prevent the establishment of ‘training camps’ for Irianese rebels in Papua New Guinea according to ANTARA, reported in Canberra Times 2 June 1969.)
was so (Goode 1970:27). The action, however, was not at this stage from camps set up by the Australian administration to contain refugees as was perhaps implied, for the systematic organization of these was to come only as a consequence of the border incidents just described; and the same was true of border liaison arrangements. The numbers which crossed the international border in New Guinea in the months immediately preceding the Act of Free Choice, and the incidents which arose as a result, led Australia to seek to abolish border squatter camps, replace them with refugee holding camps for those with both reason and desire to stay, and to formalize border liaison arrangements with Indonesia. Before the month in which the Wutung and Kwari incidents occurred was out, border liaison arrangements had therefore been made between the governments of Australia and Indonesia. Even before these were announced in Papua New Guinea’s House of Assembly on 17 June 1969, a third border episode was added to provide reason for them. Two former members of the West New Guinea Legislative Council, Wilhelm Zonggonau and Clemens Runaweri, entered Papua New Guinea as chairman and vice chairman of the West Irianese nationalist body seeking to establish the Australian attitude to the Act of Free Choice and hoping to take their case to the UN General Assembly in New York. They were offered permis­sive residence, the first such for several months.

Although only in a limited way, Australia had at last responded to the overtures made by Indonesia for cooperation in New Guinea. Indonesia had expressed an interest in Australian assistance for the development of West New Guinea before the closure of the territory to the outside world, and before the development of those foreign policies which precluded it. It was to do so again when relations between Australia and Indonesia began to improve in 1968. In spite of appreciation of the destabilizing effect of an ever-widening gap between east and west New Guinea - Papua New Guinea’s annual grant at this stage was more than $100 million while West New Guinea’s was only $10 million - border liaison was to be the way Australia’s change of course was to be charted by the new foreign minister, Gordon Freeth.

Freeth’s approach was indicated by his response to the Wutung incident, which occurred while he was in Jakarta. On his return to Canberra Freeth stated that no formal protest was made about it and none would be made (in contrast, Barnes simultaneously spoke of the ‘strong representations’ made on the matter). ‘There was a friendly
discussion of the incident’, Freeth said ((Department of External Affairs Press Release No. 51, 30 April 1969), and there had already been talks on the border problem in which it was agreed that it was a matter for local administrations to handle (Department of External Affairs Press Release No. 49, 28 April 1969). The Sydney Morning Herald (28 April 1969) commented that the minister for External Affairs’s statement at his press conference in Jakarta in April was the most direct support of Indonesia’s position to date. But Freeth had made his attitude quite clear from the outset, both towards Indonesia and towards the forthcoming Act of Free Choice.

In his first speech in his new position, Freeth recognized the right of Indonesia to carry out the act of self-determination for West New Guinea by the process of *musjawarah* rather than by one man one vote\(^{18}\), a decision which had been the subject of considerable critical debate. He explained that it was essential to live in harmony with Indonesia and that whatever happened in West New Guinea was bound to affect Papua New Guinea. Ian Hicks, writing in the Sydney Morning Herald on 19 February 1969, interpreted the government’s attitude to be that while one-man-one-vote was desirable it was not worth jeopardizing the good relations between Australia and Indonesia built up since Sukarno’s fall, and there was little to be gained from having an independent but economically unsound West New Guinea subject to bitter enmity from Indonesia. Freeth went on, in parliament and outside it, to resist the suggestion that there was any undue coercion in pursuit of the Act, to point out that Indonesia was doing the best job it could in the circumstances, and that it was not, anyway, Australia’s business to judge.

Perhaps in response to criticism of his cavalier position, in the middle of May Freeth addressed the National Press Club in Canberra on the subject of regional stability. He explained that the object of regional stability, and therefore that of Australian diplomacy, was to prevent, where this could be done, incidents or potential sources of conflict becoming worked up to crisis proportions. It was this that guided Australian policy towards Indonesia, particularly through its confron-

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\(^{18}\) He was speaking to the first national convention of Young Liberals and was reported in *The Age* 19 February 1969. The report concluded that many observers interpreted his comments as an apology for the Indonesian position which flouts the one man one vote principle which ‘Australia has defended vigorously elsewhere - and particularly in Rhodesia in recent years’. 
tation of Malaysia, and this continued to be Australia’s approach, just as it was now Indonesia’s:

Recent border intrusions in New Guinea fit this pattern, not as being in any sense comparable to the issues we faced during confrontation, but in the sense of carrying the seed of dissension. If we are too heavy handed, these seeds could quite easily grow to critical size (Department of External Affairs Press Release No. 60, 17 May 1969).

In an adjournment debate at the end of May Freeth sought to bring certain members ‘back to a sense of reality’ on the West New Guinea question (CPD H.of R. 63:2554-5, 30 May 1969) and in the process himself flew furthest in the face of the facts. He stated unequivocally his belief that Indonesia was genuinely trying to carry out its obligations under the New York Agreement and that criticism was unwarranted until the results of those efforts could be seen. He stated that there was no evidence of the repression in West New Guinea to which some members drew attention and asked, ‘Is Indonesia being charged with the administration of that area under this agreement not to maintain law and order?’ He added that there was ‘not a shred of evidence’ to support the suggestion that Indonesia would hinder the development of West New Guinea, since it had already spent considerable sums there. Just what did the members expect the government to do in any case? ‘I suggest that in the interests of maintaining good relations with a large neighbour, we should at least give the Indonesians the benefit of the doubt and await events as they turn out’. Freeth’s position was unpalatable to a large cross-section of Australia’s public, politicians on both sides of the House, churches, and the local Commission of Jurists, and brought a hornet’s nest about his ears. Common to much of the criticism - and its importance here - was recognition of the overriding need to cultivate good relations with the new Indonesia, but not at any price. For who knows what expectations were thereby laid down in Indonesia of Australia’s reaction to the border incidents that were to continue in New Guinea over the years, or to comparable uncomfortable problems elsewhere?

In full and indignant flight as the Australian press was prior to

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19 Standish (1969) concluded that only the ‘Indonesian lobby’ and a few prestigious academics and influential columnists supported Freeth and the leader of the opposition’s earlier echo on West New Guinea.
Pepera, West Irian's Act of Free Choice, interest quickly fell off even as the Act was underway. Other issues began to dominate the headlines. In Papua New Guinea and in the Post-Courier, these were Bougainville and the Gazelle, copper and confrontation. The extra police contingents which confronted the Mataungan Association in Rabaul were those which had earlier been sent to Wutung and Yako. In Australia, also, these issues took over from Pepera, along with the five power talks on defence and the forthcoming federal election. In the course of the campaign for the latter, at the end of the year the Sydney Morning Herald was to declare that the new government would have no choice but to strengthen Australia's defence, strengthen its regional military involvement and improve relations with its neighbours in circumstances in which, it believed, Australia would stand alone as never before, as Britain and America were leaving Asia, China was emerging as a Southeast Asian power in its own right, and the Russians were coming (into the Indian Ocean) 'athwart our trade routes'. Thus even this most trenchant critic of Freeth was aware of the pressures which operated on his Indonesia and New Guinea policies. These pressures, which were changing the face of Southeast Asia, centred on the decisions of the UK to withdraw its forces from east of Suez, and of the US, under the Nixon Doctrine, to play in future only an offshore role in the region's defence. There was thus every international encouragement for the stabilization of Indonesia in order that she might play her rightful role in the new indigenous balance, and every incentive for Australia to improve its relations with Indonesia in these new circumstances. The results would be reflected on the border in New Guinea.
For at least 20,000 years, for the indigenous Melanesians of New Guinea, 'foreigners' were people of other language groups, even close neighbours. While there was some economic contact between different clans, and the formation of alliances, mainly through inter-marriage, there were also frequent abuses of traditional rights. These included the theft of property and natural resources, encroachments on land, and the infringement of taboos. Villagers dealt with perceived abuses in accordance with customary methods, notably compensation; failing agreement they engaged in retributive 'payback'. These responses can still be seen in the eastern half of the island, Papua New Guinea, where some customary law has been incorporated in a modern legal system and inter-clan warfare remains a regular occurrence, especially in the highlands provinces. However in the western half of New Guinea, now the province of Irian Jaya, officials have exerted much pressure to secure obedience to the laws of the Indonesian state. From about the 7th century the local concept of foreigners was expanded by the arrival, on an increasing scale, of Asian traders, mostly Chinese and Indonesian. The coastal Melanesians were, of course, the first to sight and deal with the newcomers; it was 700 years before the interior of the island was also contacted by outsiders. The Asians sought natural products such as the scented masoi bark, used for traditional medicine, and bird of paradise plumes. While they were often prepared to trade for these, rather than simply plunder them, dealings were usually disadvantageous for the Papuans. But what angered the indigenes most was being taken as slaves, a 'natural resource' for which no payment was offered. Predictably, there was
strong local resistance to the foreigners.

From the 16th century European navigators came to the island; they found the Papuans generally unapproachable. In 1605 Captain William Janz commanded the first Dutch ship to reach the mainland; while fetching water, nine of his crew were killed by tribespeople and reportedly eaten. Eighteen years later the Dutch navigator Jan Carstensz wrote that the blacks of the western extremity of New Guinea were even more 'cunning, bold and evil-natured' than those around Australia's Gulf of Carpentaria (cited in Willey 1979:18). Another European visitor of this time noted that Muslims from the Indonesian archipelago were in the habit of attacking the Papuans with what was then modern weaponry as well as trying to win converts to Islam.

The Dutch eventually gained supremacy over their European competitors in the race to gain permanent footholds on the New Guinea coast. The aim was to establish bases which would assist in the dominance of the spice trade, centred in the nearby Moluccan islands. Due to local opposition, Holland maintained minimal contact with the Papuans, even after the territory was proclaimed a Dutch possession in 1848. However the Dutch, unlike the clan enemies of old, attempted to exert lasting control over the peoples' land (and waters). This was much resented. So too was the Papuans' lack of participation in the slim bureaucracy developed by Holland prior to the second world war. Those civil service positions not occupied by the Dutch were offered to trusted Asians from nearby islands of the Netherlands Indies.

As a result there was initial enthusiasm upon the arrival of Japan's imperial forces which promised, as they had elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region, a liberation from white colonial rule. In fact, the Japanese showed that they were more concerned with consolidating an empire of their own. There were outbreaks of resistance in various parts of West New Guinea, including resurgences of the millenarian, cargo and messianic cults which portrayed rebellion in religious terms. Japanese reprisals were often savage, whole villages sometimes being eliminated (Wilson 1975; Worsley 1957).

The most obviously nationalistic opposition to Japan was the

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1 Holland had earlier 'administered' the New Guinea islands through the sultan of Tidore, an Asian involvement that was later used by Indonesia to support its claim of historical links with the area. But it is clear that the sultanate did not enjoy unfettered control. See letter from First Secretary of Tidore in Whittaker et al. (1975:208).
revolt of the Geelvink islands people, which culminated in 1942 in a proclamation of independence and the raising of a national flag. The standard's design featured the 'Morning Star' which was personified in local mythology.

In 1944 the Allies ousted Japan and handed West New Guinea back to Holland. After the war, when the Dutch realized they would lose their Indies to the Indonesian nationalists led by Sukarno, they decided to 'hold the line' at New Guinea. The transfer of this westernmost territory was excluded from the agreement of 1949 which gave the rest of Indonesia its independence. The Dutch felt that New Guinea could be a suitable base for a re-entry to Indonesia in the event of a collapse of the republican government. They were also interested in the territory's resources potential, especially oil.

Holland was realistic enough to accept that the colonial days were ending. Thus it decided to prepare the territory for independence in the hope that a Papuan leadership fostered by Holland would be generous to Dutch business interests. The proposed deadline for independence was 1970.

Holland launched a programme aimed at rapidly educating a Papuan elite. Administrators, technicians, police and army received training and encouragement from the Dutch (Savage 1978a). The local elite was also urged to think politically. Not all members, however, endorsed the Dutch-sponsored independence plan. Some denounced it as a 'neo-colonial ploy' and felt that Papuans' best hopes lay with Indonesia, which had become a vocal leader of the world anti-colonial movement. This group, in the words of one Papuan writer, 'saw Indonesia as a potential partner to get the Dutch out of West New Guinea' ('West Papuan nationalism: an inside view' in May 1979b:134). Most of its supporters were from Biak Island and many joined two pro-Indonesia political parties that had been formed by Indonesians who settled in New Guinea earlier in the Dutch occupation.

This split in the independence movement, along both tactical and geographical lines, was to hamper the Papuan cause for the next twenty years. Only since late 1983 have there been signs that the divisions are healed.

The anti-Indonesia forces were led by the New Guinea Unity Movement, which managed to gain some defections from the opposite camp. Another movement, the Christian Workers Union of New Guinea, came to represent the rights of Papuans employed mainly
within the government. This organization was responsible for the founding of Parna (Partai Nasional - National Party) in 1960. As Savage has noted, Parna's demands - localization, education, access to credit facilities - were indicative of its petty bourgeois orientation (op.cit.:983). There was little concern for, or liaison with, the rural villagers who comprised the majority of the population.

In early 1961 national elections were held for the newly-formed New Guinea Council and twenty-two out of twenty-eight seats were gained by Melanesians. In the next year, ten Regional Councils were established. Holland's aim was to dampen pro-Indonesian sentiments among the educated elite.

Soon, five of the Papuan members of the Council had formed the National Committee (Komite Nasional) and convened a meeting at which some seventy people chose a flag, an anthem and a name - Papua Barat (West Papua) - for their country. Again there were no real links with the common people. However the Committee's work received widespread publicity through the distribution of leaflets, and Dutch cooperation. On 1 December 1961 the Morning Star flag was raised beside the Dutch tricolour. It was to have 'the briefest life of any emblem in the history of colonial heraldry in Asia' (Lockwood 1982:263-264).

During this period of Dutch activity the Indonesian government was similarly active. President Sukarno made it clear through fiery speeches that Indonesia's determination to incorporate 'West Irian' was irreversible. As a clear sign that his international lobbying might soon be backed by military force, he approached the US and then the USSR for weapons. From the latter he received a $US450 million 'soft loan' for a variety of arms, including tanks, rockets, fighter planes and bombers. A 'liberation force' was assembled under the command of Major-General Suharto, specially promoted from colonel to head the 'Mandala' force. He was later to become Indonesia's president.

There were naval engagements with Holland and in 1962 Indonesian paratroops began dropping onto New Guinea. This latest wave of newcomers received a hostile reception, not only from the Dutch but from the Papuans, including villagers in remote areas. Of the 1,419 troops dropped on New Guinea, 216 were killed or never found and 296 were captured (McDonald 1980). After much pressure from abroad, notably the US and Australia, the Dutch conceded that West Irian was a lost cause. On 15 August 1962 it was announced that Indonesia would take over the territory after an eight-month interim
period supervised by a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA). A national congress of ninety Papuan leaders accepted the decision, agreed to cooperate with both UN and Indonesian administrations, and asked for a plebiscite as soon as possible after the UNTEA's mandate ended. From this time, sentiments among Western-educated Papuans began to shift to a pro-Papuan, rather than a pro-Indonesian or pro-Dutch viewpoint (van der Veur 1964). To further this aim they placed their faith in the UN peacekeepers; but they were to be disappointed, an outcome which came as no surprise to the pro-Dutch Papuans who had joined in the colonials' exodus back to Holland.

Soon the Indonesian military outnumbered the UNTEA officials and began to strike savagely at expressions of resistance. This policy accelerated after the UNTEA's departure and continued in the following years. The Papuan elite's last hope rested with the referendum which, as part of the peace accord, Indonesia had promised would be held before the end of 1969. Again the UN came in to supervise, but it clearly lacked both the will and the resources to ensure a genuine poll.

Although the report of the UN's representative, Fernando Ortiz-Sans, expressed reservations about the so-called Act of Free Choice, it supported the outcome which was a 'unanimous' vote by the 'representatives' of the Papuan people to continue as a part of Indonesia. The Ortiz-Sans report was accepted by the UN General Assembly, thus giving Indonesia international approval to remain in control. This marked the end of the resistance's domination by the Papuan elite:

The history of the national liberation struggle in West Irian is to a large extent the story of the misfortunes of the educated petty-bourgeoisie: their successive attempts to make linkages with a variety of foreign elements: the Dutch colonialists, the Indonesian 'middle strata' colonisers and political exiles in Dutch New Guinea, the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (U.N.T.E.A.) and the Indonesian pre-1969 administration. It is the story of the successive failures of this category, and of the divisions that emerged within it. Finally, left with nowhere else to turn, elements of the educated petty-bourgeoisie have turned inwards and have sought to make linkages with the peasant and proto-peasant masses and have chosen the road of organised armed struggle (Savage 1978b:143).
That this struggle was being called by the name ‘OPM’ (Organisasi: Papua Merdeka) at the time of the Act of Free Choice was noted by journalists who covered the polling. The title apparently had been coined by supporters of the self-styled ‘president-in-exile’, Markus Kaisiepo, amongst the Arfak people of the Manokwari area. One witness of the Act has recalled being told that the ‘organization’ was more in the manner of a general movement. ‘We are all OPM’, a Papuan pastor was quoted as saying (B. May 1978:182). However there were several well-coordinated underground groups which lent their weight to the OPM. A prominent one was the Lovers of the Motherland (Pecinta Tanah Air) which had a youth wing (Pentana Muda) and produced journals such as Melanesian Triumph and The Voice of Liberty. These groups arranged demonstrations against the Act, including one on 11 April 1969 in front of the Office of the UN representative, Ortiz-Sans. Indonesia reacted strongly to this opposition. One demonstrator, Celsius Wapai, now living in Papua New Guinea, has said that during interrogation he was beaten, given electric shocks and burnt with lighted cigarettes.

The OPM

Indonesia regarded the UN’s endorsement of the Act of Free Choice as a green light to crack down on rebelliousness. Military and intelligence officials were given greater powers to harass alleged dissidents and many detainees were subjected to harsh interrogation and imprisonment. Instances of anti-Indonesian activity were countered with strong reprisals. These, combined with the rising number of immigrants from other parts of Indonesia, further alienated the local population. But they encouraged an alliance between different strata of Melanesian society and also fostered cooperation between the two main factions, though past animosity often overrode the importance of uniting against the common enemy. Proper coordination was further frustrated by claims to control of the movement by some of the leading Papuans who had gone overseas. Among the better-known emigres were Nicolaas Jouwe and Markus Kaisiepo, who lobbied on behalf of the West Papua cause from Holland and Herman Womsiwor and, later, Ben Tanggahma, based in the African state of Senegal.

The epitome of factional opportunism, and a good illustration of the difficulty of proper liaison with supporters abroad, was the decision of the OPM’s Biak group to declare West Papuan independence on 1
July 1971. Not the least of its goals was to beat the other main group, also centred in the Jayapura-Papua New Guinea border area, in the propaganda stakes and so to legitimize its claim to the leadership of the whole movement. It failed on both counts. The news that independence had been proclaimed did not travel from the New Guinea jungle to the waiting supporters in London at the appointed time. Nor did the entire movement fall into line behind the new president, ‘Brigadier General’ Seth Rumkorem, whose proclamation was broadcast over a short-wave radio captured in the Indonesian outpost of Waris. The proclamation read:

To all the Papuan people, from Numbay Jayapura to Merauke, from Sorong to Baliem Star Mountains and from Biak to the isle of Adi: With God’s blessing, we take this opportunity today to announce to you all that....the land and the people of Papua have been declared to be free and independent (de facto and de jure). May God be with us, and let it be known to the world that the sincere wish of the Papuan people to be free and independent in their own country is hereby fulfilled.

But whatever other Papuans might have felt about the former Indonesian army officer turned guerilla, and the bloc he represented, they decided to endorse his proclamation and have done so ever since. In addition there has been consensus over the use of the Morning Star flag, the national symbol of the crested goura pigeon, the anthem ‘O, My Land of Papua’, and the 129 articles of the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of West Papua which have been printed in a handsome blue booklet. The motto of the resistance is ‘One People, One Soul’ although over the years there have been numerous occasions when this expression of unity has been ignored in favour of pursuing factional vendettas. Mostly the in-fighting has been done with words but sometimes the two main arms of the OPM have come to blows.

The years from 1971 to 1976 were marked by improved links between the OPM’s founding elite and village supporters. Instead of destroying the OPM, Indonesian reprisals served to increase the strength of the resistance, especially in rural areas. Many villagers joined the regular guerilla groups in the jungle, meeting there the urban elite for whom town life had become impossible. The most suitable area for such activity was the jungle along the Papua New Guinea border. From there, relatively safe sanctuary could be found in the
neighbouring country. But the mid 1970s also saw the development of an anti-Indonesian consciousness among Papuans throughout the land. Attacks on government outposts and patrols increased. Modern light arms, mostly of US origin, were seized from Indonesian soldiers and added to the existing supply of rather ancient arms and traditional weapons.

In 1976 the subject of arms supply - or lack thereof - sparked off a dispute between two of OPM’s military commanders, Rumkorem and Jacob Prai. The former said that the movement should break with past practice and seek weapons abroad, if necessary from socialist countries. Prai, however, insisted that self-sufficiency be adhered to. An angry confrontation followed, during which the pair also argued over who was entitled to keep a batch of written records relating to the West Papua Liberation Front (Front Komando Pembebasan Papua Barat) formed in 1969. The showdown resulted in Prai’s leaving the camp and heading for his home area of Ubrub in the border area. A few months later one of Prai’s guerillas led an attack on the Rumkorem group at a sago-gathering camp called Suhampa, on the Papua New Guinea side of the border. Some hostages were taken and the news reported back to Rumkorem who, with many of his Biak Island supporters, had established a permanent camp near Bonay beach, on the north coast.

Attempts to heal the rift failed and the two groups began to operate independently of each other. The pro-Prai faction called itself ‘Pemka’ (an acronym from Pemulihan Keadilan), Command for the Restoration of Justice. Its political organization was the de facto Government of West Papua and its military wing the Liberation Army (Tepenal, or Papenal). The originally-Biak group was known as the Provisional Revolutionary Government and its army the TPN, or Liberation Forces. The latter’s main overseas supporter was the Senegal-based Ben Tanggahma. The sympathies of the Papuan emigres in Europe lay mostly with the Pemka force although these Holland-based leaders had become somewhat out of touch with the realities of the distant ‘field of struggle’.

The role of the overseas supporters was mainly propagandist, ranging from lobbying members of the UN through to the running of a ‘South Pacific News Service’ which disseminated regular releases to the foreign press. There was no channelling of arms, although printed material, letterheads, seals and even some badges of rank were smuggled into the guerilla areas, often through Papua New Guinea where there were groups of sympathetic Papuan emigres.
A section of the Trans Irian Jaya highway near one of the points of incursion into the Western Province, 1983. Photo— *Times of Papua New Guinea*
OPM field commander, James Nyaro (standing, centre), with some of his forces. Photo—Niugini Nius

Border crossers' camp at Komopkin, Western Province, August 1984. Photo—Times of Papua New Guinea
While OPM’s internecine rivalry continued, the movement did not lose sight of its real enemy. Clashes between fulltime guerillas and pro-OPM villagers on the one hand, and the Indonesian forces on the other, intensified as Indonesia’s national election, set for May 1977, approached. Government troops, backed by aerial support, struck back against Papuan communities in several areas, including some located far from the border area. One focus of intense fighting was the central highlands, particularly the Baliem valley and the site of the Freeport copper mine at Tembagapura.

The bloody events of 1977-78 have been well documented (Sharp 1977; May 1980; TAPOL 1984). It was clear that, despite Indonesia’s claims to the contrary, the fighting was not a protracted outbreak of tribal fighting but an acceleration of the nationalist resistance. The ferocity of Indonesian reprisals became so intense that the OPM had no time to concern itself with rival factions, ‘enemies under the same mosquito net’. As a result of the conflict, perhaps as many as 3,000 Papuan villagers crossed the border into Papua New Guinea seeking temporary asylum.

Among the refugees were Jacob Prai and his deputy, Otto Ondowame. Although only 34 years old, Prai had been fighting for a decade and was in poor health. The pair were arrested by Papua New Guinea authorities and after complicated legal and diplomatic moves deported to permanent exile in Sweden. By sending Prai far from the battle front both Indonesia and Papua New Guinea hoped to cripple the resistance. What they failed to recognize was that a nationalist movement is unlikely to be destroyed by the loss of one military commander. Still in the jungle was the Tapenal force which Prai had developed. In addition, Rumkorem remained active.

After Prai’s departure the OPM-Pemka group reorganized its command structure. The new leader was Marthin Tabu. Before falling into Indonesian hands, Tabu would become best known for his followers’ destruction of an Army helicopter, killing of its crew and the abduction of its passengers, who included the speaker of the local assembly. It was not long after Prai’s departure that a Papua New Guinea-based journalist could write that the ‘initial euphoria (felt by Indonesia and PNG) was... evaporating rapidly’ (Age 31 January 1979).

After the demise of Tabu came ‘General’ Elky Bemey but he too disappeared in 1981. The military leadership of OPM-Pemka passed to James Nyaro who continued to command Tapenal in 1984. Nyaro is a
highly educated Melanesian who studied agriculture in the Netherlands. He was formerly married to a German, who is reportedly still living in Jayapura, but now has a local wife. He went into the jungle only in about 1982, leaving behind his life as a senior public servant.

When the widespread uprisings of the late 1970s subsided, and Indonesian reprisals were scaled down, the OPM again turned its attention inwards. In July 1981 Papua New Guinea officials announced that there had been a major clash between rival factions near Wutung, on the border. Several deaths were reported after members of the Bemey-led Pemka group attacked a camp of Rumkorem's guerillas, using automatic weapons. Eleven hostages were taken and imprisoned in harsh circumstances. A Papua New Guinea newspaper said that seven of them had died after being housed in metre-wide cages resembling pig-pens. Several were apparently murdered (Niugini Nius 9 July 1981, 24 February 1982).

The factional struggle was reflected in splits in the emigre community in Papua New Guinea, particularly in Port Moresby. Each group made public statements denouncing the other. Their attention was diverted temporarily by news of a bold attack by the Genyem section of OPM which attacked a timber camp near the capital. Eighteen Indonesian hostages and a Malaysian-Chinese were led off into the jungle. A ransom demand was made for $US2 million and an air-drop of 100 machine guns. Eight months later the hostages were freed as a result of intervention by a Papua New Guinea official who crossed alone into Indonesia and made contact with the guerillas. Because of their ordeal the hostages were in poor health; some had died (although one had married a guerilla, another example of the so-called 'Stockholm syndrome'). The affair was a public relations disaster for the OPM which was seen by many outsiders as having maltreated innocent civilians. It was also an embarrassment for Indonesia which, unable to locate the guerillas, had insisted that they were sheltering in Papua New Guinea. The hostage debacle, and the continuing factional problems, caused alarm among West Papuan nationalists. In February 1982 the underground West Papuan Students League sent a memo to other pro-OPM groups expressing concern about the frequent public differences between the two main blocs. It said the fighting was 'not beneficial to our revolution'. Three months later, in Oegsteest, Holland, a summit of all the main West Papuan leaders took place. A resident of Papua New Guinea, who supported the Pemka group, returned from the meeting saying that there were strong pressures for unity but a
genuine reconciliation had not yet occurred.

In September 1982 the leader of the Victoria group, Seth Rumkorem, was arrested by Papua New Guinea authorities off Rabaul, having left Irian Jaya with several followers in a motorized outrigger. The party was bound for Vanuatu where they believed the Linigovernment would grant them sanctuary. (Later, while visiting Papua New Guinea, Fr Lini said that his country could not accept any more West Papuans than the few who had previously been granted residency.)

The Papua New Guinea representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) found Rumkorem a difficult person to resettle abroad. All the countries in the region turned him down, as did several European countries. It was felt that he could not be sent to Sweden because of the risk of his clashing with Prai. After more than a year in Papua New Guinea Rumkorem was accepted for temporary asylum in Greece. Before he boarded his flight at Port Moresby airport he was greeted cordially by local representatives of the Pemka faction. Cynics might suggest that Pemka was being friendly to Rumkorem because it was glad to see the end of him. However feelings of solidarity were expressed and the next day a prominent (if somewhat individualistic) West Papuan, Henk Joku, told the Papua New Guinea press that previously warring factions were now united under a single field commander, Pemka’s James Nyaro (Times of PNG 2 December 1983).

Given the OPM’s history of factionalism, this announcement was treated with scepticism by the press, the government (in private) and foreign observers. However the events of February-May 1984 seemed to give support to OPM’s claim of emerging unity.

In early 1984 Indonesian intelligence received information that OPM members in the Jayapura area were planning a large-scale uprising. According to Papua New Guinea’s Justice minister, Tony Bais, the tip-off had been given to Indonesia by Papua New Guinea intelligence. The resistance has since said that the uprising was provoked by ongoing Indonesian policies, particularly the transmigration program which has been most intensive in the border area. The OPM explained that it was also angered by the detention, in the previous November, of about thirty Papuans suspected of OPM sympathy. The most prominent of the detainees was Arnold Ap, curator of the ethnology museum at Cendrawasih University and director of the Mambesak cultural troupe. Ap, along with two or three friends, was shot dead by the Indonesian military in late April 1984, allegedly after escaping. (It
is likely that he was killed by a military death squad from the Kopassandha (Red Beret) unit which was involved in the street executions in Java and had earlier been holding him (National Times 11-17 May 1984).

Pre-emptive action by Indonesian security averted the uprising but did not stop a series of minor attacks in Biak, Sorong, Manokwari and Jayapura. The best publicized incident was an OPM flag-raising attempt outside the provincial government building in the capital.

The attacks in and around Jayapura involved both main OPM factions. They were led by O. Joweni (Victoria group), Y. Hembring (Pemka) and a J. Awom who was formerly second-in-command of a Mobile Brigade unit of the Indonesian army.

In response to the uprising attempt Indonesia launched a security crackdown on suspected OPM supporters in both urban and rural areas. The focus was the border area and in time over 11,000 Papuans had crossed into Papua New Guinea as refugees. This was the largest flow of border crossers since the Indonesian arrival in 1962-63. Of particular relevance is the fact that both of the OPM’s main factions were in action, sometimes together, against the Indonesian military.

The refugee crisis, and the concurrent visit of Pope John Paul II, attracted much media attention to Papua New Guinea. Journalists who visited the refugee camps reported meeting numerous people who felt that their involvement with the OPM would endanger their lives if they returned to Irian; the UN representative estimated that 10 per cent were in this category. Included in their number were supporters of both Pemka and Victoria factions. Some were members of the urban elite from Jayapura-Sentani, others were villagers.

Descriptions of camp life seemed to indicate that the proximity of the different factions had not led to serious clashes, verbal or physical. (This was not the case in the late 1970s when refugees at the Wabo and Yako camps created separate living areas and often engaged in faction fights.) According to reports by both the UNHCR representative and The Age (30 April 1984), in 1984 the refugees in Vanimo had segregated in accordance with a ‘social pecking order’ rather than factional or even clan allegiances. At one end of the camp, near the water, the middle class was grouped together; Papuan deserters from the Indonesian military lived in another spot while villagers and fishing families were living in the most inhospitable part of the camp.

Of the journalists who visited the border zone during this period, two - an Australian (Damien Murphy) and a Papua New Guinean
(Neville Togarewa) - managed to walk into Irian Jaya and interview OPM-Pemka leaders. Both found the OPM’s leadership greatly lacking in resources. The Australian wrote that the movement was ‘on an ultimately quixotic quest’. When asked the size of the guerilla force along the border, the leadership was said to have spent some time calculating figures before estimating it at 5000. Papua New Guinea intelligence believed that at that time there were about 1000 full- and part-time guerillas in the kabupaten of Jayapura (Sydney Morning Herald 2 May 1984). Rumkorem has since said that his Victoria group has 500 guerillas, and the Pemka group about 1,600. Around the Freeport mine site and Enarotali, Paniai Lakes, another 2,000 were in place. In all, he claimed a total force of 30,000-50,000, admitting they greatly lacked modern arms (TAPOL Bulletin 62, March 1984).

The Papua New Guinean journalist Togarewa interviewed the leadership of the West Papua Senate, a twenty-minister underground cabinet which has taken over the function of the former de facto government. The Senate’s chairman, Fisor Yarisetouw, explained the movement’s goal:

Our dream is to have one parliament, one government for all Melanesians from Sorong in the west of Irian to Samarai in the east of mainland Papua New Guinea where you don’t need a passport or identification card to travel from one end of the island to the other. You have a house with two rooms, one represents West PNG, the other East PNG. If the house is burning, it is foolish for the occupant of one room not to help the other to put out the fire and save the house and both rooms (Times of PNG 15 March 1984).

Yarisetouw, unlike so many resistance leaders before him, is not an intellectual but a coastal villager who went into the bush in 1973 after completing high school. He told Togarewa that OPM stood for democracy and Christianity, an orientation that is emphasized in the preamble to the West Papua Constitution. He insisted that help would not be sought from communist nations, a policy that may however be ignored by Rumkorem who said on leaving Papua New Guinea for exile that arms would be accepted from any donor regardless of its politics. Oddly, Yarisetouw told his interviewer that Indonesia itself was communist; the Indonesian Communist Party was a strong advocate of the Irian takeover and active in the military operations when Yarisetouw was only a young teenager in 1962 and doubtless he heard
his Christian relatives speaking of the communists’ involvement. Another OPM leader interviewed recently by journalists was the president and military commander, James Nyaro. In an interview with ABC-TV’s ‘Four Corners’ programme, which caused some controversy before it went to air in late May 1984, Nyaro admitted that his followers were short of modern arms and said that though, as a Christian, he regretted the killing of his Indonesian enemies,

...in the revolution time we must kill them - against another nation that makes us harm:...my heart feels so. I’m not afraid of them. I will fight so long as I live. When I get my independence I can stop it. Until they’re out of my country, then I will stop it.

During the recent refugee crisis two Indonesian military jets were reported to have crossed the border and caused a panic when they flew low over Papua New Guinea’s Green River settlement. On receiving Papua New Guinea’s official protests, Jakarta officials remarked that their neighbour was being overly sensitive; after all, they suggested, Papua New Guinea had done little to inhibit the OPM’s cross-border movements. While essentially true, this statement implies that sanctuary in Papua New Guinea is the OPM’s lifeline. In fact the majority of OPM supporters, active or covert, never enter Papua New Guinea: even in the unlikely event that Papua New Guinea could muster the political will - in the face of public sentiment - and the logistic support to effectively seal the border, the OPM would continue to operate. This was shown in May 1985 when 200 Papua New Guinea soldiers and riot police were despatched to the border station of Bewani in response to the detention of a Posts and Telegraphs Department helicopter which had mistakenly landed near an OPM camp. The troops did not manage to trace any guerillas and succeeded only in destroying some deserted huts. As has happened so often in the past, on both sides of the border, the OPM had melted back into the bush.

Despite the harshness of jungle life, the OPM remains effective there and in early 1985 was showing signs of uniting its long-feuding factions. In the Netherlands, too, West Papuan emigres had begun to develop a new solidarity, largely due, they said, to their exclusion of the old-timers such as Nicolaas Jouwe, who they felt could not appreciate the current state of play. The West Papuan People’s Front, formed in 1984, comprised the sons (and, less actively, the daughters) of the leaders who had moved to Holland in 1962-63. Among the mem-
bers of the front were Victor Kaisiepo, whose father, Markus, was well known in earlier years, Eliezer Bonay, the former governor of Irian Jaya who had fled to Papua New Guinea, and four younger Melanesians who had gained sanctuary in the Dutch embassy in Jakarta, and asylum in Holland in 1984. Like the guerillas in the bush, these OPM were strongly critical of the factionally-inclined emigre community in Port Moresby, feeling it was hampering the cause.

The first major initiative of the Front was the raising of funds amongst emigres in Holland to buy air tickets so that OPM faction leaders Seth Rumkorem and Jacob Prai could travel to Vanuatu to attend the ruling Vanuaaku Pati’s annual congress, scheduled to be held in mid July 1985 on the island of Tanna. However, when Rumkorem tried to collect his Qantas ticket from an Athens travel agent he was told that the Australian government had refused him a visa to transit at Sydney airport for three hours prior to connecting with his flight to Port Vila. Undeterred, he rerouted through USA and Fiji and in due course reached Vanuatu where he met his former comrade for the first time since 1976. After lengthy negotiations the pair vowed to bury past differences, co-authoring a pact dubbed the ‘Declaration of Port Vila’. They remained in Vanuatu for a month, hosted by the government and liaising closely with local OPM representative Rex Rumakiek. Rumkorem appears to have been more flexible regarding his exclusive claim to the title of OPM ‘president’, an insistence that had prevented him gaining permission to migrate to Vanuatu in 1983 when he was living in temporary asylum in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea.

Conclusion

From earliest times the Melanesians of West New Guinea have shown their willingness to fight outsiders when they felt their rights were threatened. Indonesian policies in modern Irian Jaya present a greater threat than any yet encountered and this awareness has spread throughout the indigenous population. Even observers sympathetic to Indonesia’s presence in Irian have estimated that 80 per cent of Papuans would vote against integration if given a genuine plebiscite.

An attempt at a military takeover by the OPM could not succeed. As in past years, however, it is likely to have some victories against Indonesia, both on the battlefield and in the propaganda war being waged in the foreign media.
The tenacity of the movement has so far won no concessions from Jakarta officialdom. However in mid 1984 there was a sign that the government was considering the ‘softening’ of its stance in Irian Jaya. Advocates for more humane development policies included non-governmental organisations in Jakarta and some officials (Feith 1984). Peter Hastings has written that even Irian’s military commander, Gen. Sembiring Meliala, has strong doubts about Transmigration to the province. Given the population’s propensity for exacting ‘payback’ it seems likely that past actions would be forgotten if Indonesian policy were to moderate at this stage.
CHAPTER 4

DOES INDONESIA HAVE EXPANSIONIST DESIGNS ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA?

J.A.C. Mackie

This paper had its origins in a talk I gave at the University of Papua New Guinea shortly after the September 1978 Waigani seminar, in which I attempted to answer various comments made there to the effect that Indonesia's foreign policies were inherently expansionist. It was a time of strained relations between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea because of several border incidents earlier in 1978, which were regarded by many people in Papua New Guinea as indications that Indonesia aspired to dominate and perhaps ultimately to annex the eastern half of the island.

Comments of this kind were usually based on three types of argument. According to one of these, the fact that the Indonesian government was putting pressure on Papua New Guinea to cooperate militarily with her in trying to seal the border against the Irianese dissidents seeking refuge in the east was to be seen as merely the first in a series of demands which, unless resisted from the outset, would culminate eventually in the complete subjugation of Papua New Guinea. We could call this the 'the thin end of the wedge' interpretation. My own belief was that Indonesia's objectives on that occasion were - and still are - merely limited ones to do with her way of handling the border-crossing problem; there was no reason to believe she had broader and more sinister designs for the ultimate annexation of Papua New Guinea as a whole. It is not surprising that many people in Papua New Guinea did not see it that way. It was understandable that many people in Papua New Guinea took a more sceptical and suspicious view of what was happening across the border and of Indonesia's intentions. They were uneasy about the whole record of Indonesian policy in Irian
Jaya and often not well informed of the motives behind her policies and actions. They felt strongly that the Melanesian inhabitants of Irian Jaya were their blood brothers, hence they were hostile even towards Indonesia’s limited goal of closing the border against OPM members taking advantage of the opportunities for easy sanctuary it provided. But that in itself was (and is) not an adequate reason for making the further inference that Indonesia has unlimited expansionist ambitions.

The second type of argument advanced by critics of Indonesia’s policies hinged on the proposition that her expansionist appetites had already been amply demonstrated by the seizure of East Timor, by her ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia in 1963-66 (referred to hereafter simply as konfrontasi) and by her earlier campaign to gain control of Irian Jaya over the years 1950-62. It is this second argument - about the conclusions to be drawn from the historical record regarding the supposedly ‘expansionist’ character of Indonesia’s foreign policies - which constitutes the central theme of this paper. If one looks only at this sequence of events, the three episodes involving the use of force around Indonesia’s borders, apparently directed towards the acquisition of territory, it is very easy to jump to the conclusion that they constitute evidence of territorial expansionism. Yet when we examine the motivations and political dynamics behind each of these episodes we find that however we define territorial expansionism, it has not been a significant causal factor. At this point, we should first define what ‘expansionism’ means as precisely as possible. I am interpreting it here to mean a desire to annex additional territory either

(i) for the sake of more lebensraum (living space) or resources (oil, copper, timber, etc.), that is for essentially economic reasons;
(ii) for the sake of demonstrating the national power so as to intimidate neighbours;
(iii) because of an ideology of national greatness, power and vigour, as in the case of Mussolini’s Italy and Hitler’s Germany;
(iv) for irredentist reasons (to recover parts of the national territory which have been lost in the past), or
(v) because of a belief that the nation has a historic mission to reestablish its ancient or mythical boundaries, as in the case of Russian pan-Slavic movements in the late 19th Century.

None of these motivations has played any significant part in shaping Indonesia’s foreign policies since independence, with the possible exception of the last two (and I would even query those). I will later give some attention briefly to this last possibility, however, for several
articles have been written, with titles like 'The Potential for Indonesian Expansionism' (Gordon 1963-64) to explain her foreign policy objectives in the 1963-66 konfrontasi episode, and these have gained wider circulation than they deserve. They were based primarily on the Indonesia Raya, or 'Greater Indonesia', theory - that is that the country's leaders have constantly nurtured irredentist aspirations to redraw their national boundaries in accordance with the historic boundaries of ancient empires like Majapahit. In my study of the causes of konfrontasi, however, I found this theory utterly erroneous and irrelevant.\(^1\) It is equally irrelevant as an explanation of the invasion of Timor, although the Timor affair did indeed revive many of the old fears that Indonesia has an ominous appetite for additional territory because it was not easy to understand her motivations according to any clearly discernible explanation. It is even less relevant, I think, to Indonesian thinking about Papua New Guinea, for reasons I will outline later in the paper.

I will say something more about the lebensraum argument at the end of this paper, because people in Australia and Papua New Guinea frequently misinterpret the significance of Indonesia's 'transmigration' programme as if it represented part of an expansionist drive to shift people from overcrowded Java to other parts of the archipelago, or beyond. It is easy to draw the further inference that population pressure will in due course require her to look beyond her national boundaries for more land; yet such an inference would be quite erroneous. Anyone who is at all familiar with the history and workings of the transmigration programme is likely to find this an extremely far-fetched proposition, for reasons I will set out below. In saying that I do not deny that the social and demographic consequences of large-scale immigration of Javanese into Irian Jaya are likely to create serious tensions there between the newcomers and the indigenous population. Understandably, people in Papua New Guinea with Pan-Melanesian sympathies will also be disturbed by the consequences of those tensions. But to assert that the transmigration programme represents an expansionist drive to gobble up more territory as a means of solving Java's population pressures is to exaggerate beyond the bounds of probability.

A third type of argument, which one most frequently encounters

\(^1\) For a fuller discussion of the Indonesia Raya theory and the Malaysian propaganda use of it, see Mackie (1974:21-4, 326-7 and the references cited therein).
among radical critics of the Indonesian government, is one I will call the ‘analogy with fascism’ argument - that is, the proposition that expansionism tends to be an inherent structural characteristic of military or authoritarian or avowedly fascist regimes. Hence, since Indonesia undeniably has a highly authoritarian, army-based government, there is a prima facie presumption that her foreign policies are expansionist and aggressive in much the same way as were Mussolini’s or Hitler’s or those of pre-war Japan, either because of a militaristic and imperialist ideology or because of more complex socio-political power drives. This kind of analogy is absurdly far-fetched, however. The Suharto regime may be authoritarian and in some respects indeed repressive, but to call it ‘fascist’ is a sheer misuse of that term. Yet this kind of hypothesis has some affinities with what might be categorized as ‘diversionist’ or ‘instability’ theories about the dynamics behind Indonesian foreign policies, which also achieved quite wide currency at the time of the konfrontasi episode and cannot be dismissed entirely out of hand.

Closely akin to this approach is one of the more plausible (but misleading) explanations of the Suharto government’s foreign policies, put forward in 1976 by Rex Mortimer (Mortimer 1976) which could almost be called a ‘neurosis theory’ of Indonesian national self-assertiveness. I will return to this below, but it is worth noting that Mortimer himself had abandoned it by 1979.

Before we go any further, however, we need to look more closely at the particular episodes which are commonly held to be evidence of Indonesia’s ‘expansionist’ appetites. From these it will become clear that the motivations behind Indonesia’s policies on those occasions were by no means the same as those implied by the word ‘expansionism’ as specified on page 66. And it is of particular significance that all three episodes relate to the last stages of the ending of colonial rule. The withdrawal of the metropolitan powers, Netherlands, Britain and Portugal, and the process of decolonization was in all three cases a messy one, often indefensible on a strict reading of national or international law (as also was the founding of the colonial empires). But the process of decolonization is now complete in this part of the world. Indonesia has no basis for claims to Papua New Guinea - and no desire for it or sense of need for it - as she had in two of those three cases.

The Irian Jaya claim

The basis of the original Indonesian claim to Irian Jaya is so well
known that it is hardly necessary to go into it at any length.\textsuperscript{2} Indonesia maintained that as the successor state to the former Netherlands East Indies her national territory should embrace the whole of what had formerly been the Netherlands East Indies, including Irian Jaya which had previously been considered an integral part of the former colony (albeit one of the most neglected and little-developed parts). The Dutch insistence on retaining possession of what they called ‘Dutch New Guinea’ at the time of the 1949 Round Table Conference negotiations leading to Indonesian independence, for reasons of Dutch domestic politics and wounded \textit{amour propre}, created a deadlock which was broken only by the unsatisfactory compromise decision to postpone further negotiations on the issue until 1950. In the course of those negotiations neither side would budge - and as the \textit{status quo} favoured the Dutch, they clung on grimly to their colony until mounting Indonesian pressures, military as well as diplomatic and economic, coupled with declining international support for the Dutch, finally compelled them to surrender their hold on the colony in 1962.

The rationale behind Indonesia’s case was perfectly straightforward: her claim to Irian Jaya derived from the central principles of nationalism and anticolonialism upon which her revolution against the Dutch had been fought. To abandon the claim would have been to deny those principles at a time when the very unity of the fragile new state depended on maintaining the principle of nationalism as paramount in the face of potentially secessionist regional dissident movements. Indonesians believed that in pursuing their claim to Irian Jaya they were merely trying to gain control over territory that should have been recognized as rightfully theirs from the outset. The Dutch were thought to be holding on to West New Guinea for no better reason than to use it as a base from which they could subvert and fragment the new Republic of Indonesia especially by stirring up trouble in the Moluccas and other eastern islands of the archipelago. The Dutch tried to deny Indonesia’s claim by stressing the racial differences between Indonesians of Java or Sumatra and the Melanesian inhabitants of West New Guinea, but Indonesians regarded this as irrelevant, since they themselves were ethnically a heterogeneous bunch and they did not regard racial affinities as the determining criteria of their nationhood.

\textsuperscript{2} The best account of the early stages of the Irian Jaya campaign is Bone (1958); for the final stages, see Mackie (1974:98-103).
Indonesians of all political persuasions were united in support of the claim to Irian Jaya. (The strongest initial proponents of the claim were, in fact, the most pro-Dutch and conservative group of leaders at the Round Table Conference negotiations, the Federalists, not the Republicans.) No one ever publicly denied the rightness of this claim, as far as I know, although there were major differences between the parties about the most effective tactics for pursuing the claim. As time passed the more radical parties became increasingly militant in the prominence they gave to this issue and the lengths they were willing to go to press it, whereas the more anti-communist, pro-Western parties and opinion leaders clung to the belief that moderation and persuasion would induce the Dutch to make concessions. This did not happen, however, and the latter group were outmanoeuvered by the radicals in 1957 when, after several efforts to win support in the UN had failed, the radicals seized the initiative, at President Sukarno’s instigation, and ‘took over’ all Dutch plantations, business enterprises and banks in Indonesia and nationalized them soon after. But the Dutch merely dug their toes in harder and it took the threat of military invasion of Irian Jaya in 1961-62 to force them (largely at the instigation of the US government) to abandon the struggle and negotiate a compromise settlement.

It is misleading and ignorant to assert that ‘expansionism’ was a factor in the Indonesian campaign for West Irian, either in respect of the arguments used or of the basic political dynamics which impelled Indonesia. Even though Sukarno resorted in 1962 to an undeniably aggressive, confrontative political strategy for putting pressure on the Dutch, we need to distinguish his methods from his motivations and objectives. The style of the campaign in its final stages was certainly highly emotional, the political atmosphere almost feverish; the issue lent itself to a form of mobilization politics which President Sukarno and the Indonesian Communist Party exploited very effectively for their own domestic advantage and in which the army leaders found themselves badly outmanoeuvered. The lesson was not lost on the army leaders, however, and when the conflict with Malaysia loomed up a year or so later they took good care not to lose the political initiative on an issue with strong nationalist appeal and so they played an important part in getting the campaign of konfrontasi against Malaysia started. But that turned out to be a very different story.
**Konfrontasi**

Indonesia’s ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia in the years 1963-66 provides the strongest ammunition for advocates of the expansionist theory, but an explanation given in these terms alone is seriously misleading, for the basic dynamics of the campaign have to be sought elsewhere. Indonesia never asserted any claim to the territory of the northern Borneo states whose incorporation into the Malaysian federation she was protesting; her argument was that the project was a neocolonialist strategem, master-minded by the British to enable them to maintain their interests there, and that the people of Borneo and Singapore were being steamrollered against their will into the wider Malaysian federation. There was a good deal of evidence in favour of that proposition, although I believe that overall the pro-Malaysia case was much stronger on nearly all accounts. The whole episode was a curious, half-hearted affair, a mixture of threats, propaganda, low-level border raids and reconnaissance incursions into Sarawak and Malaya, attempts to ferment domestic opposition to the Malaysian government, coupled with diplomatic and economic pressures which seemed to have a variety of objectives and motivations, few of them at all clear to outside observers.

*Konfrontasi* was very much a personal campaign of President Sukarno’s, although both the Armed Forces leaders and the PKI supported it enthusiastically in the early stages (though much less wholeheartedly later on, when the costs and risks were greater). And it undoubtedly served a variety of purposes which Sukarno found convenient - for example, maintaining an atmosphere of crisis and external threat, so that calls for national unity and solidarity with the leadership were more easily justified; simplifying the job of balancing left and right wing forces in the government and in the country; enabling him at times to divert attention from pressing domestic issues by stressing the primacy of the conflict with neocolonialist enemies at home and abroad; providing apparent justification for his ideological doctrines of inevitable conflict between the ‘New Emerging Forces’ and the old established forces of neocolonialism and imperialism. There is something to be said for explanations of the campaign in terms of its ‘diversionary’ value, at a time when the national economy was in

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3 I have summarized the strengths and weaknesses of the various interpretations of this episode in Mackie (1974:1-11,326-33 *et passim*).
decline and political tensions mounting, but they too tend to be grossly oversimplified, although in a more refined form there is something in them.  

Konfrontasi was, in a very real sense, an extension into the foreign affairs sphere of the basic instability of Indonesian domestic politics at that time. Yet on several occasions when he had to make difficult choices in domestic politics, Sukarno did make them and on several occasions he scaled down the intensity of confrontation when circumstances made it prudent for him to do so. So the diversionary theory cannot be carried too far. A more fundamental element in the explanation of the whole affair is the relevance of the ideological factor. The struggle against Malaysia served, in effect, to validate the doctrine of the New Emerging Forces, while at the same time that doctrine created the imperative to engage in the struggle, for otherwise the ideology would have been hollow and meaningless. All Sukarno’s speeches on the issue stressed the ideological factor, never the Indonesia Raya theme or the appeal to historic greatness. In short, the whole episode was very much an outgrowth of the rather singular combination of political and ideological circumstances prevailing in Indonesia in the early 1960s. The only sense in which it could be categorized as ‘expansionist’ was in terms of the style and methods adopted, not the objectives or motivations - for example the generally assertive, sometimes truculent claims made by Sukarno for the universality of his doctrine of the New Emerging Forces as applying to all Third World countries. But would one categorize German or Italian foreign policy today as inherently expansionist just because Hitler and Mussolini pursued assertive, truculent claims and methods (and, indeed, specified external objectives) in the decade before 1945? It must, indeed, be admitted that if Indonesia had succeeded at that point in the decolonization process in overthrowing the Malaysian federation, she would undoubtedly have been cock of the roost in Southeast Asia. Sukarno certainly aspired to a leadership role, not only in that region but in the Third World generally (though without much success, in the final analysis). But the explanation for this impulse is better seen in terms of what Kahin (1964:260-261) has called ‘the powerful, self-righteous thrust of Indonesian nationalism’, derived from the sense of pride in their revolutionary struggle for independence and from their opposition to colonialism and neocolonialism, than in terms

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4 The best exposition of the ‘diversion’ theory is given by Donald Hindley (1964).
of ‘Greater Indonesia’ doctrines or an ideology of territorial expansion reminiscent of Mussolini’s or Hitler’s demands for *lebensraum*.

**East Timor**

Even less, in my opinion, can the campaign to incorporate East Timor be categorized or explained as simply a manifestation of expansionist appetites. Indonesian motivations in that unhappy affair are murky and complex, not at all as easy to identify with precision - or to defend on legal and moral grounds - as in the previous cases examined. But it is not difficult to discern the major factors impelling the Suharto government to become involved in the way it did and one of the most striking features to be noted was Suharto’s reluctance to use troops there. Certainly there could be no claim here, as there was in the case of Irian Jaya, on the ground that this territory had been part of the former Netherlands East Indies. Nor was it possible after April 1974, as it might have been prior to the overthrow of the Salazar-Caetano regime in Portugal, to make a case on the grounds of liberating East Timor from colonial rule of a singularly miserable, debilitating character which had left the colony poverty-stricken and neglected.

The fundamental consideration was probably one which could not easily or delicately be put into words. This was that the Portuguese colony was an historical anachronism, just as Goa in the midst of India had been before 1961. Sooner or later it would have to be liberated - though neither in Portugal nor Australia were voices being raised on behalf of independence or self-determination for the Timorese before 1974 - and most Indonesians who ever gave any thought to the matter probably assumed that sooner or later it would become part of Indonesia by a process of natural attraction to independence. The people were, after all, ethnically akin to those in the rest of Timor and they had been separated from them politically only by the Dutch-Portuguese rivalries of the 17th to 19th centuries, not by their own volition. No one in Indonesia ever gave much thought to the question of when and how East Timor should be decolonized, and the general assumption seems to have been that the people of East Timor would of course *want* to join their Indonesian brothers in enjoying the fruits of independence. Few Indonesians knew that they could not even speak the same language or that Portuguese propaganda had implanted widespread fears of an Indonesian takeover long before 1974. It is probably not far-fetched to imagine, however, that if the Suharto gov-
ernment had mounted a campaign to assist in the liberation of East Timor from Portuguese rule prior to 1974, justifying this on the ground that it was also helping to overthrow Portuguese colonial rule and help the freedom fighters of Angola and Mozambique it would almost certainly have won widespread international support and left the Fretilin leaders no option but to side with Indonesia. Suharto must have subsequently regretted that he had been too cautious and restrained to embark on such a course, for once the revolution of April 1974 in Portugal had occurred the ball was at Fretilin’s feet, not Jakarta’s. To claim that Indonesia’s attitude towards Timor was grasping or covetous or expansionist seems, in the light of these circumstances, simply to ignore the historical background.

The Indonesian case has, in general, been argued mainly on the ground that the people of East Timor wanted incorporation into Indonesia, that the Timorese party favouring incorporation, Apodeti, had substantial popular support but was severely handicapped by the strong anti-Indonesian propaganda campaign earlier maintained by the Portuguese colonial authorities and later by Fretilin. It is highly doubtful that Apodeti really did have very widespread popular support initially, but that is not very surprising in view of the sustained anti-Indonesian propaganda to which the population had been subjected for years previously by the Portuguese. During early 1975 the Indonesian government tried to cooperate with the Portuguese in devising a political formula based upon consultations (musjawarah) between the Portuguese authorities and the three major Timorese parties, which would have resulted, they hoped - with the aid of a little ‘gentle pressure’ - in a decision to seek incorporation in Indonesia. But the outbreak of fighting between the UDT and Fretilin factions in July wrecked any hopes of this and soon resulted in the military victory of the Fretilin forces, which were by that time the faction most strongly committed to an independent East Timor and the most uncompromisingly anti-Indonesian. (UDT had by that time swung over towards a pro-Indonesian stance.) This created a situation in which the Indonesian government had to choose whether to acquiesce in a Fretilin victory and the establishment of an independent, strongly anti-Indonesian regime in East Timor, or to intervene militarily in the civil war there. The Suharto government opted for the latter choice, sending in Indonesian troops covertly in October-November and then invading overtly in December.5

The legal and moral rights and wrongs of these actions are a mat-
ter of controversy which would take too long to assess thoroughly here. But the question of Indonesia’s underlying motivation is a quite distinct question. Why did the Indonesians feel it mattered so much to them to prevent East Timor becoming independent? Their military intervention did no good to Indonesia’s international reputation and appears to have been costly to her armed forces in both lives and resources. Why, then, could they not have acquiesced in a Fretilin victory?

I suspect that the basic answer boils down to the proposition that as time passed Indonesia’s key policymakers simply found themselves more and more committed by their own rhetoric and their initial policies to the ultimate incorporation of East Timor; hence they either had to press on towards that goal at any cost or accept a humiliating defeat which might have been seriously damaging to their own domestic political prestige and influence.

Another factor was certainly their fear that East Timor might become a nest of communist influence, ‘another Cuba’ on her doorstep. The charges that Fretilin leaders were communists or pro-Chinese may have been wildly exaggerated, but some Fretilin leaders were speaking in a way which certainly justified that suspicion. Even if the charges were false, it was obvious that an independent East Timor would have had to look overseas for economic assistance and perhaps also political support from some quarter, since the economy was hardly viable and the political structure rudimentary - and China or Vietnam or Russia seemed to be the most likely candidates for such a role. Moreover, the possibilities that even a non-communist independent East Timor might provide a haven for Indonesian communist exiles outside Indonesian control was alarming enough to the Jakarta authorities, for it would be hard to prevent their infiltration from there into other parts of the archipelago.

A second consideration frequently mentioned was the fear of secessionist sentiment in other parts of eastern Indonesia if East Timor were to succeed in maintaining an independent existence. The effect on the Indonesian side of the island would have been disturbing, to say the least, and perhaps elsewhere too. Ever since the 1950s when regionalist movements threatened the territorial integrity of the young

5 I know of no good account of the Indonesian side of the Timor affair. A useful survey of events in Timor, stressing the role of the Portuguese, is Nicol (1978). A strongly anti-Indonesian, pro-Fretilin version is given by Joliffe (1978).
nation, Indonesia's leaders have been sensitive to the dangers of secessionist sentiments in the outlying regions of the archipelago. I doubt if there is currently as much risk of secessionism or territorial disintegration as is often suggested, for the centralizing tendencies of the last two decades have been very powerful. But it is probably true to say that Indonesia's national unity is still a rather brittle creation, which might not stand up to any serious blow to the authority of the central government. If any part of the archipelago were able to defy Jakarta's authority on a major issue and get away with it, the chain reaction elsewhere could be quite disastrous. That kind of consideration probably exerted great weight on the minds of the Indonesian government's policy makers throughout the Timor affair.

Another background consideration that was also important was the inclination to believe that Apodeti really did represent the true voice of the Timorese people. Indonesians referred to Fretilin, not entirely without justification, as the 'Eurasians' party', as a coterie of part-Portuguese, urban, educated leaders with no substantial following among or rapport with the bulk of the village population. They inevitably compared them with a similar group of first generation leaders of the anti-colonial movements in Indonesia, most of whom later drifted away from the mainstream of Indonesian nationalism; in fact, Indonesia's Eurasians had tended to be either pro-Dutch or highly ambivalent towards the nationalist cause during the struggle for independence, so their nationalist credentials were suspect. In the circumstances Indonesians were highly sceptical that the Fretilin leaders could really represent the true voice of East Timorese nationalism. Their suspicions of Fretilin were later exacerbated by the collusion of two left-wing Portuguese officers, Majors Mota and Jonatas, in advancing the Fretilin cause during 1975, which was reminiscent of Dutch patronage of the 'puppet' Federalists in 1948-49. UDT, on the other hand, had initially spoken out in favour of maintaining Portuguese rule and against immediate independence, so it was clearly a 'reactionary' rather than a 'progressive' force like Apodeti. So the historicist caste of mind with which Indonesians approached these matters would have inclined them towards Apodeti even though it could show little positive evidence of substantial popular support. This is not to say that they were right in that assessment; it is, however, to point out the basis of Indonesian perceptions of the matter, which is what we must be concerned with in a matter like this.

Finally, we should notice certain aspects of the Indonesian domes-
tic politics of the Timor episode which indicate, I believe, that whatever Indonesian motivations may have been - and they were certainly tangled - they were by no means expansionist in a crude sense. The initial reaction of the foreign minister, Adam Malik, in mid 1974 was, indeed, distinctly 'dove-ish'. He went so far as to assure Jose Ramos Horta, a Fretilin leader, that Indonesia made no claim to East Timor and would seek close relations with it 'after independence'. This early view was soon modified as anti-communist leaders of the intelligence forces in Jakarta began to express concern at what they saw as a drift towards the left in Timor, paralleling the course of the revolution in Portugal in its first year. But Suharto regarded the Portuguese government as the key factor determining the course of events in Timor and did not allow this group of officers to determine Indonesian policy, so long as he could hope that a political-diplomatic strategy would work towards Indonesia's ends. But after the outbreak of the civil war in Timor in July-August it became increasingly difficult for him to deny the arguments for military intervention or cling to any hope that a political solution would work. Thus the determination of policy finally fell into the hands of the military leaders, for by this time Indonesia was too deeply committed to the goals it had set to back away.

It is worth remembering that if Suharto failed to prevent the emergence of an independent East Timor once the Indonesian government had started to work for its incorporation, he would have been highly vulnerable to the charge that this kind of thing would never have happened in Sukarno's days. Paradoxically, it was precisely because Suharto's foreign policies were so different from Sukarno's unassertive, low-keyed, committed to good-neighbourly relations with the ASEAN countries, and quite sensitive to world opinion, that he found himself subject to criticism from the former radical-nationalist fringe of the political public in Indonesia that he was not sufficient of a red-blooded nationalist, that he was subordinating the country's interests too much to the goal of presenting an image of moderation and responsibility to the Western creditor nations. Political comment within Indonesia was distinctly muted in 1974-75, for the crackdown on dissentient opinion following the 'Malari' riots during Prime Minister Tanaka's visit in January 1974 was very severe. But precisely because the regime had been shaken by the mild expressions of criticism that occurred in late 1973, there was a good deal of nervousness about arousing fresh criticism over new issues. It is hardly surprising, in those circumstances, that there was almost no overt opposition to the gov-
ernment’s policies on Timor, even though there seems to have been nothing like the widespread popular support for the campaign that there was over Irian Jaya. In 1975, moreover, the development of the Pertamina crisis was creating new difficulties for the government and making it even less willing to run risks of leaving its flanks exposed to critics of any hue, whether radical or nationalist. The fact, too, that the Timor crisis occurred soon after the communist victories in Indochina, when the generals in Jakarta were most sensitive to what they perceived as communist threats to the region, must have helped to strengthen the hands of the hardliners and undermine the advocates of moderation. But it was anti-communism that was the decisive motivating force, not a diffuse espousal of expansionist objectives.

Conclusion

Are we justified, then, in concluding that ‘expansionist’ elements have played no part at all - or very little - in the shaping of Indonesia's policies towards her neighbours? I am inclined to answer: ‘Yes; the primary motivating forces behind her foreign policies could not be described as expansionist in any substantial respect’. One could even go further and list a series of opportunities Indonesia has not taken since 1945 which, if she really had been determinedly bent upon expansion or aggrandizement of her influence over her neighbours, she could easily have exploited to her advantage - for example the situation created by the race riots of May 1969 in Malaysia, the Muslim insurgency in the southern Philippines, to mention only the most obvious.

It is possible that there may be more elaborate definitions of ‘expansionism’ that could be applied to the Indonesian case, but I have not yet encountered any that was at all convincing. The nearest thing to such a theory is Rex Mortimer’s 1976 article (Mortimer 1976) in which he put great emphasis on the country’s potential instability and the inherent weaknesses or incapacity of its government, seeing various factors in that situation which were ‘nudging Indonesia towards a more assertive regional role’. Mortimer explicitly recognized that Indonesia was ‘not an actively expansionist power’, but he portrayed her leaders as bordering on the neurotic (the article is studded with words like ‘hysterical’, ‘obsessive’, ‘tense’, ‘hypersensitive’ and ‘frustrated’) in their preoccupation with their country’s regional influence, particularly in the aftermath of the communist victories in Indochina in
the previous year. Hence he regarded them as intensely concerned with the stability of Papua New Guinea also.

Mortimer's theory is vulnerable on three main grounds. First, Indonesia's 'regional role' since 1965 has not been at all 'assertive' or 'obsessive', as it was under Sukarno. Quite the opposite. Secondly, the emphasis on the 'hysterical', 'neurotic' character of Indonesian politics is grossly exaggerated. Thirdly, in the years that have passed since that article was written, the course of events has simply not borne out the predictions Mortimer then made. Instability has not significantly increased in Indonesia, her government has responded rather sensibly and coolly to the emergence of a powerful Vietnam as a potential rival for political influence in Southeast Asia, not hysterically at all, while its handling of relations with Papua New Guinea has not conformed with the pattern adumbrated in that article. One might justifiably ask whether the underlying theory was wrong, or whether the data was erroneous - or both?

Mortimer's account of Indonesia's lust for regional dominance does not rely directly on the analogy-with-fascism argument, although both rest upon the assumption that authoritarian regimes are potentially unstable (because by definition unrepresentative - although it is questionable whether more representative political systems are significantly more stable), so there is likely to be some sort of link between the politics of domestic instability and the politics of external assertiveness, particularly if frustrations over the failure of domestic policies really are generating neurotic attitudes and irrationality. But that has not been the case of Indonesia in the 1970s. Her leaders have felt they have been achieving results, despite all the criticisms that have been directed at their policies. Their actions seem to me to betoken a good deal of confidence (within the authoritarian framework of the political system, admittedly) rather than a sense of insecurity and hysteria.

Before concluding, I want to comment briefly on the 'Indonesia Raya' theory of Indonesian expansionism and offer some guesses about the likelihood of a recurrence of that stream of foreign policy thinking. I had to examine the influence of these doctrines closely in 1964-65 when I was trying to analyse the causes of konfrontasi and I have discussed the matter more fully in my book on that subject (MacKie 1974). Advocates of the 'Indonesia Raya' theory of expansionism, like Bernard Gordon, relied mainly on two sources of evidence. One was writing and speeches of the Indonesian politician-poet-historian, Mohammed Yamin, who was a great advocate of 'Indonesia Raya' and
inclined to wax eloquent on the theme of Indonesia’s historic greatness in the days of Srivijaya and Majapahit, when Indonesian language, trade and cultural influence allegedly extended as far afield as Madagascar to the west and Cambodia to the north. Yamin was a maverick, non-party minister in several of Sukarno’s cabinets and had a certain affinity of temperament and style with Sukarno, insofar as both were romantics and rhetoricians with a strong sense of Indonesia’s historic destiny. He played an active part early in the campaign to recover Irian Jaya. But neither he nor his ideas played any great part in the konfrontasi campaign, for Yamin died shortly before it began to develop and Sukarno never made use of the historic appeal to ‘Indonesia Raya’ themes in his speeches on the subject of Malaysia. Nor did any other Indonesian public figure try to step into Yamin’s shoes in order to exploit the theme for its political mileage, a rather significant piece of evidence which advocates of the ‘Indonesia Raya’ theory overlooked. Presumably there was not much mileage in it. Yamin was very much sui generis and his political influence depended more on his proximity to Sukarno than the intrinsic appeal of his doctrines (Mackie 1974:21-23).

The other piece of evidence used in support of the ‘Indonesia Raya’ theory was the debate that took place in June 1945 in the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence on what the future boundaries of independent Indonesia should be. Yamin played a prominent part in this debate, arguing that ‘the areas which should be included in Indonesian territory are those which have given birth to Indonesian people; the motherland of a people will be transformed into the territory of a State’. Thus Indonesia should consist not only of the former Netherlands Indies, including West New Guinea, but also the whole of Timor and North Borneo and Malaya, including the four northern states of Malaya which the Japanese had transferred to Thailand. Sukarno supported Yamin’s formulation (although on rather different grounds) against the more cautious arguments of realists like Mohammed Hatta and Haji Agus Salim; and the Yamin-Sukarno view carried the day when it came to a vote. But the debate had no practical consequences, for when the Indonesian leaders proclaimed the independence of their country in August 1945 they were so hard-pressed by events that they neglected even a commitment they had earlier given a group of Malayan revolutionaries to include Malaya in the anti-colonial struggle. Twenty years later the Malaysians quoted the 1945 debates extensively for propaganda purposes as evidence of Indone-
sian territorial ambitions (Department of Information, Malaysia 1964) but that assertion does not really stand up to serious critical scrutiny.

It is not inconceivable, of course, that at some point in the future another Yamin or Sukarno will emerge in Indonesia and try to exploit nationalist sentiments on the basis of an appeal to historic greatness. The teaching of Indonesian history and Indonesian patriotism in the schools, military academies and indoctrination courses almost certainly continues to incorporate some elements of Yaminesque fantasy about the past which could in appropriate circumstances be nurtured as the basis for a kind of reviver movement. But one could say that of most countries in the world. Patriotism, they say, is the last refuge of scoundrels. Logically, however, the weakness of theories about expansionist tendencies which are based on predictions about how a country might one day react is that they can neither be confirmed nor refuted by testable evidence. That being the case, they are virtually useless.

My own guess is that Indonesia, like China and Vietnam, will continue to be concerned to ensure that developments she considers adverse to her interests will not occur around her immediate peripheries. She will also, no doubt, seek to play a prominent part in the politics of the ASEAN region. But these are perfectly legitimate objectives, provided they are pursued by legitimate means. They are not in themselves evidence of a desire for aggrandizement of either power or territory. There may indeed be aspects of Indonesian nationalism and of the style of Indonesian politics which outsiders find repugnant or frightening, but to infer that this is evidence of aggressive intent is to oversimplify absurdly. One could easily imagine a state of political instability developing, in which Sukarnoesque policies of militantly radical nationalism and assertive foreign policies could conceivably recur, the implications of which could be alarming for Australia and Papua New Guinea. But the dynamics of that kind of politics entail something very different from the dynamics of crude 'expansionism'.

It has been put to me that even if my rejection of the appropriateness of the term 'expansionism' is accepted, we can hardly be surprised that many people in Papua New Guinea feel apprehensive about their country's future when they contemplate Indonesia's foreign policy

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6 An intriguing recent manifestation of this sort of subterranean survival of 'Indonesia Raya' sentiment is Rahasia (1975).
record. For she has on several occasions had no compunction about resorting to force and pursuing policies which could be described as both interventionist and aggressive. Moreover, her governments have been inclined to claim that what happens in neighbouring countries is a matter of direct concern to them. And they might do so yet again if there were to be a collapse of governmental authority in Papua New Guinea in circumstances which Indonesia regards as entailing some potential threat to her control over her eastern islands. Particularly if Indonesia herself were to subside back into an era of political and social instability reminiscent of the late Sukarno era, the possibility of a reversion to more assertive, interventionist foreign policies could not be ruled out of consideration.

These points can hardly be denied, yet there are several strong reasons for believing that Papua New Guinea is most unlikely to become a target for Indonesian aggression in such circumstances. All the other episodes we have been considering here had to do with the process of decolonization and the redrawing of the frontiers created by colonialism. The claims made to Irian Jaya and East Timor were to that extent *sui generis*. (*Konfrontasi* was also in part a response to the decolonization process, but in that case no claim was made to Sarawak or Sabah.) Neither in Irian Jaya nor in East Timor had the decolonization process been completed and international recognition through the UN achieved for a new and independent state; nor was there in either case much effective international support for such an outcome, for the principle of self-determination cannot always be sustained in the course of the decolonization process, as Bougainville and Papua Besena have discovered. But once the independence of a former colony has been achieved and recognized internationally, challenges to its sovereignty are quite another matter. Moreover, as time passes, the new map of the post-colonial world tends to achieve firmer acceptance. To that extent, the situation of Papua New Guinea is radically different from that of Irian Jaya and East Timor.

For ten years Papua New Guinea has enjoyed recognition, by Indonesia and the rest of the world, as an independent and sovereign state. So it would be extremely difficult and embarrassing for any Indonesian government to challenge its right to independence and full national sovereignty. President Suharto has visited Papua New Guinea, as have Indonesian foreign ministers and numerous other officials. The Indonesian government has clearly accepted the *status quo* there. Indonesians are not casting covetous eyes on Papua New
Guinea. They would be concerned if Papua New Guinea crumbled into anarchy or suffered any serious secessionist challenges, but it is probably true to say, as Mortimer argued, that they would prefer to see Australia intervene in that case to maintain the status quo, rather than intervene themselves. That is hardly a sign of expansionist ambitions. As anyone who has ever canvassed the matter in Jakarta will attest, Indonesian officials give very little attention to Papua New Guinea and basically just do not want to be burdened with additional problems, worry and expense in that quarter. Irian Jaya and Timor have already caused them more than enough already. They have required special financial allocations, which have been a cause of resentment in other provinces. Unless there is a reversion to quite serious instability and irrationality in Indonesian politics, as in the late Sukarno era (which seems an unlikely contingency, as of 1985), I see no reason for Papua New Guinea to feel vulnerable to annexationist designs in Jakarta.

Finally, something more needs to be said about the subject of the transmigration in Irian Jaya and the lebensraum argument - that is, its relationship to the problem of overpopulation in Java. It must be stressed that the solutions to Java’s population problem do not depend on transmigration programmes to the Outer Islands and the opening up of more land for Javanese farmers to settle on. The long-term solutions lie in the direction of effective family planning and the creation of off-farm job opportunities in Java itself. Since the birth rate in Java is now declining rapidly and non-farm employment is steadily increasing (although still not as rapidly as we might wish), there is a reasonable chance that these solutions will prove adequate over the next generation or so. Transmigration has been much discussed as an outlet for Java’s excess population since around 1900 - precisely because neither of those alternative solutions appeared feasible; only in the 1970s did they begin to do so. Yet Indonesia’s transmigration schemes never succeeded in shifting really large numbers out of Java until the last five or six years because of the sheer costs of opening up new land and resettling people. Part of the problem (until very recently) was also that it was difficult to persuade even landless and poor villagers in Java to move to the other islands, even just across the Sunda Straits to South Sumatra. Between 1950 and 1983, the total number of transmigrants, mostly to nearby South Sumatra, was only two million, that is, on average, 65,000 per annum. Considering that the annual increase of Java’s population has been nearly two million over the past five years, it can be seen that transmigration is likely to provide only marginal relief to
the basic problem of population increase there. Other processes and mechanisms are providing the more important solutions within Java. Even the quite substantial expansion of the programme over the last five years (with World Bank funding) has not radically changed this state of affairs. The rationale behind the programme these days seems to be as much to promote the opening up of unutilized areas in Kalimantan, Sumatra, Sulawesi and Irian Jaya as to relieve population pressure in Java, although in some districts it may do that to a small extent. I wish the Indonesian authorities could be persuaded that transmigration schemes involving Irian Jaya result in little real relief to the population problem and high costs in terms of the socio-cultural frictions entailed. But there is still an almost doctrinaire commitment to transmigration on basically Malthusian grounds. (See Arndt’s analysis below.)

Another serious demographic problem arising in Irian Jaya has derived, in fact, not from the government sponsored transmigration programme but from the spontaneous migration of Buginese and Moluccans in response to the opportunities they have perceived to earn a better living there. This is a response, in short, to pull-factors rather than push-factors. Relatively few of them are farmers making demands upon the land of the indigenes, as far as I am aware. There are reasons for concern over the political and socio-economic consequences of this flow of non-Melanesian immigrants into Irian Jaya, as Peter Hastings has frequently emphasized. It almost certainly means that in the course of the next few decades the Melanesian inhabitants of Irian Jaya will be outnumbered by ‘other Indonesian’ ethnic types. The tensions likely to be generated by this process will undoubtedly be a cause for concern in Papua New Guinea. But it hardly amounts to a process of crude territorial expansionism. There is no reason, in principle, why it cannot be stopped at the border (as it is, with minor exceptions, on Indonesia’s borders with East Malaysia and the Philippines), although that might become administratively more difficult if the population densities change dramatically. It is a process which will need to be carefully watched, analyzed and understood by the Papua New Guinea government - but it is not, in itself, evidence of sinister or immutable expansionist intent.
CHAPTER 5

EAST OF THE BORDER: IRIAN JAYA AND THE BORDER IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLITICS*

R.J. May

Over the years the Papua New Guinea government has made abundantly clear its unqualified acceptance of Indonesia's sovereignty in Irian Jaya and of the corollary that Indonesia's action against dissident elements in the province is a matter of internal policy. At the same time, there has been widespread recognition of an underlying conflict between Papua New Guinea's official policy, dictated by the political reality of the situation, and the fundamental sympathies of many Papua New Guineans for their Melanesian neighbours, sympathies which have been made explicit on occasion even by those who have occupied the highest levels of government. In an earlier paper (May 1979a) I referred to this as a tension between public attitudes and private feelings. Such tension has been exacerbated over the past decade by the generally high-handed and often arrogant position Indonesia has adopted in its dealings with Papua New Guinea. In recent years the two countries have developed administrative arrangements and diplomatic relationships designed to cope with the problems generated by the border but these have not significantly improved the situation and in 1984 a massive movement of Irianese across the border into Papua New Guinea raised the prominence of the issue to a new level in Papua New Guinea's domestic and foreign policy. Moreover, an apparent increase in activity by the OPM, which many observers were prepared effectively to write off in 1978-79, and the extent of planned transmigration to Irian Jaya, suggest that the new salience of

* This paper updates my earlier paper, 'Living with a lion' (May 1979a) and for the period up to 1979 draws heavily on it.
the border may be irreversible.

The object of this paper is to describe Papua New Guinea’s handling of the border issue, in a historical context, and to examine some of the domestic political forces which affect official policy.

The colonial legacy

Until well into the 1960s, within Papua New Guinea the concern over the West New Guinea issue was largely that of Australian colonial officials and an already slightly paranoid expatriate business and planter community.

The concern of Australian officials was for the most part a reflection of the Australian government’s attitude toward West New Guinea. Up till the end of the 1950s this attitude was dominated by Australia’s perception of the importance of the island to Australia’s security. The Australian government supported Holland in its denial of Indonesia’s territorial claims to West New Guinea, it established a number of new patrol posts in the border areas, and it entered into agreements for administrative cooperation between Dutch and Australian officials in the two territories, particularly in matters of joint concern such as health and quarantine.

The announcement in 1959 that Australia would recognize any peaceful agreement between Holland and Indonesia on the West New Guinea issue gave the first indication of a change in policy in favour of Indonesia, anticipating Australia’s acceptance of the transfer of sovereignty in 1962. Notwithstanding this, relations between Australia and Indonesia continued to deteriorate during the first half of the 1960s and Australian fears of a possible Indonesian invasion of Papua New Guinea resulted in a dramatic increase in defence spending in Papua New Guinea and a substantial outlay on airstrips, wharves and other infrastructure in the border areas.

The immediate impact of the transfer of sovereignty was an inflow

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1 OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka, or Operasi Papua Merdeka - Free Papua Movement) is used here as a shorthand term to describe the various organizational and factional components of the West Papua nationalist movement - what Indonesian official sources generally refer to as gerakan pengacau liar (GPL), ‘wild terrorist gangs’. For a more detailed discussion see Osborne’s contribution to this volume.

2 A more detailed account of the period up to 1969 is to be found in Verrier (1976: chapter 11), from which this section has drawn. Also see Hasluck (1976: chapter 30) for an ‘inside’ view of the period.
of West Papuan nationalists into Papua New Guinea. As far as possible the Australian administration dealt with these crossings as though they were traditional movements and encouraged the border crossers to return, but a small number was granted permissive residency. With the growing resistance to Indonesian rule in West New Guinea from 1965, movement into Papua New Guinea increased sharply. There was, moreover, a number of border incidents as Indonesian patrols pursued Irianese across the border. The Australian response has been well summarized by Verrier (1976:366-367):

Along with the troubles in WNG as a whole, the Australian Government played this down and, from 1967, to avoid embarrassing Indonesia, took a tougher line on border crossing even of the traditional kind which had been tolerated in the past.

She adds

Contrary to official public statements the majority of Irianese who crossed the border in 1968 and 1969 undoubtedly did so for political reasons, just as most of them were undoubtedly sent back for political reasons. In addition there is no doubt that Irianese dissident activity directed against Indonesia had a base in the bush camps on the Australian side of the international border. One result was a number of border incidents of potentially serious proportion, and yet another was the creation of liaison arrangements between Australia and Indonesia to resolve them.

The anxieties of the expatriate population during the 1950s and early 1960s are recorded in the pages of the South Pacific Post (which maintained a regular coverage of events in West Irian throughout the 1960s) and the debates of the Legislative Council. They urged support for the Dutch position until it became obvious that this was a lost cause and they used the spectre of an Indonesian invasion to gain support for a Melanesian Federation and for proposals that Papua New Guinea become a seventh state of Australia. These anxieties were pungently expressed in 1962 by the president of the Highlands Farmers' and Settlers' Association, Ian Downs:

...it is not our intention to deliver the Highlands people so recently won to civilisation into the hands of the decadent, degenerate Indonesian bandits (quoted in Bettison, Hughes and van der Veur 1965:33).
Paradoxically, considering the relative levels of social and economic development in the two territories, in 1962 there was not in Papua New Guinea, as there was in West New Guinea, a conspicuous nationalist elite. Hence the reaction from within Papua New Guinea to the transfer of sovereignty in that year was almost entirely an expatriate reaction. However in January 1962 delegates to a local government council conference in Port Moresby passed a resolution against an Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea; in June 1962 John Guise told Papua New Guinea’s Legislative Council that his electorate had asked him to express concern over the fate of West New Guinea and that he supported an immediate referendum in West New Guinea, and in August (following a meeting of the South Pacific Commission) Guise was one of three Papua New Guinean signatories to a letter sent to the secretary-general of the United Nations criticizing the UN’s handling of the question.

During the second half of the 1960s the situation changed quite profoundly; indeed Verrier (1976:369) has suggested that the West New Guinea dispute was a catalyst in the emergence of Papua New Guinean nationalism in the 1960s and has commented further (ibid.:200) that

In the unprecedented flurry of activity which took place in PNG [in the 1960s] largely because of Australia’s own fears of Indonesia, those fears were firmly implanted in the minds of PNG’s first elite where they were to remain when for Australia they had gone.

In a review of Australian administration in Papua New Guinea from 1951 to 1963 former Territories minister Hasluck has written (1976:372), ‘My impression was that most of the indigenous people in our Territory who were at all aware of the events were anti-Indonesian in sentiment’. In 1965, with Irianese refugees flowing into the Sepik and Western provinces in large numbers, and Australian officials putting pressure on them to return, national members of the first House of Assembly appealed for sympathetic consideration of Irianese pleas for asylum and demanded a clear policy on the refugee issue (House of Assembly Debates [HAD] I(6):924-925, 31 August 1965). One of the most prominent spokesmen for the Irianese was the member for Upper Sepik Open, Wegra Kenu. Kenu, from Yako village (where the Administration had recently purchased land for the resettlement of refugees), had been to school in Hollandia and had relatives on both sides of the border. Others included Paul Langro (member for West
Sepik Open, who later became deputy leader of the opposition and opposition spokesman on foreign affairs) and Guise, who had become leader of the elected members of the House. In the same year, Guise and United Party leader Mathias Toliman, attending a UN meeting in New York, spoke with the UN secretary-general and demanded that the ‘Act of Free Choice’ be a true referendum (Verrier 1976:385).

As the ‘Act of Free Choice’ approached, activity along the border intensified. By the end of 1968 about 1200 refugees were reported to have crossed and over 200 were granted pemissive residency. In November 1968, in response to repeated questioning of Administration policy on the border (principally by former missionary, Percy Chatterton), the secretary for law told the House that in view of the rapid build-up of Irianese camps on the Papua New Guinea side of the border over the past few weeks, ‘together with indications that the camps were focal points for political activity’, the Administration had informed the refugees that they must return to the Irian Jaya side of the border; near Skotiau a shelter had been destroyed ‘owing to its insanitary condition’ (HAD II(3):589-590, 20 November 1968). Five days later the member for East Sepik Regional, Michael Somare, moved ‘That this House expresses its sympathy with the plight of the West Irianese refugees in the Territory and urges the Administration to treat them with every consideration’. Somare was supported by Chatterton but official members attacked the motion as implying criticism of the Administration’s already liberal policy and it was defeated (HAD II(3):671-674, 25 November 1968).

In June there was a further debate on the Irian Jaya situation, occasioned by an official statement following border violations by Indonesian troops at Wutung and Kwari. Chatterton successfully moved an amendment to the statement, expressing dismay that the UN was ‘not prepared to insist on the holding of a genuine act of free choice’ and requesting the Australian government to transmit the motion to the UN. During the debate a number of members expressed sympathy with their Melanesian brothers but, interestingly, their ire was directed not so much at Indonesia (several specifically said they had no dispute with Indonesia) as at the UN; members were quick to point out that though the UN had thought fit to criticize the conduct of the elections in Papua New Guinea in 1968 it was conspicuously silent.

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on the denial of free choice to the Irianese.

In May 1969 about five hundred students, church leaders and others staged a march through the streets of Port Moresby, following a forum at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG), and a petition was presented to the Administrator protesting against the Australian government's tacit support of Indonesia.

After the 'Act of Free Choice' there were numerous complaints, expressed in the House of Assembly and through letters to the Post-Courier, that the Australian administration was putting pressure on refugees to return to Irian Jaya.

The reaction of Papua New Guineans to the West New Guinea question in this period was a complex of at least three elements. In the first place there was a genuine sympathy for the position of these fellow Melanesian people; as no lesser person than Michael Somare said in 1969, 'We are the same people...' (HAD II(5):1346, 25 June 1969). This sympathy increased as the evidence of Indonesian repression in Irian Jaya mounted and as a growing number of Irianese took up residence in Papua New Guinea and brought stories of repression and persecution. Secondly, the way in which not only the Dutch but also the United States, Australia and in turn the United Nations capitulated to Indonesia's display of truculence caused concern among the more thoughtful members of Papua New Guinea's elite. This was forcefully expressed by Chatterton at the UPNG forum in 1969 (as recorded in Nilaidat 2(2)): 'If the United Nations rats in West Irian now, it may well be that in a few years time it will rat in East Irian'. It was also a recurrent theme in comments in the House of Assembly and clearly lay behind some early Papua New Guinean support for seventh statehood. Finally, expressions of support for self-determination in West New Guinea were evidence of the emerging nationalism in Papua New Guinea during the 1960s. By expressing sympathy for the Irianese - particularly when official policy was actively to discourage such expression - and by criticizing Australia for its lack of moral fortitude, Papua New Guineans were serving notice on the Australian colonial regime of their own demands for self-determination.

Even at this stage, however, Papua New Guinean sympathy for

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4 This was particularly evident during the June 1969 House of Assembly debate. Shortly before, Papua New Guinean MHAs visiting Australia had spoken about the coming 'Act of Free Choice' in Irian Jaya and had been publicly rebuked by External Territories minister Barnes (South Pacific Post 23 May 1969).
the plight of the Irianese was not without reservation. In 1965 Kenu (1965-66:10-12) had expressed some fears about the inflow of people from West Irian; in 1968 Somare, while expressing sympathy for them, said, ‘We must put them in different areas so that they cannot plan unrest’ (HAD II(3):671, 25 November 1968), and in 1970 the member for Maprik Open, Pita Lus, told the House, ‘We do not want these refugees to come here and make trouble’ (HAD II(12):3709, 19 November 1970). More significantly, at the UPNG forum in 1969 Albert Maori Kiki disappointed students by refusing to commit the Pangu Pati on the West Irian question, stressing the need, on security grounds, to see Indonesia as a friend, and in the House of Assembly Pangu member Tony Voutas spoke of the need to maintain a stable government in Indonesia even at the expense of ‘the human rights of the minority in West Irian’ (HAD II(5):1439, 27 June 1969).

The Irian Jaya question in Papua New Guinea 1972-1977

Although formal responsibility for Papua New Guinea’s foreign policy remained with the Australian government until Papua New Guinea’s independence in September 1975, in practice the Somare government began to have a substantial say in policy formulation from its accession to office in 1972.

On the question of Irian Jaya, as foreshadowed in the comments of Kiki and Voutas, the coalition government did not seek to change the broad policy of the Australian government - indeed there were strong suggestions in 1972, 1973 and 1974 that the Somare government was taking a much tougher line on Irianese refugees than had the colonial administration before it (see, for example, Age 21 August 1972, 23 July 1973; cable from Australian High Commissioner 6 March 1974, reproduced in Kabar Seberang 8/9, 1981:155-157). Responding to questions about his government’s decision in July 1972 to deport eight Irianese border crossers, Somare was quoted as saying that acceptance of Irianese refugees with OPM sympathies could affect relations with Indonesia (Age 21 August 1972; also see Post-Courier 17, 18 and 25 August 1972 and Sydney Morning Herald 18 August 1972); Australian External Territories minister Peacock, whose approval of the deportation was required, was reported to have commented ‘It is their country and they are entitled to determine who resides there’ (Australian Financial Review 18 August 1972).

In February 1973 Somare, on behalf of the Australian govern-
ment, signed an agreement with Indonesia which defined the location of the border. There was little debate on the subsequent authorizing legislation, the sole dissenting voice being that of Langro who was pointedly reminded by Somare 'that we have a population of only 2.5 million people while Indonesia has about 100 million people. When we see such a big population in the country bordering ours we must not create any disputes with Indonesia' (see HAD III(15):1831-1833, 1840-1844, 18, 19 June 1973). A further agreement, on administrative border arrangements, was signed in late 1973. This covered such matters as traditional land rights, traditional movement, health, quarantine and pollution, and liaison arrangements, which had been the subjects of early agreements, and an important new provision, the obligation of both parties to prevent the use of their respective territories for hostile activities against the other.

During the early 1970s border crossings continued, though on a much reduced scale, and the number of Irianese granted permissive residency increased. However, within Papua New Guinea popular interest in the Irian Jaya situation seems to have diminished as people became more preoccupied with maintaining internal harmony and with the general business of preparing for independence. In official statements, which provided the first outlines of the country's 'universalist' foreign policy, particular reference was made to the friendship and understanding which existed between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and it was acknowledged that 'Indonesia has shown understanding in our role of granting permissive residence to Irian Jaya refugees'.

But while in official statements the Papua New Guinea government was unreserved in its expressions of friendship towards Indonesia and its acceptance of Indonesian sovereignty over Irian Jaya, in statements outside diplomatic circles the constant reference to the relative size of populations and armed forces and to 'sleeping giants' and 'lions' and the occasional acknowledgement of Melanesian brotherhood, left little doubt that Papua New Guinea's position was dictated by expediency rather than sympathy. The situation was not improved by Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975.

It was perhaps this conflict between expediency and sympathy

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5 Address by the then chief minister (Michael Somare) to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, June 1974 (quoted in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 1976:17).
that prompted Kiki, as minister for Defence, Foreign Relations and Trade, in 1973 to initiate ‘secret diplomacy’ designed ‘to mediate between the rebels and the Indonesian Government and bring about conditions where the two could have come together for constructive consideration of the means of peaceful reintegration of the rebel groups into the Irianese community’ (Post-Courier 23 February 1976. This was the first public statement on the negotiations). Over a period of years, with the blessing of the Indonesian government, Papua New Guinean ministers and senior officials talked with rebel leaders from overseas and from the bush but they were unable to bring the Indonesians and the Irianese to the conference table, largely, according to Kiki, because of divisions within the rebel movement.

In 1976 the position of Irianese refugees again came into prominence. In February the Dutch-based Revolutionary Provisional Government of West Papua (RPG) issued a release claiming that 5,000 (later the figure became 15,000) Indonesian troops were involved in an offensive near the border in which napalm had been used and 1,605 villagers killed, and that Australian officers of the Pacific Islands Regiment had cooperated in sealing the border (Post-Courier 18 February 1976). The report was promptly denied by both Kiki and Somare and by the Defence Department but Somare was clearly angered by the publicity it had received and told a press conference that the government would prosecute Papua New Guineans caught actively supporting Irian Jaya freedom fighters and deport Irianese permissive residents supporting them. ‘We do not recognize rebels’, he said, ‘We recognize Indonesia’s sovereignty’ (Post-Courier 20 February 1976). In response to this, a spokesman for the Irianese community in Port Moresby issued a statement saying that ‘The threats of Government action against dissidents must not go unchallenged’, that the Irianese may be forced to seek Communist aid, and that they would make representations to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. However, after Kiki had accused the group of breaching the conditions of their

Papua New Guinea’s official concern over Indonesian intervention in East Timor was elegantly stated by Kiki in a speech to the UN General Assembly in September 1976 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 1976:47-48). After Somare’s visit to Indonesia in January 1977, however, the government adopted a more conciliatory line, describing the Timor situation ‘entirely as a domestic matter of Indonesia’ (Australian Foreign Affairs Record January 1977:47) and in December 1978 it opposed a UN resolution supporting self-determination for East Timor. For an account of popular reaction, see Samana (1976).
residency and threatened deportation the community's spokesman retracted and the subject was dropped (Post-Courier 26 February 1976).

Later in the same year the refugee issue again became a point of contention, this time as the result of an Indonesian press report. In December, shortly before a planned visit to Indonesia by Somare, Papua New Guinea's National Broadcasting Commission relayed a report from the official Indonesian newsagency ANTARA (apparently emanating from the Indonesian embassy in Port Moresby) that talks had begun between the Papua New Guinea and Indonesian governments over the extradition of five hundred Irianese residents in Papua New Guinea. Although the report was denied by Somare, the subject was raised as a matter of public importance in the National Parliament where several speakers criticized Indonesia and the UN, recalled the invasion of East Timor, and demanded independence for Irian Jaya. The member for Maprik Open, Pita Lus, told the House

....the United Nations is not doing its job to recognize the West Irian cause. I think it is made up of lazy buggers! If only this country could send me to the United Nations ... I would tell the United Nations to give West Irian its freedom

and the member for Manus, Michael Pondros, said 'If we cannot reach any agreement, we should go to war'. Nor were Indonesians likely to have taken much comfort from the assurances of Kiki that 'The West Irianese are our neighbours and friends .... The Government has no intention of selling our brothers' (National Parliamentary Debates (NPD) I(18):2400-2410, 9 December 1976).

Relations between the Papua New Guinea government and the Indonesian embassy in Port Moresby were still a little uneasy when in January 1977 the head of the RPG, Brigadier-General Seth Rumkorem, crossed into Papua New Guinea and was flown to Port Moresby for talks with the government; the Indonesian embassy 'expressed concern about the Government making available facilities to the rebels' (Post-Courier 6, 10 January 1977). And relations between the Papua New Guinea government and Irianese dissidents were not improved following reports that the liberation movement would use terrorism in the Pacific to gain recognition for its cause (Post-Courier 29 April 1977. The report was subsequently denied, see Post-Courier 3 May 1977).
The events of 1977-78 and ‘normalization’, 1979

Papua New Guinea-Indonesia relations continued to deteriorate from around May 1977 when hundreds of Irianese began crossing into the Western and Sandaun (West Sepik) provinces. The movement of Irianese across the border was known to be associated with an intensification of conflict between OPM sympathizers and Indonesian military forces in the period leading up to Indonesia’s national elections (see, for example, Canberra Times 31 May 1977). But when Kiki expressed concern at the border situation Indonesian foreign minister Malik told him, curtly, that the recent ‘tribal fighting in Irian Jaya was a domestic affair and that Indonesia would not tolerate those who attempted to exploit the tribal clashes for political purposes’ (Post-Courier 8, 13, 15 June 1977).

At the end of May 1977 there were reported to be over two hundred refugees at Suki in the Western Province and several hundred more at other points along the border. There were also reports (subsequently denied by intelligence sources) that a Papua New Guinean villager had been shot by an Indonesian patrol on the Papua New Guinea side of the border (Post-Courier 30 May 1977).

The government thus found itself in the uncomfortable position of having to reassure Indonesia that it was not providing a harbour for opponents of the Indonesian regime, while at the same time attempting to meet the considerable local pressures (including pressure from the representative of the UN High Commission for Refugees) to deal sympathetically with the border crossers and not to let itself be pushed around by Indonesia - and this at a time which the Post-Courier (3 June 1977) delicately referred to as ‘the sensitive pre-election phase’.

In June the secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Tony Siaguru, told reporters that the refugees had returned to Irian Jaya after being told of Papua New Guinea’s policy on border crossings (Post-Courier 2 June 1977). Irianese sympathizers, however, suspected that undue pressure had been put on the refugees and Langro, as deputy leader of the opposition, issued a statement accusing the Somare government of appeasement (Sydney Morning Herald 1 June 1977). During the ensuing elections the Somare government was frequently attacked for its handling of the Irian Jaya issue; among those who took up the issue were Langro, Pondros, Noel Levi (former Defence secretary who was a successful candidate in New Ireland, subsequently became minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade) and John Jaminan (former head of the security intelligence branch who was a
successful candidate in the East Sepik electorate of Yangoru-Saussia and became, for a while, opposition spokesman on foreign affairs).

Nor did Somare find, on his return to office in August, that the issue had gone away. During the second half of 1977 and early 1978 it became abundantly clear that what Malik had dismissed as ‘tribal clashes’ was in fact a series of widespread confrontations between Indonesian troops and Irianese dissidents. It was in this context that in November 1977 the minister for Defence, Louis Mona, informed Parliament that

Recently government policy has been to take a tougher line with all border crossers. People who enter Papua New Guinea illegally can now expect to be arrested and may be put in gaol or handed over to Indonesian authorities (NPD II(4):381, 10 November 1977).

During 1978 this situation became more complex and the government found itself squeezed on three sides: by the Indonesians, who sought a firm commitment against Irianese rebels; by an increasingly vocal group within the country which demanded sympathy towards Irianese freedom fighters; and by OPM leaders, who threatened militant action against Papua New Guinea if it attempted to close the border.

In April the government was embarrassed by the publication of an OPM press release naming the members of the newly appointed ministry of the de facto government of West Papua. Of the eighteen names on the list six were Papua New Guinea citizens, two were permissive residents, and two were serving gaol sentences for illegal entry but had given notice of their intentions to apply for political asylum. In a statement pending a full enquiry, the minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ebia Olewale, said that he viewed the matter with the ‘utmost gravity’ and threatened to cancel the entry permits of those named; ‘we will oppose any minority which seeks to involve Papua New Guinea in the domestic affairs of Indonesia’, he said (Post-Courier 19 April 1978). However this did not prevent the Indonesian embassy from making strong representations to the government and calling on the named rebels to declare their loyalties; moreover Indonesian first secretary Siregar was reported as accusing Papua New Guinea of having double standards and saying ‘If we wanted to invade Papua New Guinea we would do it now when Papua New Guinea is weak’ (Post-Courier 19, 26, 28 April 1978). The Indonesians also requested tighter
controls over journalists. Olewale reacted sharply to these pressures and was reported to have asked the Indonesian ambassador to consider reposting Siregar (Sydney Morning Herald 2 May 1978).

In the week following publication of the OPM cabinet list it was announced that Olewale, Mona and Defence Force Commander Diro had held talks in Port Moresby with OPM leaders Jacob Prai and Seth Rumkorem. Prai and Rumkorem were told to remove camps within the Sandaun Province or have them burnt (Post-Courier 28 April 1978, 1 May 1978; Age 29 April 1978). According to the Post-Courier (28 April 1978), 'They were told PNG did not want to act against 'other Melanesians', but, at the same time, the Government could not afford a fall out with Indonesia'. Journalist Mark Baker described the ultimatum as 'the strongest stand PNG has yet taken against the guerrillas' but reported that it had been firmly rejected (Age 29 April 1978).

In May Olewale made an official visit to Indonesia. Indonesian officials succeeded in communicating their doubts about the strength of Papua New Guinea's commitment to its obligations under the 1973 border arrangements and at the conclusion of his visit Olewale told reporters that Papua New Guinea was now mounting 'constant patrols' along the border (Post-Courier 26 May 1978; Sydney Morning Herald 18 May 1978).

Activity along the border further intensified in late May 1978 following the kidnapping of Indonesian officials by a rebel group south of Jayapura. At the end of the month the Post-Courier (31 May 1978) reported that a large-scale Indonesian military operation was in progress. Shortly after, Somare announced his government's decision to deploy additional troops and police along the northern sector of the boundary in order to prevent rebels from crossing; according to Olewale, any rebels encountered by Papua New Guinea border patrols would be dealt with in a 'Melanesian Way': they would be told to go back and if they refused they would be arrested (Post-Courier 13 June 1978). However, although there was liaison between the two governments, Papua New Guinea firmly resisted repeated Indonesian requests for joint patrols (see Post-Courier 12, 13, 21 June 1978).

In the following weeks there was at least one major border incursion by an Indonesian patrol which was reported to have raided a Papua New Guinea village and destroyed gardens, bringing an official protest from the Papua New Guinea government (Post-Courier 22, 23 June 1978; Age 22, 25 July 1978). Early in July Indonesian operations escalated; villages were strafed and plastic bombs dropped in the bor-
der area. In Papua New Guinea the government expressed to the Indonesian ambassador its fears for the safety of Papua New Guinea citizens near the border but requests to Indonesia to confine bombing raids to an area not less than 8 km from the border were refused. Conscious of the possibility of an accidental clash between Indonesian and Papua New Guinea patrols, the Papua New Guinea government began withdrawing its troops from the area. Once again hundreds of Irianese villagers moved across the order into Papua New Guinea. At a meeting of the UPNG Law Faculty Papua New Guinea was described, somewhat dramatically, as 'slowly entering a state of war with Indonesia' (Post-Courier 7 July 1978). In September, however, the Indonesian hostages were released and Indonesia began to scale down its military operations.

On top of this, the arrest of Prai and Otto Ondowame in the Sandaun Province in late September pleased Indonesia but provided an additional headache for the Papua New Guinea government - especially when the persistent Siregar announced (incorrectly, as it turned out) that Indonesia would seek their extradition to stand trial for treason. The two were charged as illegal immigrants and, having been denied permissive residency in Papua New Guinea and threatened with repatriation to Indonesia (Post-Courier 29 January 1979), they were eventually granted asylum in Sweden in March 1979, along with three other OPM leaders.

A few weeks later, a statement by Indonesia's Defence minister, General Jusuf gave notice of a shift in Indonesia's policy towards Irianese dissidents; under a new 'smiling policy' it would not be necessary for the army to pursue rebels (Far Eastern Economic Review 24 November 1978; Sydney Morning Herald 12 December 1978). In December the new policy was outlined to Papua New Guinean ministers during an official visit to Papua New Guinea by Indonesia's foreign minister, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, who praised the Papua New Guinea government for its 'restraint and good leadership' in cooperating with Indonesia (Post-Courier 12 December 1978; Sydney Morning Herald 12 December 1978).
With the scaling down of military operations and a certain amount of goodwill generated by Mochtar’s visit, at the end of 1978 relations between the two countries seemed to be taking a definite turn for the better. Shortly after Mochtar’s visit the two governments began a series of discussions preliminary to the renewal of the 1973 border agreement and in March 1979 the first round of these discussions was concluded without significant disagreement. The atmosphere of renewed cordiality even survived the publication, in February, of a document purporting to be a plan for an Indonesian takeover of Papua New Guinea (Nation Review 1 February 1979; Post-Courier 8, 12 February 1979). Papua New Guinea security experts dismissed the document as a fake and there was virtually no public discussion of it.

In June 1979, amidst what was described (Post-Courier 5 June 1979) as the tightest security operation Papua New Guinea had ever provided for a visitor (it included the use of a bullet-proof limousine lent by the Australian government), Papua New Guinea received a brief visit from President Suharto. The Indonesian president told his hosts that he appreciated the present Papua New Guinea stand, and his minister co-ordinator for political and security affairs gave Papua New Guinea a further assurance that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions (Post-Courier 7 June 1979). A technical cooperation treaty was signed during the visit and it was reported that the new border agreement would be finalized soon and ‘would ensure improved quality of life of people living along the common border and encourage development programmes in the area’ (ibid.). Opposition leader Iambakey Okuk, who had become a vocal critic of the government’s handling of the border issue in 1978, presented the Indonesian president with a submission in which (as reported in Post-Courier 6 June 1979) he urged Indonesia to consider large scale investment in Papua New Guinea and offered the interesting suggestion that massive Indonesian aid would help Papua New Guinea overcome some of its domestic problems.

Renegotiation of the border agreement continued during 1979; drafting was completed in late July and the agreement signed in Jakarta in December. Amongst the topics covered in the new agreement were preservation of customary rights across the border, cooperation in the development of the border areas, upgrading of quarantine and health controls, and improved liaison procedures for border administration; it was also agreed to establish a joint border committee. Other developments in late 1979 included an announcement that
the police communications network along the border was to be upgraded as part of the border administration programme, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the two countries which formalized arrangements to improve communications across the border. Details of Papua New Guinea's border development programme, foreshadowed in earlier talks, were released as part of the 1980-83 National Public Expenditure Plan (NPEP) in December; provision was made for expenditure of K4.45 million over the four years to 1983, commencing with K0.8 million for projects in West Sepik and K0.6 for projects in Western Province in 1980. There was, however, some implicit irony in the NPEP's provision for development projects on the Papua New Guinea side of the border, in order, in part, 'to minimise the risk of major influxes of refugees and dissident activity' (National Planning Office 1979:III, italics added).

Towards the end of 1979, also, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reported that the number of border crossers had increased in 1979 and that 'although the actual number of people crossing ... was not high, they were becoming a burden to the PNG Government' (Post-Courier 29 November 1979). The deportation of several Irianese, including six involved in a fight at Wabo camp in December, was widely interpreted as an indication that the government was taking a tougher stand on border crossers (for example see Post-Courier 14 December 1979), and this appeared to be confirmed in a statement by Foreign Affairs minister Olewale on his return from Indonesia in December 1979: the government 'would continue to respect the interests of Irian Jayans with a genuine basis for seeking political asylum' but would not accept people who acted against the security of either Indonesia or Papua New Guinea or who only sought employment or schooling (Post-Courier 21 December 1979). The following month the Black Brothers, an Irianese rock group, were ordered to leave after overstaying their visa, despite considerable popular support for them. (The group subsequently sought asylum in Holland and after five years there took up residence in Vanuatu.)

Change of government: 1980-82

Late in 1978 there had been a falling out within Papua New Guinea's coalition government, which took Julius Chan and his People's Progress Party (PPP) across to the opposition. Fourteen months later two other prominent members of the coalition left the government, forming a new party, the Melanesian Alliance, and in
March 1980 with their support a no-confidence motion was carried against the Somare government. Chan became prime minister as the head of a National Alliance coalition, with Okuk as his deputy.

Despite earlier criticism of the Somare government's handling of the border issue by Okuk, the change of government did not bring any significant change in government policy or attitudes (see, for example, the report of a statement in parliament, *Post-Courier* 25 June 1980). If anything, there was evidence that the Chan government intended to take a harder line on border crossers. In December 1980 Prime Minister Chan and Foreign Affairs minister Noel Levi paid an official visit to Indonesia, where *inter alia* they signed a maritime boundaries agreement and, as appears to be mandatory upon visiting Papua New Guinea dignitaries, visited a small arms factory in Bandung. Chan was reported to have told the Indonesians that he was 'not in the least concerned or suspicious that Indonesia might try to expand its territory into PNG' and that 'tensions which had been significant ... in the past were no longer significant, and should decrease [with development] in future'. For his part, Mr Suharto 'was reported to have praised PNG's action in support of the Government of Vanuatu in putting down the rebellion [in Santo] (*Post-Courier* 15 December 1980).

However, if things appeared to go smoothly for Chan in Indonesia they did not go so well at home. In a statement made prior to his departure, Chan was quoted as saying that his government did not recognize the OPM and that 'if there was a step up in guerilla activities in the border region ... PNG would feel bound to consider military action after consultation with Indonesian authorities' (*Post-Courier* 10 December 1980; the *Post-Courier* paraphrased this as 'PNG troops would be sent to crush OPM's guerilla activities'. Similarly see *Canberra Times* 6 December 1980). This statement drew a sharp reaction in Papua New Guinea: the national executive of Chan's coalition partner, the Melanesian Alliance, strongly criticized the prime minister and 'declared its support for the Irian Jaya freedom movement' (*Post-Courier* 12 December 1980) (though, significantly, the party's parliamentary leaders Fr John Momis and John Kaputin, were away at the time); and opposition leader Somare called on Chan and Levi, on their return, to explain their government's attitude to the OPM (*Post-Courier* 15 December 1980). Responding, Chan denied that he had threatened force against Irianese, and told reporters that though he only had Indonesia's word that it was not going to pursue an expansionist policy in the Pacific, 'he thought he sensed a new [sic] non-aggressive stance'
(Post-Courier 16 December 1980); he also sought an early meeting with Melanesian Alliance leaders.

Late 1980-early 1981 also saw an apparent further hardening in the government’s attitude to border crossers. In December 1980 a group of over one hundred crossers was repatriated after being given food and medical treatment and the new Foreign Affairs and Trade secretary Paulius Matane took the opportunity to observe that Papua New Guinea and Indonesia were working towards the establishment of a joint border committee to coordinate development on the border in order to prevent such mass migrations (Post-Courier 22 December 1980). The following month, in giving notice of the government’s intention to close refugee camps at Yako and Wabo, Matane reiterated the view that as development got under way ‘we can reasonably expect this problem [border crossing] to disappear’; those presently in the camps would be given permissive residency or sent back to Irian Jaya, the secretary said, but future border crossers would be immediately sent back to Irian Jaya (Post-Courier 21 January 1981).

The Post-Courier reported (20 January 1981): ‘It is understood the Government believes the flow of ‘genuine refugees’ across the border has significantly declined’.

Against this background, in February 1981 the first meeting of the Joint Border Committee, created under the 1979 border agreement, was held in Jakarta. The meeting, which was judged a success, discussed infrastructure development, communications, trade and cultural exchange (Post-Courier 5 February 1981).

In retrospect, relations between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia probably reached a highpoint around this time. The tense atmosphere which prevailed during most of 1977-78 appeared to have abated; the two governments had exchanged cordial official visits; a new border agreement had been successfully negotiated and administrative arrangements were in hand for more effective control of the border; Papua New Guinea’s acceptance of Indonesian sovereignty in Irian Jaya and its unwillingness to allow the OPM to operate on Papua New Guinean soil had been reconfirmed following a change of government; Indonesia had given a further reassurance that it had no expansionist ambitions, and there were hopes that a joint border development programme would gradually remove the incentive to border crossing.

This is not to say that there were not problems. For one, although the border never became a partisan issue in Papua New Guinea’s
domestic politics, it remained a subject about which successive governments were made to feel a need periodically to defend their record. For another, there was at least one further border incursion, in July 1980 when a party of Indonesian police crossed into Western Province in pursuit of ‘an escaped family’ (*Post-Courier* 7, 8 July 1980). Thirdly, there was a protracted disagreement following a decision by Air Niugini, for economic reasons, to cut out a Jakarta stop-over on its flight to Singapore and to close its Jakarta office. In retaliation, Indonesia refused Air Niugini flyover rights, causing Transport minister Okuk, in turn, to cancel plans (part of a recently signed technical cooperation agreement) to have Papua New Guineans train at Indonesia’s Air Training College. Fourthly, there was a continued steady trickle of Irianese across the border into Papua New Guinea. But generally it was felt that the problems posed by the border were likely to diminish.

Towards the middle of 1981 the border issue appeared again to become more salient, and relations between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia to move into a new downward phase.

In April 1981 UPNG students, led by Student Representative Council (SRC) president Gabriel Ramoi (a West Sepik, who in 1982 was elected to the National Parliament), staged a solidarity march ‘to assess the public’s support for the West Papua freedom movement’, and approved a gift of K2000 to support the OPM (*Post-Courier* 2 April 1981). The following month a Melanesian Solidarity Week was organized at UPNG. As part of this a South Pacific Human Rights Tribunal was convened to consider charges that Indonesia had violated international laws on human rights. Members of the self-appointed tribunal included acting national court judge Bernard Narokobi, East Sepik politician and sometime opposition foreign-affairs spokesman Tony Bais, National Cultural Council chairman Moi Avei, church leader Dick Avi, and the UPNG’s dean of Law, Sao Gabi. Over several days the tribunal heard from Irianese witnesses accounts of executions, torture, political indoctrination and denial of free speech (see *Post-Courier* reports 28, 29 May and 1, 5-6 June 1981). The Indonesian embassy declined an invitation to attend the tribunal and appears to have put pressure on the Papua New Guinea government to stop the hearings. The incident clearly did cause some embarrassment to the government, and foreign minister Levi said the tribunal could jeopardize the government’s acceptance of Irianese refugees; however prime minister Chan was reported as saying, ‘It is allowed by PNG.
authorities because it is an expression of our people’s rights to express themselves’ (Post-Courier 29 May 1981).

In June it became known that three Irianese refugees who had been involved in the Human Rights Tribunal - including former Irian Jaya governor Eliezer Bonay, who had crossed to Papua New Guinea seeking asylum in 1979 - were to be deported. Two of them, Bonay and Dean Kafiar, left for Sweden early in July but the third, John Hamadi, who had been in Papua New Guinea since 1978 and whose mother was Papua New Guinean, was taken in by UPNG students who managed to conceal him from police and DFAT officials for several weeks. (As a result of this incident Ramoi was subsequently charged and convicted of harbouring an illegal immigrant.) The government’s deportation order came under strong criticism, amongst others from Bais. Notwithstanding this criticism, in late July another three Irianese, long-time residents in Papua New Guinea, were deported, this time back to Indonesia. A statement by Levi accused the three (Bob Kubia, Fred Pieger and Willie Jebleb) of being senior members of the Melanesian Socialist Party, in whose name approaches had been made to the USSR and Cuba for assistance to the OPM, and of ‘orchestrating ... recent armed clashes between OPM rebel factions’; he warned that ‘similar stern action’ would be taken against other permissive residents who breached the terms of their entry (Post-Courier 28, 30, 31 July 1981). Again the Chan government came under heavy criticism. Bais accused it of sending the three to their deaths, and the general secretary of the Melanesian Alliance, Michael Malenki, issued a statement saying that while his party respected the need to safeguard national security, ‘we call on the Foreign Affairs Department to stop being dictated to by Indonesia and come to grips with the need to be sensitive to the plight of Irian Jayans’ (Post-Courier 31 July 1981). But the protests were of no avail, and public interest in the fate of the refugees appears to have quickly faded.

In the latter part of 1981 reportage of border activities was taken up largely with accounts of clashes between rival OPM factions along the border. In late June supporters of a faction led by Elky Bemey were reported to have crossed into Sandaun Province and raided Papua New Guinea villages reputed to be sympathetic to the rival Rumkorem faction. Another raid occurred in the same area in August, in which several villagers were abducted, and there were reports that several OPM supporters had been killed in faction-fighting. More generally, there appears to have been an upsurge of OPM activity within
Papua New Guinea's foreign secretary, Paulias Matane, and Indonesia's ambassador to Papua New Guinea, Brigadier-General Imam Soepomo, leaving for an inspection visit to Suwampa village, Sandaun Province, following reports that Indonesian troops had harassed villagers (see p. 129). Photo—Post Courter.
Irian Jaya during 1981 (see, for example, *Canberra Times* 20 October 1981; *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 27 October 1981; *Bulletin* 15 December 1981), and with this came an increase in military activity in the province and a new escalation of border crossings. In September the *Post-Courier* carried an AAP report, quoting ANTARA newsagency, that the provincial military commander in Irian Jaya, Brigadier-General Santosa had declared that OPM rebels had not responded to the ‘smiling policy’ and that ‘All troublemakers at home and their supporters abroad should be eliminated’ (*Post-Courier* 8, 24 September 1981; *Niugini Nius* 8 September 1981).

In November foreign minister Levi tabled the government’s White Paper on Foreign Policy, the product of a foreign policy review initiated by the Somare government in 1979. In it the government observed that relations between the two countries had been marked by an increasing commitment to cooperation by both governments, while noting that such commitment had ‘not always been matched by public understanding’. The document also reaffirmed that, in recognition of public opinion in Papua New Guinea, it would not become involved in joint patrols, would not allow foreign forces to enter in ‘hot pursuit’, and would not insist that ‘genuine refugees’ return to the other side (*PNG Foreign Affairs Record* 1(4) 1982:41-43).

Apparently moved by developments in 1981, deputy prime minister Okuk responded to the White Paper with a statement in which he said that 99 per cent of educated Papua New Guineans supported the OPM, that ‘Indonesia must realize the people of Irian Jaya were Melanesians – not Indonesians’, and that Indonesia ‘should be ashamed that its own people were crossing the border to live in Papua New Guinea’ (*Age* 11 November 1981). The statement prompted a sharp response from Indonesia’s foreign minister Mochtar who warned Papua New Guinea not to take advantage of the ‘economic imbalance’ between Irian Jaya and Papua New Guinea (*Post-Courier* 26 November 1981). Not to be discouraged, in March 1982 the outspoken Okuk returned to the subject of the border: Papua New Guinea, he said, faced a growing threat from Irian Jaya. The threat came from a build-up of non-Melanesians in the province, and Indonesian border developments unmatched by Papua New Guinea (*Post-Courier* 23 March 1982). Levi dismissed Okuk’s statement as ‘sheer nonsense’ and ‘election bluff’; ‘We have excellent relations with Indonesia’, Levi said, ‘and they will continue’ (*Post-Courier* 24 March 1982). (This was, in fact, a slight exaggeration: in January the Papua New Guinea gov-
ernment had refused to renew the visas of two members of the non-diplomatic staff of the Indonesian embassy, who had arrived in the country on tourist visas and who, according to the *Times of PNG* 15 January 1982, had been engaged in espionage; in retaliation the Indonesian embassy in Port Moresby had closed down its visa section.) But Okuk persisted: under the headline 'Okuk: I won’t shut up!' he was reported as telling the UPNG branch of the National Party:

I believe you are fed up ... with a foreign policy which sells out our fellow Melanesians.... We complain about events in New Caledonia - yet we maintain a deafening silence about events in Irian Jaya (*Post-Courier* 2 April 1982).

The DFAT quickly dissociated the government from the views expressed by the deputy prime minister, but others thought his warning timely (see *Post-Courier* 5, 7, 12 April 1982). The discussion took a new direction, however, following the publication of an Indonesian embassy newsletter (*Indonesian Newsletter* No. 3/III/82). Under a heading 'A matter of understanding' the embassy presented a defence of transmigration to Irian Jaya, which concluded with a short homily whose object was not difficult to guess:

One has to understand the nature of international politics if one would become a leader of a certain nation, otherwise such a person will create disaster instead of developing peace and harmony between neighbouring countries.

The *Post-Courier* (29 April 1982) reported the newsletter on its front page, under the headline, 'Indonesia’s warning: shut up on Irian Jaya’ and the next day Okuk responded. In his usual forthright manner Okuk told the Indonesian embassy to stay out of the Papua New Guinea election:

The people of this nation do not respond kindly to thinly veiled warnings from foreign governments, or their embassies (*Post-Courier* 30 April 1982).

He went on to say that some years ago the Indonesian embassy had attempted to ‘win [his] favor’ and that other leading Papua New Guineans had ‘been ‘greased’ by highly-trained Indonesian officials’; the Indonesian embassy, he said, was ‘grossly over-staffed’ - ‘One must wonder what they all do’ - and a National Party government would make it very clear that embassies are ‘for diplomatic purposes only’.
Okuk was supported by a *Post-Courier* editorial (3 May 1982) which spoke of ‘a crude attempt by Indonesia to curb not only Mr Okuk’s freedom of speech, but everyone else’s, on matters Jakarta finds embarrassing’ and described as ‘ominous’, given the history of Indonesia’s relations with its neighbours, the reference to ‘creating disaster’. More significantly both Matane and Levi came in behind Okuk. Matane was reported to have told the Indonesian ambassador that the newsletter had created damage the two governments now would have to repair (*Post-Courier* 3 May 1982). Levi described the newsletter as undiplomatic and was reported as saying that the government would now move to ‘tighten up’ the border agreement at the next meeting of the joint border committee; specifically

He said PNG would press for amendments to the 1979 border agreement to outlaw settlement of non-Irianese in ‘clearly defined traditional zones’ (*Post-Courier* 5 May 1982).

Close on the heels of this (and on the eve of voting for the national elections) came reports that armed Indonesian troops had crossed the border into Papua New Guinea. In October 1981 an OPM group had made a raid on a sawmill at Holtekang south of Jayapura, taking fifty-eight hostages. Indonesian military operations had apparently resulted in the release of some of these hostages but seven months later about half were still being held, according to Indonesian intelligence on the Papua New Guinea side of the border. Without prior consultation, Indonesian patrols crossed into Papua New Guinea on three separate occasions between 14 and 22 May and in one instance Papua New Guinean villagers in Sandaun Province were questioned at gunpoint. Although Papua New Guinea’s leaders were by this time in the midst of campaigning for the national election, a meeting of the National Security Advisory Council was called and on 27 May an official protest was lodged with the Indonesian embassy. The same day a fourth incursion occurred. Levi expressed himself ‘deeply disturbed’ that Papua New Guinea’s sovereignty had been ‘so blatantly breached’ and said the incidents had the potential to severely damage relations; Defence minister Pepena said further incursions would be ‘dealt with accordingly’, and though Momis criticized ‘prominent leaders’ for ‘baiting our enemies’ (*Times of PNG* 28 May 1982), the Melanesian Alliance called on the government to take a tougher stand on border violations (subsequently the party’s deputy chairman, Narokobi, urged the
immediate cutting of diplomatic relations as a mark of protest). (See *Post-Courier* 24, 27 May 1982, 1 June 1982; *Canberra Times* 22 May 1982; *Far Eastern Economic Review* 4 June 1982.) A second protest note was sent and the Papua New Guinea ambassador was brought across from Jakarta and instructed to pursue diplomatic initiatives to bring forward the annual joint border committee conference scheduled for August. In the midst of this a helicopter containing the provincial military commander and thirteen troops and civilians bound for Wamena landed at a mission station on the Papua New Guinea side, allegedly having been forced down by bad weather. When, eventually, Indonesia responded to the Papua New Guinea demand for an explanation of the border violations it claimed that Indonesian troops had not been involved and that all the hostages had been recovered from Papua New Guinea by people from the Irian Jaya village of Selmus; the statement went on to accuse Papua New Guinea of failing to honour its obligations under the 1979 Border Agreement. An editorial of the *Times of Papua New Guinea* (11 June 1982) described the Indonesian response as 'singularly arrogant' and said: 'The Indonesians ... have, in the toughest terms diplomats use, told PNG where it can stick its protest note. We believe they have told lies'. The credibility of the Indonesian response was, in fact, severely dented when, a few days after its receipt, a group of eighteen hostages was handed over to Irianese villagers who escorted them across the border into Papua New Guinea where they were intercepted by a border patrol and taken to Vanimo hospital. It appears that the release of the hostages was negotiated by DFAT officials and a Catholic brother, who had crossed into Irian Jaya with the agreement of the Indonesian government; moreover, although the Indonesians had been asked to suspend military operations in the area while negotiations were being carried out, Indonesian troops were actively patrolling and the negotiating group was 'several times close to discovery' (*Times of PNG* 16 July 1982. See also *Post-Courier* 11, 15 June 1982; *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 June 1982; *Far Eastern Economic Review* 18, 26 June, 2, 9 July 1982; Nanggoi 1982). The hostages were subsequently repatriated (though Indonesia refused to meet the costs of repatriation). Informed public feeling in Papua New Guinea was well represented by the *Post-Courier's* defence reporter (16 June 1982):

In recent days the Jakarta machine has pressed us to believe:
(1) That a group of villagers from Irian Jaya popped over the border last month to free hostages held by the Free West Papua guerillas.

(2) That all the hostages taken in the October raid on a saw-mill near Jayapura had been freed, and

(3) That a helicopter flying the Jayapura military commander, Brig-Gen Santos [sic], from his headquarters to Wamena in the Highlands 240 km south-west of the Irian Jaya capital was forced by bad weather to land in PNG some 10 km south-east of his departure point.

The answers are (1): Rubbish. (2): Not true. And (3): When the Indonesians next get the chance to discuss their defence co-operation agreement with Australia, they should request navigation training for their helicopter pilots.

On a more serious note a DFAT spokesman was reported as saying that the entire incident could have been avoided if Indonesian officials had kept Papua New Guinea informed, in the spirit of the 1979 border agreement, and Papua New Guinea reaffirmed that it would not become involved in joint patrols (Post-Courier 15, 16 June 1982).

In the first week of July 1982 another three military incursions occurred. In the first incident nineteen people who had crossed in 1977, and were said not to be OPM sympathizers, were taken back across the border by an armed Indonesian patrol. Matane made strong verbal representations on this occasion and Levi forwarded a formal protest, saying that Papua New Guinea 'would not tolerate continued violations of its territory by armed Indonesian soldiers' and questioning Indonesia's sincerity in complying with the 1979 border agreement. Chan stated that border patrols (which had been increased in June) must act to disarm Indonesian troops or OPM guerillas inside Papua New Guinea. Okuk called for the closure of the Indonesian embassy, and was supported in this by Bais (Post-Courier 8 July 1982; Far Eastern Economic Review 9 July 1982).

Nevertheless, during the next few weeks, as voting was finalized in Papua New Guinea's elections and a new Somare government came to office, things quietened down along the border and tensions eased. The Indonesian government, which had reportedly favoured a Somare victory, must have been well satisfied with the outcome, especially as Okuk failed to gain reelection and the foreign affairs portfolio was
allocated not to the former opposition foreign affairs spokesman, Bais, but to Rabbie Namaliu. In August, the third meeting of the joint border committee went ahead as scheduled. Memoranda of understanding were signed covering the formal establishment of the joint border committee, arrangements for border demarcation, survey and mapping, installation and operation of a high frequency radio linkage, and traditional and customary border crossings. Officials of the two countries also met to discuss border surveying and mapping. The following month Namaliu visited Jakarta to ratify a seabed agreement. By mid September, in what seemed to be a quick about-face, the Post-Courier (14 September 1982) felt able to comment, ‘Our relations with Indonesia are probably better right now than they have been for at least two years’.

Then, on 17 September, providing a sequence of developments which recalled the events of 1977-78, OPM leader Seth Rumkorem and nine of his deputies were taken into custody in Rabaul, allegedly en route to Vanuatu and Senegal, and subsequently charged as illegal immigrants.8

1982-83: mounting tensions

But just as the optimism of late 1978 proved shortlived, so did the newfound accord of 1982.

Late in 1982 there was a minor flurry when the staff driver of the Indonesian defence attache (Colonel Ismail) was murdered by an Irianese permissive resident, Simon Alom. During the course of the trial it was claimed that the driver, Meinard Poluan, had been involved in coordinating the surveillance of Irianese residents in Papua New Guinea and that Alom had been a reluctant informer (Far Eastern Economic Review 6 January 1983; Canberra Times 28 January 1983). Then in February 1983 some concern was caused by reports that between 1,000 and 1,500 Irianese - refugees, apparently, from clashes between Indonesian troops and the OPM - were about to cross the border into Papua New Guinea (Times of PNG 11 February 1983; Sydney Morning Herald 16 February 1983).

8 The charge was dismissed, on the grounds that Rumkorem’s group had been ‘invited’ to disembark by Rabaul police and customs officers. After about fourteen months of unsuccessful negotiations to find a third country which would accept the refugees, Rumkorem and two of his deputies were granted temporary residence in Greece. The rest were granted permissive residency.
In April 1983 the border again captured the headlines when it was reported that Indonesia’s trans-Irian Jaya highway, then in an early stage of construction, crossed into Papua New Guinea at two points near the headwaters of the Bensbach River in Western Province. (Later survey established that it crossed at a third point.) That the highway crossed into Papua New Guinea had been established by a National Mapping Bureau survey in late March-early April though later information suggested that photographs taken during a National Intelligence Organization-Defence-DFAT survey had revealed the crossings in October 1982, and that the National Security Advisory Committee had been informed of this (though Namaliu claimed not to have been advised). A peculiarity of the situation was that the highway in this section lay in largely uninhabited country between the border and the Merauke River, bypassing planned transmigration settlements to the west of the Merauke River - a fact which led an anonymous DFAT ‘analyst’ (as reported in Post-Courier 9 June 1983) to conjecture that the location of the road ‘indicated it would serve a ‘strategic military’ purpose’ and ‘had potential for aggression rather than defence’. Foreign minister Namaliu expressed himself ‘very concerned’ at the incursion (Post-Courier 14 April 1983) and a formal protest was lodged calling for the closure of the offending sections of the road. Opposition leader (and former Defence Force chief) Diro referred to it as ‘the first act of deliberate territorial violation’ (Post-Courier 18 April 1983; later he took a more moderate stand, calling for a continuation of ‘the present good relations with Indonesia’, Post-Courier 19 May 1983). From Rabaul, where he was still awaiting acceptance by a third country, Rumkorem commented that he was aware of the road ‘and several other major projects ... aimed at reducing rebel activity on the border’ (Post-Courier 19 April 1983).

The alleged border violations were referred to a joint border technical sub-committee meeting scheduled for later in the month. Foreign Affairs secretary Matane requested that the meeting be at departmental head level, and led the Papua New Guinea delegation; the Indonesian delegation was headed by the director of the National Co-ordina-

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9 This survey had been carried out after two unsuccessful attempts to arrange a joint Indonesia-Papua New Guinea survey - the first in September 1982 when a survey had commenced but was called off twenty-odd kilometres south of the incursions due to bad weather; the second in January 1983 when a proposed survey was cancelled at Indonesia’s request.
tion Agency for Surveys and Mapping. Following this meeting the area was subjected to a satellite scan which confirmed that the road had crossed the border in three places. In mid June it was reported that in Jakarta Mochtar had expressed his government's official regret over the crossings, but it was not until the end of July that Namaliu received confirmation of this. Towards the end of the year a joint Indonesia-Papua New Guinea survey party began detailed survey, mapping and demarcation of the border, after which the offending road sections were to be closed. The exercise took place under the protective watch of Indonesian and Papua New Guinean troops; the Papua New Guinea government acknowledged (*Post-Courier* 7 July 1983) that 'This can be regarded, therefore, as a joint operation with Indonesia' - something of a departure from its earlier firm denial of joint military operations and one which drew criticism from opposition spokesman Levi (*Post-Courier* 20 July 1983) - but according to Namaliu (*Post-Courier* 13 July 1983) neither nation's troops would cross the border at any time. (Reports in the *Times of PNG* 8 July 1983, 6 January 1984, on the other hand, claimed that the agreement gave rights of 'hot pursuit' twenty kilometres inside the border.) However in December it was announced that survey work had been halted due to heavy rain and 'financial problems [which] forced the Indonesian group to withdraw' (*Post-Courier* 27 December 1983). The offending sections of the road were eventually closed off at a formal ceremony in late August 1984; 'We hope the road intrusion was an honest mistake', Matane told the assembled group, 'We hope it is the only mistake the Indonesian government will make' (*Niugini Nius* 3 September 1984). In a later comment on the subject (*Post-Courier* 28 September 1984) Matane said, 'The 'mistakes' they made had cost us thousands of kina that should have been spent in developing Papua New Guinea and its people'.

In summary, generally cordial relations at the government-to-government level together with improved machinery for joint border administration made it possible to sort out what was in all probability a harmless, if puzzling, error by the road construction contractors employed by Indonesia, without any significant deterioration in relations between the two countries. The incident did, however, suggest also that the joint border machinery, and indeed diplomatic channels, were not functioning very effectively. Nor, it might be added, were border development programmes conspicuously successful, despite the early rhetoric, on either side of the border. In Papua New Guinea's two border provinces there were frequent complaints of lack of
development, even before 1983 when border development programme expenditure was cut severely.

In the border road incident and in other developments in 1983 the Somare government worked hard at maintaining good relations with Indonesia. It again reiterated its acceptance that what happened in Irian Jaya was Indonesia’s internal affair, notwithstanding a steady build-up in the number of border crossers (see, for example, Draft Hansard 5 May 1983); it maintained a firm line against border crossing and against support for the OPM within Papua New Guinea; and it announced increased allocations for border patrols and plans to station an infantry company at Kiunga. In September Defence minister Epel Tito was relieved of his portfolio after expressing the view, to an Australian audience, that an Indonesian invasion of Papua New Guinea was a future likelihood. And in December Somare made another state visit to Indonesia and was reported (Pacific Islands Monthly February 1984) as being impressed with Indonesian assurances of determined efforts to develop and improve the lives and conditions of Melanesians in Irian Jaya.

Once again, however, the good intentions of government were overtaken by events.

The events of 1984 - a substantive shift?

It appears that during 1983 there was an upsurge of OPM activity in Irian Jaya, in part the consequence of a new solidarity within the movement. It seems, further, that there were ambitious plans for a general uprising in early 1984, to draw international attention to the demands for West Papuan independence (see, for example, the report of an interview with James Nyaro, Niugini Nius 27 February 1984).

In late January intelligence sources in both Papua New Guinea and Australia were forewarned of a likely influx of border crossers into Papua New Guinea. Around mid February the influx began, initially mostly women and children, then men, including a number who had deserted from the army or abandoned public service or university posts. By the third week of February there were said to be about 130 border crossers. Requests by the Papua New Guinea government for information concerning the movement of people and the situation in Irian Jaya failed to elicit a credible response. Indonesian officials, initially not available for comment, told the Papua New Guinea government that they knew nothing of reported events in Jayapura, yet denied that there had been a confrontation between the OPM and the
military (*Post-Courier* 16 February 1984; *Niugini Nius* 16 February 1984); the situation in Jayapura was said to be ‘normal’ (*Niugini Nius* 22 February 1984). Irianese refugees told a different story. In January, according to one, some thirty OPM supporters in Jayapura had been arrested and detained. Another told of a fight in the Hamadi (Jayapura) market, in which three Melanesians had been killed. But the critical incident was an abortive attempt by West Papuan independence supporters on 13 February to raise the West Papuan flag on the provincial assembly building in Jayapura, an incident in which two West Papuans were killed. As a sequel to this, Indonesian authorities were said to have conducted a house-to-house search for OPM sympathisers and, according to refugees, ‘hundreds’ of Melanesian civil servants and army deserters were under military detention. Others had fled. Residents on the Papua New Guinea side of the border confirmed that Jayapura was in darkness and its government radio station silent. OPM supporters spoke of an imminent attack on Jayapura and other centres (*Post-Courier* 20 February 1984).

On 21 February it was reported that foreign minister Namaliu had cabled his Indonesian counterpart Mochtar, urgently requesting information, since contacts at senior official levels had proved unsuccessful. Namaliu expressed his disappointment at the lack of communication from Indonesia and made the pointed observation that under the border agreement the two countries had an obligation to inform each other of matters relevant to their security (*Post-Courier* 21, 22 February 1984). (It might be noted that when the crisis arose, there had not been a border liaison meeting since December 1983 - allegedly because of lack of funds - and the Vanimo-Jayapura ‘hot-line’ had been out of service for ‘several months’). Three days later Namaliu and prime minister Somare told a press conference that they had still not received an answer from Indonesia and had sent a second telex asking for a reply within forty-eight hours. A *Post-Courier* editorial (24 February 1984) described the Indonesian non-response as ‘an insult’. When a reply came, on 25 February, it confirmed that there had been clashes, but said little. Namaliu told reporters he thought the response was ‘sufficient enough’ (*Post-Courier* 27 February 1984).

Meanwhile two police riot squads were dispatched to Vanimo to join the 360 Defence Force personnel already patrolling the border and northwest coastline.

By the end of February there were about 250 border crossers, mostly accommodated in camps on the outskirts of Vanimo, and
FIGURE 5.1 Language groups and population density in the border area
although a number said they intended to return to continue the fight for West Papuan independence, the number of refugees rose daily. In the hope, it seems, of discouraging such movement the government pressed charges of illegal entry against all the adult males (then numbering eighty), and acting foreign minister Bais announced that the government would decide on the future of the crossers after further consultation with Indonesia. This action came under strong criticism, among others from Okuk (who had been returned to parliament in a by-election and emerged again as opposition leader), UPNG students and law faculty, the bishop of Vanimo, and officials within DFAT, Justice and the Public Solicitor’s Office. The court handed down its decision in Vanimo on 21 March, by which time the number charged had increased to 111: 84 crossers were found guilty by one magistrate - who, however, expressed sympathy with their reasons for crossing - while a second magistrate dismissed the case against the other 27. 73 of those found guilty were sentenced to six weeks gaol, but were subsequently released on their own recognizance pending appeal. Their conviction was later quashed by the National Court (Post-Courier 22 June 1984).

As the flow of Irianese across the border continued during February and March, the government found itself under pressure from a number of sources to grant asylum to the refugees and also to support West Papuan independence demands at the UN. In early March, following a parliamentary debate on the border problem, prime minister Somare told a press conference that his government was prepared ‘to act as honest brokers’; Papua New Guinea would support the Irianese, he said, but not to a situation where it would jeopardize Papua New Guinea’s own position (Post-Courier 2 March 1984).

Confronted with a growing volume of border crossers, the Papua New Guinea government requested an urgent meeting with Indonesian officials to discuss the border situation, and particularly the question of the refugees. It appears that Papua New Guinea requested a meeting of the joint border committee (though there is some confusion on this - see for example Niugini Nius 15 March 1984 and Far Eastern Economic Review 12 April 1984) but when its delegation, led by Matane, arrived for the meeting in Jayapura in mid March it found itself sitting down to a meeting of the lesser border liaison committee with an Indonesian delegation led by a local bupati (district commissioner) who was apparently uninformed on the subject of border crossings and did not have authority to make decisions. Papua New
Guinea’s frustration on this account was aggravated by an Indonesian news report which claimed that Papua New Guinea had agreed to repatriate the 300 or so refugees who had crossed since February. Namaliu denied the report, at the same time revealing that Indonesia had requested a list of names and particulars of the border crossers. (See Post-Courier 19, 20, 21 March 1984).

While DFAT officials were still interviewing these border crossers, another group of about one hundred crossed into Sandaun Province, seeking temporary refuge from fighting along the border. Matane told the Indonesian ambassador that the government was ‘very, very concerned about the situation’ (Post-Courier 27 March 1984); nothing if not consistent, ‘Mr Soepomo said he was unaware of the latest crossings...’ (ibid.).

In the midst of all this (and within hours of restoring the telephone link between Port Moresby and the border stations in Sandaun Province - which had been disconnected because accounts allegedly had not been paid), the Papua New Guinea public learned that two ‘unidentified jet fighter planes’ had flown low over Green River station, buzzing the station and, according to some reports, dropping what was thought to be a bomb or rocket (witnesses reported hearing a loud ‘explosion’ and some said they saw smoke as an object was dropped) (Niugini Nius 28 March 1984; Post-Courier 28, 29 March 1984). A complaint to the Indonesian ambassador brought an immediate denial that the planes were Indonesia’s, though the ANTARA news agency had already reported an exercise by the Indonesian air force, including mock battles and paratrooper drops, around Jayapura. Indonesia’s foreign minister Mochtar declined to comment. The ambassador’s curious response caused Matane to comment, ‘We are very disappointed and annoyed as to the way we have been treated by Indonesia so far’ (Post-Courier 29 March 1984), while Namaliu was said to be ‘Bloody angry’ (Far Eastern Economic Review 12 April 1984). The prime minister instructed Namaliu to seek an immediate meeting with Mochtar, and suggested a meeting of defence ministers and armed forces chiefs after that; an immediate meeting of foreign ministers, however, was ruled out by Mochtar’s previous overseas commitments.

The disappointment and annoyance expressed by Namaliu and Matane was manifested in a threat to expel Indonesia’s defence attache, Colonel Ismail; speaking to the press after delivering ‘a strongly worded protest note’, Matane observed that Papua New Guinea had not been advised of the air force exercises and said, ‘We
believe the defence attache is not doing his job' *(Post-Courier 30 March 1984).* (It might be added that within Papua New Guinea it was generally believed that Ismail was in charge of Indonesia's espionage activities in the country - see, for example, *Times of PNG* 12 April 1984.)

A formal response to Papua New Guinea's request for information on this latest incident was received on 3 April. By this time the presence of Indonesian aircraft in the general vicinity at the time of the incursion was an established fact and the possibility of an unintentional incursion had been privately admitted (*Niugini Nius* 30 March 1984; *Far Eastern Economic Review* 12 April 1984); however the Indonesian reply, which emanated from military sources, continued to insist that no incursion had occurred and suggested that the reports of a bomb or rocket firing might be explained by the fact that the aircraft had, at the provincial governor's request, produced a sonic boom, 'to raise a spirit of love for the skies in the people of the region' ['untuk membangkitkan semangat cinta udara masyarakat daerah'] (*Tempo* 14 April 1984; see also *Far Eastern Economic Review* 12 April 1984 and *Post-Courier* 4 April 1984). Namaliu, describing the reply as 'highly unsatisfactory', delivered a second diplomatic note, asking for clarification of the Indonesian response within forty-eight hours and again raised the threat of expulsion of the military attache. (After some abstruse diplomatic shuffling - including denial of landing rights to an Indonesian military aircraft sent to collect Ismail - the military attache left Port Moresby on 12 April.)

The Indonesian ambassador was not the only one to receive a diplomatic note on 3 April. At the end of March the Australian *National Times* had published the contents of a 'leaked' cabinet document outlining the strategic bases of Australian foreign policy (*National Times* 30 March-5 April, 6-12 April 1984; *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 March 1984). Contained in this document was the statement that 'Australian policy should encourage PNG to take action wherever possible to suppress anti-Indonesian activity by Irian Jaya dissidents and progressively to develop the PNG official presence in the border region'. The Australian high commissioner in Port Moresby was called in and asked to provide information on the status of the leaked document; at the same time Namaliu took the opportunity to tell the Australians that Papua New Guinea would 'not accept suggestions from any foreign government or organisation which seeks to involve the country and its people in an internal dispute of another sovereign base' (*Niugini Nius*)
In the midst of these diplomatic ‘exchanges’, it was reported that OPM guerillas had kidnapped a Swiss mission pilot, Werner Wyder, and an Irianese school superintendent and that the Swiss embassy in Jakarta had asked the Papua New Guinea government to help locate the pilot and negotiate his release. The pilot and his passengers had been ambushed when his plane landed at Yurup, a mission station across the border from Kamberatoro; two other passengers, Indonesians, had been murdered. (It was while searching for this aircraft, it transpired, that the Indonesian jets had flown over Green River.) The Swiss authorities subsequently received, through Henk Joku, a ransom demand for K1.5 million, to be delivered to OPM leader Nyaro via Papua New Guinea officials and the Catholic mission at Kamberatoro. Somare reacted promptly and sternly to this demand: ‘The government will not allow PNG soil to be used as a base for terrorism, extortion or murder by the OPM’, Somare said, and any resident of Papua New Guinea, citizen or non-citizen, ‘shown to be involved in such criminal acts’ would face criminal charges (Post-Courier 5 April 1984). He did, however, offer to mediate in the release, without conditions, of the hostages. Statements from members of the Irianese community in Papua New Guinea called on the OPM to release Wyder, offered to assist in negotiation of his release, and cast doubts both on Joku’s credentials as OPM spokesman and on the source of the ransom demand. The latter was subsequently quietly dropped but the OPM did insist that as conditions for the release of Wyder, Switzerland act as intermediary in arranging talks between the OPM and the Indonesian government, and that it present the West Papua issue to international forums (the UN General Assembly and its Committee on Decolonization, and the Non-Aligned Nations’ Conference were mentioned). On 7 April Nyaro’s men were finally persuaded to free Wyder, without conditions, and a party comprising the bishop of Vanimo, the Swiss ambassador to Australia, the Swiss honorary consul in Papua New Guinea and Henk Joku escorted the pilot from the border to Kamberatoro mission and thence to Vanimo and Port Moresby. (The Irianese captive had been released in Irian Jaya earlier.)

In the meantime, the Papua New Guinea government received a reply to its second diplomatic note. Although this second response ‘did not deal directly or in full with all matters raised in the two protest notes’, it was accepted by Namaliu who said, ‘We believe that the violation of our territorial sovereignty...has been acknowledged’ (Post-
**Courier** 6 April 1984). The Indonesian note also confirmed arrange­ments for a meeting between Namaliu and the Indonesian ministers for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Home Affairs in mid April.

It also became clear early in April that, associated with the Wyder incident (and despite a statement by Mochtar, reported in Post-Courier 23 April 1984, that ‘very little or no fighting has taken place between troops and rebels’), there had been increased military activity on the Indonesian side of the border from around late March, particularly around Yurup-Amgotoro, and a further massive flow of people across the border was taking place. According to a Post-Courier report (9 April 1984) DFAT officials, concerned at this latest development, had instructed border officials to refuse these people food and send them back across the border. On 9 April it was reported (Post-Courier) that the number of border crossers had risen to 1,000, most of them in Sandaun Province. Three days later another report said that 3,000 Irianese were heading for the border, in Western Province; by the end of the month the number in refugee camps along the border was put at more than 4,500 (Post-Courier 1 May 1984). As further clashes occurred between the OPM and Indonesian troops, and OPM activities in the southern part of the border area intensified, the number of border crossers increased steadily: to 5,600 by 11 May, 7,400 by end May, over 9,000 by end June and around 11,000 in October. Understandably, the question of border crossers/refugees10 became a dominant concern of the Papua New Guinea government in 1984, both domestically and in its relations with Indonesia, and it remains such. Since this is the subject of a separate chapter (Smith and Hewison, below; see also Brunton 1984; ICJ 1984), however, it will not be considered in detail here, except insofar as it is an essential element of Papua New Guinea’s domestic political situation and foreign relations.

The scheduled ministerial talks between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea were held in Jakarta in mid April. A few days before they

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10 The use of the terms ‘border crosser’ and ‘refugee’ has been a contentious issue. The Papua New Guinea government rightly argues that many of those who have crossed the border are ‘traditional crossers’ or people who intend to go back as soon as things quieten down; only a small proportion of those who have crossed the border are ‘genuine refugees’, that is people who might have a reasonable claim to political asylum. Accepting the logic of this I have generally used the term ‘border crossers’ in this discussion. But this is not meant to deny that, in the common usage of the term, virtually all border crossers are ‘refugees’, people seeking permanent or temporary refuge from conditions they perceive as threatening their wellbeing.
Irianese refugees at Vanimo, March 1984. Photo—Times of Papua New Guinea

Refugees at Blackwater camp, Sandaun Province. Photo—Sydney Morning Herald
The border area, near Wutung. Photo—R. J., May
commenced the Papua New Guinea press carried reports of a statement by Indonesia's military commander in Irian Jaya, Brigadier-General Sembiring Meliala, which accused Papua New Guinea of 'habouring, giving sanctuary, to the OPM'. As reported (Niugini Nius 11 April 1984; see also Post-Courier 16 April 1984) Sembiring expressed the view, inaccurate as well as optimistic, that

If only the PNG government was consistent with promises made during our joint border committee talks that it would not allow OPM living there to carry arms... the problem would be solved.

He also repeated the denials of the air incursions, denied that there had been an uprising in Jayapura, and said that Indonesia had no obligation to warn Papua New Guinea of military exercises. The Papua New Guinea government appears to have made no response to this statement, though Okuk called for another formal protest note. It may, however, have influenced the stand which Namaliu took. In a statement issued to the press soon after his arrival, the Papua New Guinea foreign minister said that the immediate cause of his visit was to lodge 'a very strong formal protest'. Apart from the specific issue of violations of Papua New Guinea's territorial sovereignty by Indonesian military aircraft, Namaliu referred to the problems that had led to so many Irianese crossing the border since February, and complained that his government had been forced in recent months 'to deal with the effects of problems not of our own making'.

The people and government of my country have a very real interest in ensuring that Irian Jaya is administered in an orderly and peaceful way and that development takes place in the interests of the people who live there

the minister said (Niugini Nius 16 April 1984). The impact of the statement was not softened, in Indonesian eyes, by Namaliu's offer of financial and technical development assistance, and assistance to other Indonesians 'to understand the cultures and values of the Melanesian inhabitants in Irian Jaya' (ibid.). In an interview with AAP correspondent Leigh Mackay, Mochtar referred to Namaliu's statement as 'offensive' and 'provocative' and said Indonesia had 'reacted in a very restrained manner' (Post-Courier 23 April 1984).

The same day, in Port Moresby a statement by the acting Foreign Affairs minister, Tony Siaguru, reflected Papua New Guinea's
stronger stand on the border situation:

There has never been any question that PNG regards Irian Jaya as an integral part of Indonesia. Since the first Somare Government, we have been careful not to interfere in the internal affairs of Indonesia. But the time has come to make it clear to the Indonesian Government that many of its policies and actions in Irian Jaya affect PNG quite directly (Post-Courier 16 April 1984).

The Jakarta talks did little to reconcile the two governments: on the subject of the Green River incursions the Indonesian government continued to deny that its aircraft had crossed the border; with regard to Defence attache Ismail, the Indonesian government insisted that the attache had been expelled, while Papua New Guinea claimed that Indonesia had been persuaded to withdraw him. On these issues, ‘We have agreed to disagree’, Namaliu reported, and he described himself as ‘satisfied … under the circumstances’ (Post-Courier 18 April 1984). Partial agreement was reached on the repatriation of border crossers, and Namaliu was given an assurance of the safety of those who returned to Irian Jaya, but Papua New Guinea’s request for UNHCR supervision of the welfare of returnees was not accepted by Indonesia.

General reaction in Papua New Guinea to the Jakarta talks seems to have been that, though they failed to resolve some major differences, they had been fruitful and that Namaliu had succeeded in taking a commendably firmer line in presenting Papua New Guinea’s position (see, for example, Times of PNG 26 April 1984). Some, however, felt that the foreign minister had not been firm enough: former Foreign Affairs minister Noel Levi described his successor’s offer of assistance to Indonesia as ‘nothing more than buying friendship from a burglar’ and said that ‘any help to Indonesia would mean assistance in the killing of the Melanesian race in Irian Jaya’ (Post-Courier 18 April 1984); UP leader Torato urged that diplomatic relations with Indonesia be cut and that Papua New Guinea support West Papuan demands at the UN; MA spokesman Narokobi expressed the view that Papua New Guinea would be ‘justified in treating Indonesia as a hostile and unfriendly nation’ (Niugini Nius 21 April 1984); the Sandaun premier, Andrew Komboni, said that sending the border crossers back was ‘as good as killing them’ (Times of PNG 3 May 1984) and suggested that Mochtar visit the refugee camps; and in the National Parliament the
member for Wosera-Gaui proposed a bill to resurrect the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and to create reserve police and school cadets in order to prepare Papua New Guinea for an attack by Indonesia (such legislation was in fact passed in November 1984).

The question of border crossers and what to do with them preoccupied the Papua New Guinea government in its dealings with Indonesia throughout 1984. Namaliu and Matane, it seems, had hoped to commence repatriation soon after the April talks (though it is not clear how they intended to do this, since there is no evidence that the border crossers were willing to go back of their own accord). At the end of April Mochtar announced that 1,140 border crossers would be returned within days (Post-Courier 30 April 1984) but in mid May it was reported that Papua New Guinea was waiting for Indonesia to set a date for repatriation (Post-Courier 14 May 1984). The government perhaps had good reason for wishing the border crossers away, since by this time the situation in camps in the Western Province was being described as ‘quite desperate’ (Post-Courier 15 May 1984). On 28 May Niugini Nius quoted an ANTARA report that repatriation was to commence ‘in the near future’; the following day, however, the same paper reported that repatriation plans had been ‘shelved indefinitely’ following the withdrawal of Indonesian officials from a meeting arranged in Vanimo to finalize a programme for the repatriation of about 5,000 border crossers. (According to a report in Niugini Nius 29 May 1984 the Irian Jaya governor, Isaac Hindom, who was to have led the delegation, was ‘over-committed’; but Post-Courier 30 May 1984 reported that Hindom had fears for his security in Papua New Guinea.)

This was symptomatic of a state of affairs which continued throughout the year. There were, it seems, three major obstacles to agreement on repatriation arrangements. One was Papua New Guinea’s insistence on a guarantee of the safety of returnees. Such an assurance had been given verbally on more than one occasion but when Papua New Guinea sought, first, a written undertaking and, subsequently, a formal commitment from both the foreign minister and the military as part of a joint repatriation agreement, it met resistance. In August Namaliu sent for the Indonesian ambassador and expressed Papua New Guinea’s concern that despite commitments made by senior Indonesian ministers in April, assurances still had not been formalized; ‘...arrangements will not - I repeat not - be put into effect until the guarantees we seek have been finalized’, said the minister (Post-Courier 21 August 1984; see also Post-Courier 7 September
1984). Some two weeks later Mochtar was reported (Niugini Nius 8 September 1984) as saying that his repeated verbal assurances should have been sufficient but that he would provide an assurance in writing, as part of a formal repatriation agreement recently negotiated at a border liaison meeting. In fact, Mochtar objected to the terms of the assurance which Papua New Guinea sought in the agreement (see Post-Courier, Niugini Nius 25 September 1984) and it was not until late October, and after the offending section had been removed, that the agreement was signed. In the event, the assurance of the safety of returnees was given in a separate (unpublished) letter. A second point of contention was Papua New Guinea’s request that the UNHCR be involved in overseeing the repatriation exercise. Indonesia denied this request, though it agreed to have Papua New Guinea officials monitor the repatriation and visit returnees in Irian Jaya. Towards the end of the year the Papua New Guinea government appears to have given up on this point (see, for example, a statement by Siaguru reported in Post-Courier 16 October 1984), though in an unexpected reversal of policy in December Indonesia was reported to have agreed to let the UNHCR supervise repatriation (Post-Courier 13 December 1984).

The third obstacle to agreement on repatriation was Indonesia’s insistence that Papua New Guinea provide it with a list of names of border crossers. In early June Mochtar was quoted as saying that repatriation had been stalled by Papua New Guinea’s failure to provide such a list; ‘It would be an enormous task’, was Namaliu’s reported response, ‘There are 8000 here now and they are still coming’ (Post-Courier 4 June 1984). However a week later Mochtar told a press conference in Jakarta that the names of some sixty dissidents (including army deserters and hard-core OPM sympathizers) would suffice, and that repatriation could begin once this list was received (Post-Courier 12 June 1984). Niugini Nius (12 June 1984) expressed widespread reaction within Papua New Guinea to this demand in its headline: ‘Don’t do it, Mr Namaliu’. The same issue carried a detailed report on the killing of Irianese museum curator Arnold Ap.11 The Papua New Guinea gov-

11 Ap, along with several other Irianese nationalists, had been detained and held, apparently without formal charges, since November 1983. For accounts of his death see Niugini Nius 7 May, 11, 12, 30 June, 28 August 1984; Times of PNG 10 May, 7 June 1984; Sydney Morning Herald 14 May, 27 August 1984; Far Eastern Economic Review 7 June 1984. Ap’s wife was among refugees who crossed into Sandaun Province in February 1984.
ernment appears to have refused this request but to have offered to supply lists of names for each group repatriated as they were sent back *(Post-Courier 27 June 1984).*

Within Papua New Guinea opposition to repatriation was strong and vocal, not only from within the camps and from the political opposition (notably Okuk, Momis, Narokobi and the member for North Fly, Warren Dutton) but also from the Sandaun and Western provincial premiers, from students, from various church sources, from some government officials, and in newspaper editorials and numerous letters to the press. Public sentiment on the refugee issue was further aroused in August by a statement by Matane, on his return from a joint border committee meeting, that 9,000 border crossers would be escorted across the border by Defence Force personnel ‘within the next few weeks’ *(Post-Courier 1 August 1984)*, and it was intensified following newspaper reports that about one hundred people in refugee camps had died from starvation or malnutrition-related causes *(Post-Courier 13, 14, 16 August 1984; Times of PNG 16, 30 August 1984).* Although many of those who died were old or very young and in poor condition when they crossed into Papua New Guinea, there was nevertheless a strong feeling that tragedy could have been avoided, and questions were raised about the extent of the government’s resolve with regard to refugees and about why offers of assistance from the UNHCR and from churches had not been taken up. (See Smith and Hewison, below.) Government backbencher and member for Aitape-Lumi, and former student leader, Gabriel Ramoi accused the government of employing a policy of deliberate starvation to encourage people to go back across the border *(Niugini Nius 20 August 1984).* In the National Parliament the government came under strong criticism and there were calls for the resignation of the ministers for Provincial Affairs (John Nilkare, who accepted responsibility for the government’s failure to cope with the situation) and Health *(Niugini Nius 17, 23 August 1984).* If any demonstration were needed of the fact that conditions within Irian Jaya were of direct concern to Papua New Guinea, this surely provided it.

In a press release issued on 19 August Namaliu said that while Papua New Guinea regretted the deaths and suffering, ‘We should not forget that ultimately conditions in the camps on the border were brought about as a result of circumstances in Irian Jaya which have caused more than 9,000 people to flee their homes to Papua New Guinea’. He went on to say that Papua New Guinea, believing that the
border crossers, as Indonesian citizens, were primarily an Indonesian responsibility, had repeatedly asked the Indonesian government to help feed them, but apart from an amount of K22,800 received in April it had received no assistance - 'In fact, most of our requests have gone unanswered' (Post-Courier 20 August 1984). (A further K18,000 was received from Indonesia subsequently.) Nilkare, on the other hand, laid part of the blame on the OPM, who, he said, had told the refugees not to return until Irian Jaya had independence from Indonesia; 'They are killing their own women and children for the sake of politics', he said (Niugini Nius 17 August 1984).

In late August, following a border liaison meeting in Port Moresby, it appeared that repatriation was about to commence; Indonesian sources even mentioned a date, 17 September, though this apparently came as a surprise to Namaliu (Post-Courier 29 August 1984). 'Public awareness' patrols were carried out in the border areas in the hopes of persuading border crossers to return and arrangements were in hand for an Indonesian 'verification team' to visit the camps to speak with prospective returnees. But in October repatriation still had not commenced. OPM sources, meanwhile, had let it be known that they intended to disrupt the repatriation exercise and would take retaliatory action if it proceeded; specific threats were made against the Ok Tedi mining project and against individual Papua New Guinean politicians and bureaucrats (see, for example, Post-Courier 12 September 1984; Niugini Nius 19 September 1984).

In October letters concerning repatriation arrangements were exchanged and at the end of the month Mochtar visited Papua New Guinea to sign a new basic border agreement (see below). During Mochtar's visit it was announced that repatriation would commence the following week. However, when in early November the Indonesian verification team visited the Blackwater camp outside Vanimo (against the advice of Papua New Guinea officials, who had warned of likely violence) it was confronted by stone-throwing Irianese refugees and had to withdraw. Five of the seven Indonesian team members had to be treated in Vanimo hospital and amid heated complaints of inadequate security on Papua New Guinea's part (including a demonstration outside the Papua New Guinea embassy in Jakarta) the verification team returned to Jayapura.

Shortly after this, Namaliu presented a statement to the National Parliament in which he announced that 'A flexible program for the return of border-crossers to Indonesia has been devised ... The repat-
A Foreign Affairs official said yesterday it was hoped the 11,000 crossers in camps in Western and West Sepik Provinces would return voluntarily .... making an official repatriation unnecessary. ‘We wanted to allow the situation to solve itself ...,’ he said (Post-Courier 4 January 1985).

The estimate of 2,000 has been largely discounted by informed sources, and the expectations of Giheno and his department have so far proved wildly optimistic. In mid May 1985, on the eve of a border liaison committee meeting, a second group was repatriated from Blackwater camp, on this occasion with the involvement of the UNHCR as well as the Papua New Guinea government and refugee camp representatives. Initially 79 people agreed to go back but in the event 28 had second thoughts, leaving 51 to be repatriated (Post-Courier 15 May 1985; Far Eastern Economic Review 30 May 1985).

Two months later it was reported that in Sandaun Province there were 300 to 400 recently arrived border crossers at Old Skotiau, another 100 at Yabsiei, and over 200 at Wasengla (Post-Courier 12, 16 July 1985; Wantok 20 July 1985). The same month an event long anticipated by some Australian observers of the border situation occurred when five refugees arrived, via Papua New Guinea, on Australia’s Boigu Island, and sought asylum. Australian authorities who hoped to shift this problem back to Papua New Guinea were quickly disabused: ‘If the reports are right, then it is a matter between Australia and Indonesia’, an official [of DFAT] said’ (Post-Courier 8 July 1985).
While repatriation of border crossers became the major issue in both domestic politics and foreign relations concerning the border during 1984, it was not the only problem. 'Incidents' continued to occur and border administration posed continuing problems. Together with what Papua New Guinea saw as a somewhat intransigent attitude to repatriation on Indonesia's part, these contributed to a toughening of the position taken by Papua New Guinea which culminated in a complaint about the border situation at a UN General Assembly meeting in October.

In late April 1984, shortly after the Jakarta talks and with refugees pouring across the border, it was reported (Niugini Nius 27 April 1984) that about 150 Indonesian soldiers had crossed the border near Imonda while pursuing Nyaro, and in Western Province four Indonesians, who confessed to being in pursuit of border crossers near Weam, were taken into custody before being sent back across the border. About three weeks later Papua New Guinea officials learnt from an Indonesian press report that a three-day military exercise was under way to the south of Jayapura. Despite undertakings given in April, the Papua New Guinea government had not been advised of this and the Indonesian charge d'affaires claimed he was unaware of it. On 21 May it was reported (Niugini Nius) that two Indonesian helicopters had strayed 3 km into Papua New Guinea territory near the Bewani patrol post. The same day, Namaliu delivered a major statement on the border situation to the National Parliament; the statement summarized developments since February and elaborated the government's approach to the question of repatriation, but the foreign minister also took the opportunity to express the government's deep concern that it had not been informed of Indonesia's military activities near the border and that Indonesia had not been responsive to its requests for border liaison meetings. Namaliu also reiterated the view that while Papua New Guinea did not want to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs, '... the border crossings are not simply internal affairs of Indonesia. They have had - and continue to have - direct effects on Papua New Guinea' (Times of PNG 24 May 1984).

About the same time as Namaliu's statement to parliament, it was announced that, in an effort to reduce border crossings and to prepare for the repatriation of crossers, police and military patrolling of the border was being stepped up and permanent bases were to be established at Vanimo and Amanab (Niugini Nius 17 May 1984). The following month several Irianese, described as 'leading members of the
OPM', were arrested in a police mobile squad raid on a camp inside the Papua New Guinea border, near Kamberatoro; six were subsequently charged under the Criminal Code with operating an illegal paramilitary force.

Within days of this, however, relations between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea headed towards a new nadir after it was established that fifty-three Indonesian soldiers had crossed into Papua New Guinea and had destroyed crops and garden huts in Suwampa village near Wutung. Yet again the Indonesian ambassador was called to DFAT and given a 'strongly-worded note'; the Papua New Guinea government claimed compensation for the damage and told the ambassador that unless a satisfactory explanation was provided soon, 'the Papua New Guinea Government will feel compelled to begin considering raising the violations at forthcoming regional and international meetings' (Post-Courier 29 June 1984). Yet again, however, Indonesian authorities refused to admit that an incursion had occurred (indeed, shortly before this the secretary to the governor of Irian Jaya repeated the claim that 'There have never been any clashes between the Indonesian defence forces and the OPM rebels. There have been no clashes, never', Times of PNG 31 May 1984). Notwithstanding the fact that witnesses had reported that all but three of the party were non-Melanesians, Mochtar suggested that perhaps the offenders were OPM guerillas in Indonesian army uniforms; but he was said to be taking the Papua New Guinea claim seriously and seeking advice from military sources in Irian Jaya. Although the Indonesian ambassador accompanied secretary Matane on an inspection visit to Suwampa - where empty Indonesian army ration packs had been left behind and names carved on trees - Indonesian armed forces commander General Murdani formally denied the incursion, attributing it to a 'third party' and adding that Indonesian army uniforms could be 'easily purchased anywhere' (Niugini Nius 26, 29, 30 June, 3, 5, 7 July 1984; Post-Courier 29 June, 2, 5 July, 3 August 1984; Times of PNG 5 July 1984).

Indonesia's formal response was received by Namaliu on the eve of his departure for Jakarta to attend a ministerial meeting of ASEAN (within which Papua New Guinea has special observer status), and in a speech to that meeting Namaliu took the opportunity to inform ASEAN ministers of his government's 'deep concern at recent events on the border' (Post-Courier 11 July 1984; Niugini Nius 25 July 1984). While in Jakarta Namaliu also had talks with senior Indonesian ministers and with Murdani who gave him an assurance (not, however, the
first such assurance) that in future Papua New Guinea would be informed in advance of any Indonesian military exercises in the border area (*Post-Courier* 13 July 1984). Papua New Guinea, it was reported, again rejected the idea of joint border patrols.

On the last day of June the border incursion was jostled out of the headlines by the news that in Sandaun Province the headmaster of a community school near Amanab had been kidnapped by OPM guerrillas. Reports suggested that kidnappers were demanding a halt to the proposed repatriation of refugees and the withdrawal of special police patrols along the border. Following an emergency meeting of the National Security Council, acting foreign minister Bais issued a statement calling for the release of the teacher and saying there would be no negotiations and no bargaining (*Niugini Nius* 30 June, 2, 3 July 1984; *Post-Courier* 3, 4 July 1984). The teacher was released after a few days and an apology subsequently was received from Nyaro, who said that the kidnapping had been intended to avenge police action along the border (*Niugini Nius* 19 September 1984). However the incident resulted in the closure of schools in the border area for about ten weeks and appears to have been the main reason for a special military operation in the Amanab - Green River - Imonda area which resulted in the apprehension of twelve suspected OPM guerrillas. (In another sequel, the officer in charge of Amanab patrol post, who had played a major role in securing the release of the kidnapped teacher, was charged with harbouring an illegal immigrant - allegedly the nine-year-old daughter of James Nyaro.)

During July 1984: a group of Indonesian officials, led by the director of Indonesia's Center for Strategic and International Studies, visited Port Moresby for a seminar on Indonesia-Papua New Guinea relations; the annual joint border meeting was held in Surabaya, and the formal process of drafting a new basic border agreement (the 1979 agreement being due to expire in 1984) commenced. These three events provided further occasions for the expression of Papua New Guinea's firmer stand on border issues. In an address to the joint seminar Namaliu told delegates that events in Irian Jaya directly affected Papua New Guinea and that Papua New Guinea had 'an immediate interest in the way in which Irian Jaya is governed and developed' (reported in *Post-Courier* 24 July 1984), and that Indonesia was not doing enough to understand the Melanesian cultures of the Irian Jaya people. Matane, on his return from Surabaya (where discussion had been primarily concerned with repatriation of border crossers),
expressed his obvious frustration with Indonesian denials of the latest border violation in the suggestion that in future any soldiers found on the Papua New Guinea side of the border who did not look like Melanesians should be shot in the leg, so that Papua New Guinea could provide the required evidence \( (\text{Niugini Nius} \ 30 \text{July 1984}) \). And with reference to the new border agreement it was made known that Papua New Guinea would press for the inclusion of provision for compensation for damages arising from border incursions \( (\text{Times of PNG} \ 19 \text{July 1984}) \).

Nevertheless during August prime minister Somare appears to have gone to some trouble to dissuade Vanuatu's prime minister, Walter Lini (whose Vanuaaku Pati had voted in late July to recognize the OPM), and Solomons prime minister Solomon Mamaloni from raising the West Papua issue at a Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting (CHOGRM) and a forthcoming South Pacific Forum meeting \( (\text{Niugini Nius} \ 9, \ 13 \text{August 1984}; \text{Post-Courier} \ 13, \ 27 \text{August 1984}) \). Somare was alleged to have had a ‘sharp exchange’ with Lini, telling him that so long as Vanuatu was not prepared to accept Irianese refugees there was no point discussing the matter.

By the end of September, obviously irritated by Indonesia’s procrastination on the repatriation issue - in the face of a continuing steady flow of border crossers - and stung by the criticisms, domestic and foreign, generated by the deteriorating conditions in refugee camps along the border, Namaliu had resolved to air Papua New Guinea’s grievances at the UN. In a speech to the General Assembly on 1 October Namaliu referred to recent developments along the border and told delegates that Papua New Guinea had not been satisfied with most of the replies it had received from Indonesia about border violations. The Indonesian ambassador in Washington replied that his country was ‘painfully surprised’ at these accusations, that he thought ‘misunderstandings’ had been resolved, and that Indonesia ‘had shown great restraint’ \( (\text{reported in Times of PNG} \ 4 \text{October 1984}; \text{Niugini Nius} \ 5 \text{October 1984}) \). Apparently provoked by Namaliu’s UN speech, at a press conference in Jakarta in mid October foreign minister Mochtar was quoted as saying that Indonesia had ‘run out of patience’ and was ready to respond to charges made by Papua New Guinea concerning the border; Namaliu replied that although Mochtar’s statement ‘sounded quite tough’ he was pleased that it showed the Indonesian government realized just how serious and concerned Papua New Guinea was about the border situation \( (\text{Post-Courier} \ 18 \text{October} \)
Mochtar in turn countered with a complaint that Papua New Guinea had not prevented OPM rebels from taking sanctuary on its side of the border, and cast doubts on his planned visit to Moresby for the signing of the revised border agreement (Niugini Nius 22 October 1984).

The visit did go ahead, and a new border agreement was signed on 29 October. The agreement (which is summarized by Prescott in chapter 1 and is reproduced as an appendix to this volume) contained new provisions concerning exchange of information on major constructions within 5 km of the border, and compensation for damages caused by ‘acts and related activities’ within the border area.

At a press conference after the signing, Mochtar said that he was satisfied that Papua New Guinea was doing all it could to prevent the OPM using its territory, though there was still room for improvement. Mochtar also invited the Papua New Guinea government to establish a consulate in Jayapura to serve as a conduit for information on conditions in the province (Post-Courier 30 October 1984).

Days before the ministerial meeting in Port Moresby the local press revealed that, unknown to the government or DFAT, deputy opposition leader Momis had had talks with Nyaro on the Papua New Guinea side of the border near Kamberatoro (Niugini Nius 25, 26 October 1984). Mochtar made reference to this meeting, and warned that meetings with rebels on the Papua New Guinea side of the border would not be tolerated; ‘if nothing is done about it’, Mochtar is reported to have said, ‘we are quite entitled, I think, to consider it an unfriendly act’ (Post-Courier, Niugini Nius 30 October 1984). The initial reaction to the news of Momis’s meeting, expressed by Somare (Post-Courier 26 October 1984), was tolerant (‘If Fr Momis has talked to these people, well that’s something entirely up to him ....’), but Momis’s action was later strongly condemned by Namaliu, who described the contact as ‘not only embarrassing to the government, but potentially a real source for actions which could seriously undermine national security’ (quoted in Post-Courier 8 November 1984).

Shortly after this, Defence Force personnel were called out to assist police along the border following unconfirmed reports of OPM-Indonesian military clashes spilling across the border near Wutung. In the event, there was no sighting of either OPM or Indonesian troops, though in the following weeks a further 660 refugees crossed into the Sandaun Province (Post-Courier 9, 13, 28 November 1984).

The next significant incident on the border occurred in April 1985,
when a helicopter containing a Papua New Guinea Post and Telegraphs maintenance crew landed, by mistake, at an OPM camp in the border area near Bewani. The group was taken into custody by about forty OPM guerillas, but released after promising not to reveal the location of the camp. (One man, from Central Province, narrowly escaped being killed because he was taken for an Indonesian.) On hearing of the incident, more than four weeks later, the government mounted a special operation involving about 200 Defence Force personnel and police, but by the time the force moved on the camp (twenty-five days elapsed between the government learning of the incident and troops entering the camp), the OPM had disappeared (Post-Courier 14, 15, 22 May 1985). The incident was noted by Mochtar, who was prompted to make the curious comment (as reported in Sydney Morning Herald and Canberra Times 25 May 1985) that since the OPM had failed to gain independence for Irian Jaya it may now ‘try to stir rebellion in Papua New Guinea to establish an independent Papuan State’. Less than a month later another, more successful, operation was conducted near Wutung, Sandaun Province, in which six suspected OPM members were arrested and weapons and explosives captured. Several Papua New Guinean villagers were also charged with harbouring illegal immigrants (Post-Courier 27, 28 May 1985).

Public opinion on the Irian Jaya issue

This account of Indonesia-Papua New Guinean relations relative to the border and the situation of the Melanesians in Irian Jaya has so far been principally in terms of the relations between governments, though passing reference has been made to broader public awareness and attitudes, and to relations between the Papua New Guinea government, OPM leaders and the Irianese community in Papua New Guinea. Following the expression of popular sentiment towards the ‘Act of Free Choice’ in 1969 Irian Jaya was not a subject of great concern in Papua New Guinea for several years, Papua New Guineans being generally preoccupied with the domestic circumstances of the immediate pre-independence and post-independence periods. As noted above, the Papua New Guinea government under Michael Somare (1972-77) broadly accepted the policies of the colonial government in relation to the border and border crossers, although, following the elaboration of a universalist foreign policy, there was a suggestion that the new government was less conciliatory towards expressions of
Irianese nationalism than the colonial government had been (see p. 91).

In 1976 Somare and Kiki stated clearly that their government was not prepared to countenance support for the OPM within Papua New Guinea (see p. 93). I have suggested, however, that this position was determined more by realpolitik and expedience than by the feelings of the mass of Papua New Guineans, among whom there was a widespread, if generally poorly informed, sympathy for their ‘Melanesian brothers’. Some influential commentators, indeed, have spoken with concern of what they regard as ‘Indophobia’ among educated Papua New Guineans, an attitude which they frequently attribute to outside influences (for example, Hastings 1979 and in Sydney Morning Herald 2 May 1983; Whitlam 1980:5; Mochtar quoted in Post-Courier 24 April 1984). There has also been a suggestion that if only Papua New Guineans understood Indonesia’s position on Irian Jaya (and East Timor), their reservations about Indonesia’s presence and policies there might be suspended. It should be clear from the historical survey presented here that I believe such a viewpoint not only reveals a patronizing attitude towards those Papua New Guineans who have helped formulate opinions and policies in their country, but vastly oversimplifies a complex set of attitudes which has been shaped more than anything else by Papua New Guinea’s own nationalist experience and political ideology, by shared language and kinship among border communities, and by the history of diplomatic and administrative dealings over the border.

Developments in Irian Jaya and along the border in 1977-78 increased the salience of the border issue in Papua New Guinea and revealed a growing popular sympathy for the Melanesian population in Irian Jaya. At the same time, in the intensified activity along the border in 1977-78 relations between the Papua New Guinea government and the OPM - and consequently between the government and the Irianese community in Papua New Guinea - appeared to deteriorate markedly. This latter development was in part the inevitable consequence of the government’s tougher attitudes towards border crossings and towards visible support for the OPM within Papua New Guinea; but it also reflected the difficulties of dealing with a movement sharply divided within itself and of coming to terms with a leadership which, from about 1977, threatened to resort to terrorism against Papua New Guinea in pursuing its demands (see, for example, Post-Courier 29 April 1977, 2, 3 May 1977, 27 September 1977, 10 November 1977, 23
October 1978; *Age* 13 June 1978). After the capture of Prai and Ondowame in 1978, and the decision not to grant them asylum in Papua New Guinea, several members of the government received threats of violence and at a cabinet meeting in Wewak, usually a very casual affair, ministers were heavily guarded by police with armalite rifles. The removal of two Irianese refugees in an OPM raid on the refugee camp at Yako in April 1979 brought a very strong reaction from Somare, who said the incident could lead to a hardening of the government’s attitude towards the separatists, and indeed shortly after it was reported that the government was preparing legislation to stop citizens actively supporting the OPM (*Canberra Times* 4 April 1979; *Post-Courier* 25 May 1979; *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 May 1979). (Such a proposal, it seems, had been discussed in June 1978, but Justice secretary, Buri Kidu, had advised that any attempt to restrict the movement of Papua New Guinean citizens would be unconstitutional. See *Post-Courier* 31 January, 5 February 1979.)

Since 1979, and especially since 1984, popular concern over the situation on the border has undoubtedly increased, while relations between the Papua New Guinea government and the OPM and its supporters appear to have deteriorated still further. It might be useful, therefore, to look more closely at the various elements of what earlier I referred to as ‘the Irian Jaya lobby’ (May 1979a:98) and to offer some comments, in summary, on attitudes towards the OPM.

*The Irianese community in Papua New Guinea*

There appears to be some uncertainty about the number of Irian-born residents in Papua New Guinea. A figure given to me by official sources in 1983 put the total of naturalized citizens and permissive residents from Irian Jaya at 567, but the usual estimate of Irian-born residents is about 2,000 to 3,000 (with guesses as high as 10,000). Of these, 217 have been granted Papua New Guinea citizenship.12 Some of these people migrated from West New Guinea before 1962; the rest are

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12 Between September 1975 and June 1977, 157 Irianese were granted citizenship. In November 1978 it was reported (*Post-Courier* 13 November 1978) that the government was imposing a freeze on citizenship to Irianese, and there has been no evidence of a thaw despite a subsequent announcement of a freeze in March 1984. In March 1980 members of the Irianese community approached the then foreign minister, Levi, seeking clarification of the status of citizenship applications, some of which had been outstanding since 1976, but received no response.
either refugees with the status of permissive residence (or citizenship) or people who slipped across the border in the 1960s or early 1970s and took up residence in villages or towns in Papua New Guinea. The number in the latter category (particularly in the Sandaun and East Sepik provinces) is possibly quite large.

For most of the 1960s and early 1970s the Papua New Guinea government, while discouraging border crossing in general, seems to have granted permissive residence fairly readily to those who could plausibly claim that they would suffer persecution if they were returned to Indonesia. Those granted permissive residence, however, were required to accept two conditions: that they would settle wherever they and their families were directed (in practice, where jobs were available away from the border), and that they would ‘never directly or indirectly get involved in political activities which caused [them] seeking for asylum in Papua New Guinea’ (Verrier 1976: Appendix F). The first of these conditions had the effect of distributing the Irianese community fairly widely throughout the country and mostly in towns (particularly in Manus - where in the 1960s and early 1970s large numbers of permissive residents were accommodated temporarily - and Port Moresby). The second condition, I suggested in 1979, had not been very strictly enforced:

The circumstances of gaining permissive residency virtually ensure that the Irianese community will be antipathetic, if not actively hostile, towards Indonesia and even without engaging in formal political activity some Irianese are likely to find sympathetic voices among their Papua New Guinean neighbours (one prominent Papua New Guinean spokesman for Irian Jaya has joint business interests with Irianese). Many Irianese now hold senior positions in government, private enterprise and the church and there is no doubt that some have used their positions to publicize the grievances of the Irianese people. Moreover, since 1962 the Irianese community has provided an effective underground channel for OPM propaganda... (May 1979a:99-100).

In the 1970s a South Pacific News Service, the mouthpiece for the Provisional Revolutionary Government of West Papua New Guinea,

13 For a summary of policy and procedures on border crossing see May 1979a:98-99.
operated from Port Moresby with agencies in Sydney and London, and, as noted above, the de facto West Papuan cabinet announced in 1977 included the names of Irianese residents in Papua New Guinea, though some of these disclaimed any involvement.

In 1976 and again in 1978, however, the government threatened to take action against Irianese residents giving visible support to the OPM, and early in 1979 an Irian-born permanent resident, Nicolaas Messet, was deported for his part in assisting Jacob Prai and Otto Ondowame to seek asylum in Papua New Guinea. Further deportations followed later in 1979 (see above page 100) and in 1980 it withdrew the travel documents of a permissive resident Rex Rumakiek, when it was reported that Rumakiek had been invited to establish an OPM office in Vanuatu. The Chan government’s concern with internal security in relation to the border was also evidenced in 1980 by the arrest of an Irian-born naturalized citizen who had in his possession ‘prohibited literature’, including ‘diagrams of how to make bombs and how to destroy a railway’ (Post-Courier 11 December 1980). Even more melodramatic was the ‘exposure’, in March 1981, of an OPM plot to obtain Soviet arms and smuggle them into Irian Jaya through Papua New Guinea. This ‘plot’ came to light when a letter, signed by the ‘chairman of the OPM Central Committee’ and addressed to a ‘Mr George, c/o Poste Restante, Turkey’, was returned, unclaimed, to its sender in Madang. A DFAT spokesman told the press that the government had ‘substantial documentary evidence’ of the OPM’s Papua New Guinea connection and was treating the matter with the ‘utmost seriousness’. He was probably not reassured by a statement by self-described OPM spokesman Henk Joku, who said that approaches by the OPM to the USSR and Cuba (but not involving Papua New Guinea) had been made public five years previously (see Post-Courier 19, 20, 23 March 1981; 31 July 1981). The repatriation to Indonesia of another three long-time residents four months later was apparently related to this episode (see page 104). In the meantime another three had been deported following their participation in the Human Rights Tribunal organized at UPNG (ibid.) and the government had stopped issuing from Port Moresby visas to residents of Irian Jaya, claiming that the system had been ‘abused by some people’ (Post-Courier 21 January 1981).

Although there was in the 1970s an Irianese community organization in Papua New Guinea the government’s dealings with the local community were complicated by divisions within the community,
which in part reflected the ideological and regional factionalism which characterized the nationalist movement within Irian Jaya and elsewhere overseas (see Osborne's chapter above and also May 1980). These divisions were evidenced in 1978 when a faction calling itself the South Pacific Group opposed an officially sanctioned visit by Netherlands-based Irianese emigre Nicolaas Jouwe (see Post-Courier 12, 24, 25, 30 January 1978), and they became more apparent when in mid July 1981 twenty-three 'West Irian refugees' were charged after attempting to abduct Henk Joku from his office in Port Moresby (Post-Courier 17, 20 July 1981). Joku, born in Sentani, but a naturalized Papua New Guinea citizen, had been an outspoken, if perhaps erratic, member of a relatively militant element of the Irianese community in Port Moresby which was identified with Elky Bemey and later James Nyaro and which in 1984 was accused of threatening Irianese residents not directly supporting the OPM (Times of PNG 9 August, 6 September 1984). Other members of this group included Ruben Victor Kambuaya, Melky Salosa, Matthew Mayer, and the three deported in July 1981. A self-confessed member of the Melanesian Socialist Party, which advocated armed resistance to Indonesia and had threatened terrorist action in Papua New Guinea, Joku appears to have been involved in the abortive attempt to obtain arms from the USSR and had he not been a Papua New Guinean citizen would probably have been deported.

In 1982 the Irianese community came under close surveillance following threats against some leading politicians (see Post-Courier 28, 29 July 1982; the unlikely collection included Levi, Somare, Bais and East Sepik premier Dambui) and after an Irianese man had forced his way into DFAT offices in Port Moresby wielding an axe. The following year there was another report of alleged attempts to smuggle arms into Irian Jaya from Australia via Papua New Guinea (Niugini Nius 10 August 1983). But generally the community maintained a fairly low profile.

Circumstances changed somewhat, however, following the influx of border crossers beginning early 1984 and as negotiations proceeded with Indonesia over repatriation. As early as February a group of Irianese residing in Papua New Guinea circulated amongst foreign

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14 According to the Post-Courier 24 February 1976 a community organization had been established earlier for proposed round table talks with the Indonesia and Papua New Guinea governments and represented about 200 people.
embassies and Papua New Guinean officials in Port Moresby an urgent appeal for the raising of the ‘West Papua issue’ with the UN Committee on Decolonization and for a round table conference between the Indonesian government and the provisional government of West Papua to implement West Papuan independence (Post-Courier 27 February 1984). The request for Papua New Guinea to represent West Papuan demands in New York was repeated by Henk Joku and in interviews with OPM leaders reported by Papua New Guinean journalists Alfred Sasako (Niugini Nius 29 February 1984) and Neville Togarewa (Times of PNG 8, 15 March 1984) and was taken up by a number of Papua New Guineans, though it was firmly rejected by the foreign minister and by Papua New Guinea’s ambassador at the UN. In mid March 1984 the chairman of the Citizenship Committee reacted by announcing a temporary freeze on citizenship applications from Irianese (though, as noted above, a freeze appears to have been in effect already since 1978); some Irianese permissive and naturalized citizens, he said, had supported the OPM and were ‘a real headache to the community in which they live’. The chairman went on to announce that steps were being taken to amend parts of the Citizenship Act to enforce stricter criteria in assessing applications and to revoke, if necessary, citizenship or permissive residency status granted previously (Post-Courier 16 March 1984).

The situation deteriorated further with the kidnap of Werner Wyder and the conveying, through Henk Joku, of a demand for ransom (see p.119). Although the Irianese community as a whole seems to have been embarrassed by this incident - some calling on the OPM to release Wyder and some expressing doubts that the OPM was in fact involved - it almost certainly had an adverse effect on sympathy for the OPM and indirectly for the Irianese community generally (see Times of PNG 5 April 1984); the Police Association, for example, urged the government to increase its surveillance of OPM sympathizers and to strengthen its internal security organization, warning that otherwise the country was laying itself open ‘to becoming the Pacific Lebanon’ (Niugini Nius 8 April 1984), and Somare was quoted as saying, ‘If these people persist in these activities, they will be expelled from our country’ (Post-Courier 11 April 1984). The subsequent abduction of a West Sepik headmaster, during the midst of negotiations over repatriation of border crossers, though disclaimed on behalf of the OPM by Joku, further alienated some sympathizers, the usually supportive Bais, for example, accusing the OPM of ‘illegal and irresponsible conduct’ and
warning, ‘So far we have been very good to them [the OPM]’ (Post-Courier 4 July 1984).

About this time, also, the more militant element of Papua New Guinea’s Irianese community carried its campaign to Australia. In June Henk Joku attended a conference in Canberra of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples; three months later an Australian former mercenary soldier with contacts in Papua New Guinea was arrested in Sydney for allegedly attempting to supply arms to OPM guerillas (Niugini Nius 27 September 1984; Times of PNG 4 October 1984; Sydney Morning Herald 4 June 1985; Post-Courier 4 June 1985). In the same month that Joku visited Canberra, Matthew Mayer, a permissive resident, visited Australia and subsequently (on the eve of the Australian foreign minister’s departure for Indonesia) sought political asylum there. Mayer claimed that he had been harrassed by ‘thugs’ hired by both Indonesian and Papua New Guinea intelligence agencies. A report by Irian-born journalist Franzalbert Joku (Times of PNG 9 August 1984) suggested that Mayer had been sent to Australia by the OPM to try to organize military and financial support for the movement. It was further claimed (ibid., also 16 August 1984) that Iambakey Okuk had been involved in arranging Mayer’s travel and in advising him to apply for refugee status in Australia. Mayer was subsequently refused residence in Australia - and refused re-entry to Papua New Guinea.

Again, in September-October 1984, as plans for the repatriation of border crossers appeared to be reaching finality, the government received threats from OPM sources that if the planned repatriation went ahead the movement would disrupt the exercise and would sabotage the Ok Tedi mine (Post-Courier 12 September 1984, Niugini Nius 19, 23, 25 October 1984). There were also renewed threats of violence against several Papua New Guinean politicians and officials and, from within the refugee camps, warnings not to proceed with proposed visits by Indonesian verification teams and suggestions that retaliation against abuses of camp inmates by government officials (see Niugini Nius 22, 26, 29 September 1984) might be carried out by OPM guerillas from the other side of the border. Again the foreign minister issued counter-threats (Niugini Nius 25 October 1984).

Early in 1985 AAP correspondent Craig Skehan reported (Post-Courier 14 February 1985) that OPM members were moving freely in and out of border camps, and a proposed visit to border camps by Australian foreign minister Bill Hayden was called off after armed
guerillas had been seen in the area. (According to Joku, reported in *Post-Courier* 25 February 1984, the guerillas - eight of whom were later arrested as illegal immigrants - had hoped to deliver letters to Hayden for the UN secretary-general and the ALP; the latter was requested to give substantial financial assistance and military equipment to the OPM.) Shortly after this it was revealed that the Swiss consulate had received a demand for K50,000, representing the cost of looking after Wyder while he was in OPM custody. The 'account' was signed by Melky Salosa, and according to Joku was not authorized by the OPM (*Post-Courier* 3 May 1985). Salosa, a permissive resident in Papua New Guinea, had left Port Moresby early in 1984, allegedly to take weapons collected in Port Moresby to Nyaro (*Times of PNG* 4 October 1984); he was subsequently involved in the kidnapping of Wyder and of the West Sepik schoolteacher. In a strongly worded editorial, the *Post-Courier* (2 May 1985) urged the government to act immediately: 'These are desperate people and there is no knowing how far they are prepared to go'. Less than three weeks later Salosa was arrested near the border and brought to Port Moresby for charging (*Post-Courier* 20, 22, 27 May 1985).

The net effect of all this has been that at the same time as a massive exodus of refugees has given rise to a widespread popular sympathy for the Irianese people, the actions of what appears to be a small section of the Irian-born population in Papua New Guinea has prompted the government to keep a closer watch over the resident Irianese community and to take a harder line against both permissive residents engaging in political activity and refugees seeking political asylum. It is still nevertheless true that Irian-born citizens and permissive residents exercise an important influence, through the media and the church especially, on popular perceptions of the border issue and that this influence will increasingly test sensitivities on both sides.

*The border villages and the Sepik connection* 15

Although the border passes through areas which are for the most part only sparsely populated, it is none the less an arbitrary boundary which ignores traditional rights to land and hunting and gathering, and

15 The attitude of border villagers to the border problem is discussed in greater detail by Herlihy, below. A recent population survey of the border census divisions of Western Province (Pula and Jackson 1984) also contains useful information.
divides groups of people who are bound by ties of language, kin and relations of exchange [Figure 5.1]. Successive border agreements between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea have recognized this in provisions which safeguard the rights of border villagers to cross for traditional purposes (principally sago making).

Hence when Irianese began to cross into Papua New Guinea after 1962 they were generally well-received, especially since many border villagers saw themselves as standing to gain from associated border development plans. It was no coincidence that the most prominent early spokesmen for the Irianese (apart from Guise) were Kenu and Langro and the expatriate member for the Madang-Sepik special electorate - all from electorates adjoining the border. There was, also, in the West and East Sepik provinces in the 1970s a millenarian-style movement whose supporters sold ‘freedom fighters’ stripes and epaulettes to villagers for amounts ranging from K2 to K20 (though the reasons for acquiring the insignia were not clear). Moreover in 1974 Papua New Guinea’s minister for Defence, Foreign Relations and Trade, Kiki, informed the Australian high commissioner that reports indicated that the OPM had extended its influence quite widely among villages on the Papua New Guinea side of the border ‘and to a depth in the area behind Wanimo not previously suspected’ (Kabar Seberang 8/9, 1981:155).

With the increased level of activity along the border in 1977-78, and frustrated expectations of development in the border areas, it seemed possible that this sympathy might diminish. However Defence Force commander Diro was quoted as saying in April 1978 that support for the West Papuan nationalists among Papua New Guineans near the border was so strong that no military campaign by Papua New Guinea against the guerillas could succeed (Sharp 1978:105, quoting the ABC) and reports of operations in July 1978 tended to confirm this (for example, Sydney Morning Herald 13 July 1978). In December 1978, following the arrest of Prai and Ondowame, a letter appeared in the Post-Courier (20 December 1978), signed by ‘The Bush People, Bewani’, which asked the government to return Prai and Ondowame to the West Sepik. There is no doubt that over a number of years there has been support for the OPM in some border villages, and in 1981 villages along the northern sector of the border were involved in OPM faction in-fighting. But many observers were surprised by a statement of the Sandaun deputy premier in 1983, that young men from Wutung, Amanab, Yabsiei and Telefomin were deserting their villages to join
the OPM (Post-Courier 20 July 1983). The events of 1984-85 brought
the situation of the Melanesians in Irian Jaya more immediately to the
attention of villages in the border area, which showed a remarkable
willingness to accommodate large numbers of border crossers and gen-
erally strong opposition to proposals for repatriation. In a letter to the
Post-Courier (12 April 1984), for example, the Sandaun premier,
Andrew Komboni, argued that the ‘family aspects’ of the border situa-
tion had been evaded by Australian, Indonesian and Papua New Gui-
nean governments:

....the traditional ties among the border villages in the
northern sector have not changed since the white men
declared an invisible border line....a good number of the
current refugees... have run this way with the natural incli-
nation to seek family refuge. It must be shocking, and many
families around Vanimo have expressed as inhuman, to see
blood relatives being jailed or being held at camps....I am
proud of my people of the border villages that they have not
taken too drastic rebellious action against the Papua New
Guinea government.

The extent of support for OPM guerillas, on the other hand, is difficult
to judge, though the opinion of the Post-Courier’s defence correspon-
dent was that

....it is becoming more and more apparent that our village
people on the border are, voluntarily or through fear, aid-
ing and abetting the continued sanctuary of OPM rebels
(Ian Glanville, Post-Courier 22 May 1985).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, among the most consistent
critics of successive governments’ handling of the border situation -
specifically with regard to border crossers/refugees - there has been a
disproportionate number of politicians and others from the Sepik
(West and East) and Western provinces. Of the Sepik politicians, the
former East Sepik district commissioner and member for Wewak,
Tony Bais, has been particularly outspoken: when early in 1979 diffi-
culty was being experienced in finding a third-country home for Prai
and Ondowame, Bais (then a government backbencher) said over the
NBC that his village would provide them with a home; in 1981 he was
a member of the South Pacific Human Rights Tribunal; and though
since 1982 he has been occasionally acting foreign affairs minister he
has continued to speak out against Indonesian border violations and in support of granting refugee status to border crossers. He has been supported in this by fellow Sepiks Lus, Jaminan, and, since 1982, the member for Aitape-Lumi, Gabriel Ramoi, who as a student leader had organized the first Melanesian Solidarity Week and had been arrested for harbouring an Irianese permissive resident whom the government was seeking to deport (see p.104). It was Ramoi who in August 1984 accused the government of trying to starve refugees back across the border; several months earlier he had expressed the view (*Post-Courier* 2 March 1984) that Papua New Guinea had a better claim to Irian Jaya than Indonesia did. Another Sepik, the Melanesian Alliance deputy chairman Narokobi has also been a longstanding champion of Irianese interests (see below). Among Western Province politicians, the member for North Fly, Warren Dutton, emerged as a strong advocate of refugee status for border crossers in 1984. In May he told parliament that Papua New Guinea should be prepared to accept border crossers as refugees, and in August, when repatriation seemed imminent, Dutton defended a group of about 6,000 refugees in camps at Atkamba and Kungim saying that they were not illegal crossers, that the government appeared to be starving the people in the camps in order to encourage them to go back, and that the proposed repatriation of border crossers was ‘inhumane, illegal and impossible’ (*Post-Courier* 2, 13 August 1984; *Niugini Nius* 2 August 1984). Subsequently Dutton announced that villagers in the Kiunga area of the Western Province had offered to accommodate border crossers on 30,000 ha of their traditional land (an area which was under consideration for a major rubber development scheme) (*Post-Courier* 19 September 1984, 7 November 1984, 8 March 1985). Dutton’s resettlement proposals have been supported by the Western Provincial member and minister for Physical Planning and Housing, Kala Swokin.

Writing in 1979, I suggested that the existence of local sympathies in the border areas might raise problems for the national government as powers were progressively transferred to provincial governments. In fact, however, though provincial politicians were occasional critics of government policy (see, for example, *Post-Courier* 13 January 1981, 21 September 1981, 23 June 1982, 26 May 1983) there was little conflict between the national and provincial governments over border administration or related issues until 1984. In that year, with thousands of refugees pouring across their borders, it was inevitable that the provincial governments would become involved in the politics of the situ-
ation, and involved they became, primarily as opponents of the national government’s handling of border crossers. As early as March 1984 the Western (Fly River) Province’s premier called on the prime minister to ‘support UN moves to enable the people of Irian Jaya to determine their own future’ (*Post-Courier* 15 March 1984). Later in the year the premier was removed from an official function in Port Moresby after he had interjected during a speech, accusing the national government and its official guest, Gough Whitlam, of being ‘afraid of Indonesia’ (*Niugini Nius* 8 August 1984). The following month the Sandaun provincial government, also, passed a resolution deploring violence on its border and calling on the prime minister to ask the UN to re-examine its 1966 decision [sic] on West Papuan independence. The Sandaun premier, Komboni16, continued to oppose repatriation of refugees throughout 1984, establishing a provincial refugee co-ordinating committee, placing the repatriation issue before a generally sympathetic Premiers’ Council meeting in May, and announcing in October that provincial leaders had expressed the desire to resettle the 4,000 or so refugees in the province. Support for resettlement also came from the Western Provincial government (*Post-Courier* 10, 14 August 1984).

Whether such sympathetic attitudes can be maintained in the border areas if anything like the present number of border crossers remains there, is another question. Already in April and May 1984 there were isolated reports (one from the Bewani area) of complaints from border villages, who felt that the refugees were being treated better than the local villagers, and feared that their presence might attract military action from the other side of the border (for example, *Niugini Nius* 21 April, 30 May, 5 November 1984; more recently, see *Wantok* 20 July 1985). Moreover, despite outside assistance, the massive increase of population in a generally fairly inhospitable environment17, and apparently increasing demands by OPM guerillas, must place strains on traditional food supplies which cannot be maintained for any length of time.

16 In 1985 Komboni lost office, and was succeeded as premier by former national politician Paul Langro.

17 In the Komokpin area of Western Province, where it was first reported that large numbers of refugees had died from starvation, it was estimated that over 2,000 refugees were camped in an area which normally supported about 150 people.
The church

The church exercises a strong influence over public opinion in Papua New Guinea. Apart from the influence exerted through pastors, priests and missionaries, the nation’s weekly Tokpisin newspaper, *Wantok*, and the major weekly *Times of Papua New Guinea* are published under the direction of a board comprising representatives of the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and United churches (and their editorial staff has included Irian-born journalists who have contributed to an extensive and sympathetic coverage of the Irianese position). On the Irian Jaya issue the church’s general concern over human rights has perhaps been reinforced by sympathy for a predominantly Christian population in a predominantly Muslim state. Also, as the major outside presence in the generally remote areas along the border, church and mission workers are often in closer touch with the situation than government officials - as became conspicuously apparent in 1984.

Although church bodies had been relatively quiet on Irian Jaya between 1969 and 1977, the events of 1977-78 prompted several strong statements on the subject. In June 1977 the National Catholic Council called on the Indonesian government ‘to refrain from acts of savagery against Melanesians in Irian Jaya’ (*Post-Courier* 1 June 1977). In October 1978 the Melanesian Council of Churches (MCC) - which represents the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran and United churches and the Salvation Army - established a Committee on Melanesian Refugees (under the chairmanship of an Irian-born Papua New Guinea citizen) to protect the rights of Irianese refugees and to raise public awareness; one of its first acts was to criticize the government’s handling of refugees in the West Sepik. Early in 1979 the MCC told the government that to deport Prai and Ondowame would be unchristian (*Wantok* 17 February 1979). And again in mid 1981 the MCC attacked the government over its decision to deport Bonay, Kafiari and Hamadi (see p. 104).

It was, therefore, perhaps predictable that when in early 1984 the government reacted to the influx of border crossers by charging them with illegal entry, the bishop of Vanimo, John Etheridge, should be critical. In a letter to the *Post-Courier* (12 March 1984) and *Niugini Nius* (9 March 1984) Etheridge wrote:

> It is very sad to see a group of refugees, people who had fled from their own country because of fear, standing outside the court house here at Vanimo, waiting for the govern-
ment to decide their fate....I trust and pray that the credibility of this country be restored with the resumption of the very basic rights that are expected of all countries, let alone a country that professes to be a just and Christian one.

During the following months the Catholic church bore much of the brunt of providing for the maintenance of refugees along the border in the northern sector, and the bishop of Vanimo was heavily involved in the relief programme and consistently outspoken in his opposition to repatriation of border crossers against their will. Later in the year, as the influx of border crossers shifted south, the bishop of Kiunga, Gerard Deschamps, took a similarly strong stand. The two bishops have been supported during 1984-85 by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference and by other denominational and inter-denominational bodies in Papua New Guinea, including the Evangelic Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea, the Evangelical Church of Papua, and the MCC - all of which have also contributed materially to the maintenance of the refugee camps. Support has also come from Australian church bodies, a group of which visited refugee camps in July 1984.

Since 1977-78, however, there have been suggestions within government circles that mission stations along the border have sometimes known more about what is happening along the border than they should, and in 1982 a Catholic priest was charged over an incident in which he was alleged to have incited a group of Irianese due to be repatriated to Jayapura to flee into the bush (see Post-Courier 19, 28 July 1982). In April 1984 following the negotiated release of the Swiss pilot Wyder, it became known that the final negotiations with OPM leader Nyaro took place well within the Sandaun Province, at a church-run vocational training centre, and that the negotiators had been flown there in a mission plane. Although Etheridge insisted that he had been in constant contact with the NIO and that no Papua New Guinea citizens had crossed into Indonesia, the government was reported as being angry about the incident (Niugini Nius 11, 21 April 1984; Times of PNG 26 April 1984) and subsequently, in the National Parliament, two government members - Carl Stack, the member for West Sepik Provincial, and John Giheno, who later became Foreign Affairs minister - accused Bishop Etheridge of influencing Irianese to cross the border and called for the deportation of the bishop. Sensibly the government chose not to become involved in a confrontation with the church, but the incident illustrated a degree of tension which has existed in relations between the government and the church on matters concerning
the border.

Students and intellectuals

In 1969 the then recently established Politics Club at UPNG became the first predominantly Papua New Guinean organization (apart from the House of Assembly) to take up the Irian Jaya cause. Participant commentator Davis (1970:295) compared Papua New Guinean student involvement over Irian Jaya at this time to Australian student involvement over Vietnam, though the former proved to be relatively short-lived. Indonesia’s invasion of East Timor provided the occasion for a further anti-Indonesian demonstration by students who presented petitions to the Indonesian embassy and the Papua New Guinea government which referred also to Irianese demands for freedom. (For an account of the student protest see Samana 1976.) During 1977 and 1978 students again identified with their Melanesian brothers in criticizing the government’s handling of the issue: in July 1978 there was another march on the Indonesian embassy and in November students offered assistance to Prai and Ondowame. And during Suharto’s visit in 1979 800 students marched to the airport to protest against Indonesian rule in Irian Jaya.

The high point of student protest, however, was in 1981 when, under the leadership of Gabriel Ramoi, UPNG students staged a Melanesian Solidarity Week, whose activities included a ‘solidarity march’, allocation by the Students’ Representative Council (SRC) of K2000 to assist the OPM, and the organization of the South Pacific Human Rights Tribunal after which a petition was presented to the Indonesian embassy. Subsequently Ramoi and other UPNG students protested the deportation of Irianese permissive residents involved in the forum (concealing one of them from the police for several weeks), and later still another three deportations (see p.104).

Between 1981 and 1984 student interest in the border issue subsided, but in 1984 students - from the University of Technology, Goroka Teachers College and high schools, as well as UPNG - were quick to respond to developments on the border, urging the government to show its concern for the refugees and to support a West Papuan petition before the UN. In April, Indonesian foreign minister Mochtar managed to further antagonize students when he suggested that fears of Indonesia were being whipped up by ‘a certain segment of Australians, young people and progressives from universities’; the statement drew firmly worded responses from the UPNG’s vice chan-
cellor and from the vice president of its SRC (Post-Courier 23, 24, 26 April 1984). Later in the year, as the issue of repatriation became a focus of discussion, UPNG students marched to the Indonesian embassy to present a petition calling for UNHCR involvement in the exercise, and the Sandaun Students' Society and the Fly River Students' Association expressed support for a call to take the government to court if it denied refugee status to border crossers (Post-Courier 6, 9 August, 20 September 1984).

In addition to the activities of student bodies, several student leaders of earlier years (apart from Ramoi, whose views have already been noted) have continued to espouse the cause of the Melanesians in Irian Jaya after their student careers.

John Kasaipwalova, former student and village leader, poet, playwright and businessman, wrote in an article in the Post-Courier (28 July 1978): 'as a nation we are but dancing fools for Indonesian foreign policy', but he went on to suggest that 'we three brothers' (Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Irian Jaya) sit down together to argue our differences. Shortly after, and almost prophetically in view of the arrest of Jacob Prai, Kasaipwalova presented a new play, 'My Brother, My Enemy', the subject of which is the capture and incarceration of an OPM leader who has crossed into Papua New Guinea. Although the play is essentially a satire against the Papua New Guinea government, the Indonesian ambassador felt moved to walk out of the first performance.

Another former UPNG SRC president, Utula Samana, who as a student had taken an active part in the 1976 demonstration over East Timor, was arrested (but in the event not charged) when in December 1978 he attempted to hand a petition to Mochtar; he was at the time he was arrested a member of the official welcoming party in Lae. Samana subsequently became premier of Morobe Province and as such in 1984 he spoke out against repatriation of border crossers and in support of moves to refer the question of self-determination for Irian Jaya to the UN (see, for example, Niugini Nius 30 April, 14 August 1984, and interview with Samana in Asian Bureau Australia Newsletter No. 77 December 1984).

Perhaps most consistently vocal among the intellectuals, however, has been lawyer, writer, philosopher, unsuccessful political candidate, and Melanesian Alliance vice chairman Bernard Narokobi. As early as 1975 Narokobi warned against 'Indonesian imperialism' and in 1978 he frequently attacked the government for not supporting
Irianese freedom fighters. In 1979, when the government was experiencing difficulty in finding a home for Prai and Ondowame, Narokobi criticized the Melanesian states which had refused them, saying ‘When we reject a fellow Melanesian, we actually reject the the fundamental bases of our society - and our Constitution’. He went on to describe Indonesian presence on Melanesian soil as ‘immoral and unnatural’ and ventured the opinion: ‘The Melanesian struggle for liberation is legitimate and honorable....They will, of course, win in the end’ (Post-Courier 21 March 1981). The same year Narokobi presented a petition on the subject to visiting US ambassador Andrew Young; Young was reported, in a government newsletter (Papua New Guinea Newsletter 47, week ending 4 May 1979), to have said that he ‘would bring the matter to groups which are sympathetic to the West Irian cause to bring it up at the United Nations for discussion’. In 1981 Narokobi was one of the principal forces behind the South Pacific Human Rights Tribunal. As a political candidate in 1982 (he stood against Somare), Narokobi appeared to have moved to a less militant stand, though in June of that year he urged the cutting of diplomatic ties with Indonesia in protest against recent border incursions. During 1984 Narokobi was a frequent critic of Indonesian actions and of the government’s attitude to border crossers. In October 1984 as a member of a non-government ‘Centre for Concern’ he announced a proposal for the resettlement of Irianese refugees ‘traditionally’ with people who have land in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; there were, he said, already 600 people in Maprik (East Sepik) willing to adopt refugees (Niugini Nius 25 October 1984). And in 1985 it was reported (Post-Courier 24 April, 24 May 1985) that an application had been filed with the Supreme Court, by Narokobi on behalf of the border crossers, seeking a ruling on the rights and freedom of those who had crossed and were facing repatriation.

Parliamentary opposition

Between 1969 and 1976 Irian Jaya was not a prominent issue in domestic politics. Apart from questions by Langro, Chatterton and Pondros, the subject was seldom raised in parliament and when it was there was no systematic difference of opinion between government and opposition. As noted above, however, the government’s handling of the border situation became a significant issue during the national elections of 1977 and a recurring subject for question and debate in the
second parliament.

Although Langro (who had been deputy leader of the opposition) was a casualty of the 1977 election his concern over government policy on Irian Jaya was taken up by several new members on both sides of the House - notably Levi, Jaminan and Bais - as well as by Guise, Pondros, Okuk and Papua Besena member James Mopio. Under the new, confrontationist style of politics employed by Okuk when he became leader of the opposition in 1978, opposition members were quick to make political capital out of the Irian Jaya issue, accusing the government of being weak in its dealings with Indonesia and wrong in its decision to deport Prai and his colleagues (see, for example, Draft Hansard 7, 17 August 1978). But there was no evidence that opposition members had a significantly different policy to offer. Moreover Okuk’s own position seemed to fluctuate: up till October 1978 he appeared mostly as a champion of Irianese refugees (for example, see Post-Courier 9 June, 7 July, 20 October 1978) but at the end of that month he returned from Indonesia with glowing reports of Indonesia’s administration of Irian Jaya and East Timor (Post-Courier 1 November 1978); by early 1979 he was again attacking the government over its decision to deport Prai and Ondowame but in June advocated large-scale Indonesian investment in and aid to Papua New Guinea (see p.99).

As noted above, the change of government in 1980, following a vote of no-confidence, did not bring any noticeable change in policy, except perhaps that the new government, and particularly its foreign minister Levi, appeared to be taking a stronger stand against border crossers and against support for the OPM. Indeed although members of the previous government were occasionally critical of the Chan government’s handling of the border situation, the strongest challenges to government policy came not from the opposition but from within the governing coalition itself. As deputy prime minister, Okuk launched a strong attack on Indonesia in late 1981, which caused Mochtar to observe that Okuk’s statement differed from the views of the prime minister (Post-Courier 26 November 1981), and in 1982 the minister for Foreign Affairs, Levi, and his department felt it necessary, initially, to counter a series of anti-Indonesian comments by Okuk which produced the ‘Indonesian Newsletter affair’ (see pp.105-107) and culminated in Okuk’s call for the closure of the Indonesian embassy. The Melanesian Alliance, also, though a member of the coalition, declared support for the OPM in 1980, criticized the government’s action in deporting Irianese permissive residents in 1981, and in 1982 called for
a tougher stand on border incursions.

In 1982 as in 1977, activity along the border intensified coincidentally with Papua New Guinea's national elections, yet Irian Jaya failed to emerge as an election issue and with the return of a Pangu government existing policies were broadly maintained. What did change in 1984-85, however, was the scale of the problem. The difficulties posed by a massive influx of border crossers, the repetition of border violations by Indonesia, and the difficulties, both at administrative and at diplomatic levels, of communicating with Indonesia provided ample scope for criticism from the political opposition, and it was not slow in coming. While he was in the house as opposition leader, Okuk made his presence felt, criticizing the government's actions with regard to border crossers, urging it to support Irianese self-determination at the UN, and revealing his fundamental concern in arguing that if Papua New Guinea could not help resolve Irianese demands for independence (or at least for political asylum) the OPM and its supporters would turn to the USSR and thus threaten the security of the region with communist intervention (see, for example, Post-Courier 13 April, 16 May and 12 October 1984; also see Times of PNG 20 September 1984, 2 December 1983). Interestingly, former foreign minister Levi, now in opposition, also came out strongly against Indonesia's actions in Irian Jaya. In a remarkable letter to the Times of Papua New Guinea (23 February 1984) Levi expressed his opposition to Papua New Guinea's seeking full membership of ASEAN, on the grounds that such a move 'will endorse Indonesia's claim over West New Guinea'; 'Papua New Guinea to me is not complete without the western half of the island', the former foreign minister wrote, 'The only grounds upon which I would accept full ASEAN membership for PNG is for ASEAN to accept the fact that West New Guinea is not part of Indonesia, but part of Papua New Guinea'. Levi threatened to boycott the forthcoming parliamentary session in May, and was supported in this by Okuk. Newspaper editorials, however, noted with a certain cynicism that although Okuk and Levi were strong critics of government policy in 1984

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18 Okuk lost his seat in 1982 but was returned to the parliament in a by-election in July 1983 and took over as leader of the opposition from former Defence Force commander, Diro. In December 1984 Okuk lost his seat as the result of a challenge to his residential qualifications as a candidate in the by-election, but he stood again in a new by-election in May 1985 and was re-elected.
Momis and the Melanesian Alliance, on the other hand, maintained a consistent line in and out of office, opposing repatriation and urging the government to resettle refugees. When Momis visited the border area in October 1984 and held discussions with Nyaro (p. 132) it appears that one of the main purposes was to consider options in the event of a successful challenge to the Somare government (Niugini Nius 25 October 1984). On his return he told a press conference that Papua New Guinea would be ‘committing an act of genocide’ if it sent the refugees back (Niugini Nius 10 October 1984). In the latter part of 1984 and early 1985, opposition to repatriation and support for Papua New Guinea’s raising of the question of West Papuan independence at the UN came also from former prime minister Chan, from United Party leader Torato, from National Party and deputy opposition leader Tago, and from Diro.

Looking at the discussion which has taken place during 1984-85 and at what the Papua New Guinea government has actually done, however, it would seem that whatever differences of approach to the problems of the border might exist between government and opposition in parliament, they are essentially differences of degree, and perhaps, more than anything else, have to do with whether a group is in office or not. In the final analysis policy positions appear to have been determined by the circumstances of the time - the crises, the frustrations, the pressures of international diplomacy - rather than by differences of ideology or disposition. The possible exception to this is the Melanesian Alliance, whose leading members inside and outside parliament have consistently demonstrated a deeper concern for their Melanesian neighbours than other political groups. But even if the Melanesian Alliance were allowed to dictate policy it seems highly unlikely that there would be any significant shift in the Papua New Guinea government’s well-established policy of unquestioningly rec-

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A no-confidence vote had been foreshadowed for the November sitting of parliament, with Momis as a possible alternative prime minister. In the event, the motion, which nominated Okuk as alternative prime minister, was defeated in March 1985, and the Melanesian Alliance joined Pangu in a new governing coalition.
ognizing Indonesia’s sovereignty in Irian Jaya, discouraging OPM movement across the border, and, while assisting a small number of refugees to find political asylum in third countries and granting permis­sive residency to some, generally seeking to push border crossers back into Irian Jaya.

The army

Towards the end of 1977 much publicity was given to the fact that Defence Force commander-in-chief, Ted Diro, was summoned to a cabinet meeting and reprimanded for having had contact with rebel leaders. It was even reported that there were demands from within cabinet to remove Diro from the position of commander-in-chief but that these demands were overruled when it became clear that the Defence Force stood firmly behind Diro (Post-Courier 30 September, 6, 10, 12, 14 October 1977. This incident seems to have provided the basis for later stories of an ‘army coup plot’ in 1977; see for example Sydney Morning Herald, Age 23 August 1983). Then in December 1978 a senior officer of the Defence Force, Lieutenant-Colonel Tom Poang, was forced to resign because of his alleged involvement in negotiations between the OPM and an arms dealer from Senegal for the purchase of weapons (Sydney Morning Herald 19 December 1978).

In both cases personal antagonisms seem to have played some part in the government’s handling of the situation but the incidents did raise questions about the extent of accord between the government and the army and lent weight to a commonly held view that there is a good deal of antipathy towards Indonesia among army officers.

On the basis of casual discussion with Defence Force personnel in Port Moresby and Wewak over a number of years I suspect there is some truth in this view. And perhaps one should not be surprised to find such an attitude among soldiers given that, in a leaked Defence Department document in 1984, Papua New Guinea’s other close neighbour, Australia, nominated Indonesia as its most likely military threat. There is no evidence, however, that antipathy to Indonesia within the Defence Force has influenced government policy or the deployment of troops along the border. Moreover, when Diro, having resigned from the Defence Force in July 1981, contested the 1982 elections and subsequently became leader of the opposition in the National Parliament during a period of border tension in 1982-83 he displayed no signs of being a ‘hawk’ (though he was reported (Canberra Times 7
July 1982) as saying that Indonesia probably had plans for the takeover of Papua New Guinea ‘one day’). In 1983 the newly appointed Defence Force commander, Brigadier-General Ken Noga, supported Indonesian suggestions that a military attaché be appointed to the Papua New Guinean embassy in Jakarta, saying that, ‘Internationally, the military seem to talk to other military a lot more regularly and easily’ (Canberra Times 22 September 1983).

These six categories - the Irianese community, border villagers, the church, students and intellectuals, parliamentary opposition, and the army - obviously do not represent an unbiased sample of ‘public opinion’. However, an examination of letters to the press (including the Tokpisin Wantok), casual discussion with people in some quite remote villages of East Sepik, and the fact that offers to resettle refugees have come from as far afield as the East Sepik, Gulf, Morobe and North Solomons provinces, suggests that the general concerns expressed by these groups are felt, in varying degrees, by a large segment of the population throughout the country. An extreme viewpoint is represented by people who fear that an Indonesian invasion of Papua New Guinea is a future possibility. This view persists despite Indonesian assurances that it has no expansionist ambitions (though it is perhaps nourished by repeated statements that Indonesia has acted with ‘restraint’). I do not think that such a fear is widespread, but it has been expressed by people ranging from the former Defence minister, Tito, and one of his predecessors, Gai Duwabane (who told the Post-Courier (14 March 1984) that Indonesia might try to capitalize on a volcanic eruption in Rabaul to invade Papua New Guinea), to groups of villagers such as the highlanders reported in Niugini Nius (10 April 1984) as preparing themselves for a third world war. Among those who foresee the possibility of invasion, responses vary from the belligerent - mostly demands that Papua New Guinea take an unspecified ‘stronger stand’ against border violations - through the practical - particularly, seeking stronger and more explicit defence links with Australia - to the conciliatory. Much more common, however, is a broadly articulated sympathy with the situation of the Melanesian population of Irian Jaya, a belief - founded on newspaper reports and word of mouth - that the Melanesians of Irian Jaya have been badly treated by the Indonesian government, and a feeling that the Melanesians of Irian Jaya do not belong in an autocratic Asian nation. These sentiments find expression in a variety of forms, from demands that the Papua New Guinea government support demands for West Papuan
independence at the UN, through offers to assist Indonesia to understand its Melanesian cultures, to offers to accommodate refugees. It is important to recognize that most of those who press such views see themselves not so much ‘anti-Indonesian’ as ‘pro-Melanesian’.

Not all expressions of popular opinion in Papua New Guinea have been unreservedly sympathetic to the Irianese. Between 1979 and 1981 there were several complaints about the Wabo camp in Gulf Province and suggestions that the camp be closed and some refugees deported (Post-Courier 10, 14 September 1979, 26 November 1980, 23 January 1981). In 1981 there were complaints from Manus about politically active Irian-born residents (Post-Courier 21 April 1981). At the time of the 1984 kidnappings there were calls for tough action against those who broke Papua New Guinea laws. In 1984-85 there were complaints from some border villagers that border crossers were raiding gardens, and stealing canoes and that those in refugee camps were receiving better treatment than local villagers (page 145). Other instances of negative attitudes have been cited above. But on the whole these have been vastly outweighed by a general sympathy and concern.

The developments of 1984-85 not only raised awareness locally but brought greater international attention to the border situation. Among a number of international organizations which in 1984 expressed their concern over the situation in Irian Jaya and the fate of the border crossers (apart from the UNHCR and TAPOL - the British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia - whose concerns are longstanding and well known), were the Anti-Slavery Society (UK), Survival International (UK), the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs (Denmark), the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, the Refugee Council of Australia and the Australian branch of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ). An ICJ team, which visited the refugee camps in September 1984, produced draft and final reports which were well publicized in Papua New Guinea, at one stage prompting an irritated response from Somare: ‘The ICJ does not run this country’ (Niugini Nius 5 October 1984).

In summary: there appears to be within Papua New Guinea a widespread general awareness of the grievances and the demands expressed by Irianese nationalists, and a good deal of sympathy towards their motives and to the idea of accommodating refugees. Developments along the border during 1984-85 undoubtedly raised this awareness and, overall, probably increased sympathetic feelings.
As such, 'public opinion' probably had a significant influence on government policies relating to the border - particularly with respect to repatriation and joint patrols. On the other hand, few people seem to believe that an independent West Papua is a likely prospect, and attitudes to Papua New Guinea’s relations with Indonesia are generally pragmatic. Popular opinion, in other words, has been questioning the policies of the Indonesian government in Irian Jaya, and occasionally the policies of the Papua New Guinea government towards Indonesia and towards border crossers, but it scarcely seems to merit the label 'Indophobia', and still less to be seen as the product of outside manipulation.

Conclusion

In 1977-78 - less than three years after Papua New Guinea had gained independence - events on the Indonesia-Papua New Guinea border raised the border, and the situation of the Melanesian population of Irian Jaya, to a level of major public concern within Papua New Guinea.20 Towards the end of 1978, with the easing tensions, brought about by military de-escalation on the Indonesian side and the announcement of a new ‘smiling policy’ for Irian Jaya, the capture of OPM leaders Prai and Ondowame, and threats by the Papua New Guinea that it would take stern action against overt supporters of the OPM within Papua New Guinea, the salience of the border issue diminished. Cordial relations with Indonesia were restored. Writing in 1979 I ventured the opinion that public concern over the border would not be sustained (May 1979a :1 06), while Rex Mortimer in the same volume wrote of the ‘smiling policy’ as marking, perhaps, the beginnings of 'a more fruitful phase’ in Indonesia-Papua New Guinea relations (Mortimer 1979).

In the event, the ‘border problem’ did not go away. Between 1979 and 1983, in various manifestations - territorial violations by Indonesian troops, influxes of Irianese refugees to Papua New Guinea, a road incursion, and expressions of support within Papua New Guinea for

20 A crude indicator of public concern over border related issues is the number of times Irian Jaya or Indonesia-Papua New Guinea relations occur in the Post-Courier as a news item or in letters to the editor. Annual figures to 1978 are as follows: 1972, 26; 1973, 40; 1974, 8; 1975, 11; 1976, 50; 1977, 71 (of which 61 were after 1 May); 1978, 220. (Source: Post-Courier indexes, IASER, Port Moresby).
Irianese separatism - it kept recurring in short cycles of incident, minor confrontation and renewed cordiality.\(^{21}\) Despite two changes of government in Papua New Guinea in this period, however, successive governments remained unwavering in their acceptance of Indonesia's sovereignty in Irian Jaya, their commitment to maintaining friendly relations with Indonesia, and their refusal to countenance the use of Papua New Guinea as a base for OPM activity. Nor, despite frequent criticisms from the parliamentary opposition of the government's handling of border-related issues, has there been any evidence that any opposition group has had anything significantly different to offer on the issue.

At the same time, although reliable information about conditions in Irian Jaya is difficult - even for the Papua New Guinea government - to obtain, it became clear that, despite predictions to the contrary, support within Irian Jaya for the OPM was not disappearing but was quite probably on the increase.

The developments of 1984, which brought some 11,000 Irianese across the border into Papua New Guinea, again raised public concern, this time dramatically and perhaps irreversibly. They also generated new levels of tension in the relations between the two governments - to the point that Papua New Guinea felt moved to express its concern at international forums - and in the attitudes of the Papua New Guinea government towards some Irian-born residents in Papua New Guinea. Moreover, even if they did not actually threaten the stability of the government in Papua New Guinea, events along the border in 1984-85 certainly intruded into Papua New Guinea's domestic politics to the extent that one minister lost his portfolio for an indiscreet remark and two others faced calls for their resignation following revelations about the situation in border camps. This was reflected, in 1984, in repeated statements to the effect that, while Papua New Guinea recognized Indonesian sovereignty in Irian Jaya, the growing volume of border crossers and problems of security in the border area made it clear that Papua New Guinea did have some direct interest in what was happening in the Indonesian province.

Questions concerning the fate of border crossers/refugees and concerning border security remained dominant issues throughout 1984

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\(^{21}\) The numbers of *Post-Courier* entries between 1979 and 1983 were: 1979, 98; 1980, 56; 1981, 102; 1982, 99; 1983, 68. During 1984, items on Irian Jaya or Indonesia averaged something more than one per day.
and the first half of 1985 and the generally poor record of attempts to resolve problems through diplomatic channels and through the machinery established to deal with border administration and liaison cast serious doubts on their effectiveness.

As of mid 1985 Papua New Guinea still has a problem of major proportions, in the form of a continuing flow of border crossers, while a sharpened public awareness of and sympathy with the situation of the Melanesian population seems likely to ensure that no government can afford either to ignore the problem or to employ repressive measures in an attempt to solve it.

Projected inflows of transmigrant settlers, combined with a continuation of the repressive policies which have to date characterized Indonesia’s administration in Irian Jaya, seem likely to ensure that West Papuan nationalism will remain a problem for the Indonesian government, and to the extent that border crossing appears to offer a way out for disaffected Irianese the situation in Irian Jaya will also continue to present problems for Papua New Guinea, both in its international relations and in its domestic politics.
CHAPTER 6

TRANSMIGRATION TO IRIAN JAYA

H. Arndt

The idea of trying to alleviate population pressure and poverty in Java by organizing and encouraging the movement of people from Java to the outer islands is almost a hundred years old. A census conducted by the Dutch colonial administration in 1905 had shown that, of the total population of the Netherlands East Indies of 37.5 million, 80 per cent (30 million) lived in Java-Madura which accounted for little more than 7 per cent of the land area. Mounting evidence of declining welfare in rural Java led to the adoption of a ‘colonization’ policy aimed at relieving population pressure in Java by settling ‘colonies’ of Javanese on the sparsely populated outer islands, initially mainly in southern Sumatra. By 1940, some 200,000 government-sponsored migrants are estimated to have been settled under this policy. There was also, during the 1930s, a large flow of spontaneous migration of labour to the Sumatran plantations. With the Japanese occupation in 1942, colonization came to an end.

After the attainment of independence, the idea was revived. Ambitious, and quite unrealistic, plans for massive transmigration were put forward. In practice, during the Sukarno period the Dutch policy of transmigration and land settlement of Javanese subsistence farmers continued on a modest scale. The numbers moved rarely exceeded 25,000 persons in any one year and declined to a trickle in the chaotic years of the mid-1960s.

As rational economic policy making again became possible after the 1965-66 change of regime, interest in transmigration revived, but with a different perspective. It came to be recognized that transmigration could not solve, or even substantially alleviate the problem of
'population imbalance' between Java and the other islands, or even the problem of population pressure on Java. As Table 6.1 shows, the balance of Indonesia's population has shifted somewhat in favour of the outer islands since 1905, but population pressure on Java has increased very much further. Java has a population density even greater than that of Bangladesh and nearly double that of the Netherlands, with land holdings averaging less than 0.5 hectares and one quarter or more of the rural population landless. Even an ambitious transmigration programme involving the movement of 200,000 persons a year would be equivalent to only one tenth of the annual increase in Java's population.

In the past fifteen years, transmigration has been seen by Indonesian policy makers primarily as having a welfare objective, to raise the standard of living of the migrants themselves and perhaps, by reducing the number of mouths to feed, that of their home villages in Java. A secondary motive has been to promote lagging economic development on the outer islands.

The first half of this chapter will give a brief account of the development of the transmigration programme in recent years and of some of the problems it has encountered. (For a more detailed study see Arndt 1983.) The second half will focus specifically on transmigration to Irian Jaya.

Table 6.1 Population density in Indonesia, 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'000 km²</td>
<td>million</td>
<td>persons per km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>155.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Java</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>95.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other islands</td>
<td>1,777</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Irian Jaya)</td>
<td>(416)</td>
<td>(1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>99.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>7,617</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extrapolated from World Bank (1982).

Transmigration: Progress and Problems

During the period of the first Five Year Plan (Repelita I, 1969/70-73/4) transmigration was resumed, with the emphasis on expanded
food production. As the older settlement areas in southern Sumatra became overcrowded and increasingly resembled some of the worst areas of Java itself, attention shifted to swamp reclamation in coastal regions of southern Kalimantan and eastern Sumatra and to unirrigated (rainfed) land in other provinces of Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. The OPEC oil price increases of 1973/4 and 1979/80 which brought hitherto undreamed-of foreign exchange earnings to the country and revenue to the government, raised Indonesian development targets all round. Transmigration became one of the main beneficiaries of the windfall. Both the scale of the programme and its regional development objectives became more ambitious.

The income of migrant settlers was to be raised by giving them enough land to grow cash crops as well as food for their own needs, with special emphasis on tree crops such as rubber and palm oil. The pace of transmigration was to be accelerated to the point where settlements would economically justify the provision of new infrastructure and community facilities, such as schools, clinics and local government. The land settlements themselves were increasingly to serve as growth centres by attracting spontaneous migrants from Java and by promoting regional development beyond agriculture, in processing and other industries, as well as in trade and services.

The second Five Year Plan (Repelita II, 1974/75-78/79) at first adopted a transmigration target of 50,000 families (200,000 persons) a year, a figure four times as high as the highest achieved in any previous year. This was subsequently recognized as unrealistic and scaled down to about 20,000 families a year. The third Plan (Repelita III, 1979/80-83/84) set its sights even higher, with a transmigration target of 500,000 families or over 2 million persons over the plan period, and within a year of its adoption the second oil price increase seemed to make so vast a programme financially feasible. Development budget allocations for transmigration were raised from about US$5 million a year in Repelita I to US$340 million in Repelita III, equivalent to almost 6 per cent of the development (capital) budget. Since the early 1970s, the transmigration programme has also received a substantial flow of external assistance, from the World Bank and other international banks and agencies.

Judged merely by the number of people moved from Java¹, the

¹ Transmigrants (and spontaneous migrants) have come from Bali, and recently also from Lombok, as well as from Java. Unless specifically indicated, 'Java' as the source of migrants in this chapter includes the latter two small islands.
transmigration programme has achieved remarkable results in the past ten years. Admittedly, the Repelita III target of 500,000 families has proved over-ambitious. (Official statistics which show it to have been reached include a substantial number of voluntary migrants.) But to have managed the movement and settlement even of 50-60,000 transmigrant families a year in the often extremely difficult conditions of the Indonesian archipelago represents an organizational achievement of no mean order.

Even in terms of numbers, the effort has not been pointless. The removal of 200-300,000 people a year must have done something to relieve population pressure and consequent social problems in some of the poorest areas of Java: and in so far as low population density and labour shortage constitute an obstacle to the economic development of the outer islands, the influx of 300,000 transmigrants represents a significant addition to their natural increase. Nor is there much doubt that the welfare of the great majority of the transmigrant families has been improved. Such scanty estimates of income per head in transmigrant settlements as are available suggest that in most areas, especially those where there is scope for little more than subsistence farming, it is not significantly above the average for Java. But even this, with the ownership of a piece of land, represents a substantial improvement for landless labourers from the poorest parts of Java. Certainly, very few transmigrants, on the publicly available evidence, have returned to their home villages in Java.

There is also statistical support for the presumption that transmigration has contributed to one of the major objectives of the three Five Year Plans, increased food production. Both harvested area under rice and rice yields have risen rapidly in recent years in the main transmigration settlement areas of Sumatra. There is little evidence that transmigration has as yet significantly stimulated regional development in the sense of modern industrial development on the outer islands. But by opening up large tracts of jungle and swamp, and inducing substantial investment in roads and other infrastructure, the programme has undoubtedly laid the foundations for a process that must be thought of in terms of decades.

To achieve these results, the transmigration programme has had to overcome immense obstacles. Some of these problems now cast serious shadows on its future. The selection of transmigrants has from the beginning presented a dilemma, between need and suitability. The poorest who most needed help (and were often the first to volunteer or
to be pushed by village officials anxious to be rid of them) were not necessarily the most enterprising, vigorous and capable settlers. Nor did their skills as wet-rice farmers in Java necessarily help them farm efficiently in the very different soil and other conditions of the outer islands. Other dilemmas were presented by transport to and land preparation in settlement areas. To meet the targets of the accelerated programme during Repelita III, there was a tendency to resort to mechanized land clearing and to air transport of transmigrants which increased cost and reduced employment generation. The magnitude of the organizational tasks imposed severe strains on the vast and complex but not very robust Indonesian bureaucracy. (By 1978 over fifty directorates-general, spread among seven central government departments and numerous local authorities were involved in administering the programme in Jakarta and in the provinces of Java and the outer islands.) As the facilities provided to transmigrants improved, especially in the effort to shift from mere subsistence farming to cash crop production, so the costs of the programme rose. By 1983, the cost per transmigrant family had reached $US12,000. At this average figure, the direct cost to the development budget during Repelita IV of a target programme of 800,000 families would reach at least $US2 billion a year. While such a figure might have been accommodated in the years of the oil boom, it could not really be contemplated in the period of financial stringency which began with the world oil glut of 1982.

The most serious problem of all, however, and the most surprising at first sight, has been the increasing difficulty of finding suitable land for transmigrant settlements on the outer islands. The land area of the outer islands is enormous, fourteen times that of Java, but most of the soil is much less fertile than the rich volcanic soil of Java. By 1965, most of the areas suitable for wet rice cultivation and other good agricultural land were already under cultivation. The choice for new transmigration settlements was between the relatively poor soils of rainfed upland, whether under primary forest or under grass with secondary timber growth, and reclaimable tidal swamp.

For some years after 1966, the latter attracted most interest among transmigration planners, but the technical difficulties and costs of reclamation and tidal irrigation have proved very great. A few thousand families were settled on swamp land during Repelita II, but little further progress was made during Repelita III. Most settlement in the past ten years has therefore been in upland regions of Sumatra and Kalimantan. These generally consist of reddish-yellow podzolic
soils which are highly susceptible to erosion and leaching. Their natural fertility is low, more suited to tree than to food crops.

Three factors have increasingly limited the choice of suitable sites even here. One is concern about the rate of which Indonesia’s tropical forest resources have been exploited. As forest conservation has been given higher priority and been more effectively enforced, clearing of primary forest for settlement sites has virtually come to an end. A second major problem has been the infestation of cleared and grass lands by *alang-alang* grass which renders large areas unusable for agriculture. None of the mechanical, chemical or vegetative methods of eradication which have been tried has yet proved wholly effective. The third persistent difficulty has been the fact that even sparsely populated land in the outer islands has been subject to land claims, customary and often communal, by the local population. Disputes over land have been the commonest source of friction between the Javanese settlers and the indigenous people who, with their different traditions, language and culture, have generally not welcomed the intrusion of Javanese settlers.

The net effect of all these factors has been to render site identification in the traditional areas of settlement increasingly difficult. ‘Sumatra and Kalimantan are full’, one heard it said in the latter years of Repelita III. This is the reason why, in planning for transmigration during Repelita IV (1983/84-88/89), Irian Jaya has been seriously considered as the major target area for transmigration settlements.

*Transmigration to Irian Jaya, 1963-83*

So long as ample land for transmigrant settlements seemed available nearer by, little thought was given to the remote and inaccessible province of Irian Jaya as a recipient area. It never figured significantly in the Dutch colonization policy, and only a trickle of transmigrants was sent to Irian Jaya in the 1960s.

Before 1969 only 267 families were moved to a few tiny settlements, initially under the policy favoured by the National Transmigration Movement of having projects in every province, irrespective of economic feasibility. Three of these settlements were near Merauke (Kumbe, Kurik, Kuprik), and one each near Jayapura, Nabire and Manokwari on the north coast. Another 260 families were brought to these settlements in 1971 and 1972, chiefly by the provincial authorities, bringing the total number of people living in the six vil-
lages to 2,539 by the end of Repelita I (Hardjono 1977:89). Garnaut and Manning’s study of the economy of Irian Jaya based on intensive field work during 1972 presented the following picture of these early transmigration experiments in the province:

Although the prospect of filling empty Irian Jaya with farmers from overpopulated Java has had romantic appeal in Indonesia, the province has not been a priority region for official resettlement. Only about 450 families had arrived under the official transmigration scheme to the end of 1971. Most of these have begun farming close to Merauke, Jayapura and Manokwari. Faced with unfamiliar soils, terrain and climate, the need to change consumption patterns (rice cannot be grown in the highlands), marketing difficulties and some hostility from local people, some settlements have broken up and their members have moved into commerce and other employment in urban areas. The transmigration schemes in the highlands broke up and settlers now make up a large proportion of the shop and market traders in Wamena. A majority of transmigrants to Kurik have moved to Merauke to take up labouring and artisan jobs.

Some small groups of transmigrants have done very well in Irian Jaya. Settlers near Jayapura and Nabire have become market gardeners and important suppliers of vegetables to the towns. With these and larger, better planned future projects the government hopes to introduce new farming techniques and to encourage commercial farming by the local people. Problems of adjustment have been least severe in settlements adjacent to Merauke, where rice can be grown either in remnants of the technically irrigated scheme commenced by the Dutch (at Kumbe) or through reliance on wet-season rain (at Kurik and Kuprik). There seems to be considerable scope for new paddy farming in the Merauke area (Garnaut and Manning 1974:38-39).

Until the end of the 1970s, the number of Javanese transmigrants moved to Irian Jaya was trifling compared with the large influx of other immigrants into the province from various parts of Indonesia. These other immigrants have been of two types: government officials and skilled employees of large companies arriving to take up employment arranged in advance, and self-financed settlers hoping to find employ-
ment on arrival.

After the initial large transfers of Indonesian officials to restaff government following the departure of the Dutch in 1962 and 1963, immigrants with technical and administrative skills continued to be recruited on a small scale. By 1968, official statistics put the number of non-local officials at 4,150, just under one-third of civil servants employed in Irian Jaya. In the following years almost one half of these were replaced by local civil servants, although a considerable proportion may have been immigrants from other parts of Indonesia. Foreign mining and fishing companies also attracted skilled workers and staff from other provinces, as well as from abroad. Unsponsored (spontaneous) immigrants, chiefly from Sulawesi and Maluku, arrived in large numbers, especially after the requirement of a special permit was abolished in 1969. Attracted by the very much higher wage rates ruling in Irian Jaya than in their home provinces, they came by inter-island ships, mainly to the four northern ports, Jayapura, Biak, Manokwari and Sorong. Garnaut and Manning quoted an estimate by the regional shipping authority that net migration from all ships rose from a little over 5,000 in 1970 to just under 10,000 in 1971 (ibid:40).

As Table 6.2 shows, there was only a slight increase in the number of official transmigrants sent to Irian Jaya during Repelita II, little more than 200 families a year on average. By the end of Repelita II, however, the problem of shortage of suitable sites in the traditional areas in Sumatra, Sulawesi and Kalimantan was beginning to become evident. Writing in 1977, Joan Hardjono concluded her study of transmigration with the ominous prediction that, 'as population continues to increase in Java, it is very likely that in the 1980s migrants may have to be settled in Irian Jaya, despite geographical obstacles, through lack of land elsewhere' (Hardjono 1977:90).

During Repelita III, Irian Jaya assumed greater importance as a recipient area, some 12,000 transmigrants being sent there in the first three and three quarter years (to 31 December 1982). Even this constituted only just over 4 per cent of the greatly enlarged programme, but with the settlement of some 50,000 people in the concentrated settlement areas in the northeastern and southeastern parts of the province and the associated large expenditures on roads and other infrastructure, transmigration for the first time became a significant factor in the economic development and in the internal and external politics of the province.
UNHCR Commissioner Tom Unwin talks with Irianese at Yako Camp, March 1979. This group subsequently returned to Irian Jaya. Photo—Times of Papua New Guinea

Yako refugee camp, Sandaun Province (now closed). Photo—Times of Papua New Guinea
OPM leader, Jacob Prai, and some of his forces posing in front of the West Papua flag, 1977. Photo—Mark Baker

Max Ireeuw (left) and Ben Tanggahma attending an African national liberation movements solidarity week in Dakar, Senegal, 1980. Photo—Mark Baker
Table 6.2 *Transmigration to Irian Jaya*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Families Total ('000)</th>
<th>Irian Jaya ('000)</th>
<th>Persons Total ('000)</th>
<th>Irian Jaya ('000)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-68</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>424.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1969/70</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970/71</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971/72</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972/73</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973/74</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repelita I</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>181.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974/75</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975/76</td>
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<td>48.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
<td>53.7</td>
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<td>1977/78</td>
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<td>95.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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<td>28.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>123.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repelita II</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>376.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979/80</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>210.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1980/81</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>327.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981/82</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>357.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982/83(b)</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>272.6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repelita III</td>
<td>286.0(a)</td>
<td>12.1(a)</td>
<td>1,168.1(a)</td>
<td>50.7(a)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repelita IV (planned)</td>
<td>(800)</td>
<td>(137)</td>
<td>(4,000)</td>
<td>(600)</td>
<td>(15.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arndt (1983:52f)

(a) 1.4.79-31.12.82
(b) 1.4.82-31.12.82
By 1983, the number of spontaneous immigrants into Irian Jaya from other parts of Indonesia is estimated to have reached 160,000 (Peter Hastings, ‘Inside Irian Jaya’, Sydney Morning Herald 30 August 1983).

Little information is available on the progress of the transmigration settlements in Irian Jaya. One of the few recent eye witness reports is that published by Peter Hastings following a visit to the resettlement areas at Koya, Arso and Dosay south of Jayapura and at Sota near Merauke in mid-1983. Some of his impressions are worth quoting:

Koya is quite an eye opener. It is a huge area of neat intersecting roads, new houses with tin roofs, laid out in equally neat rows, two primary standard schools, dispensaries, a central mosque and a Protestant Church, to meet the needs of the Irianese community, which accounts for about 25 per cent of an estimated settlement of 2,160 people or 500 families. Most of the non-Irianese are Javanese settlers. Most arrived there last year. The Indonesian Government paid their transport by ship and helped them build their homes. For one year each family will receive free sugar, salt, rice, kerosene and cooking oil. The rice ration is crucial until newly planted paddy starts to grow.

TMs are all volunteers. They must settle and make the best of where they are sent. At a packed meeting of settlement leaders I could not find one who wished to return to Java. Most, in fact, were trying to bring other family members to join them. The big attraction was the two hectares of land - the first they had ever owned - to which they had been given title. The usual arrangement is a quarter hectare for house and private garden and the remainder for crop cultivation. In the fields I saw rice, soybean, peanuts, chillies, cucumbers, green beans and tomatoes. At Arso, some 20 kilometres further south, oil palm has been put in on a large scale, the highway is being pushed further south and new houses are ready for an expected 500 Javanese families (ibid).

At the southern end, the highway begins at Merauke:
The road to Sota from Merauke is quite amazing: 60 kilometres of compressed earth highway, carrying two-way
traffic, pushed across one of the world’s largest swamps about a metre above wet season flood level. It is part of the projected southern half of an all-weather compact road which will eventually link, some say in five years, but more likely 10, north and south Irian Jaya and form the basis of a large-scale Javanese resettlement scheme (ibid).

The main local problem Hastings reports to be, in Irian Jaya as in other parts of the outer islands, that of land ownership. Traditionally, in Irian Jaya as in much of Sumatra and Kalimantan, land is owned communally, individuals merely having the usufruct. Land alienation is a potential source of resentment by indigenous people, even where the land appears unused, and compensation for land use is crucial. The official Indonesian policy of trying to integrate Irianese and Javanese transmigrants in the settlements, partly with a view to encouraging the spread of farming techniques to the local people, can alleviate but not always resolve the problem.

Integration of Javanese and Irianese farmers, on the other hand, offers some surprises. One of the oldest TM settlements is at Dosay, about 60 kilometres from Jayapura, on relatively good soil. There is found a well-integrated community of both races. The settlement started in 1966 with five Javanese TM families. It now has about 200, nearly half of them Irianese busily growing cocoa, coffee, vegetables and a variety of tropical fruit...for the markets at Jayapura.... A similarly encouraging situation seems to exist in the much larger TM settlements which spread, their tin roofs gleaming in the sun, 60 kilometres and more in all directions from Merauke. This former tiny Dutch settlement has developed into a centre of 20,000 people, about half of them Indonesians from all over the archipelago.... The successfully integrated settlements share a common factor. The Irianese have already become largely Indonesianised (ibid).

Not all the integrated transmigration settlements, however, have been successful. Those in the west, at Nabire and at Timika, have been ‘fairly disastrous’. The latter has been closed down (ibid). Generally, while there appears to be little friction in the lowland areas of Irian Jaya which have for long been exposed to external influence and contacts, transmigration settlement among the people of the highlands, as
indeed any other efforts to Indonesianize them, are liable to run into severe difficulties. Hastings quotes a Catholic priest: 'It is for the bush people we fear. They are increasingly angry over land and confused by the Javanese preoccupation with civilising them' (ibid).

Transmigration to Irian Jaya: Prospects

In the early stages of Jakarta planning for Repelita IV (1984/85-88/89), transmigration target figures as high as 1,000,000 families over the five-year period were under discussion, and a substantial proportion of these was to be settled in Irian Jaya. In the last two years, as the financial stringency imposed by the ending of the oil boom has become apparent, the overall target has been scaled down, probably to 800,000 families including some 300,000 of spontaneous migrants, so that the target for officially sponsored transmigrants would be the same as for Repelita III, 500,000 families or some 2.0-2.5 million persons.

It has also come to be recognized in Jakarta that transmigration of one million or more Javanese to Irian Jaya, where they would swamp the local Irianese population, was bound to invite political trouble within Irian Jaya and in consequence also with Papua New Guinea and conceivably Australia. The target for transmigration to Irian Jaya included in the Plan has therefore been substantially reduced, but it remains worryingly high at 137,000 families or about 600,000 persons over the five years. Table 6.3 shows the proposed distribution of this total among the kabupaten of Irian Jaya².

Table 6.3: Transmigration to Irian Jaya:
Repelita IV Targets
('000 families)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kabupaten</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jayapura</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merauke</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorong</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singgi</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>137.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Repelita IV
The Indonesian government is preparing to allocate very large funds to integrate the people and promote the economic development of the province. The allocation for transmigration in Irian Jaya in the 1983/84 development budget was Rp 20 billion ($US20 million) and total government expenditure in the province was budgeted to exceed $US250 million. Further increases in real terms are planned through Repelita IV. But this may exacerbate rather than alleviate the problem.

Hastings argues that the danger of external repercussions arises not so much from political hostility to Indonesia within Irian Jaya but from the contrast between economic development on the western side of the border and the almost total lack of it on the eastern side. ‘The greater the development on the west side, the more it will attract PNG border dwellers and the more it will shake their allegiance to Port Moresby’ (Peter Hastings, ‘PNG’s border of suspicion’, Sydney Morning Herald, 2 May 1983).

Whatever the precise reasons for fearing political repercussions of massive transmigration to Irian Jaya, the risk is bound to weigh with the Indonesian government and its policy advisers. There are two alternatives, neither of them easy. One is a still more determined effort to identify and develop suitable settlement sites on the other islands, chiefly Sumatra and Kalimantan, which involves allocation of funds and enlistment of foreign technical assistance in the development of effective methods of eradication of alang-alang grass and of more efficient and less costly methods of swamp reclamation. The other alternative is to abandon, or at least greatly cut back, the transmigration programme and put the resources now devoted to it to more intensive economic development and employment creation in Java.

There remains the question of spontaneous migration to Irian Jaya which, as we have noted, has in the past two decades brought far more people from other parts of Indonesia to Irian Jaya than official transmigration. Hastings quotes a Protestant pastor in Irian Jaya: ‘I would stop unsponsored migrants.’ But Hastings adds that ‘as Indone-

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2 Since this chapter was written, the head of the provincial transmigration office in Jayapura, Mr Eko Sarwoko, has given a target figure of 689,000 transmigrants to Irian Jaya for Repelita IV (The Australian 13 April 1984).

3 For an alternative approach to transmigration which would, however, not in itself alter the Irian Jaya dilemma, see Arndt and Sundrum (1977).
sian citizens they have every right to visit and settle another part of Indonesia. They cannot be stopped, for they are as much part of the process of Indonesianisation as the communicants streaming to early morning Mass at Merauke’s cathedral - or the brand new mosque taking shape not a kilometre from it’ (Hastings, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1983). This is the wider context in which the issue of transmigration to Irian Jaya has to be viewed - in Jakarta and abroad.
CHAPTER 7

BORDER DEVELOPMENT: A ‘POLITICAL NECESSITY’ AGAIN

J.M. Herlihy

In the relatively few years since the exigencies of international relations revived interest in the Papua New Guinea-Indonesian border, most observers and government officials have been cautiously optimistic about the new rapport between the two uneasy neighbours. With the surprise capture in Vanimo in September 1978 of OPM leader Jakob Prai, the hostility, concern and emotionalism which had swept Papua New Guinea after the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975 received an abrupt check. The Somare government, which in the immediate aftermath of the East Timor issue had moved quickly to initiate a border development programme to strengthen its influence in the area, in 1977/78 became increasingly conciliatory towards Indonesian anti-rebel activities. As these diminished with the ‘hard line’ taken by Papua New Guinea towards rebel sympathizers and the concurrent ‘smiling policy’ introduced by Indonesia in 1978 on the Irianese side of the border, the issue of border development became a priority for both countries. The new Papua New Guinea-Indonesia Border Agreement of 1979, the first to be negotiated by an independent Papua New Guinea government, made provision for a Joint Border Committee comprised of senior officials from both sides, to ensure ‘balanced development’. Papua New Guinea in the same year allocated the first funds to the Border Development Programme which the Inter-Departmental Border Committee had proposed under the National Public Expenditure Plan in 1977, and formed a Division of Defence and Border Administration within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to oversee its administration.

One factor which has been consistently underestimated in the
plethora of resolutions and recommendations that has accompanied the recent interest in border development is that the response within the border zone itself will be a crucial determinant of the success or failure of the new government initiatives. This chapter outlines briefly, for the Papua New Guinea side of the border, some of the situational variables which in the past have hindered village response to government initiatives and which are likely to vitiate governmental capacity to institute effective change within the border zone. These suggest that the achievement of the Papua New Guinea government’s objectives with regard to the communities in the vicinity of the border will be a complex and costly task, the difficulties of which could well outweigh the time and resources that can be diverted to it. Previous experience and present patterns already indicate a high probability that the recent concern for border development will be a transient phenomenon, and survive only as long as the border and the tensions between the two countries over it remain national political issues.

The relevance of a border development programme to the politics of the border in recent years depends largely on the validity of several assumptions. The first of these is that it will bring about a decline in Papua New Guinean support for Irianese rebels and dissidents—within the border zone, is confined to a relatively small area—and that this will neutralize the long-standing conflict of interest between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea over their mutual land boundary. The second assumption is that sympathy and support for the rebel movement among border communities will show an inverse correlation to development of the area, which again is debatable. The third assumption, that the Papua New Guinea government will be able to supply the type and quantity of inputs necessary to implement an effective development programme, was a moot point even during periods of considerable colonial and later national prosperity. The fourth and possibly most important assumption for a programme that aspires to influence communal attitudes, is the hypothesis that the border communities will be able and willing to take advantage of the government’s scheme. Many social, spatial and situational factors, and a long history of lumpy and unreliable administration, make this assumption particularly suspect. The significance of these factors is examined in the following pages.

The border zone

The term ‘border zone’ is used here to refer to the 32 km (20 mile)
quarantine strip or *cordon sanitaire* which parallels the actual border across Papua New Guinea. Within this zone, border issues have a direct impact on the daily lives of the people, even though many have little knowledge of, or interest in, the political considerations. The terrain within the *cordon sanitaire* varies from the lowland swamps of most of the Western Province, through the inaccessible central cordilleria to the Sepik River grasslands, the Bewani and border ranges, the swampy alluvial reaches of the Neumeyer Plain, and northwards across the Oenake Mountains to the coastal lowlands around Vanimo. Average population densities for the two border provinces, at approximately 0.9 persons per sq km for Western Province and 3.3 per sq km for Sandaun (West Sepik) Province in 1980, are very low. Average densities along the Sandaun side of the *cordon sanitaire*, on a breakdown by census division, range from 0 to 4 persons per sq km for most of the zone with a small pocket of about 6 per sq km around Amanab. Due to the dispersed settlement pattern and uneven distribution these figures are merely indicative. Nonetheless, they have important implications for the government’s development programme, since *ceteris paribus* they mean that the costs involved in provision of services of accessibility equivalent to that in more densely populated areas may be magnified by as much as five to fifteen times.

Physical and demographic diversity within the border zone is echoed in marked cultural differences between border communities, which also inhibit across-the-board planning for the area. Most border communities, however, with the possible exception of the Wutung-Vanimo people, and, more recently, those in the vicinity of the Ok Tedi mining project, have in common their isolation from each other and from other areas of Papua New Guinea, relatively low standards of living and economic opportunity, and a history of administrative neglect and unreliability which has left deep though usually hidden resentments.

Most traditional communication and trade routes for the zone, such as they were, ran east-west rather than north-south, so that contacts across the border were more important for some communities than linkages on the same side. These ‘traditional’ contacts, nonetheless, probably are less significant in the overall context of border diplomacy than the emphasis given them in recent negotiations (Papua New Guinea *Foreign Affairs Review* 1(2):5) suggests. Though some villagers still have kinship links and land or hunting rights on both sides of the border, their range is fairly limited. Formal linkages inland on the
Papua New Guinea side around the main crossing points of the Bewani-Kilimeri area rarely extend beyond a few kilometres. Far more extensive, and of far greater political significance, is the residue of contacts established through more sophisticated exchanges and movement to and from Hollandia, which prior to the Indonesian takeover of Dutch New Guinea was one of the largest and most attractive urban centres on the entire island (Garnaut and Manning 1974). As Jayapura, the town suffered a period of relative stagnation in the early years of Indonesian control, but by the 1980s it was once again attracting increasing numbers of visitors from the Papua New Guinea side (Sydney Morning Herald 2 May 1983).

For most villagers within the border zone, however, movement beyond traditional boundaries, and knowledge of living conditions and attitudes outside that range, are relatively slight. The loose identification of mutual interest which some villagers feel as a result of the difficulties they have been caused by the manoeuvres of their respective governments usually is subordinated to commonplace considerations of survival. Despite the apparent contiguity between cross-border sympathies and the ‘Melanesian brotherhood’ theme on which many members of the educated elite, including parliamentarians, have based their support for the Irianese cause, the latter is of little importance to border villagers. Many in fact have criticized elite articulation of the Irianese issue, with good reason, as political opportunism. As the 1977 and 1982 election results demonstrated, the Irian Jaya situation per se has very little electoral pull by comparison with pragmatic parochial concerns.

Many of the border communities are basically hunter-gatherers. Cultivation usually is regarded as a secondary activity (Gell 1975) though most communities, especially in the mountains, maintain small gardens, and the swamp dwellers depend heavily on natural or cultivated stands of sago. This means that cash-cropping, the central component of most development programmes for rural communities, involves a double transition: the first to permanent or semi-permanent settlement - with all that entails in terms of land use capacity and cultural readjustment - and the second to the stability of production required by the monetary economy.

The hunter-gatherer mode of production also encourages a relatively high level of individualism, and is thus frequently at variance with the assumptions of the Papua New Guinea stereotype in relation to communal bonds. As in other areas of the Sepik, village elders can
advise and exhort, but cannot control (Thurnwald 1916; Huber 1977). Mobilization for a communal activity is difficult and infrequent. In areas which operate on a particularly narrow survival margin, welfare matters such as care for the sick and elderly usually are a personal or familial concern rather than the communal responsibility that they are elsewhere. In some cases those without nuclear family support or first degree kin may be left to fend for themselves.

A variety of cultural factors also reinforces locational isolation and inhibits development in the border area. Notable among such factors are the multiplicity of languages, the dominance of sister exchange marital alliance, and, for the Kilimeri area in particular, the pervasiveness of sangguma or assault sorcery.

The Sepik provinces contain approximately one third of Papua New Guinea’s listed languages. The population to language ratio is about half the average for the rest of the country, and drops to approximately 500 speakers per language in the border area (Laycock 1973). A sample of Kilimeri people taken in 1975/76 showed very little contact with neighbouring linguistic groups and no knowledge of their language patterns, though 96 per cent of males and 75 per cent of females could communicate to some extent in Pidgin. As levels of literacy are exceptionally low (only 4 per cent of the Kilimeri sample could read or write even at an elementary level), effective communication is restricted to word of mouth. While oral information flows through kinship networks and migration, usually one of the most efficient links with the modern sector (Lasaqa 1972; Allen 1976; Young 1977), in the border zone they are relatively ineffective. Physical and cultural isolation, the paucity of government patrolling, the closing down of the indentured labour system, the dearth of employment and educational opportunities, and, overall, the lack of cash severely constrain both the quantity and quality of information available to border villagers.

In many areas of Melanesia ties of kinship and marriage are the major determinant of informal village access to political and economic power and, paradoxically, of village ability to do without them. Even in the border zone, villagers with wide-ranging ties on occasion are able to substitute kinship obligations for cash to gain access to development opportunities outside their immediate vicinity. Rigid adherence to traditional sister exchange marriage in some border areas, however, 

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1 The Kilimeri data quoted in this paper is drawn from fieldwork carried out in the area by the author between 1975 and 1977.
severely constrains the outward spread of such ties.

Sister exchange marriage in the border zone is almost entirely endogamous, and dissociated from the cash economy. As it tends on the whole to reinforce the dependence of young people on their village elders, the ability of young working-age adults to innovate or provide an impetus for change and development often is seriously curtailed. Under sister (or daughter) exchange a man who wishes to marry must supply in return a female relative as wife for a male member of the family or clan from whom he seeks his wife. Though traditionally the system was fairly flexible, the social structure which has resulted is now characterized by older men married to one or more young wives while the young men, lacking female relatives or female children from an earlier marriage, often wed widows many years their senior, who were unclaimed by their previous husband's kin. The result is poor marital cohesiveness, a tendency for productive young males to migrate more or less permanently, and a very narrow spread of kinship ties within operative range. In the Kilimeri sample all adults had married within their own area, with about 50 per cent married to someone from the same village and the bulk of the remainder no further afield than a neighbouring village. Kinship reciprocity in consequence rarely operated to their developmental advantage. Many Kilimeri villagers, for example, were unable to utilize the school at Bewani station when opportunistic Bewani villagers began to impose cash charges, such as land rents for school children's food gardens, on villagers to whom they had no kinship obligations. Similar problems arose when Kilimeri villagers wished to establish cattle on land outside the cordon sanitaire, where the rent demanded was equal to 50 per cent of a beast's sale value (then equivalent to approximately $40 per annum for about two hectares of unimproved pasture).

The inhibitory effect of *sangguma* on societal cohesiveness, entrepreneurial innovation and response to external development stimuli is also a major problem for the border area. Border villages on the whole do not have the tradition of endemic violence which characterizes other parts of Papua New Guinea, though warfare was a recurrent pre-contact hazard. Possibly as a result, very few border villages have become actively involved in the OPM guerilla campaigns and, unlike some of the highlands communities, they exhibit little serious interest in the military defence of the border. Though outbreaks of overt violence in the mountainous Telefomin area caused periodic concern, covert violence by *sangguma* was more common for most
border villagers, and more widely feared. *Sangguma* practices along the border vary from the 'death threat' or magic forms familiar in many parts of the country to the ritualized execution of the Kilimeri. Unlike most variants, for which counteractive rituals are available, Kilimeri *sangguma* is irrevocable. Villagers claim that, until the suppression of warfare, *sangguma* was a 'last resort' method of social control and rarely used; but that now 'we are afraid to talk strong, we are afraid to try anything new, it is *sangguma* that holds us back'. The actual strength of this variable is still unknown. Estimates by government, mission and other observers in 1976 of the importance of *sangguma* to the development of the area ranged from 'very little' to attributed responsibility for about 80 per cent of deaths in Kilimeri, a range matched only by the wildly fluctuating estimates of support for the OPM. While fear of *sangguma* certainly is used at times as an *ex post* rationalization for inertia or developmental inactivity, the awareness that one's neighbours could become a *sangguma* squad is, equally certainly, a strong disincentive on any activity that is not in accordance with communal norms.

Nutrition is one such case. For most of the border area, problems of isolation and access are compounded by very serious levels of malnutrition which, *inter alia*, reduces tolerable distance to services by its effect on energy and work capacity. In some villages malnutrition, especially among young children, is the accepted communal norm. The well-nourished child, by this criterion, is 'abnormal'. Whether his condition is attributed to sorcery, white man's magic or simply to new and strange feeding practices, villagers tend to regard it as a contravention of the norm and the nutritionally aware parent or parents as eccentric if not socially disruptive. Improved pre-natal nutrition in some areas is also seen as a threat to community survival. Some traditional pregnancy *tabus*, notably on protein sources, are designed to restrict foetal growth in small, malnourished mothers and thus safeguard the life of mother and child during the birth. Some medical workers in areas where pre-natal maternal nutrition has resulted in an increase in infant size at birth have reported an increase in the number of difficult births requiring specialized hospital care. To many border villagers, whose access to such care is limited, improved pre-natal nutrition involves an unacceptable risk.

Improvement of nutrition has been a perennial aim of the West Sepik administration, but for the border area in particular has proved very difficult to implement. Partly this has been due to the spasmodic
and often inappropriate nature of official attention to the problem, and to the difficulty of isolating the causal social and economic factors. A study in 1962 identified nutritional deficiencies in the Bewani area which were more serious than those of the Wosera and other known problem areas of Papua New Guinea (McLennan n.d.), but its findings were not followed up. A decade later other studies, based primarily on clinic records\(^2\), confirmed that malnutrition was a problem for the majority of inland border stations. In some cases the level of malnutrition exceeded by a considerable margin that for the province as a whole which, with an average of 63 malnourished children per 100 attending clinics and up to 80-90 per cent of children under two years malnourished in some areas (Salfield 1973; Korte 1974; Korte and Kamilakai 1975), is among the most seriously malnourished in the country. In the Kilimeri area the poor nutrition and general low level of health care was reflected in 1975/76 in a crude death rate of 3.8 per cent. One third of these deaths was among women of child-bearing age.\(^3\) Over one third of children died before they reached maturity, with 69 per cent of child deaths in the under six months age bracket and 83 per cent under two years. The high mortality, however, was disguised to some extent by a relatively high birth rate, 6.7 per cent, which held the rate of natural increase to 2.8 per cent or approximately the average level for the country. This in turn has tended to conceal the fact that the age-sex structure on the border often is inimical to effective community involvement in the standard type of government development programme.

**Border development**

*The early phase.* Though border issues, including border development, have been a recurrent government concern for most of this century, the border is still one of the most backward and administratively neglected areas of Papua New Guinea. To a large extent this is attributable, ironically, to the preoccupation of government officials

\(^2\) A comparison of village data with clinic records in 1976 indicated that the latter underestimated the degree of malnutrition, largely as a result of poor or irregular clinic attendance, lack of awareness among many villagers about nutritional deficiencies, and the tendency of some mothers to hide malnourished children from health staff to avoid criticism or interference.

\(^3\) Division of District Administration (DDA), Pagei, Patrol Report 2/75-76.
with the political ramifications of border administration. While these resulted in a theoretical commitment to border development, in practice the outcome was a sequence of ad hoc, reactive decisions and the relative neglect of the developmental constraints and areal idiosyncracies that were reported regularly by field staff. The gap between policy objectives and practice was aggravated by official difficulties in reconciling observed needs with available resources. In 1947, for example, the then district officer stressed the importance of border development to amicable border politics and recommended ‘continual urging to improve their living and health conditions’, but felt unable to divert staff to the area. Government officials in later years, cognizant of the logistic difficulties of cash crop development, regularly evaded the issue by announcements that government would concentrate on improvement of subsistence - an even more difficult task and one rarely followed through.

The inhibitory effects of the government’s policies on border development were evident as early as the transfer from German to Australian control after the First World War. The first consequence of this was that the Sepik area was no longer seen as the ‘centre for future agricultural development’ (Whittaker et al. 1975:263) that it had been to the German administration, but as a peripheral administrative district. A second consequence was the removal of all settlers on the coast between the only significant centre, at Aitape, and the border in an attempt by the district officer to prevent illicit communication via the Dutch between German settlers and their home country (Rowley 1958:42). This meant that the westward spread of developmental demonstration effects from Aitape was halted almost entirely, and a communications lacuna was formed between the border and the eastern Sepik area which has lasted with little improvement to the present day.

Until the Second World War European influence on the border area came mainly from Netherlands New Guinea. Government supervision on the Papua New Guinea side was represented by a border surveillance post which was opened at Vanimo in 1918 and which provided (for the periods in which it was staffed) a desultory check on trade and contact across the border. Restrictions on trans-border movement tightened after the Second World War, when a patrol officer was posted to Vanimo ‘mainly to prevent Indonesians from cros-

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4 Sub-district office (SDO), Wewak, file 30/2-23, 12 May 1947.
sing the border'. At the same time, rumours that the Dutch intended to establish a city at Hollandia triggered proposals for the development of the New Guinea side, 'otherwise they [border villagers] may tend to prefer the Dutch administration to ours'.\(^5\) This rivalry, and the desire to prevent movement either from the western side to the eastern or vice versa, became - though the rationale behind it varied over the years - a recurrent theme. The possibility of an Indonesian takeover in Dutch New Guinea brought a further flurry of restrictions. Officially the Australian government in the 1950s favoured the 'side-by-side' development of east and west New Guinea based on the view that 'the peoples of the island of New Guinea were one people... [and] the hope that they would find one destiny' (Hasluck 1976:362). Nonetheless, after a report in 1953 of projected Indonesian activity in the Dutch territory, a directive was issued in 1954 that 'natives from across the border, or villages now regarded as under Dutch influence were not permitted to enter employment' on the Australian side.\(^6\)

After the transfer of control over Netherlands New Guinea to Indonesia in the early 1960s, the Australian administration, in what later became the standard response to shifts in border equilibrium, announced a massive development programme along the border. New patrol posts were opened, schools and health centres built, local government councils introduced, and an intense campaign of 'political education' commenced. Money was poured into the area to win the support of local people who in many cases had exhibited a marked preference for the material benefits they had gained from Hollandia under the Dutch. The result of this, complained one patrol officer, was that the people afterwards expected to be paid for everything.\(^7\) At the same time, however, an instruction to border officials that 'border surveillance is to be maintained as a priority over all other activities\(^8\) ensured that border development, such as it was, was effectively subordinated to political considerations. The development programme, apart from the improvements it brought to the border stations and to the living

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\(^5\) SDO, Wewak, file 30/2-23.

\(^6\) Department of District Services and Native Affairs (DDS & NA), file NLB 31/1-1407, 6 December 1954.

\(^7\) DDA, Wewak, patrol report 5/69/70.

\(^8\) District Commissioner (DC), Wewak, file A2-2-10/376, 6 September 1963.
Indonesia's Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, and Papua New Guinea's acting foreign minister, Tony Siaguru, in Port Moresby for the signing of the new Border Agreement, 1984. Photo—Post Courier
Border marker number 1, at Wutung. Photo—*Times of Papua New Guinea*
and working conditions of border administrative staff, soon flagged. Official attention for some time thereafter focused on the political gamesmanship of the small community of Sekotchiau (later Skotiau), which was the centre of most movement across border tribal lands in the early to mid 1960s and which shrewdly played one government against the other to its considerable material advantage and the envy of neighbouring villages.

In the late 1960s the peripheral border villages began to complain of their exclusion from administrative attention and from the anticipated benefits of the border development programme. By that time it was clear that direct benefits such as education and health facilities, and flow-on benefits such as income-earning opportunities from the Bewani patrol post, accrued mainly to the 19 per cent of the administrative area in its immediate vicinity. Vanimo and the border posts were a poor substitute for Hollandia as a source of trade goods, and had insufficient attractions to overcome the distance constraint involved for most border villagers. One consequence of the development of the border stations, however, was that villagers outside their range became more sensitive to the inferiority of their ‘catechist schools’ and unreliable health facilities vis-a-vis the new ‘certificate’ schools and government health centres, and utilization of the former declined. Resentment at being ‘left out’ mounted after a government order that shotguns, the most valuable and coveted possession of a subsistence hunter, were to be kept to a minimum on the border⁹ to reduce the chance that they might be sold or used to support guerilla resistance to Indonesian control on the western side. These resentments intensified when cash-cropping activities, which had been promoted by the mission network and the new councils, were discouraged by government officials. ‘Be extremely wary on the introduction of crops’, the district commissioner advised his staff in 1963, ‘I do not want these people to get a cash-crop idea, we will never get the stuff out’.¹⁰

The tendency for administrative convenience to dictate border development practice, if not policy, has been a recurrent and often unavoidable necessity. Administrative problems were compounded in the area by a very rapid turnover of staff, the spasmodic use of border

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⁹ DDA, Wewak, file 67-3-7, 5 April 1965.

¹⁰ DDA, Wewak, file 67-3-8, 12 July 1963.
stations as ‘exile’ or training posts for ‘difficult’ or inexperienced officers and, especially in recent years, by the youth and inexperience of many indigenous officials. Delays in departmental funding, irregular availability of staff, and the burden of office obligations were reflected regularly in the postponement of patrols. In addition, the simple logistics of patrolling a large, sparsely populated area meant that over a given period the client coverage which staff in the border area could achieve was less than half the national average. Such problems were exacerbated by the changes which occurred prior to and during Papua New Guinea’s decolonization, notably the relatively rapid ‘localization’ of administrative positions, the concurrent decline of the kiap (patrol officer) system of administration, and the introduction of provincial government. On the border, as in other areas of the Sepik, the consequent lumpiness of administrative operations created a vicious cycle of diminished government effectiveness at village level and diminishing village enthusiasm for government intervention. At the same time a number of factors, including lack of political sophistication, the scarcity of alternative sources of development assistance, and the official discouragement of visitors to the sensitive border area, meant that power in the border zone was increasingly concentrated in a narrow administrative spectrum.

The cordon sanitaire. The major government-initiated constraint on economic development of the border area, both for government officials and for villagers, undoubtedly has been the cordon sanitaire. The bulk of the border population lives ten or more kilometres away from the actual border. Most border villagers have little contact with the border patrol posts and little comprehension of, or interest in, border political issues. For all practical purposes, due to the land tenure system, these villagers are locationally bound into a situation from which they gain little if any advantage but as a result of which they are, in effect, subsidizing development elsewhere. They bear a large part of the costs of quarantine protection for crops and herds in other parts of Papua New Guinea and, since the Indonesian side has no equivalent arrangement, they also provide a buffer zone which enables Indonesia to evade responsibility for containment of its communicable diseases and pests. Since the existence of the cordon sanitaire reduces the likelihood of conflict between representatives of the two countries over quarantine matters, the border villagers are paying, through the restrictions on income-earning opportunities that are available to all other Papua New Guineans, for a benefit that accrues mainly to the
diplomatic levels of Indonesian, Papua New Guinean and even Australian governments. In addition, maintenance of the quarantine strip has allowed agricultural and health staff on the Papua New Guinea side to avoid the expense and difficulty of regular field patrols and active quarantine supervision. It has also provided government officials with a blanket excuse for neglect of border development. Villagers have been told that in the absence of cash crop and livestock projects regular visits by agriculture staff would be superfluous, and that such assistance would only be necessary after they had established economically viable projects.

In the early 1950s moves were initiated by the Dutch and Australian colonial governments to establish uniform quarantine regulations and procedures on both sides of the border (Hasluck 1976:360). When these were aborted by the Indonesian takeover of Netherlands New Guinea the Australian administration, fearful of the possible threat to Australian as well as Papua New Guinean immunity, tightened the controls on the Papua New Guinea side of the border. The effects of the *cordon sanitaire* thus were felt most severely at a time when the border development programme and the accelerated pace of cash-crop and pastoral development in other parts of Papua New Guinea had aroused widespread interest in such economic development among border villages. Villagers were particularly anxious to start coffee and cattle projects, which they knew had been successful in other parts of the East and West Sepik. Some, undeterred by the lack of government assistance and by the difficulties of transporting their produce, established plots of rice, coffee or cocoa with planting materials brought back from other areas, built local material fowl runs, and endeavoured to replicate the projects that they had seen elsewhere. These efforts usually were short-lived.

Responsibility for the quarantine zone devolved primarily upon the Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries (DASF, later DPI), a specialist and somewhat autonomous department which was singularly ill-attuned to the political ramifications of border management. By virtue of its control over quarantine and stock movement, however, DASF was one of the most powerful political forces in the area. For some time confusion in DASF ranks led to a series of conflicting directives as to what could and could not be grown or kept within the border zone. As a result of this, and of inconsistent and unreliable DASF sponsorship of various projects, border villagers soon became very sceptical about DASF advice. Further confusion arose from pol-
icy conflicts at senior levels of the Department, and the consequent uncertainty among DASF field staff as to which policy they were to pursue. On one occasion, for example, DASF proposed to allow pig and poultry projects on the border, but in its general policy and staff training discouraged these because of their low economic returns, need for close supervision, and competition for foodstuffs required for human consumption - all factors of particular relevance for the border communities. Many villagers came to regard the quarantine zone as a 'total development ban' (West Sepik Province 1976:16).

The 1970s saw increasing recognition of the futility of a ban on cattle and coffee, which could be controlled, when disease could be carried by dogs, pigs, deer and people, whose border crossings could not be policed. This led several government officials and West Sepik politicians to press for a relaxation of the policy. Several alternatives were mooted, including the establishment of sentinel herds and the realignment of the perimeter, but these were rejected by agriculture and health officials in Port Moresby. Citing international precedent, DASF advised that it considered that twenty miles was the minimum acceptable for a cordon sanitaire and that preferably the zone should be widened.\textsuperscript{11} This intransigence reflected adversely on village relations with other government officials, in particular Division of District Administration (DDA) field staff, who were forced to justify a government stance which many personally opposed.

The renegotiation in 1979 of the Papua New Guinea-Indonesia border agreement brought initial indications that Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Australia were beginning to see certain advantages to a syndicated approach to the quarantine problem. In the face of the complexity of the issues involved, however, this was not followed up though the establishment of sentinel herds (for quarantine rather than income-earning purposes) was included in the border development programme for 1982. Once again government officials in Papua New Guinea concentrated on administrative infrastructure for border development, and on the promotion of economic activities such as rubber, fisheries and crocodile farming, which did not entail significant changes to quarantine policy. The new, albeit shaky, rapport between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea over the border brought little indication that the burden of the cordon sanitaire on border villagers would

\textsuperscript{11} DASF, Port Moresby, file 1-14-103, 27 December 1972.
be eased; indeed, it gave some disquieting hints that the problem could intensify. The massive Indonesian transmigration programme, the proximity of the major trans Irian Jaya highway construction to the Papua New Guinea side of the border, and the important resource projects of Ok Tedi mining and Vanimo timber are fraught with possible problems for quarantine, which could well make the cordon sanitaire a serious political issue in the long term.

Cash-earning in Kilimeri. For the Kilimeri, as for much of the border population, regular cash earning activity in the mid 1970s was almost non-existent. The scarcity of cash, however, meant that the overriding development priority for Kilimeri villagers was cash-earning opportunities. To many villagers, aware of their locational, educational and governmental difficulties, the economically optimal choice was the 'minimal involvement' one. In 1972, when foreign ownership of land was becoming a major political issue throughout the country, one Kilimeri village astounded government officials by offering land for any available European businessman to start an enterprise of his choice in their area.\(^\text{12}\) The same year brought an outbreak of chain letters, which originated in Rabaul and Australia and which promised enormous returns for a tiny investment.\(^\text{13}\) Visiting resource assessment teams were welcomed for the relatively high prices they paid for supplies and services, and for many years villagers placed their main hope in recurrent government promises of imminent exploitation of the Vanimo/Pual River timber resource.

As village hopes for large-scale development were repeatedly disappointed, some turned to ‘self-help’ initiatives. Lack of knowledge of the availability of government-sponsored self-help schemes, however, and the chronic shortage of cash and manpower which these usually demanded as the village contribution, meant that these often were poorly conceived and difficult to manage. The unreliability of government direction and encouragement resulted in many cases in imitative gestures and confused efforts to replicate projects that villagers had heard about or seen in operation elsewhere.

\(^{12}\) DDA, Pagei, patrol report 4/71/72.

\(^{13}\) The chain letter problem reached such proportions throughout the country that chain letters were declared a prohibited import shortly afterwards (PNG Government Gazette 93, 26 October 1972).
Most of the 'cash crops' reported by the Kilimeri sample had been encouraged at one time or another by government officials, but none had received much, if any, attention past the planting stage. Though 16 per cent of the sample claimed to have coconut plantings (two thirds of which were immature) and 3 per cent had minor crops such as cocoa, chillies, coffee or spices (mostly in minute quantities and usually the untended remnant of experiments from many years earlier), none had ever received any income from their holdings. Two people claimed a share in a cow or domesticated feral pig as 'livestock projects'. Ten were 'businessmen' with an interest in a trade-store, though in seven of the ten cases the store was temporarily or permanently closed, and the remaining three were 'just starting' and had done little if any business. The expenditure of $6 on a council licence to operate a trade-store, however, was an important status symbol and some of these businessmen maintained a current licence though they had not held for some time, and could not afford, any trading stock. Twenty-seven per cent of the sample kept chickens, which originally had filtered into the area from Hollandia\textsuperscript{14}, but these were generally regarded as the nucleus of an economic enterprise and too valuable for domestic consumption. Moreover, villagers could not afford to purchase chickens from each other, as the standard asking price was based on DASF charges for imported breeding stock and many owners feared a government rebuke if they set their own price. The fact that three men in 1975/76 had sold poultry to passing government patrols was sufficient to maintain the asking price and the general interest. Total income for the area from all these sources in twelve months was $34. This amounted to an average of $5.67 for the six income earners concerned, or approximately nine cents per capita for the entire sample.

The only other significant non-wage source of income for about 20 per cent of the sample was the infrequent sale of game, sago grubs or other wild produce at the nearest station. Some other border areas were more fortunate, largely as the result of their ability to 'capture' government or mission interest. Long before the Ok Tedi development created a need for nearby sources of foodstuffs, villagers in Oksapmin, encouraged and assisted by their patrol officers, were producing European vegetables for markets in Vanimo and Wewak. Villagers in Green River, who unilaterally started a rice project, were

\textsuperscript{14} DDA, Aitape, patrol report 6/48-49.
able to tap mission transport when the freight charges out were found to be higher than the returns for sale of the crop. Development in both cases was discontinuous, highly personalized and heavily subsidized - and resented proportionately by less fortunate areas - but enabled the two centres to win preferential treatment in the subsequent search for economically viable projects to include in the border development programme. For most parts of the border, however, the difficulties of access, high freight costs, staff turnover and local preferences have given spontaneous attempts to promote income earning activities a relatively brief life.

By far the most important contribution to income in the Kilimeri area was wages. From the Second World War to the end of the contract labour period in the 1960s, wage labour on plantations provided a steady trickle of goods and cash into the area, an escape from the hardships of the home environment, and a much more reliable source of income than the dubious development prospects offered on the border. As this source dried up, the horizon for wage migration narrowed and employment-related moves outside the West Sepik dropped from approximately 80 per cent to 50 per cent of total movement between 1965 and 1975. More men began to compete for the few job opportunities closer to home. For a few years they were able to earn enough for their basic needs from predominantly casual labour in Vanimo or at government, council or mission stations nearby, but these sources also diminished in the 1970s. New regulations imposed, in the nationalist thrust of imminent independence, by the new National Investment and Development Authority (NIDA) drove Goldore Timber Company, the West Sepik’s largest private employer, out of the province. Increases in the basic wage, intended to improve the relative position of the unskilled labour force, made employers of casual labour more selective and less prepared to spend money on additional labour for minor or unproductive tasks. The rapid localization of public service posts, followed after 1974 by general financial stringencies, also reduced severely the amount of money released to the casual or unskilled labour force. At the same time, monetary requirements for council rates, education expenses, purchase of trade store goods and other domestic expenditures increased. Acquisition of saleable skills, either through formal education or through informal channels such as work experience, had always been a problem for border villagers. As the employment situation tightened across the country and the national education system was adjusted to limit the num-
bers of unemployed ‘drop-outs’, border villagers were further handicapped. Many, reluctant to settle for an inferior role in the modern world and seeing one avenue after another close down, have turned their backs on the partial solutions proposed by government officials and resigned themselves to wait for better days.

**Development in the East Timor aftermath.** In 1975/76 Indonesian intervention in the then Portuguese territory of East Timor revived old fears about the possibility of Indonesian expansionism. Perceived parallels with the Indonesian takeover of Netherlands New Guinea directed these fears, in particular, towards the security of Papua New Guinea’s border with Irian Jaya. At the instigation of the secretaries of the Prime Minister’s Department and the Department of Defence, and with the support of the influential and opportunistic Sir John Guise, the issue of border development became a priority. This resulted in the preparation of a new set of ‘border development proposals’, which purported to ‘represent the views of all sectors of the border community’ (West Sepik Province 1976:1) but which in fact was largely the work of one expatriate administrator. Predictably, it concentrated on upgrading the border stations and on improving administrative conditions and capacity. Essentially this was a repetition and extension of the 1960s development programme, for much the same reasons, and was carried over a few years later into the National Public Expenditure Plan.

As with the earlier programme, the 1976 proposals and the development programme which was initiated under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs were limited in their ability to meet the main perceived need of border villagers: wage employment. In 1975/76 49 per cent of total cash income for the Kilimeri sample came from the earnings of two unskilled labourers. A further 33 per cent came from casual labour, rarely of more than two weeks’ duration, and from quasi wage sources such as stipends and allowances. Since the sample had an annual median and modal per capita cash income of zero, and an annual mean per capita cash income of only $5.42, for most villagers even the lowest wage or stipend represented enormous riches. This was reflected in the very high proportion (79 per cent) of adult males between ages 20 and 45 who in the previous year had actively, albeit unsuccessfully, sought employment. By comparison, very few were prepared to walk the same distance to receive medical treatment, and none had done so to seek advice or assistance from government officials. For most villagers the dramatic difference between average
wages for full-time wage-earners in their vicinity and average cash incomes from other sources (Herlihy 1981) made involvement in the government’s development programme a decidedly inferior option. In addition, wage employment even for very brief periods was a socially acceptable means of cash-earning for any age cohort, allowed the participant to enter and leave the monetary economy at little or no cost and in harmony with seasonal subsistence obligations, and usually entailed less disruption of the traditional socio-economic system than did cash-cropping.

In this situation the development of the Ok Tedi mineral resource in the Star Mountains and of the Vanimo/Pual River timber stands opened opportunities that were not easily matched by the more egalitarian proposals for border development. In the idealism of the early 1970s, however, this was not at first recognized. While official hopes for major economic development in the West Sepik rested on these projects in the late 1960s and again in 1976 (Hinchliffe 1976), government policy under the first Somare government favoured improvement of rural life styles, village participation and equalization for less developed areas. On these criteria, Ok Tedi mining and Vanimo timber did not rank highly. Several analyses of village capacity to benefit from the projects reported that the likelihood of significant local advantage from copper mining, even for the Min people in the immediate vicinity, was very small (Rendell & Partners 1975) and that the population of the Vanimo/Pual River timber area was insufficient to develop the deforested area. For the border people, who had been inundated for a decade by consultations, official requests for cooperation and promises of enormous returns at an ever-receding future date, government procrastination over the two major resource developments was a major constraint on any other form of development, and correspondingly resented. As with the cordon sanitaire, inadequate explanations and weak rationalizations for the delays in exploitation of the timber resource, in particular, severely damaged the government’s credibility in the area and in Kilimeri resulted in a marked lack of enthusiasm for government development proposals.

The damage to social welfare and economic development in Kilimeri from almost twenty years of government procrastination over the timber development was such that, by the 1980s, villagers saw any form of timber exploitation as less destructive than continuation of the status quo. Until the discovery of minerals in the Star Mountains the Vanimo/Pual River timber stands, one of the largest in Papua New
Guinea, were considered to be the West Sepik’s only economically exploitable asset. A detailed survey of Pual River potential was carried out in 1963, after an inquiry from Japan for logs\textsuperscript{15}, and by 1965 discussions had reached the point of proposals for reafforestation, since a ‘world-wide shortage of increasing severity’ was predicted ‘at least as far ahead as 2000 AD’.\textsuperscript{16} A firm of international consultants from the United States was retained to advise on the development of a large industrial complex at Vanimo. By the end of 1966 the Department of District Administration (DDA) regarded the acquisition of the timber rights as ‘urgent...as time becomes the essence of success in this project’.\textsuperscript{17} Frequent visits from survey teams for major timber companies and for a plethora of departmental analyses kept village expectations high for a few years, and in 1967 Goldore Timber Company, a subsidiary of New Guinea Goldfields, commenced small-scale operations on 14,000 hectares near Vanimo. The proposed multi million dollar complex, however, failed to materialize.

By the 1970s many villagers, not fully understanding the reasons for the difference between the initial payment for the timber rights and the subsequent six-monthly interest payment on the investment of the balance (in 1975/76 this payment, when divided among each recipient group, varied on average between 20c and $1 per capita), pressed for immediate payment of the full balance so that they could use it for other development projects. Further, since life expectancy in the area was very low, villagers were beginning to realize that those involved in the original negotiations might never see the lump sum repayment on maturity of the investment in the years 2007 and 2008. As inflation in trade store prices curtailed the real value of the interest dollar, and as its monetary value per head decreased with the rate of growth of the population, the interest became little more than a token compensation for the loss of the use of village land. An additional source of dissatisfaction was that timber lease land could be cleared only for traditional subsistence use (which, for hunting communities, was slight), while most land which was not leased was marginal or unsuitable for cash-crops.

\textsuperscript{15} Department of Forests, Port Moresby, file 87-8-10, 23 November 1964.

\textsuperscript{16} Department of Forests, Port Moresby, file 88-0-0, 4 February 1965.

\textsuperscript{17} Department of Forests, Port Moresby, file 88-0-5, 31 October 1966.
In the late 1970s the new Sandaun provincial government, through its business arm, established a logging operation on 8,000 ha in the erstwhile Goldore area near Vanimo. When the national government, through the National Investment and Development Authority (NIDA), once again sought foreign investment for the large-scale development of the resource, the provincial government expressed fears that its infant industry would be ‘frozen out’ by multi-national interests (Post-Courier 24 January 1980). In February 1981 the announcement that a proposal by an unknown Philippines company had been accepted over the recommendations of the Department of Forests sparked accusations of ‘back door dealings’ (Post-Courier 5 February 1981) and an inquiry by the Ombudsman Commission. The Sandaun provincial government, which had recommended the company ‘because they have the money - and that is important’ (Post Courier 2 February 1981) and which at first had supported the proposed contract, asked that the negotiations be postponed pending further consultation. The provincial government’s Forestry Steering Group was reluctant to involve people from the timber area in the committee set up to handle negotiations, however, or to approve independent consultation with them.

The controversial deal was eventually signed during the last months in office of the then Chan government, and the firm given five months to submit detailed proposals for the timber development. But as had happened so many times before the deal collapsed. Shortly after the new Somare government took office in August 1982, the prime minister announced in Vanimo that the timber contract was to be renegotiated.

The 1982 elections. The West Sepik by 1982 had a ten-year tradition of ‘missing the boat’ in its attempts to select representatives who could tap national power and resources on behalf of the province. In some parts of the province a vigorous outmigrant wage-earning tradition meant that kinship linkage, the standard unit for political mobilization, was often distorted by migrant worker ties. For border villages, which usually lacked the community of cropping, pastoral or other business interests that formed the basis of political pressure groups elsewhere, and which traditionally tended to acephalous political organization, representatives often were selected on the basis of local entrepreneurial skills. Until the division of the Sepik in 1966 into East and West, and the emergence in the 1968 parliament of party politics, such representation was reasonably effective. With the formation of
the radical new Pangu Pati, the Sepik politicians divided. Paul Langro, West Sepik regional member, resigned his position of assistant ministerial member in late 1969 and joined Pangu, but the Pangu stance on early independence proved unacceptable to the bulk of his electorate. Four of the five West Sepik parliamentarians in 1972, including Langro, aligned themselves with the United Party, which opposed early independence and which prior to the 1972 elections was expected to form the government.

In April 1972 Somare and Pangu put together a coalition government. Throughtout the life of the 1972 parliament, the emphasis which the coalition placed on improvement for less developed areas was vitiated for the West Sepik by the province's association with the parliamentary gamesmanship of the opposition. The consequent lacuna at national political level, and the *impuissance* of the local councils, left border development for five years to public servants who on the whole were professionally and locationally inexperienced, and ill-equipped to tackle developmental problems of such magnitude. At the 1977 elections representative turnover was 100 per cent.\(^\text{18}\) The three largest electorates voted Pangu and the two border representatives crossed the floor to Pangu in the Opposition reshuffle of early 1978 (*Post-Courier* 21 March 1978). Party loyalties and even personal preferences were less important to the West Sepik electorates, however, than the potential access to government resources represented by staying with the strength. The purse-string vote was again demonstrated, but in the opposite direction, when the Somare government was voted out in 1980 and several West Sepik parliamentarians swung overtly or covertly towards the new government benches.

The defeat of the second Somare government half-way through its term focused political activity earlier than might otherwise have been the case on the 1982 elections. By 1981 the border development programme had become caught up in the politicking for the next election. Deputy prime minister Iambakey Okuk took up the West Papua cause and adopted a quasi-confrontationist stance towards Indonesia, while Paul Langro in the West Sepik led public service and provincial government complaints over the lack of communication between the national government and the province over border development.

\(^{18}\) This refers to the members who represented the West Sepik in the 1972-77 House. The extent of actual change in electoral support is difficult to assess, as electoral boundaries in the border area have been redrawn between every election until 1982.
Through 1982 the programme was largely subordinated to party campaign­ning, and one member of Foreign Affairs staff on the border development programme resigned to contest the West Sepik regional seat. Despite vigorous and often extravagant campaigning by other candidates, the results of the election were overwhelmingly Pangu and the West Sepik was with the new government.

The border development problem

By 1983, despite the continuation of the border development programme and improved communications with Indonesia through the Joint Border Committee, the benefits were mainly administrative. Kilimeri villagers gained a road connecting Ossima to Bewani and thus to Vanimo, but little improvement to their overall situation from it. In some areas conditions had deteriorated so much that development was an even more difficult task than it had been in the colonial era. The decline in employment opportunities and cash incomes, especially marked after 1974/75, brought a reduction in modern supplements to subsistence. Most Kilimeri households in 1976 were using worn utensils which had been brought back in the 1950s and 1960s by returned labourers, and were unable to replace worn-out items such as axes and saucepans which previously had been regarded as bone (essential). Unwilling or unable to return to arduous traditional techniques for the manufacture of such items as salt, many villagers simply discontinued their use.

The range of foodstuffs consumed regularly also appears, for various reasons, to have diminished. In Kilimeri the most common morning and evening meal consisted of boiled sago and tulip (the flavour­some and nutritious Gnetum gnemon tips). One village, which used to consume the surplus from market garden produce that it cultivated for sale to a nearby boarding school, ceased consumption of introduced crops entirely when the boarding school became a day school and its market collapsed. Another group joined the Seventh-Day Adventist Church to obtain a school. By the time the mission withdrew, a few years later, the group had acquired a new range of food tabus which included most of its hunter-gatherer protein sources, and refused to assist with communal pig hunts. In the absence of cultivated dietary alternatives, this marginalized their own diet and to some extent also affected the balance for the rest of the community. With the decline in other cash-earning opportunities, many villagers retained a greater
proportion of saleable bush products such as game, wildfowl eggs and sago grubs for market or for the gift exchanges with town contacts whereby they obtained cloth and a few other coveted trade goods.

Educational and employment potential declined concurrently. As the costs of education and the standard required for regular employment rose, village interest in pursuing primary or vocational education fell, and schools reported a drop in attendance. In 1976 31 per cent of Kilimeri adults interviewed had received some basic education, but only 27 per cent of their children. Seventy-seven per cent of school-age children at the time of the survey were not attending school, and only three villagers in the sample area had completed primary education. Of those children who had some schooling, most, like their parents, had dropped out by Grade 3 despite the improvements which had taken place in primary facilities in the area. Informal acquisition of skills and work experience also declined with the marked reduction in the range and duration of outside experience after the mid 1960s. This was matched by a general decline in the number of outside contacts which villagers had and, as a result, in their informal access to information and modern opportunities.

Conclusion

The recurrent dilemma for government in development of the border area, as its past attempts have demonstrated, is that programmes which have been considered administratively feasible have been handicapped by situational constraints, while full-scale attack on border underdevelopment would be a high cost, low return and long term operation. To upgrade government services and village standards of living on the border, merely to a standard comparable with the average in other parts of the country, would in itself be expensive in terms of monetary resources, staff quantity and calibre, and in the possible political repercussions from other areas. To continue to divert resources indefinitely to the maintenance of such standards, when the per capita costs of doing so are inflated vis-a-vis other areas by distance, low population densities and difficult terrain, is not likely to be economically or politically practicable. The provincial government experiment has already indicated that the more advanced regions are not prepared to subsidize the less developed areas to the extent that would be required, and neither the Western nor the Sandaun province has the capacity to mount a campaign of such magnitude without assis-
tance. Moreover the uneasy relationship which currently exists be­
tween the national and provincial governments, and the conflict of political interest involved, indicates that such assistance from the cen­
tral government may not be welcomed. Nor is it by any means certain that the national government's present concern for border develop­
ment is a lasting one. Ironically, the success of the new Joint Border Committee in easing tensions between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia over their mutual border could well bear an inverse correla­
tion to border development.
CHAPTER 8

1984: REFUGEES, ‘HOLIDAY CAMPS’ AND DEATHS

Alan Smith and Kevin Hewison

In 1984 11,000 refugees crossed into Papua New Guinea. In previous years the flow of refugees had remained relatively small and manageable, and the Papua New Guinea government (and the Australian administration before it) had been able to cope. It resettled some within Papua New Guinea, found third countries for a few, and repatriated (or turned back) the majority, probably a pragmatic balancing of Papua New Guinean public opinion and Indonesian pressure (see TAPOL 1984:84-92). The exodus in 1984, however, threatened to destroy the assumptions on which border management policy has been based.

Nowhere has this been more obvious than in the dilemma concerning the treatment of border crossers. Initially the Papua New Guinea government attempted to apply its tried methods, but as the number of crossers grew, so did the difficulties of pursuing such a policy, which stretched the resources of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to the limit. One of the major assumptions of DFAT policy has been that West Papuan nationalism, as expressed through the OPM, will wither as Irian Jaya becomes more closely integrated into the Indonesian nation. The unprecedented flow of refugees across the border in three major waves in 1984 seems closely related to OPM activity in Irian Jaya and the Indonesian government’s continued attempts to suppress the movement.

First wave - incident in Jayapura

Following the flag-raising incident in Jayapura on 13 February
FIGURE 8.1 The refugee camps
1984 and a series of OPM actions in and around the city the Indonesian authorities began a 'clean-up' campaign which radiated out from Jayapura into the nearby countryside. House-to-house searches were conducted in the city and surrounding villages and large numbers of Melanesian soldiers, police, civil servants, teachers, students and their families were reported detained or fleeing the authorities towards Vanimo in Papua New Guinea (*Post-Courier* 21 February 1984; *Niugini Nius* 22 February 1984). Sandaun (West Sepik) provincial secretary, Melchior Kapaith, stated:

The story they [refugees] tell is pretty consistent, that there is fighting in Jayapura between OPM and Indonesian security forces. It seems to be true because they are city people, which is unusual because we usually get village people coming across (*Niugini Nius* 16 February 1984).

The events of February were themselves a response to continued Indonesian action against West Papuan nationalism in all its forms. At the end of 1983 a number of prominent West Papuans, including Arnold Ap, curator of the anthropological museum at Cendrawasih University and director of the Membesak Melanesian folk theatre, were arrested by Indonesian paracommandos in what appeared to be the beginning of a new wave of repression (*TAPOL Bulletin* 61, January-February 1984).

During and after the events of February, it was reported that staff and students of the university were amongst those to flee (*Post-Courier* 20 February, 11 May 1984). The first wave of refugees included many who, like these students, were articulate and politically conscious Melanesian nationalists. Some identified explicitly with OPM and stated that they were in Papua New Guinea temporarily: ‘We came here because if we are killed, the guts of West Papuan hopes will disappear with us’ (*Niugini Nius* 23 February 1984). These refugees were said to have come originally from the towns of the north coast, their association with the OPM being through the Markas Victoria group - the former Biak-based Rumkorem faction (Osborne 1984:8).

Almost all of the refugees who crossed into Papua New Guinea at this time came as a direct result of the events in and around Jayapura. As refugees began to move into Papua New Guinea the government began to apply its standard policies on border crossing. In line with this both the Sandaun provincial government and DFAT attempted to use the border liaison hot-line to contact Jayapura and find out the cause
of the exodus. Jayapura could not be raised by either group nor by the Indonesian embassy in Port Moresby (Post-Courier 16 February 1984). The Papua New Guinea embassy in Jakarta was instructed to seek an explanation (Times of Papua New Guinea 16 February 1984) but to no avail. Foreign Affairs and Trade minister Rabbie Namaliu then sent two urgent telexed requests to his counterpart, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, asking for clarification (Post-Courier 24 February 1984). Jakarta finally sent a reply stating that nothing major had occurred on their side of the border and that everything was under control.

Apparently satisfied with this belated reply, the Papua New Guinea government then proceeded to offer limited assistance to the border crossers. However, prime minister Somare was quick to point out that the crossers would be dealt with under the provisions of the 1979 Border Agreement as illegal immigrants. Somare stated: ‘They will be arrested, questioned and a court will decide whether they are genuine refugees’ (Niugini Nius 24 February 1984). Meanwhile, the makeshift camp holding the crossers soon proved inadequate and the first hundred or so arrivals in Vanimo assisted the Papua New Guinea Defence Force to construct a new camp at Blackwater, outside Vanimo. The costs of running the camp were to be borne by international agencies - the UNHCR, with assistance from the Red Cross and Austcare (Mongi et al. 1984; Post-Courier 29 February 1984).

With the border crossers in their new camp, legal proceedings began; eighty men were charged with illegal entry by the police in Vanimo, apparently acting on directions from Port Moresby. The men appeared in Vanimo District Court on 27 February and pleaded guilty but their case was adjourned for a week by the presiding magistrate pending instructions from Port Moresby. Before the case appeared again, legal aid was arranged through the public solicitor on request from one of those charged (Niugini Nius 1 March 1984). When the case came up again, defence counsel from the Public Solicitor’s Office challenged the legality of the government’s direction to the police to charge the crossers. He also sought to change the ‘guilty’ plea to ‘not guilty’. After a further two weeks’ adjournment the case was heard against an expanded list of 111 refugees. The constitutional issue was resolved when the police prosecutor claimed he had mistaken National Security Council direction (permissible) for National Executive Council (cabinet) direction (non-permissible). The change of plea was rejected by magistrate Salatiel Lenalia who had handled the case to date and he convicted 84 of the men, with 73 of them being gaoled for six weeks. A
second magistrate dismissed the same charge against the other 27 (Post-Courier, Niugini Nius 22 March 1984).

The fate of those convicted was not immediately clear, but Namaliu stated that under normal circumstances illegal crossers were to be dealt with by the police (Post-Courier 22 March 1984). Nor was it clear what the implications of a not guilty verdict were. While Namaliu had referred to the possibility of permissive residence for some and to the need for Indonesian assurances of safety for returnees, there was also concern in some quarters that a repatriation exercise would begin. For example, UNHCR representative Michael Shergold suggested that his office should be involved in the assessment of refugee status (Post-Courier, Niugini Nius 22 March 1984). Before any repatriation could have commenced, however, an appeal was lodged against the conviction and those who had been gaolled were released on bail (Post-Courier 30 March 1984). When the National Court finally convened in Vanimo in mid June, Deputy chief justice Mari Kapi quashed the District Court convictions (Niugini Nius 22 June 1984).

Between the first and second hearings of the Vanimo case, a special border liaison meeting took place in Jayapura at the request of the Papua New Guinea government, with refugees being the principal topic (Niugini Nius 15 March 1984). At this meeting, the first since the February events, a stalemate emerged that was to continue for most of the year: the Indonesians sought information on the border crossers which Papua New Guinea was reluctant or unable to provide; Papua New Guinea sought satisfactory guarantees of the safety of returnees which the Indonesian government would not give (Post-Courier, Niugini Nius 19, 20, 21 March 1984).

Second wave - Jayapura hinterland

By March 1984 it was reported that there were about 320 crossers in Sandaun Province, and even though there were reports of groups of refugees heading for Papua New Guinea the problem for the Papua New Guinea government remained at a manageable level (Post-Courier 26 March 1984). However, it was soon to become clear that the incident in Jayapura was not planned as a single event but rather as part of a general uprising (interview, Tom Ireeuw, Vanimo, 29 December 1984). It is not clear how widespread or coordinated these gestures of defiance were, but Indonesian military activity certainly fanned out from Jayapura and moved inland to the south and east.
down the border (*Post-Courier* 26 March 1984).

The second wave of refugees moving into Papua New Guinea came from this corner of Irian Jaya as a result of search and pursuit operations carried out by the Indonesian military, and possibly also because of clashes between these troops and the OPM, fear of possible clashes, Indonesian harassment, or because OPM warned people that they should escape while they had the chance. It should be remembered that this area is close to Jayapura where official and unofficial transmigration has caused considerable dislocation amongst Melanesians, and that it is an area which has a long association with OPM. Most recently, it has been the base area of regional commander James Nyaro.

On 26 March it was reported that, almost a week earlier, more than one hundred people had fled into Papua New Guinea to escape clashes between OPM and Indonesian troops in and around Waris, about 20 kilometres from the border. From the villages of Woro and Kwana, these refugees were the first reported from the inland (*Post-Courier, Niugini Nius* 26 March 1984). The movement of this relatively small group of refugees across the border signalled the beginning of a rapid increase in the number of refugees entering Papua New Guinea.

OPM actions at Waris were followed by a raid at Ubrub (*Niugini Nius* 28 March 1984), and by OPM’s 26 March capture of Swiss pilot Werner Wyder, an Indonesian army officer and a doctor (both assassinated) and a Melanesian teacher at the border station of Yuruf (*Post-Courier* 2 April 1984) (see chapter 5). The Indonesian government’s response to these events included ground sweeps by troops, apparently supported by helicopters and jet fighters, two of which flew into Papua New Guinea territory near Green River (*Post-Courier, Niugini Nius* 28 March 1984), setting off a long series of diplomatic exchanges between the two governments.

As these events unfolded, the trickle of refugees across the border into Sandaun Province became a flood. By 7 April refugees were said to be congregating around the Catholic mission at Kamberatoro and Mamamura village, but it was reported that border officials had now been instructed to send the refugees back to their villages and not to give any help. The report quoted government officials as saying there was no money for help and the government did not want to ask for assistance from the UNHCR because it insisted that these people were not refugees. *Niugini Nius* claims to have been told at the border that since 26 March Indonesian troops had been dropped almost daily from
helicopters and were advancing towards the border and that there had been heavy fighting between Yuruf and Amgotoro (*Niugini Nius* 8 April 1984). By 12 April it was reported that as many as 3,000 Irian Jayan border crossers were either in or headed for Papua New Guinea, including 437 already in Vanimo, 320 at Kamberatoro and another 300 heading there, about 1,000 heading for Green River from Ubrub, and hundreds from the Waris and Arso areas heading for Imonda and Bewani (*Post-Courier* 12 April 1984). The bulk of the new crossers were inland village people, and many were joining relatives on the Papua New Guinea side. The bishop of Vanimo, John Etheridge, became involved, warning of the danger of food shortages and taking full responsibility for feeding and clothing refugees at Kamberatoro (*Niugini Nius* 24 April 1984). But the involvement of the church was not, according to Etheridge, without its critics (interview, Vanimo, 29 December 1984).

**Third wave - focus on the south**

The third wave of refugees, again mainly villagers, crossed into Western Province along a 150 kilometre stretch of the border from about the northern end of the Fly River bulge to the mountains where Western Province meets Sandaun. The first report of the southern boundary crossers was of twenty-eight people from Sota village on the border who sought refuge on 9 April. It was reported that the village had connections with OPM, and following the arrest of two of their leaders all of the remaining villagers had fled (*Niugini Nius* 12 April 1984). But this was just the beginning, and by 1 May some 2,500 refugees had arrived in the area north of Kiunga near the small town of Ningerum (*Post-Courier* 1 May 1984). Already, this new exodus dwarfed that into Sandaun Province.

The border crossers in the Western Province camps are people from two tribal groups - the Yonggom (or Muyu as they are known on the other side) and the Ningerum. Many have been in Papua New Guinea before, and on crossing joined their *wantoks* (members of the same language group, kin). Indeed, many are people recognized by the 1984 border agreement as 'traditional' crossers, having sago stands and vegetable gardens on the Papua New Guinea side of the border. However this agreement does not allow for crossing the border for resettlement. According to missionaries of long experience in the Kiunga area, for many years there has been a certain amount of popu-
lation drift across the quite artificial border. The drift was to the west into Dutch New Guinea during the 1950s and early 1960s, when Dutch mission activity attracted people; more recently it has been to the east, with the Yonggom tending to displace the neighbouring Awin people. The Ok Tedi project, especially the construction of the Kiunga-Tabubil road, seems to have caused a considerable population shift in the whole region (King 1983). This recent influx, however, has involved a large proportion of the Yonggom and Ningerum people from west of the border. According to reports in the camps, much of the tribal land has been depopulated. This was confirmed in a Jakarta press report of a tour by Irian Jaya governor, Isaac Hindom. It was reported that he found that 5,000 of the 8,500 population of the Mindiptanah subdistrict had fled; a further 4,400 of a population of 6,100 had fled Waropko subdistrict. Whole villages were found to be deserted (TAPOL Bulletin 64, 1984).

In most cases the newcomers have arrived amongst people who have traditional obligations to them and have made land available to them to live on and from. This has meant that although the situation may not have been entirely without friction, accommodation, rather than confrontation, has been the norm. Other observers have described the same kind of situation at the inland camps on the northern end of the border at Kamberatoro and Green River. Referring to Kamberatoro, one investigating team found that the 'people from Yurup and Amgotoro are from the same Dera clan as the people of the Kamberatoro area... The Ubrup people here are those who have ties by marriage to the Deras'. At Green River, similarly, they reported 'they are of the same clan as the Papua New Guinea people of the area and so are offered hospitality' (Mongi et al. 1984:5, 7).

Despite Indonesian denials, it is clear that military operations or 'exercises' have been conducted in the northern border region and all of the evidence points to OPM involvement also. For the south, however, news reports of OPM-Indonesian clashes emanate from OPM sources, either from letters released by OPM 'representatives' in Port Moresby or through OPM's southern regional (Merauke) commander Gerardus Thomy (e.g. Niugini Nius 18 May, 13 August 1984). Determining, with any degree of confidence, the causes of the southern exodus is thus a matter of conjecture, but there has been a number of suggestions.

One possibility is that the refugees have spontaneously fled a generalized oppression. This seems unlikely, however, given the sud-
den exodus of thousands of people. A second suggestion is that the people have been displaced by transmigration. While there are plans for transmigration in this area, little, if any, actual settlement has taken place; transmigration could be seen by the people only as a future threat. The third possibility is in two variant forms, but centres on the assertion that OPM has forced the people to leave their traditional land. One variant suggests that OPM might have cleared a fighting zone and thus moved the population to safer areas. The other, supported by both Indonesian and Papua New Guinea officials, is that OPM has intimidated the people and forced them into Papua New Guinea in order to gain international publicity. The fourth possibility is that there have been armed clashes between OPM and Indonesian forces. In determining the veracity of these possibilities, the accounts of the refugees are significant.

In the Western Province camps the refugees appear well organized and disciplined, especially as they have tended to remain in village groups, with lines of communication through camp and village leaders and spokesmen. During the course of interviews two themes kept emerging, the first almost legendary in form. It was an account of the frustration of the West Papuan people and the denial of their aspirations for independence; it referred to their land having been stolen from them by the Indonesian people, who are different from them and have no right to Melanesian land. It spoke of oppression by Indonesia in the form of rough justice being handed out to any West Papuans who revealed their nationalist feelings. Transmigration was spoken of only in the sense of a component of cultural threat (interviews, Kiunga, 9 September 1984). OPM did not figure prominently. Rather the people spoke powerfully and emotionally of their West Papua and their independence. They clearly believe in the possibility of independence and say they will not return until they gain independence, with some claiming they will fight for it.

The second recurring theme concerned ‘incidents’, clashes, reprisals and threats. The refugees referred specifically to an incident at Waropko near the town of Mindiptanah on 10 April when it appears there was a raising of the West Papuan flag. The incidents surrounding this event are said to have led (by one account) to a threat that the army would wipe out the people if there was another incident. A variant claim was that the threat was relayed by ‘our leaders’. There were references to church desecrations and the destruction of houses and gardens (interview, Kiunga, 9 September 1984).
These refugee accounts appear to be roughly in line with that provided by the OPM of clashes beginning in mid April and continuing through to July, and of Indonesian reprisals. Investigating teams from the Catholic church, while reluctant to accept all OPM stories of atrocities, reprisals and clashes, claim to have enough corroborating evidence to suggest that a church in Ninati, near Mindiptanah, was sacked by Indonesian troops (interview, Bishop Deschamps, Kiunga, 9 September 1984), and to at least take seriously the broad outline of the OPM claims of clashes (interview, Father Basil Peutalo, Port Moresby, 17 October 1984).

The reported flow of refugees across the border also tends to coincide with the claimed armed clashes. While refugees continued to cross in the north (*Post-Courier* 27 April 1984), the first reports of southern crossers, as noted above, was on 9 April. However, by the end of April it was reported that more than 1,000 people from four villages in Irian Jaya had crossed into Western Province a week earlier. The refugees claimed that their villages had been occupied by Indonesian soldiers and it was said that they were short of food in bush camps (*Niugini Nius* 30 April 1984). The following day it was reported that 2,660 people had crossed into Western Province in the previous week and were camped at Komopkin and Benlim [sic.] (*Post-Courier* 1 May 1984). By mid May it was estimated that there were 5,000 refugees in Papua New Guinea, with 3,800 in Western Province (*Niugini Nius* 16 May 1984). The numbers continued to rise over the next few weeks with a joint churches team reporting 10,000 refugees by the end of July, including 6,800 in Western Province. The discovery of three other bush camps, holding about 1,500 people, west of Tabubil and south of Kiunga was reported in September (*Niugini Nius* 26, 27 September 1984).

**Papua New Guinea government policy on refugees**

As noted above, the Papua New Guinea government’s initial response had been to offer assistance to border crossers but to charge them all as illegal crossers and to prepare to repatriate them. However, as the numbers of crossers dramatically increased, the government’s response was not so clear.

A churches investigating team reported that at the end of July all costs at the Blackwater camp, with about 1,000 people, were continuing to be borne by the UNHCR, Red Cross and Austcare. At Kamberatoro (800-900 refugees) the Catholic mission had provided for the
basic needs of the refugees, the costs being borne by the Diocese of Vanimo. The situation at Green River was not so fortunate. The report stated that supplies were originally provided by the government. However, in times of shortage the Catholic Church was asked by the Officer in Charge for assistance, which it provided. The report went on to observe that ‘the government funds seem to be exhausted and the Catholic Church is prepared to extend its services there as well’ (Mongi et al. 1984:4-8). The wording of the church report allows the government’s position to be seen as benevolently helpless in a situation of emergency beyond its capacity.

In mid May, according to Bishop Etheridge the food situation at Green River was desperate (Post-Courier 15 May 1984). A month later when a further group of 200 refugees was brought to Green River, both the Sandaun provincial government and Bishop Etheridge warned that neither the government nor any agency was providing for inland border crossers, and it was left to the church to begin a relief operation (Niugini Nius 25, 27 June 1984; Post-Courier 28 June 1984).

Following its visit to the Sandaun camps in July, the church investigating team warned that the condition of refugees at Green River was very poor, despite some outside assistance, especially when compared with those at Kamberatoro who had sufficient, church-supplied rations. They extrapolated from this a serious concern for the refugees in Western Province who ‘had not been given any assistance’ (Mongi et al. 1984:9). The investigating team had every reason for concern, for it was soon discovered that people were dying of starvation and starvation-related diseases in the Komopkin camp.

Initially, fifty-four deaths were reported, but the toll was up to ninety-two before an adequate relief programme was organized, and following charges of ‘criminal neglect’ by the opposition member for North Fly, Warren Dutton, (Niugini Nius 13 August 1984) the government attempted to explain the situation. Provincial Affairs minister, John Nilkare, told parliament that he accepted responsibility for the deaths, stating:

> Obviously there has been some failure by my department that I take full responsibility for. The real responsibility lies with those who persist in telling fanciful stories to people with little knowledge of political reality.

Nilkare went on to accuse OPM of ‘killing their own women and children for the sake of politics’. While admitting that his department had
failed to cope, he claimed that the Irian Jayans were in Papua New Guinea on orders from OPM who must take the blame for the deaths. In other words, the people should not have been in Papua New Guinea in the first place, so those who ‘sent’ them were at fault. He went on to deny that the government had a policy of starving the border-crossers back into Irian Jaya, stating that the tragedy was not averted because some of his department’s officers had failed to correctly interpret the situation and to pass on information to Port Moresby (Post-Courier 17 August 1984).

However, Nilkare’s statement failed to convince a number of people, and government backbencher Gabriel Ramoi accused the government of having a starvation policy (Niugini Nius 20 August 1984). As the full story of what happened in the Western Province camps was pieced together, the evidence seemed to confirm Ramoi’s claim, in the words of law lecturer Brian Brunton (1984:10) pointing ‘more to deliberate design than to a series of serious but not necessarily intentional misjudgements’. It is necessary to look at the events which led to the deaths of ninety-seven refugees in the camps by the end of August (Post-Courier 30 August 1984) in order to examine the contention that deliberate neglect at the highest levels of government amounted to policy.

The ‘holiday camps’

When the refugees first crossed into Western Province they camped in the bush or near villages or missions, but not in proximity to government stations. Their first contact with officials came when patrols were sent out to the camps to supervise them. Initially, the refugees lived off local sago stands and vegetable gardens, but with numbers swelling these resources were soon exhausted. To offset this, two food supply drops of a week’s food each were made by the government in late April and early May, apparently paid for from a payment of K22,800 provided by the Indonesian government (Post-Courier 1 May 1984). However, no further supplies from the government went to the camps until August, and the government would not allow any other relief agencies to become involved (interviews, Kiunga, 9 September 1984; Port Moresby, 13 August 1984).

The period between May and mid August is an important one. On the one hand Foreign Affairs minister Namaliu was taking a strong line on repatriation, demanding that the Indonesian government provide
meaningful guarantees of the safety of any people repatriated. On the other hand, Namaliu’s government and his own department were allowing refugees to starve. This is not the place to examine Namaliu’s initiatives, but it is important to examine what was happening to the refugees, especially in Western Province.

As early as 6 May, one representative of a major international relief agency claims to have expressed concern to DFAT about the camps in the south, and to have offered assistance, but was told ‘at a high level of government’ to keep out (interview, Port Moresby, 13 August 1984). At about the same time, Bishop Deschamps made the first of a number of offers of assistance but was told that he should ‘stand by’ as the government seemed to have control of the situation (Niugini Nius 18 August 1984).

Events during the remainder of May are not at all clear, but there are no reports of supplies reaching the camps although government patrols continued to have a presence in the camps. It seems clear that the government was aware of the situation in the camps at this time, for a report dated 1 June was prepared for Namaliu by Mataio Rabura (acting first assistant secretary for the Border Liaison Branch of DFAT). This report, apparently leaked to Niugini Nius (30 August 1984) by ‘cabinet sources’, pointed out that approaches to the Indonesian authorities for more money had been unsuccessful and added that the crossers would not be fed; the situation was described as ‘critical’. If this was the case, then it should also have been clear to Paulias Matane, secretary of DFAT, who toured the Sandaun and Western Provinces in the last two weeks of May on a ‘public awareness campaign’ designed to identify refugees who would be repatriated. Given that Matane claimed to have identified 5,000 crossers in this category, it can only be assumed that he was aware of the existing conditions in the camps (Niugini Nius 4 June 1984).

In early June the UNHCR sent a formal note to the government requesting that it be given access to the refugees who were now in Papua New Guinea. While the UNHCR had been involved at Blackwater, repeated offers of assistance for the thousands of others had fallen on deaf ears, and this had meant, in journalist Alfred Sasako’s words, ‘thousands of West Irian refugees…have been denied urgently-needed food and medical supplies…’ (Niugini Nius 11 June 1984). Throughout June, while an administrative presence was maintained in the camps, still no supplies were provided, despite offers and expressions of concern about the seriousness of the situation.
On 6 July, for apparently routine reasons, all government officials at the camps in the southern border area were called into Kiunga (Niugini Nius 18 August 1984). Ten days later a new style of administrative presence in the camps was introduced, with two patrols, one north and one south of Kiunga, doing weekly rounds of overnight visits to the various camps then returning to Kiunga for rebriefing. The patrols consisted of a patrol officer, a police officer and a medical officer. It was a show-the-flag operation intended to check on conditions, and to check for new arrivals. But during July conditions deteriorated to the level of disaster.

The official account of how the situation was permitted to deteriorate so badly blames mismanagement, unforeseen difficulties, and a serious breakdown in communications. Nilkare explained:

‘The area is not rich [and there] are continuous difficulties maintaining adequate food supplies for the ordinary population. The medical officers on the regular patrols may have been [so] used to seeing sick people that they did not think it unusual’ (Niugini Nius 18 August 1984).

It is difficult to conceive how the situation could have been considered in any way ‘usual’ if the region is ‘not rich’ and is suddenly burdened with thousands of extra people. Further, when Pastor Roy Woods of the Evangelical Church, and a man of long experience in the area, went to Komopkin on 3 August he reported that he was ‘shocked, really shocked. I could hear crying, crying and crying. The children were just sitting around; they were just too weak to stand or follow us’ (Times of PNG 27 September 1984). Pastor Woods certainly did consider the situation ‘unusual’ and immediately got a helicopter into Komopkin to take out the sickest - seventy trips were reportedly made that day (Niugini Nius 21 August 1984).

It was only Pastor Woods’ report, relayed through local member of parliament Warren Dutton to Port Moresby, which brought any government action, and then, it seems, reluctant action. Earlier patrol reports were ignored. For example, Alfred Sasako (Niugini Nius 21 August 1984) states that he met one officer who spoke of a visit to Niogomban:

I was inside this camp and seven people died right before my eyes. I rushed back and told the provincial police commander in Kiunga and other government officers and all
they said was ‘worry blong ol’ [their problem]. The OPM is causing a lot of headaches so let their people die.

Even when reports of deaths in the camps reached senior Health Department officials, who wanted to rush aid to the area, DFAT remained immovable (Times of PNG 6 September 1984). Only the publicity associated with Woods’ report moved DFAT, with Matane finally inviting the UNHCR representative to visit the Western Province camps. The UNHCR’s visits to the camps resulted in the provision of K725,000 to aid the refugees in September, with a further $435,000 being allocated in December (Niugini Nius 10 September 1984; Post-Courier 12 December 1984). In addition, other non-governmental relief agencies became involved following Woods’ revelations.

The contradiction between the ‘neglect’ of the refugees and concern for their welfare as reflected in prolonged negotiation over the repatriation of so-called illegal border crossers has already been pointed out. They are reconciled only on the basis of a common underlying starting point - a determined refusal to acknowledge the realities of the existence of a refugee problem. The calculated neglect reflects a determination to ‘wish them away’, or ‘ignore them and they’ll go away’. The latter position seems to reflect the position of secretary Matane who saw that ignoring the refugees could also mean applying pressure to force them back across the border and, indeed, to dissuade others from coming across. Even in August, when reports of camp deaths were public, Matane, in briefing a meeting of non-governmental relief agencies (attended by Alan Smith), stressed that the aid provided to border crossers should be minimal, since ‘we don’t want these people coming across for a holiday’.

Given the conditions in the camps, and the deaths, the suggestion that they offered a ‘holiday’ is obscene. More significantly, the suggestion reveals not a ‘miscalculation’ on the part of DFAT or Provincial Affairs but a cold-blooded gamble concerning the motivations and will of the refugees. And even when the bet seemed lost, it was stubbornly maintained.

The publicity associated with the camp deaths continued well into September and brought with it impassioned opposition to the government’s policies and reasoned, yet scathing, criticism of policies (see Brunton 1984). Perhaps in partial response to this criticism, Namaliu surprised many, not the least being the Indonesian government, by
raising Indonesian border violations at the UN General Assembly (*Post-Courier* 3 October 1984). Mochtar responded by accusing the Papua New Guinea government of interfering in Indonesian domestic affairs, with Namaliu then claiming that Papua New Guinea had a right to ask about events which had caused thousands of Indonesian citizens to flee into Papua New Guinea (*Post-Courier* 17, 18 October 1984).

Despite these exchanges and criticisms, repatriation remained on the agenda. Proposed visits by Indonesian verification teams brought hostile responses, especially from the Blackwater refugee camp where many of the more articulate refugees were held. Nevertheless, an Indonesian team did arrive to begin assuring the border crossers of their safety upon returning to Irian Jaya (*Niugini Nius* 2 November 1984). Accompanied by two Papua New Guinea police riot squads, the group visited Green River first, then moved to the Blackwater camp. Despite warnings that the Indonesians would receive a hostile reception, Papua New Guinea officials allowed the Blackwater visit to proceed, arguing that adequate security would be provided (*Post-Courier* 6 November 1984). However, when the widow of Irian Jayan anthropologist Arnold Ap became involved, accusing the Indonesians of murdering her husband, some refugees attacked and injured several of the Indonesian delegation (*Niugini Nius* 5 November 1984). In response, there was an official protest to the Papua New Guinea government (*Post-Courier* 5 November 1984) and a demonstration outside the Papua New Guinea embassy in Jakarta (*Niugini Nius* 7 November 1984). The Papua New Guinea government was quick to express its regret at the incident and stated that those responsible for the attack would be brought to justice (*Niugini Nius* 9 November 1984). Perhaps some of the sincerity was taken out of the apology when Papua New Guinea's police commissioner, David Tasion, stated that his police did not take strong action to prevent the attack at the camp because, ‘We are not like the Indonesians. We won’t shoot people’ (*Niugini Nius* 9 November 1984). Following this, the Indonesian authorities were reported as saying that repatriation ‘- if it takes place at all - will...probably be deferred until mid-1985, at the earliest’ (*Times of PNG* 18 November 1984). Nevertheless, the last weeks of the year were still to prove surprising.

At the end of November it seemed that the influx of refugees was not over, with a further 660 arriving at Kamberatoro and Green River (*Niugini Nius* 27 November 1984; *Post-Courier* 28 November 1984). It was also known that there were groups of displaced Irianese living in
the bush along the border, many of whom were, according to Bishop Etheridge, becoming short of food (interview, Vanimo, 29 December 1984). Then, as the UNHCR made more money available for the care of the border crossers, it was announced from Jakarta, where Namaliu was signing the new Border Agreement, that the Indonesian government had finally agreed to the involvement of the UNHCR in repatriation (Post-Courier 13 December 1984).

Despite having achieved this diplomatic victory, Namaliu was removed from his Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio less than two weeks later. Somare claimed that Namaliu asked to move, but the latter denied this, stating that his work was unfinished. While his new portfolio of Primary Industry is not insignificant, it seems clear that Namaliu was one of the political casualties of the troubled year in DFAT.

If Namaliu's removal from Foreign Affairs came as something of a surprise, then so did the announcement that about one hundred refugees had been repatriated from the Blackwater camp. The new minister, John Giheno, commented on the repatriation, which apparently was carried out in the early hours of the morning when an Indonesian ship took the refugees from Vanimo to Jayapura where they were reported to have been given a welcoming feast. It appears that those who returned had crossed into Papua New Guinea in the wake of the Wyder kidnapping in March and had been anxious to return (Post-Courier 27 December 1984; Times of PNG 30 December 1984). However, some questions remain about the exercise. First, while both Bishop Etheridge and Blackwater camp spokesman Tom Ireeuw agree that the refugees wanted to return, they claim that they had not been anxious to return through Jayapura (separate interviews, Vanimo, 29 December 1984). More importantly, despite apparent Indonesian agreement that the UNHCR be involved in repatriation, there was no such involvement in this case. Monitoring the safety of the returnees, so much an issue throughout 1984 and pursued strongly by Namaliu, seems to have been forgotten. Papua New Guinea officials accompanied the refugees to Jayapura, but returned almost immediately with no effort being made to monitor their fate.

The border remains the crucial issue in Papua New Guinea-Indonesian relations, and never before has it seen so many refugees cross to Papua New Guinea. The refugees are still in their camps dotted along the border and while they are there they continue to be a source of aggravation in the relationship between the two countries.
The Papua New Guinea government remains hypersensitive about the border and refugees, having taken action against a number of journalists who have commented on the situation (Osborne 1985). The future of the refugees is no more certain in late 1985 than it was in early 1984, although recent reports do suggest that small numbers of them are seeking asylum in third countries, particularly the Netherlands and Australia (Osborne 1985).

What is certain, however, is that the problem will remain, and, as was so clearly demonstrated in 1984, Papua New Guinea's policy towards refugees or, as the government prefers, 'border crossers', has not been able to cope with large numbers. Nowhere was this more tragically demonstrated than in the deaths in the Western Province camps. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, facing its first real crisis since independence, has appeared split within itself and has followed no consistent line on the treatment of border crossers.

1984 has shown that many thousands of the border crossers have genuine reasons for leaving their side of the border, but the Papua New Guinea government's apparent refusal to acknowledge this seriously limits its options in dealing with the problem. While the government may well feel that the interests of a few border crossers must be sacrificed in the security interests of Papua New Guinea, the events of 1984 do not suggest that the former necessarily achieves the latter.
CHAPTER 9

PROSPECTS: 'A STATE OF MIND'

Peter Hastings

For close Indonesia watchers, the arrival of five anti-Indonesian Irianese on Thursday Island, Australia, on June 26 1985 did not come as a surprise. Some have long anticipated it: Merauke is only 250 kilometres northwest and adjacent to Wendu-Kumbe settlement camp which houses around 10,000 (mainly Javanese) transmigrants and 2,000 Irianese co-settlers.

The five Irianese, who are Indonesian citizens, originally from Merauke, came by canoe from Papua New Guinea by way of Boigu Island. Earlier the five had crossed into Papua New Guinea at Morehead patrol post, and prior to their departure for Australia had spent six months in southern Papua. At first, the five made a request for political asylum, but when the meaning of that was fully explained to them in Indonesian, they changed their request to one for permission to ‘preach’ to Australians on the rights of the Irianese to independence from Indonesia. All five were suffering severely from malaria and agreed that on recovery they would return to Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea, however, has since refused to accept them back, since technically they are illegal immigrants.

These five are the first of many ‘canoe people’ that Australia may expect to arrive at Thursday Island and other northern ports in the future to claim asylum in one degree or another and for one reason or another. Many who come are likely to be ‘economic refugees’ and sorting them out from those genuinely qualifying as refugees under the Geneva Convention may prove difficult. But whether genuine refugees or not, and whether seeking asylum or not, many human rights activists in Australia, already involved in protesting the activities
of the Indonesian administration in East Timor and Irian Jaya, will insist they stay in Australia. The future therefore promises new strains in Australian-Indonesian relations and it may be safely assumed that the Australian government will seek to minimize damage to those relations by returning ‘canoe people’, where possible, to Indonesia.

The five arrivals have claimed membership of a fairly new Irianese nationalist organization, MUFGAS, an English language acronym for Melanesian Union from Gag to Samarai. (Gag is a tiny island west of the Bird’s Head and Samarai an island off the tail of Papua.) The acronym reflects the earlier slogan, espoused by Papuan leaders of the former Volksraad in seeking to promote a one island federation, From Sorong to Samarai. This in turn was a play on the Indonesian slogan of the 1950s, From Sabang to Merauke. According to the five, MUFGAS represents a new political movement which rejects the OPM’s ‘armed terrorism’, seeking to promote one-island unity through means of peaceful propaganda and example.

Their arrival in Australia coincided with reports of the arrival in Papua New Guinea of at least another 1,000 border crossers from Irian Jaya. About 1,000 were said to have come across at Skotiau, and, it is thought, a further 1,500 Min-speaking people came across at Yapsiei, west of Telefomin. The Skotiau arrivals contained a fair number of returnees from the results of a Papua New Guinea military exercise, Operation Rausim Kwik. This had involved six weeks planning and two days execution; according to one ironic observer in Port Moresby, its failures became apparent within a week. The troops certainly forced a number of Irianese settlers near Skotiau to return to Irian Jaya, but as soon as the troops went back to Port Moresby the border crossers, augmented by others, returned to Skotiau. The Yapsiei crossers represent the northernmost extremities of the Min-speaking people, and they come from a mountainous area about 50 kilometres west of the border, which is only lightly administered; available evidence points to OPM propagandists being able to induce the people to cross the border to avoid an alleged Indonesian/OPM clash. This brings the total number of border crossers in Papua New Guinea once again to about 12,000.

Definitions

While many, especially in Papua New Guinea, refer to the 10,000 or so border crossers in Papua New Guinea camps, prior to the most
recent crossings, as refugees, the description is not accurate except in so far as it applies to perhaps 400 or more of the 1,000 residents in Blackwater camp. These are primarily Irianese teachers, police, soldiers, two university lecturers, and small-time bureaucrats, who represent the growing number of Irianese evolues. They left Jayapura after the February 13 flag raising incident and subsequent events last year. They are certainly refugees by any definition because they would be in danger of life or liberty if they returned to Irian Jaya. They cannot return. Between 80 and 100 of the remainder have in fact returned.

There are three main camps in the north: Green River, Kamberatoro and Blackwater. Until a year ago the northern border was the main centre of OPM operations and of Indonesian military incursions either in hot pursuit, in error, or to intimidate. Following the flag raising incident the OPM became much more active, virtually for the first time, in the south under the leadership of Gerardus Thomy whose raid in early April 1984 on the Indonesian administrative centre at Waropko, about 30 kilometres northwest of Ningerum, precipitated Indonesian military reaction and led to the large number of crossings later that month.

Eventually more than 8,000 Irianese crossed the border, at least 6,000 in various stages of exhaustion and hunger which for some time the Papua New Guinea government did little to alleviate. The majority were Roman Catholic and with the exception of 1,100 people, now at Tarakbits camp, all were Yonggom-speakers (some from as far west as Mindiptanah, a largish centre 25 kilometres west of the border) as are most Papua New Guineans around Kiunga. For this reason, all but the Ningerum-speaking Tarakbits people were able to get land from the locals, a difficult matter in Melanesia. They have thus been able to plant traditional food to supplement UNHCR food rations; as well they get clothes, drugs and medical treatment. As a result the camps have taken on a semi-permanent character. The Yonggom-speakers are accepted, the Ningerum-speakers are suffered.

*The crossings*

It is difficult to sort out all the reasons for the crossings. Heavy-handed Indonesian administrative practices, or unsympathetic ones; over-reaction (including shootings) by military patrols, to raids such as that on Waropko, and genuine fears of land alienation through *transmigrasi* settlements, are among them. But I believe the main problem
to be the ineradicable cultural dislike of the Malay and Melanesian races for each other. This was pungently expressed in August 1984 at an Australian-Indonesian conference in Brisbane, by a senior Indonesian delegate, Brigadier-General Soebyakto, who said that Indonesia could not keep Irian Jaya as a ‘zoo’ or ‘museum’ and even more succinctly a hundred years earlier by Alfred Russell Wallace who said that ‘... if the tide of [Malay] colonization should be turned to New Guinea, there can be little doubt of the early extinction of the Papuan race’ (Wallace 1869 vol. 2:448).

By the same token it would be unwise to ignore the increasing effectiveness with which the OPM, despite factionalism and small numbers, has been able to exploit Irianese grievances to promote fear among Irianese villagers, and to influence them to cross the border and to remain there. And like the Indonesian forces it opposes, it is not averse to burning villages. Observers of the southern border crossers, including Warren Dutton, the member for North Fly, and most border kiaps (especially the few expatriates remaining), believe that the OPM is 80 per cent responsible for the crossings. This in itself is a signal achievement.

The missions, especially the Catholic missions, are notable dissenters from this view and have been an important element in the decision of border crossers to remain in Papua New Guinea. They have been active also in supporting Dutton’s proposal to resettle the crossers permanently in Papua New Guinea (see chapter 5 above).

In a long interview in Kiunga on 9 February 1985, the bishop of Daru, Bishop Deschamps, a French Canadian Montfort missioner, told me that he was inclined not to accept information from the bishop of Merauke which cast doubt on stories carried by the border crossers. These stories alleged that within Merauke diocese Indonesian soldiers had wantonly killed teachers, catechists, villagers and children, had raped nuns and had shot up the church at Ninati.

The bishop also said that he was disinclined to accept assurances from a Dutch priest, who had made a special visit from Merauke diocese, that it was the experience of priests working in Irian Jaya that ‘by and large the Indonesian Army behaved with consideration of the Church’ and that the Bishop should be careful of stories of church desecration. By the same token the following day a senior Montfort mission nun at Kungim camp told me that a number of border crossers had arrived ‘in fair health, accompanied by teachers, catechists and all their pots and pans’, showing all the signs of a carefully planned exodus.
rather than sudden flight in fear.

The camps

All eight camps on the border, especially those at Kuiu, Komokpin and Tarakbits, are within easy walking distance of the border. The majority of inmates comprises women, children and old people. Young and married men tend to live on the Irianese side of the border, visiting the camps by night or for some days on end and returning with food to Indonesia.

While crossers tend to deny open OPM affiliations, hard core OPM members clearly have access to the camps at will. An old man told me that, in any case, ‘the OPM is a state of mind’. This is a more than accurate description to the extent that the vast majority of camp dwellers north and south along the border are strongly anti-Indonesian in sentiment. All strongly resist any suggestion they should return.

The OPM

The former panglima, Brigadier-General Sembiring, maintained that OPM hard-core numbers, as distinct from sympathizers, do not exceed 300 to 400 and are very poorly armed. They have few firearms, between 30 and 40, mainly old Dutch and US rifles and a few Indonesian firearms, and very little ammunition, mainly because Indonesian troops carry only five rounds per man for fear of ambush. Most OPM carry traditional weapons, mainly bows and arrows. Intelligence sources in Papua New Guinea and Australia believe this an accurate description of numbers and weapons.

While OPM members at Blackwater camp tend to represent Irianese evolues, those in the south, including OPM members operating a few years ago around Tanahmerah and as far west as Akimuga and Tembagapura, are regarded as discontented village types. Even so, they include a number who have worked in Merauke, Mindiptanah, Agats and Timika in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. Most leaders, however, are ‘elite’ and literate.

1 It is well to remember in this regard that Indonesia has only three battalions, 735, 736 and 737 in Irian Jaya, that more than 400 of its total strength of 2,300 are Irianese, mostly Christian, that many of the officers are Christian, and that the former panglima, Brigadier-General Sembiring Meliala, a Batak, was a strict Christian and Baptist lay preacher. He has been succeeded by another Batak Christian in Brigadier-General Hasudungan Simandjuntak.
As an insurgency force the OPM amounts to little away from the border where it relies on being able to seek sanctuary in Papua New Guinea when the going gets tough. It is less effective in the far west, although it operates in Biak, the Bird’s Head, Paniai (Wissel Lakes) and Akimuga.

**OPM organization**

The border area is divided into five KODAPs (*komando daerah pasukan* or troop command areas). KODAPs 1 and 3 operate around Kamberatoro, northern border; KODAP 2 around Wutung - probably the most contentious OPM group; KODAP 4 around Merauke and possibly the Freeport Indonesia copper mine at Tembagapura; KODAP 5, under Thomy, around Ambotweng, a tiny village on the Indonesian side of the northern section of the Fly River bulge.

Despite impressive sounding command structures, and official letterheads to match, KODAP numbers are small. KODAP 3, for example, has eight or nine central highlands Wamenas who operate around Bewani and Skotiau. The OPM is not only small in hard-core numbers but is badly factionalized by leadership, clan and linguistic rivalries. Two rival OPM groups - including one under Prawar who deserted in mid February with fifty to ninety followers from Blackwater camp - operate around Wutung, not only against Indonesians but against each other. On 28 February 1985 Prawar’s group in fact moved south and attacked the small group operating under James Nyaro, self-styled OPM commander-in-chief. On the orders of Papua New Guinea’s foreign secretary, Paulius Matane, seven leaders from Blackwater, with their families, were moved recently to Telefomin as a means of defusing internecine rivalries.

**Propaganda**

Despite factionalism and small numbers, the OPM groups on the border nevertheless show a greater talent for organization than one might have predicted several years ago, if we judge by their success in manipulating the large-scale southern exodus of Irianese into Papua New Guinea. This is especially true of the group under Thomy, who has shown organizational capacity.

Propaganda, written and oral, has taken several lines. First, there have been ceaseless allegations of Indonesian atrocities throughout the province of the sort I have already mentioned: allegations of capri-
cious, motiveless killings by the Indonesian military, or future genocidal operations planned by them. Secondly, there have been accounts of (mostly fictitious) engagements with Indonesian forces, alleging high Indonesian casualties; invariably there are no OPM casualties. The places mentioned are usually too far away for those to whom the propaganda is directed to be able to check. These accounts are mostly written. Thirdly, verbal propaganda has been spread in the camps. This plugs several themes: that Indonesian doctors forcibly sterilize Irianese women so that 'we will have no children and the Javanese will take our land'; that Javanese settlers take over Irianese villages for settlement in areas scarcely able to support sweet potato and yam subsistence farmers, let alone rice eaters; that Irian Jaya has all but achieved independence and that therefore those who have crossed the border must remain there 'until the final battle is fought'; that any border crossers returning to Irian Jaya will either be killed by the Indonesians or beaten up by the OPM for disobeying orders. Fourthly, special events are covered by written communications typed on special letterhead paper bearing the Papua Barat (OPM) flag, the PAPENAL (freedom force) emblem and the legend, MARKAS PASUKAN PEMBEBA-SAN NASIONAL MERAUKE or National Independence Group Headquarters, Merauke. Communications of this sort may be in Bahasa or English and are signed 'Gerardus Thomy, Panglima OPM Divisi Merauke'. The English version of several such communications which I have received recently are nevertheless authorized by 'Henk Joku, OPM Spokesman in PNG'. They are almost certainly printed and typed in Port Moresby, not in Merauke where it would be difficult for a clandestine printery to operate undetected. Communications are addressed among others to UPNG's Student Representative Council; the Papua New Guinea government; Vanuatu's Fr Lini; Warren Dutton; Ramos Horta; Yann Uregei, Noumea; UNHCR, Port Moresby; Bernard Narokobi; West Sepik Students Association; Mr Somare.

Dilemmas

There is increasing evidence to suppose that OPM supporters in Port Moresby are responsible for trying to coordinate the uncertain activities of the OPM on the border, including terrorism. I have referred above to the attack by Prawar on James Nyaro but not its bizarre sequel. Fighting between the two became sufficiently serious for a leading OPM light, Melky Salosa, who runs a small group near Kam-
beratoro, to visit Port Moresby in an attempt to get help in resolving factional problems. Salosa is a violent, unstable man twenty-three years of age who last year was responsible for the capture of Swiss pilot Werner Wyder and, according to Wyder, for the murder of two plane passengers and three Sulawesi timber cutters in the same exercise. The occasion caused prime minister Mr Somare to condemn OPM terrorism; more recently Vanimo’s pro-OPM bishop, John Etheridge, has sounded a further warning.

Sometime in February 1985 Salosa is alleged to have walked 250 kilometres through extremely rough country from Amanab to Wewak and thence travelled to Port Moresby. A more credible alternative story maintains he flew from Amanab to Wewak by MAF (the Mission Aviation Fellowship) and onwards by Air Niugini. Without doubt, however, he stayed in Port Moresby with well-known Irianese dissidents - all but one of them permissive residents under strict obligation to refrain from political activity - from 27 February to 5 March when he returned to the border. There are various stories as to the purpose of his visit. The one accepted by DFAT says that he came to persuade Henk Joku, Bas Fairio, Martin Kambu and other OPM sympathizers in Port Moresby to withdraw support from James Nyaro as OPM commander-in-chief. He was arrested on the border in early June and taken to Port Moresby.

Separate OPM groups on the border seem to have better contact with Port Moresby than with each other. Contact generally is maintained by couriers, letters, and, increasingly, by use of STD phones made available by some obliging mission stations and by equally obliging Melanesian kiaps from time to time in Vanimo, Amanab, Green River and Bewani in the north and Tabubil, Kiunga and possibly Daru in the south. It is hard to believe that the Indonesian embassy in Port Moresby is not aware of links between OPM sympathizers on the border and in Port Moresby or of the Papua New Guinea government’s failure or reluctance to do much about them.

Problems and options for Papua New Guinea

In essence Papua New Guinea’s problems boil down to two: what to do about border crossers already in Papua New Guinea, and what to do about future crossers? Papua New Guinea has consistently refused Indonesian requests for Sarawak-type ‘hot pursuit’ rights, on two grounds: (a) it is politically impossible; any Papua New Guinea gov-
ernment agreeing to such a request might well lose office; (b) chasing Chinese communist terrorists around a Borneo swamp is one thing, they are easily recognizable because they do not look like Malays; Indonesian troops in hot pursuit over the Irian border could not distinguish between Indonesian Melanesians and Papua New Guinea Melanesians.

'Closing the border' Port Moresby often talks of, but knows it is impossible on both geographical and political grounds. There are insufficient disciplined forces, and too many of them are pro-OPM in sentiment, to close all but tiny sections of the border.

A third option is returning the camp dwellers. But how? They show no signs of going and there is little chance they can be forced back at the point of a Papua New Guinean police bayonet, no matter what Matane says. If they are forced back they will possibly return again in greater numbers, as happened in June 1985 with the Skotiau crossers. There are, in any case, possibly constitutionally sanctioned legal restraints on the Papua New Guinea government's capacity to force them back against their will. Moreover forced return would damage Papua New Guinea's international image, not least in Australia. Yet their return one way or another may prove crucial.

There is every inducement at this stage to border crossers to stay in Papua New Guinea. In addition to UNHCR food, drugs and clothes, all but 1000 have land. Dutton, supported by the Catholic mission at Kiunga and other interested bodies, has proposed resettling all 8,000 on land suitable to future rubber, sugar and oil palm planting, to be purchased from customary owners in an area 75 km east of the border between the Elevala and Kaim rivers. Dutton has a sincere interest in the welfare of the border crossers, but it is fair to point out that he has also invested considerable capital in the Kiunga-Tabubil area and in economic development in the general Ok Tedi mining area.

Government objections to resettlement are three in the main. First, the camps could become permanent OPM sanctuaries and invite an Indonesian attempt to 'sanitise' the border by way of limited military action. Secondly, near border settlement will invite further groups of crossers. Many dispute this but Department of Provincial Affairs estimates that a properly organized OPM campaign from Wutung to Weam could force another 25-30,000 Irianese across the border. Thirdly, resettlement costs in Western Province, in terms of roads, schools and crops, would prove formidable and resettlement further east, even if land were available, prohibitive and politically undesira-
ble. There are few in Somare's cabinet, Fr Momis excepted, who disagree on the necessity for repatriation.

**Indonesian options**

In a change from earlier attitudes, Indonesia is currently showing a great deal of restraint, almost verging on indifference, over the border crossers, especially those in the south. The camps cost it virtually nothing; they are a charge on Papua New Guinea and the UNHCR. However if the camps become effective bases - inviting more crossings - for OPM sympathizers to mount anti-Indonesian operations in Irian Jaya the present mood of forebearance will change. Two worst case scenarios offer themselves. One, much talked of in Papua New Guinea, is outright Indonesian invasion of Papua New Guinea. The other is one, two or a series of swift punitive military attacks on the border camps.

I discount utterly the possibility of invasion. Papua New Guinea is not a colonial vacuum like East Timor. An Indonesian attack on Papua New Guinea, with a view to subjugation or virtual annexation, is an attack on a sovereign, independent country, a member of the UN, the Commonwealth, the South Pacific Forum and an associate state of ASEAN, as well as a country with a special relationship with Australia. Invasion, a Security Council matter, would not be in any of Indonesia's perceived regional interests. For what ultimate benefit?

If Papua New Guinea is perceived as in any way conniving at anti-Indonesian activities from Papua New Guinea sanctuaries, or as being unwilling or unable to control them, then limited cross-border raids are entirely possible. This would particularly be the case if the OPM were able to obtain any of the several thousand shotguns estimated to be in Papua New Guinea's possession along the border area or other weapons. To date there is no evidence of Papua New Guinea shotguns or ammunition crossing the border or being used in the camps.

Even limited strikes, few in number, would be extremely serious in their effects. They would tend to destabilize government in Port Moresby, place great strains on the Jakarta-Canberra relationship, thoroughly antagonize Forum states, including a Lange type government in New Zealand, raise questions in the UN, and not least in countries like Singapore, the most reluctant ASEAN state to accept East Timor's incorporation into Indonesia.

Under the border agreement each signatory expressly undertakes
not to allow its territory to be used for hostile purposes against the other. Papua New Guinea’s seeming inability, or reluctance, to do anything about the 90 Irianese who deserted Blackwater camp with Sergeant Prawar - now operating around Wutung with the avowed purpose of attacking installations at Jayapura - is a case in point where Papua New Guinea is clearly in breach of the agreement. A series of such breaches may well be seen ultimately by Indonesia as a threat to sovereignty and invite action. To date Indonesia has been restrained and seems determined to remain so.

Australia’s options

On close examination, I believe these to be few. In the event of invasion I would simply point out that while Australia has no ground force capability, eastern Indonesia is extremely vulnerable to Australian air and sea power - the most formidable in the region - should Australia’s government decide to go down that track. But would it? The consequences of such an action would be extremely grave. In the event of Indonesian cross-border attacks on camps believed to harbour Indonesian rebels operating against Indonesian forces in Irian Jaya, Australia’s choices seem few indeed.

It would be very difficult for Australia to support, and be seen to support, Papua New Guinea in a deliberate or uncontrolled policy of encouraging, tacitly or otherwise, subversive operations against Indonesia. It would be difficult even if Australians were aroused and Australia’s Papua New Guinea constituency - an increasingly unknown quantity as time goes by - agitated for it.

We should not underestimate the difficult political problems facing Papua New Guinea in the border issue. Nor should we ignore, as friends, the dangers inherent in apparent drift. It may be that a majority of the border crossers will return in small numbers over time. How perfect a solution. But there are as yet no signs of it happening. Until it does our proper role as friend may be to urge Indonesia to more acceptable policies in Irian Jaya and to warn Port Moresby, however unpopular it makes us, that if the present border camp situation is allowed to continue unchecked then sooner or later PNG may find itself looking straight down the barrel of an Indonesian gun.

Changes in Irian Jaya

To a large extent the OPM is only as strong as the Irianese resent-
ment it feeds on. A major cause of Irianese fear generally, and an underlying cause of the record number of crossings in 1984-85, is more than likely the effects of the transmigrasi programme.

Between 60,000 and 70,000 transmigrants, mainly Javanese, are in numerous settlements in the Bird's Head, the north coast and around Jayapura and Merauke. One settlement, Koya-Arso, is right on the border.

At the end of the fourth Five Year Plan in 1989, Indonesia hopes to move 136,000 transmigrant families, about 544,000 people, into mixed settlements in Irian Jaya. On past performance, the goal of half a million is unrealistic. But even if half that number is settled in the province during the next four to five years, the impact on Melanesian culture and the Melanesian land tenure system will be shattering, no matter how much expert care is taken implementing the programme.

Land alone poses problems enough. About 3,000 hectares are required for every 500 people. About 700,000 hectares have already been alienated from Melanesian owners without compensation. In 1989 this will amount to between 1.5 to 3.2 million hectares. Given Irian Jaya’s generally poor soils, steep slopes and swampy terrain this is a far larger area than the figure suggests. Moreover, Melanesian landowners are not paid compensation and the Indonesian view maintains that development of roads, schools and crops is compensation in itself. The failure to pay compensation, even if a reasonable case can be made, must nevertheless create severe tensions in a traditional Melanesian society.

The main purpose of transmigration is, allegedly, to help relieve pressure on Java’s huge population of 92 million. This is largely delusory because at least 20 million would have to move to have any real effect. Transmigration certainly makes a difference to the individual peasants who move: for the first time in their lives they own their land, even if in the Melanesian view it is not theirs to take.

Transmigration’s positive aspects are clear. It improves Irianese living standards, teaches them technological farming skills and furthers their national integration, creating in them the sense of being Indonesian, of belonging to the great and varied Indonesian family. But questions can be asked about the effectiveness of transmigration programmes. In the first place transmigration settlements are designed to integrate non-Irianese (mainly Javanese) and Irianese. President Suharto has directed that each farming settlement must contain 25 per cent Irianese. But where do they come from? It will take a generation
to make rice farmers or fruit growers out of subsistence, shifting agriculturalists like the Melanesians.

Moreover, under the Five Year Plan 81,000 families, about 324,000 people, will be moved during the next four to five years into new settlements in Jayapura and Merauke districts, both of which are close to the border. The political implications of so many Javanese, or even half the number, being settled close to Papua New Guinea are alarming, even allowing for the positive aspects of transmigration programmes.

It must be asked whether the rapid growth of the settlements and their culturally distorting effect on the Irianese will not prove counterproductive. Many Indonesians working in Irian Jaya, including the commanding general, Sembiring Meliala, think so and have called for a rethink of the programme. 2

The increasing number of settlements, with their implied threat to land and culture, leads to increased sympathy for the OPM, to acts of civil disobedience, and to the growth of Irianese nationalism - such as the murdered Arnold Ap represented - rather than to a sense of being both Indonesian and Melanesian, which is the most desirable end from all points of view, and not least Papua New Guinea’s and Australia’s.

If border pressures and increasing numbers of border crossers cause Papua New Guinea to become politically destabilized, it would have political and defence implications for Australia. It would, in fact, affect the whole region. It would concern New Zealand, whose new Labour government will take a far more radical view of neighbourhood events than Sir Robert Muldoon’s. New Zealand has considerable influence in Papua New Guinea and in the South Pacific Forum and its views will carry considerable weight with the small Forum countries which, although mini-states, have votes in world and regional organizations and already view Indonesia’s Irian Jaya policies unfavourably.

Potential anti-Indonesian feelings are not restricted to the independent island countries. New Caledonia’s Kanaks, bargaining for their independence with the French, might follow the lead of Vanuatu’s Melanesian leaders and come to see Irian Jaya in terms of a colonial struggle.

2 The Irianese are still unable to accept the transmigration program whole because most do not understand the purpose, objective and benefit of transmigration. They watch and think on the basis only of what they believe, that their land is being taken from them and their forests cleared by strangers who look different from them in many ways.
One should not underestimate the capacity of Indonesians to rethink policies and, when they have to, change them. I believe Jakarta is rethinking its Irian Jaya strategies and programmes. But, as an old Indonesian friend put it, this will take time like an ocean liner takes time to change course. But by reason of its contiguity, size and resources, Indonesia knows it has a constructive role to play in the southwest Pacific, not least in relation to its Melanesian neighbours.

The course that relationship takes depends to a large degree on how it handles its relations with Papua New Guinea. This in turn depends to a large degree on the course of events in Irian Jaya. Jakarta is nevertheless well aware that Irian Jaya is not East Timor. The Timorese people must eventually accept their future as part of the Republic; they have nowhere else to go. The Irianese can ‘vote with their feet’ by crossing the border into Papua New Guinea and, as the five in Thursday Island have shown, by entering Australia as well.

‘Despite the world of enlightened field workers the Irianese are not convinced of the need for transmigrasi. That’s why they so often ask for a share of transmigrants’ harvests, believing that the land still belongs to them. Unrest develops as a result of their unreadiness to accept this reality ... they feel strangers in their own land ... they are the ones who need help first ... it is not necessary to mix the Irianese with the newcomers (to provide development) but to bring development to their villages first. Assimilation will occur when the Irianese have acquired a sufficiently high level of consciousness’ (Melaila 1983).

General Sembiring received no firm answer to his submission but the debate on the best way to handle the Irian Jaya problem, including transmigration, continues in Jakarta.
POSTSCRIPT

While this volume was going to press, further developments along the border ensured that the subject continued to command attention, domestically and internationally.

In September, on the eve of Papua New Guinea’s tenth anniversary of independence, there was suggestion of a major policy shift when prime minister Somare said that resettlement within Papua New Guinea would be ‘sympathetically considered’ for all those border crossers unwilling to return home (Canberra Times 16 September 1985). This generosity appears to have dissipated on more mature reflection, however; indeed shortly after this statement was made, the government forcibly repatriated twelve border crossers by plane to Jayapura, despite an attempt by Bernard Narokobi to block the deportation by legal action. Although the government described the deportees as ‘criminals’ (they had been previously arrested on charges involving firearms and smuggling and had later absconded from Blackwater camp, reportedly to join the OPM), it seems certain that they were OPM supporters and as such, in terms of Papua New Guinea’s stated policy on ‘genuine refugees’, not candidates for repatriation. News of the deportation spread quickly through Blackwater camp, precipitating a protest by camp inmates who marched on Vanimo damaging the local DFAT office and overturning government vehicles before being restrained. The government’s action was widely criticized, among others by Bishop Etheridge who had earlier warned of growing tension in the border camps and who described the deportation as ‘disgusting and quite against all humanitarian values’ (Sydney Morning Herald 14 October 1985). Over a hundred camp inmates were arrested following this incident but acting prime minister Momis subsequently announced that there would be no further forced repatriation.

Subsequent reports (for example, Canberra Times 24 October 1985) said that the twelve were being ‘intensively’ interrogated by police in Irian Jaya, who had linked their activities to the OPM. Within days of this incident Momis also announced a ‘new’ policy with regard to border crossers. While emphasizing that Papua New Guinea would not tolerate the use of its territory as a base for guerilla or terrorist activities, Momis said that the government would not ignore those who crossed its borders to escape persecution as a result of political opinions; after a screening of camp inmates those granted refugee status
according to this criterion could be granted residency; UNHCR assistance would be sought in resettlement. Third country resettlement would be sought for some, but Momis challenged Papua New Guineans to help refugee families settle in villages and communities in Papua New Guinea. He also referred, somewhat cryptically, to a proposed ‘private repatriation scheme’ for camp inmates found not to be ‘genuine refugees’ (see Sydney Morning Herald 26 October 1985).

It is not obvious how far the approach outlined by the acting prime minister, and adopted by cabinet in Somare’s absence, departed from the previous government policy. Within days, however, one new direction was indicated when the acting foreign minister, Tony Bais, strongly criticized Indonesia, Australia, Holland, the United States and the United Nations for not doing enough to solve a problem largely of their making: ‘We are not satisfied with … words of sympathy … or token financial contributions’, Bais said, ‘We will be seeking real and financial commitment in permanently resettling the refugees that PNG is unable to resettle’ (Post-Courier 28 October 1985). In early November the subject of refugee resettlement was discussed during a visit to Papua New Guinea by the Australian foreign minister, Bill Hayden. Hayden’s response was unsympathetic. Calling on the Papua New Guinea government to take ‘resolute action’ to separate political activists [from] the vast majority of people who would like to go back’, he said, ‘… there is absolutely no evidence of any substantial policy in place to have those people returned to their homes’( Times of PNG 9 November 1985. The statement that no substantial policy was in place appears to have found support in a comment by Momis, who told journalists that there had not been any screening of border camps - see Sydney Morning Herald 8 November 1985). Hayden suggested that Papua New Guinea had ‘plenty of room’ in which to resettle the refugees and that until this was done there was little hope of internationalizing the refugee issue. Somare was reported to have told Hayden that Papua New Guinea was capable of handling the refugee situation, but Momis pointed out that the prime minister was bound by the policy accepted by cabinet in October and proposed that Australia accept some refugees as a gesture of goodwill’. Momis was supported by foreign minister Giheno, who described his Australian counterpart’s statement as patronizing and suggested that it cast doubts on the humanitarian basis for Australian refugee policy’; Giheno pointed out that Papua New Guinea did have a policy on refugees and foreshadowed a formal request that Australia, amongst
others, accept some refugees (Sydney Morning Herald 7,8, 14 November 1985; Times of PNG 9 November 1985; Post-Courier 12 November 1985).

Before this apparent difference was resolved (and, indeed, perhaps partly because of it), in a vote of no confidence in November the Somare government was defeated. A five-party coalition, headed by former deputy prime minister Paias Wingti (who, with a number of colleagues, had split from Pangu in March 1985 to form the People's Democratic Movement) came to office. A former DFAT officer, Legu Vagi, took up the Foreign Affairs portfolio.

The border situation quickly reemerged as an issue of major concern to the new government though not, it seemed, of general consensus. During a protracted debate in cabinet at least three ministers - Vagi, Dutton and Ramoi - appear to have supported proposals to offer resettlement to people in the border camps, and Vagi initiated a telex to provincial premiers seeking commitments on temporary resettlement of the border crossers (Post-Courier, 16, 17, 18 December 1985, 21 January 1986). But despite Wingti's promise of greater compassion' (Sydney Morning Herald, 16 December 1985), the policy package which emerged in January 1986 did not differ greatly from that of the Somare government. The new government announced that it would accede to the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and would welcome UNHCR involvement in the administration of border camps and in the screening of border crossers to determine their status. Those granted refugee status would be allowed to remain as permissive residents until arrangements could be made for them to be permanently resettled in third countries; others would be required to return to Irian Jaya. The number of border camps would be reduced in number and relocated away from the border (Post-Courier, 22 January 1986). Although the prime minister repeated the assurance that no border crossers would be repatriated against their will, both Wingti and Vagi expressed the view that only a few hundred of the 10,000 or so border crossers were genuine refugees' and that most would be repatriated (Sydney Morning Herald 30 January 1986, Post-Courier 6 February 1986).

Within days of the policy announcement the new foreign minister left on his first official visit, which included Australia and Indonesia. After visiting Canberra (where he firmly declined an Australian request that Papua New Guinea accept eight Irianese refugees who had sought asylum in Australia) Vagi had talks with Indonesia's
foreign minister, Mochtar. A subsequent communique reiterated the two countries' commitment to closer border ties, harmonious relations, and respect for each other's sovereignty. It also recorded that Indonesia respected Papua New Guinea's decision to give a greater role to the UNHCR and foreshadowed a treaty of friendship and cooperation between the two countries, an extradition treaty, the exchanging of military attaches (there having been no military attache in either country since the departure from Port Moresby of Colonel Ismail in 1984 - see p. 117, 122), and a study of the feasibility of expanded trade and transportation links. And in March 1986, coincident with the departure of PNGDF commander-in-chief, Brigadier-General Tony Huai, for a visit to Jakarta, Prime Minister Wingti raised the possibility of closer military ties between the two countries (Sydney Morning Herald 14 March 1986).

Meanwhile, shortly after the Wingti government had assumed office and with its border policy still under debate, two groups of OPM leaders crossed over into Papua New Guinea to seek asylum. In the south the OPM's regional commander, Gerardus Thommy, and two of his companions (Aries Wader and David Teimka) surrendered with eight other Irianese to government officials at the Kuiu refugee camp south of Kiunga. Five days later OPM president James Nyaro and his defence minister, Alex Donald Derey, surrendered to officials in Sandaun Province. When this volume went to press the five OPM leaders were being held in Port Moresby while the UNHCR sought third countries to take them. Meanwhile, in early February 1986 another forty-four OPM guerillas were reported to have crossed over to seek asylum. Lack of food, medical supplies and ammunition, combined with the strain of a long guerilla campaign with little to show for it, contributed to the surrender of the OPM leaders. Nyaro's withdrawal, however, appears to have been primarily the result of opposition to his leadership within the OPM, and in the opinion of Bishop Etheridge may signify the beginning of a new, more radical phase of the movement (Pacific Islands Monthly March 1986: 12-14; see ibid. February 1986; Post-Courier 13 December 1985; Times of PNG 8 February 1986).

With the elaboration of a new policy on refugees and the conclusion of a successful diplomatic visit, and with further depletions in the ranks of the OPM leadership, there is a temptation to predict a long-term improvement in the border situation and in relations between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. The recent (March 1986) voluntary repatriation of 213 Irianese from camps in Sandaun Province would
seem to support this prediction. But considering all things, it seems far more likely that - just as in 1979 and 1983 a similar concurrence of events prompted commentators, including myself, to make such predictions, erroneously as it turned out - the events of early 1986 simply mark another phase in the recurring cycle of tension and self-conscious cordiality which has characterized relations between the two countries for over a decade. Given the continued existence of over 10,000 border crossers and an apparent upsurge in subnationalist sentiment in Irian Jaya, this cyclical pattern of relations seems likely to continue into the foreseeable future as the government in Jakarta attempts to integrate Irian Jaya into the larger Indonesian society.

R.J.M.
NOTING the provisions of the Agreement dated the 17th day of December one thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine and in particular Article 19 which called for a review of the Agreement upon the expiration of five years from the date of ratification; DETERMINED to further foster co-operation, goodwill and understanding between the two countries; DETERMINED to further co-operate in the administration and development of the Border Area for the mutual benefit of their peoples giving due consideration to the traditional rights and customs of the people in the Border Area as already done by both Governments (in the past); RECOGNISING the need to replace the said Agreement dated the 17th day of December one thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine with a new Agreement; As good neighbours and in a spirit of friendship and co-operation; HAVE AGREED as follows:

ARTICLE 1
THE BORDER AREA

1. The Border Area shall consist of the Census Divisions within Papua New Guinea and the Kecamatan-Kecamatan Perbatasan within the Republic of Indonesia in respect of which the Border forms part of their boundaries.
2. The Border Area may be varied from time to time by an Exchange of Letters and maps after mutual consultations.
3. For the purposes of implementation of paragraph 1 of this Article, the two Governments shall consult and each make the necessary arrangements for the survey and demarcation of the Boundary and mapping of that part of the Border Area on their respective sides of the Border, by a mutually agreed method.
ARTICLE 2
JOINT BORDER COMMITTEE AND CONSULTATION

1. There shall be established a Joint Border Committee consisting of senior officials of both Governments.
2. The Committee shall formulate guidelines and procedures for the effective implementation of this Agreement.
3. Members of the Committee shall, as appropriate, advise and make recommendations to their respective Governments on all matters, procedures and arrangements relating to the implementation of this Agreement and to the development and review of border cooperation. The Committee shall meet at least once a year, and additionally as and when necessary, upon request by either Government. The venue for such meetings shall be by rotation in each country.
4. The two Governments may, if required, consult each other concerning the implementation and operation of this Article.

ARTICLE 3
LIAISON ARRANGEMENTS

1. To assist the Joint Border Committee there shall be established liaison meetings to discuss matters of mutual concern relating to the administration of the Border. Arrangements shall be made for regulating functions and working procedures for such meetings.
2. The liaison shall comprise officials from Port Moresby, Western and West Sepik Provinces and officials from the Province of Irian Jaya.
3. The main purpose of the liaison meetings shall be as follows:
   (i) to exchange information on all developments in the Border Area which are of mutual interest to both Governments;
   (ii) to devise, amend or establish arrangements to facilitate the practical operations, particularly at local and district levels, of the provisions of this Agreement; and
   (iii) to ensure that both Governments, through the Joint Border Committee, are kept informed of developments of significance relating to the Border Area and that their attention is drawn to any matters which may require consultation in accordance with this Agreement.
4. The liaison meetings shall take place as and when required but not
BETWEEN TWO NATIONS

later than three months intervals.

ARTICLE 4
BORDER CROSSINGS FOR TRADITIONAL AND CUSTOMARY PURPOSES

1. Each country shall continue to recognize and permit movement across the Border by the traditional inhabitants of the other country who reside in the Border Area and are citizens of the country concerned for traditional activities within the Border Area such as social contacts and ceremonies including marriage, gardening, hunting, collecting and other land usage, fishing and other usage of waters, and customary border trade.

2. Such movement shall be the subject of special arrangements between the two Governments and normal immigration, customs, quarantine and health requirements shall not apply.

3. The Special arrangements shall be formulated on the principle that such movement across the Border shall only be temporary in character and not for the purpose of resettlement.

ARTICLE 5
EXERCISE OF TRADITIONAL RIGHTS TO LAND AND WATERS IN THE BORDER AREA

1. Where the traditional inhabitants of one country who reside in the Border Area and are citizens of the country concerned but enjoy traditional rights of access to and usage of areas of land or waters in the Border Area of the other country, that country shall permit the continued exercise of those rights subject to its existing laws and regulations on the same conditions as those applying to its own citizens.

2. The traditional rights to use land and waters referred to in paragraph 1 shall not constitute proprietary rights over the same.

3. The rights referred to in paragraph 1 shall be exercised by the persons concerned without settling permanently on that side of the Border unless such persons obtain permission to enter the other country for residence in accordance with the immigration and other laws and or procedures of that country.
ARTICLE 6
BORDER CROSSINGS BY NON-TRADITIONAL INHABITANTS

1. Crossing of the Border by persons not falling under the provisions of Article 4 of this Agreement is to take place through designated points of entry and in accordance with the relevant existing laws and regulations relating to entry. Designated points of entry shall be as agreed from time to time by an Exchange of Letters after consultations.

2. Information shall be exchanged with respect to the migration laws and policies existing on each side of the Border in order to maintain more effective control of the Border Area.

3. Persons who cross the Border other than in accordance with Article 4 of this Agreement or the relevant laws and regulations relating to entry shall be treated as illegal immigrants. The preceding sentence does not apply to crossings for purposes as agreed upon by both Governments.

4. In administering its laws and policies relating to entry of persons into its territory across the Border each Government shall act in a spirit of friendship good neighbourliness, bearing in mind relevant principles of international law and established international practices and the importance of discouraging the use of border crossing for the purpose of evading justice and the use of its territory in a manner inconsistent with any provision of this Agreement. Each Government shall also take into account, where appropriate, the desirability of exchanging information and holding consultations with the other.

ARTICLE 7
SECURITY

1. In the spirit of goodwill and mutual understanding and in order to maintain and strengthen the existing good neighbourly and friendly relations, the two Governments shall continue to actively co-operate with one another in order to prevent the use of their respective territories in or in the vicinity of the Border Area as sanctuary, staging areas, bases or routes for any kind of hostile or illegal activities against the other. To this end, each Government shall maintain its own procedures of notification and control.

2. The two Governments shall keep each other informed and where appropriate consult as to developments in or in the vicinity of the Bor-
der Area, which are relevant to their security.

ARTICLE 8
BORDER CO-OPERATION

In the event of natural disaster or major accidents in the Border Area, the two Governments shall establish close contacts with one another and shall render all possible assistance, particularly in search and rescue operations.

ARTICLE 9
CUSTOMARY BORDER TRADE

1. The two Governments shall make arrangements to facilitate the continuation of customary cross-border trade by the inhabitants of the Border Area.
2. In making such arrangements the two Governments shall be mindful of the following limitations:
   (a) that such arrangements shall only apply to Papua New Guinea and Indonesian citizens who traditionally live in the Border Area;
   (b) that the cross-border trade be of a traditional nature and conducted in order to satisfy the needs of the people in the Border Area; and
   (c) that the goods traded are not prohibited by either Government.

ARTICLE 10
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

The two Governments shall consider, in accordance with the normal procedures and practices:
   (a) The continuation of the operation of the existing direct trans-border telecommunication links for border-liaison purposes;
   (b) Aeronautical communication between the Air Traffic Service Units of the two countries relating to international flights;
   (c) Radio frequency co-ordination crossing trans-border areas; and
   (d) Matters relating to the improvement of communication systems and direct trans-border transport.

ARTICLE 11
CITIZENSHIP

The desirability is recognised of having a regular exchange of relevant
information regarding laws and regulations on nationality and citizenship and the two Governments shall, if either so requests, consult each other on any problem being encountered in relation thereto.

ARTICLE 12
QUARANTINE

1. The co-operation already existing in the field of health and quarantine, including mutual visits of officials and exchange of information and periodical reports, shall be continued and developed.

2. In the case of an outbreak or spread of an epidemic in the Border Area, quarantine and health restrictions on movement across the Border may be imposed, notwithstanding Article 4 of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 13
NAVIGATION AND THE PROVISION OF NAVIGATIONAL FACILITIES

1. Nationals of either country or vessels registered in either country may navigate freely throughout the boundary waters of the Fly River Bulge and the two Governments shall make arrangements for the provision of navigational facilities in the said waters.

2. Where, for the purpose of a national development project, either Government requires a right of transit navigation between two points in its territory, through a river in the territory of the other country, then the two Governments recognise that such a right may be exercised in accordance with terms and conditions to be determined by them, according to the individual requirements of that project.

ARTICLE 14
EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON MAJOR CONSTRUCTION

The two Governments shall keep each other informed of any proposed major construction such as roads, dams, bridges and aerodromes within a 5 kilometer zone on either side of the Border, provided such construction could affect the movement of the people from one side to the Border to the other.
ARTICLE 15
MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

1. The two Governments, recognising the need which either Govern­
ment may have to develop, for the benefit of its people generally, any
naturally occurring resources in an area adjacent to or in close proxim­
ity to the Border, agree to keep each other informed, either by consul­
tation or through their respective representatives on the Joint Border
Committee, as to particulars of such developments or proposed
developments.
2. The two Governments further recognise the need which may arise
from time to time for them to co-operate in order to formalise mutually
satisfactory arrangements which will assist in facilitating the establish­
ment and continued operation of such developments in either country,
in a manner consistent with the provisions of this Agreement.
3. Having regard to the provisions of this Article, the two Govern­
ments recognise in particular the Ok Tedi Mining Project as being such
a major development and agree to consult as appropriate, at the
request of either Government, on any matter of concern relating to
that development.
4. If any single accumulation of liquid hydrocarbons or natural gas, or
if any other mineral deposit on land or subsoil thereof, extends across
the Border, and the parts of such accumulation or deposit that is siut­
at on one side of the Border, is recoverable wholly or in part from
the other side of the Border, the two Governments will seek to reach
agreement on the manner in which the accumulation or deposit shall
be most effectively exploited and on the equitable sharing of the
benefits derived from such exploitation.

ARTICLE 16
PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

When mining, industrial, forestry, agricultural or other projects are
carried out in areas adjacent to, or in close proximity to the Border,
The Government responsible for such development shall ensure that
all necessary precautionary measures are taken to prevent or control
pollution of the environment across the Border.
ARTICLE 17
UTILISATION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The two Governments shall, as appropriate and at the request of either Government, consult each other on matters regarding the utilisation and conservation of such natural resources as fresh water and forest resources (including wildlife) in areas adjacent to, or in close proximity to the Border, with a view to preventing the adverse effects which might arise from the exploitation of such resources.

ARTICLE 18
FAUNA AND FLORA

Each Government shall use its best endeavour, and shall enhance mutual co-operation to protect species of indigenous fauna and flora that are or may become threatened with extinction, in and in the vicinity of the Border Area.

ARTICLE 19
COMPENSATION

1. Each Government shall pay due compensation for damages caused intentionally or otherwise to the other Government for acts and related activities within its responsibility in the Border Area.
2. Damages in the Border Area caused by acts of each other’s citizens, except by elements hostile to each other’s country may be compensated in accordance with traditional and customary practices, under the supervision of both Governments, without limiting the right of each Government to consult directly.

ARTICLE 20
PROMOTION OF THE AGREEMENT

The two Governments shall promote amongst their people, particularly those in the Border Area, an understanding of the Agreement in order to develop a stable and harmonious border regime, reflecting the good-neighbourly relations between the two countries.
ARTICLE 21

1. The two Governments shall, if so required, consult each other on the implementation, operation and scope of this Agreement.
2. This Agreement shall be reviewed upon the expiration of a five year period, or earlier with the approval of both Government beginning from the date of the exchange of instruments of ratification.
3. The members of the Joint Border Committee may make recommendations to their respective Governments on any matters concerning border arrangements not specifically regulated by this Agreement.
4. Upon receiving of information that an influx of border crossings or other border crossings have taken place other than border crossings under Articles 4, 5 and 7, the two Governments shall consult immediately at liaison level. The two Governments shall agree to meet at higher levels if the need arises.

ARTICLE 22
SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION

1. This Agreement is subject to ratification in accordance with the constitutional requirements of each country, and shall enter into force on the day on which the instruments of ratification are exchanged.
2. On the day this Agreement enters into force, it replaces the Basic Agreement between the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on Border Arrangements dated the 17th day of December one thousand nine hundred and seventy-nine.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned, being duly authorised by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.
DONE IN DUPLICATE at Port Moresby this twenty-ninth day of October one thousand nine hundred and eighty-four, in English.

FOR THE
GOVERNMENT OF
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

[signed]
Rabbie Namaliu

FOR THE
GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

[signed]
Mochtar KS
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