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**Disappearing Islands? Management of  
Microstate Foreign Affairs and the Potential  
Impact of Alternative General Futures: the Case  
of the Cook Islands**

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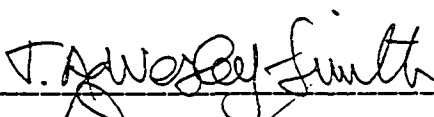
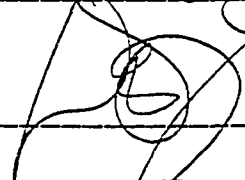
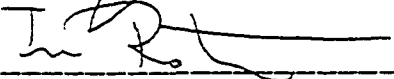
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We certify that we have read this dissertation and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

  
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*This study is dedicated to my ancestors and descendants. Especially to my parents Michael William Jonassen and Lily Tauei Tinomana Napa. Also to Rena, Nono'o, Anne, Dora, Lily, Muriel, and my wife and best friend Diya Moana Nicholas-Taripo. To our children Melina, Olivialani, Tamatoa and Melody, I say, "Live the dream and brave the future."*

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## ABSTRACT

Rapid environmental, societal and technological changes at an increasing pace, often highlight the feasibility of microstates continuing to exist as self governing political entities. This study is an effort to understand the Cook Islands Free Association political status relationship with New Zealand. It investigates foreign affairs management and the perceived “driving” influence of four issue areas: (1) military-security, (2) political-diplomatic, (3) economic-developmental, and (4) cultural-status.

There is a probe into Cook Islanders’ perceptions of government preparedness. It also looks at selected future trends and the support for maximal New Zealand involvement in the management of Cook Islands Foreign Affairs. The study reviews potential political status changes that the country possibly faces. This discourse is a practical approach to what may be a fundamental need for associated microstate governments to review their preparedness, effectiveness and quest for continued “buoyancy.” Buoyancy is a common thread throughout the study. It links with foreign affairs management and Free Association.

In microstates such as the Cook Islands, the development of foreign affairs management capabilities, underline political status and economic developments. This is due primarily to expectations that direct international assistance approaches achieve the best appropriate economic development for the country.

Most Cook Islanders perceive a move toward independence. They also anticipate, that economic-development issues are primary influences in such a trend. For the same reason, Cook Islanders expect NZ to remain in the future (2020) as the most important country. While most Cook Islanders expect a variety of major changes to take place, they observe that government is generally unprepared for the future. Although such a political future may seem difficult to project with some certainty, the current perceptions of most Cook Islanders, portray a reality in existing trends. These underline some dangers facing disappearing or emerging microstates.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| ADB        | Asian Development Bank  |
| ADFIP      | Association of Development Finance Institutions   |
| ASEAN      | Association of Southeast Asian Nations  |
| BYUH       | Brigham Young University Hawaii   |
| CCOP/SOPAC | Committee for Coordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in South Pacific Offshore Areas |
| CDF        | Center for Development of Industry, EEC   |
| CFF        | Compensatory Financing Facility, IMF  |
| CIs        | Cook Islands  |
| CIGOV      | Cook Islands Government   |
| CIN        | Cook Islands News   |
| CNMI       | Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  |
| COMSEC     | Commonwealth Secretariat  |
| CPI        | consumer price index  |
| DWFN       | Distant Water Fishing Nation  |
| EEC        | European Economic Community   |
| EEZ        | Exclusive Economic Zone   |
| ESCAP      | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific   |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| EWC   | East West Center  |
| FAO   | Food and Agriculture Organization                         |
| FFA   | Forum Fisheries Agency                                    |
| FIC   | Forum Island Country                                      |
| FOAFF | Foreign Affairs   |
| FSM   | Federated States of Micronesia                            |
| GDP   | gross domestic product                                    |
| GNP   | gross national product                                    |
| IFC   | International Finance Corporation                         |
| ILO   | International Labor Organization                          |
| IMF   | International Monetary Fund                               |
| IMO   | International Maritime Organization                       |
| JCC   | Joint Commercials Commission, US                          |
| JDC   | Joint Declaration of Cooperation, US                      |
| JETRO | Japan's External Trade Organization                       |
| JICA  | Japanese International Cooperation Agency                 |
| LMS   | London Missionary Society                                 |
| MARC  | Market Access Regional Competitiveness Project,<br>US AID |
| MI    | Marshall Islands  |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| MUF      | manufacturing unit value  |
| NGO      | non government organization                                     |
| NZ       | New Zealand   |
| Niu      | Niue  |
| Pal      | Palau   |
| PIDP     | Pacific Islands Development Program                             |
| PIM      | Pacific Islands Monthly   |
| PM       | Prime Minister  |
| PNG      | Papua New Guinea  |
| PSC      | Public Service Commission                                       |
| QR       | Queen's Representative  |
| SIC      | Smaller Island Country  |
| SIS      | Smaller Island States   |
| SOE      | state-owned enterprise  |
| SPNFZ    | South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone                                 |
| SPARTECA | South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement |
| SPC      | South Pacific Commission  |
| SPDP     | South Pacific Development Bank                                  |
| SPDMC    | South Pacific Developing Member Country                         |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| SPF     | South Pacific Forum   |
| SPGC    | South Pacific Geo-Science Commission<br>(formerly CCOP/SOPAC)       |
| SPPF    | South Pacific Project Facility, IFC                                 |
| SPRETCO | South Pacific Regional Trade Commission,<br>Australia               |
| SPREP   | South Pacific Regional Environment Programme                        |
| SPRO    | South Pacific Regional Trade Office, ADB                            |
| SPTC    | South Pacific Trade Commission, Australia                           |
| SPTO    | South Pacific Trade Office, New Zealand                             |
| TCSP    | Tourism Council of the Pacific                                      |
| TFO     | Trade Facilitation Office, Canada                                   |
| TLT     | Ministry of Trade, Labour and Transport                             |
| TTPI    | Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands                              |
| UH      | University of Hawaii  |
| UNCTAD  | United Nations Conference of Trade and<br>Development               |
| UNESCO  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and<br>Cultural Organization |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Program                                  |
| UNFPA   | United Nations Fund for Population Activities                       |



|       |  |
|-------|--|
| UNIDO | United Nations Industrial Development Organization |
| US    | United States                                      |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USDA  | United States Department of Agriculture            |
| USP   | University of the South Pacific                    |
| YMCA  | Young Men's Christian Organization                 |
| YWCA  | Young Women's Christian Organization               |

## CHAPTER 1

### MICROSTATE: THE QUEST FOR “BUOYANCY”

*Te enua mamaiti, mei te vaka moana nui rai,  
Tere ma'ora ua na te vaka rangatira e to'u.  
Ko tei kite i te natura, ka ora uatu.  
Matakite ra, ko te vare i te tuputupua karape.  
Ma'ara, e ka'ore te atupaka o te vaka e pu'apinga,  
A teta'i tuatau, teitei roatu te ngaru:  
E kitea ei te tomo'anga ruku, no te mea, te Ora,  
Tei te manamana o te Paunu, Kaore e ko tona nunui.*

*Microstates, are like canoes in the wide-open sea,  
It can sail freely or be navigated with purpose.  
It survives only if one has learned nature's challenges.  
However, watch out for the wrath of the trickster giant.  
Remember, that canoe size matters not to safety.  
For there will come a time when waves are bigger:  
Bigger than even the canoe to surely sink it because Life,  
Depends not on canoe size, but on the magic of buoyancy.*

Ti'avaru Mata-ka-vau-a-Pa, Aitutaki, circa 1924.

Translation by Jon Tikivanotau M. Jonassen, 1995.<sup>1</sup>

Buoyancy is the capacity to float over threatening waves.<sup>2</sup>

When this concept applies to nations, there is an inherent suggestion that given the right balance in the use of total resources, even microstates have the same chance of survival as larger, resource endowed nations. Such a perspective may be critical in a rapidly changing international environment. Subsequently, this research attempts to understand the dynamic relationship between a freely

associated microstate's foreign affairs role and the country's quest for buoyancy.<sup>3</sup> Buoyancy becomes a common thread linking the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs" to "free association."

In this study, *free association* is purporting as a political relationship that exists somewhere between independence and dependence. It subsequently has a flexibility that offers the opportunity for a freely associated state to establish a foreign affair's capability. Any existence of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs implies that a country is sovereign and can act outside its territorial boundaries. It underlines a direct link between the establishment of a foreign affair's institution and the sovereignty afforded by a country's political status. Notably, all of the five freely associated Microstates in the Pacific pursued that capability in varying degrees.

The flexibility in free association has become a significant and an inherent part of a country's buoyancy. However, some important questions remain. "Does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of microstates, such as the Cook Islands, have the viabilities to maintain activities adequately into the future? How does this relate to the country's political Free Association status?"

Free association often alludes to a product of the post United Nations political era. However, it is reminiscent of the idea of sovereignty that emerged with the modern state in eighteenth century Europe. Over the years, sovereignty has become a measurement to observe the distribution of power within the state and, its external control. These supposedly underline the ability of a nation to operate as an independent and autonomous actor. It is often a basis for determining whether a country is independent or dependent. In the 1960-90 period, self government in free association emerged as a preferred political status arrangement for some small microstates in the Pacific. This included the Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau. Since then, there has been much interest in their capacity to maintain their own foreign affairs' capability and survive into the next century.

### **Scope and Setting**

This study specifically converges on the management of foreign affairs in the Cook Islands. It looks at the development of a Ministry, and the alternative future directions in which it is heading. There is also a focus on the country's perceived preparedness, and

the impact of foreign policy strategic decisions in four areas. Those decision areas cover military-security, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental, and cultural-status.<sup>4</sup>

The Cook Islands free association relationship with New Zealand, offers an opportunity to review the growing role of a microstate's Foreign Affairs Ministry. It also addresses the perceived logic for its development. While reflecting both its own history and the flexibility of its freely associated political status, the research anticipates foreign affairs' activities in microstates. A strong interest in economic development primarily influences these activities. Consequently, we would expect that potentially, economic-developmental issues have the greatest influence in any perceived voluntary political status change in microstates.

In this study, I have adopted the definition of *foreign policy*, as "those official actions (and reactions) which sovereign states initiate (or receive and subsequently react to) for . . . altering or creating a condition (or a problem) outside their territorial boundaries," (Wilkenfeld, Hopple, Rosa & Andriole, 1980, p. 22). Foreign affairs are subsequently the embodiments of all foreign policy of the identified country. The focus is the institution that

manages foreign affairs and the potential impact of alternate general futures. It includes a consul, whether career or honorary. A *consul*, is essentially the person duly appointed by a government to act, with the permission of another government, certain duties in the latter territory. The consul carries out his functions in the interest of his own government's nationals and commerce. Activities also include the administration of laws (Satow, 1991, p 211).

### **Small, Vulnerable and Disappearing?**

In many studies of microstates, three major interrelated national issues often seem to emerge: the minuscule size of the state, their vulnerability, and the logic of existence as a sovereign nation (Schumaker 1973; Plischke, 1977; Harden, 1985). The Pacific Islands has been of particular interest. Figure 1.1, accents their minuscule size and scattered nature in the Pacific. The islands stretch from the north of the equator to the south. Except Papua New Guinea (PNG), all of the self governing entities, have total populations of less than 500,000 people and a land area of no more than 30,000 square kilometers.

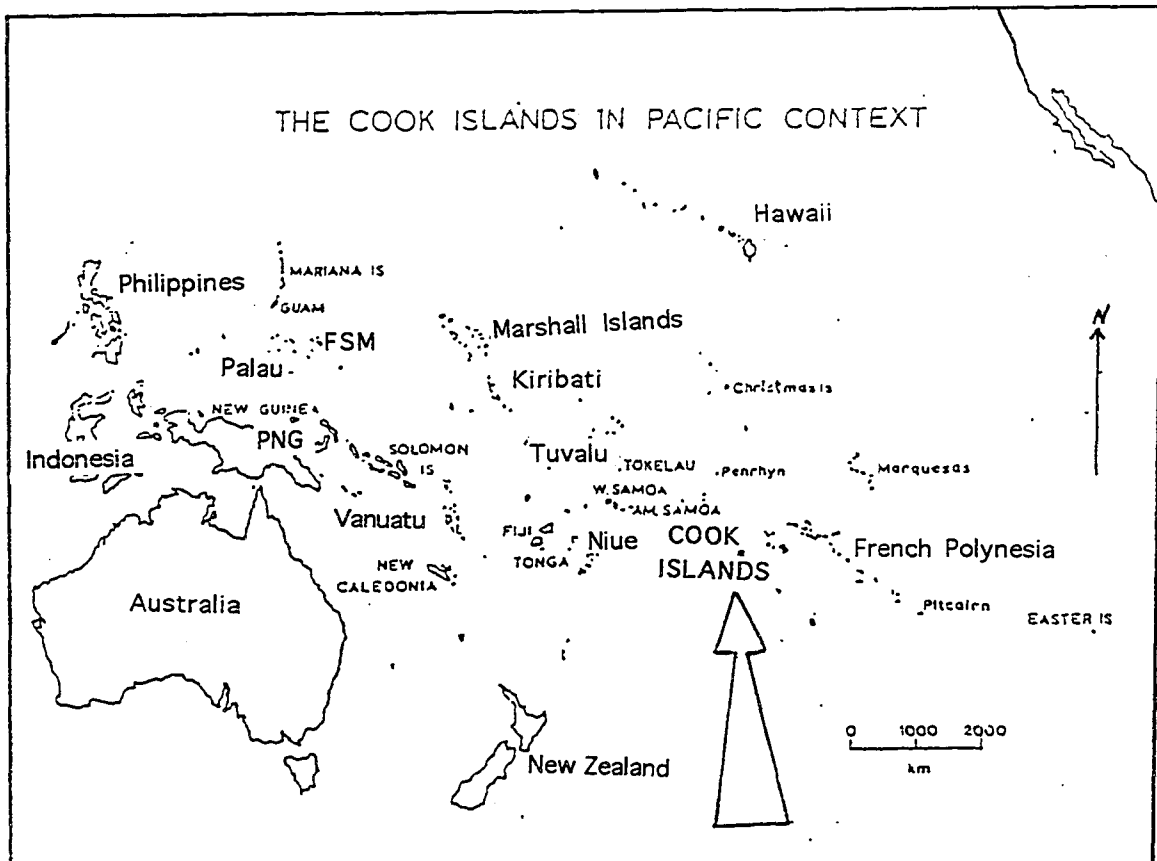


FIGURE 1.1 - Map of the Pacific Islands

Many islands are extremely small. Such statistics become ammunition in criticizing the gradual fragmentation into microstates such as that exists in the Pacific. Many observers consider these Pacific microstates as ill equipped to participate in world affairs. Randal Baker (1992) even suggests, that small may be beautiful but in public administration terms, small may also be unmanageable. He referred to several challenges facing microstates: the printing and issuing of money, maintaining defense obligations, and overcoming the problem of scale economies. He also listed: the state's vulnerability to fluctuations in world markets, its limited domestic resource base and market, a high emigration pattern, and difficulties in the conducting of foreign relations with other countries (pp. 6-8).

Member governments in the two major regional organizations in the Pacific, the South Pacific Commission (SPC), and the South Pacific Forum (SPF), had earlier recognized these same challenges. Tuvalu was the host to the 1984 SPF meeting, where the island nations specifically highlighted the dim future prospects of smaller island countries. They noted several issues that entail increased global climatic and environmental changes, overwhelming "foreign"



cultural influences, and demanding economic pressures. They sometimes even alluded to the increased pressures on the continued sovereignty of small island nations (Jonassen, 1985). To establish a greater awareness of the difficulties facing Pacific microstates, the Government of Kiribati proposed to the 1984 SPF that Forum countries, accord special attention to problems faced by smaller members (SPF Communique, 1984). The SPF subsequently established a committee on “Smaller Island Countries (SIC)” and a working definition developed. SPF committee members noted, that many problems facing small island countries could generally be found in other Pacific countries. However, the SPF members recognized that such problems accentuate in SIC and they identified four countries: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, and Tuvalu.<sup>5</sup> Pacific countries accepted smaller annual membership contributions from SIC countries to both the SPC and the SPF. It was set at the lowest level in comparison to other island countries. Smaller Island Countries (SIC) or what later became the preferred term, Smaller Island States (SIS), became a State characterized by several factors. The identification included: (1) their very small size in terms of physical, economical, and population; (2) a severe lack of resources including human, natural,

technical, and its infrastructure; (3) their extreme isolation from great distances, both internal and external, and; (4) an economic and social vulnerability (SPF, Committee Report, 1985). Resulting problems often inhibit economic growth while promoting a national dependency on external inputs of aid and remittances from foreign workers.<sup>6</sup> Even the ever increasing globalization of trade and new rules governing its international conduct, presents Pacific states with a dilemma. Can “they can afford to remain outside the main stream?” (Barber, 1994, p.17).

Despite some pessimistic academic analyses about the prospects of being small, the number of microstates continues to increase and to enter the world stage. Since World War II, the increasing number of such nations participating in world affairs has changed the family of nations (Plischke, 1977, p.18; Boyce, 1978; Harden, 1985, p.17). In the Pacific Islands alone, nine independent and five freely associated countries have emerged onto the world scene since 1962. Others are destined to follow. Table 1.1, lists 23 Pacific island entities. It shows the political status of Pacific countries, the year in which that status was achieved, the land area, and the population of each entity.

TABLE 1.1: Pacific Countries and Territories

| COUNTRIES        | POLITICAL STATUS (Year Achieved)   | LAND AREA (sq Km) | POPULATION  |
|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| American Samoa   | US Unincorporated Territory (1899) | 197               | 47,000      |
| Cook Islands     | Free Association with NZ (1965)    | 237               | 18,000      |
| French Polynesia | French Overseas Territory (1880)   | 4,000             | 197,000     |
| FSM              | Free Association with US (1986)    | 701               | 101,000     |
| Fiji             | Independent (1970)                 | 18,272            | 735,000     |
| Guam             | US Unincorporated Territory (1898) | 549               | 133,000     |
| Kiribati         | Independent (1979)                 | 726               | 72,000      |
| Marshall Is      | Free Association with US (1989)    | 181               | 42,000      |
| Nauru            | Independent (1968)                 | 21                | 8,042       |
| New Caledonia    | French Overseas Territory (1853)   | 19,103            | 160,000     |
| Niue             | Free Association with NZ (1974)    | 258               | 2,112       |
| Norfolk          | Australian Territory (1914)        | 345               | 2,490       |
| Northern Mariana | US Commonwealth (1976/1986)        | 475               | 43,000      |
| Palau            | Free Association with US (1994)    | 488               | 15,000      |
| PNG              | Independent (1975)                 |                   | 3.5 million |
| Pitcairn         | British colony (1838)              | 4.5               | 68          |
| Solomon Is       | Independent (1978)                 | 29,789            | 320,000     |
| Tokelau          | NZ Territory (1948)                | 12.1              | 1,700       |
| Tonga            | Independent (1970)                 | 696.7             | 100,000     |
| Tuvalu           | Independent (1978)                 | 25.9              | 9,000       |
| Vanuatu          | Independent (1986)                 | 12,189            | 160,000     |
| Wallis & Futuna  | French Overseas Territory (1887)   | 124               | 15,000      |
| Western Samoa    | Independent (1962)                 | 2,934             | 182,000     |

Source: Crocombe 1987, Douglas 1989, SPC 1995.

Of the 23 entities listed, only nine remain as territories, colonies or commonwealth of metropolitan countries. American Samoa, French Polynesia, Guam, New Caledonia, Norfolk island, Northern Mariana Islands, Pitcairn, Tokelau, and Wallis and Futuna.<sup>7</sup> The rest are either self governments in free association or are fully independent. This proliferation of small states, has expanded the focus on microstate membership in international organizations and, has attracted attention on the management of the external affairs of those countries. It has highlighted the small populations and the status of their total resources. The former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant (1976) alluded to this general observation through his definition of microstates as sovereign states, which are exceptionally small in area, population and economic resources (pp. 135-137).

In his study of Microstates in World Affairs, Elmer Plischke (1977) observed the growth of new microstates and strongly suggests that there be a need to impose the interactive expectations of the global society from modern states, through the establishment of "a territory's ability to sustain its political individuality and contribute usefully to the development and progress of the

international community” (p. 23). Plischke even proposes that limits be placed on independent status and international participation (pp. 23-25).

### **Buoyancy not Size**

Although much has been said about the vulnerability of microstates and their eventual demise as a political entity, Harold and Margaret Sprout (1986) point to the common fate of all states - - irrelevant of size. In their inquiry, they identify military threat from hostile forces, economic constraints, transnational communications, pollution of the state’s geographic space and, access to resources beyond the jurisdiction of the state (p. 10). They underline how susceptible all political communities are to unpropitious encroachments from outside, and the mounting concern “to control or influence conditions and events outside their sovereign jurisdictions” (p. 10).

The growing awareness of an interdependent global society further emphasizes this concern. It projects a significant role for a foreign affair's institution in any self governing state. As an operative arm of the sovereign government of a small state however, the capability of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs becomes particularly

important because of the very size of the state in a perceived macro-world. Observers will note a constant internal conflict between “what is feasible” and “what is required.” The number of staff and the enormity of the task in monitoring a global environment, stretches the meager resources of a microstate. In spite of such costs, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been initiated in freely associated states such as the Cook Islands, where an opportunity exists for passing foreign affairs costs to its metropolitan partner. This suggests that even microstate governments, quest for direct access to international forums. Governments perceive such an action, as an important facet in the microstate’s survival. A survival possibly linked to the very pursuit of sovereign power.

In his study, Politics Among Nations, Hans Morgenthau (1977) alludes to the pursuit of power as a primary focus in international interaction (p. 77). Nonetheless, for microstates such as the Cook Islands, the pursuit of power may even be more directly reflected with the enhancement of the government leader’s own puissance internally. It is a result of consumer goods being the focus of international interaction. However, it would be a fallacy to assume

that, as the microstates seek “buoyancy” power through foreign policies, they always do so in a “rational manner, calculating costs and estimating benefits typically in a logical fashion” (Ray, 1992, 79). Microstates, who usually have inadequate foreign affairs personnel and financial resources, become susceptible to internal political pressures and overseas experts who have a disparate definition of “problems” (Ogden, 1993). Subsequently, expected benefits usually fulfil government’s short term political concerns or, the objectives defined by the adviser. Often, the benefits fall short of government’s general expectations.

In view of the potentially devastating challenges, some observers have suggested those smaller island states, will find it more difficult to maintain their status as a sovereign country. They could “disappear” in years to come as internationally recognized microstates. Antony Dolman (1985) had noted that the general prospect for most of small island countries, was a “worsening rather than improving situation” (p. 44). Subsequently, the quest for survival through what Ti’avaru called in her chant, “*te manamana o te paunu*” or “the magic of buoyancy,” is a key issue for microstates. For the Cook Islands, that buoyancy approach links

directly to the future success of the country's free association political relationship with New Zealand. Consequently, it ties with the activities of the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Buoyancy especially highlights the case of the Cook Islands because it is small, even by Pacific standards.

Figure 1.2 shows a map of the fifteen islands of the Cook Islands consisting of the Northern Group (Pukapuka, Nassau, Penrhyn or Tongareva, Rakahanga, Manihiki and Suvarrow), and the Southern Group (Palmerston, Aitutaki, Manuae, Takutea, Mitiaro, Atiu, Mauke, Rarotonga, and Mangaia).

From an outsider's perspective, the map might highlight the scattered nature of the 15 islands, their physical isolation separated by the sea, and how tiny each island is. A traditional Maori perspective could alternatively perceive how the vast ocean connects the islands and the huge resource within that sea expanse. Whichever perspective one adopts, the relative nature of the islands to its international environment, expands the challenge on the country as a sovereign entity. It emphasizes the role of foreign affairs in international and regional exchange.



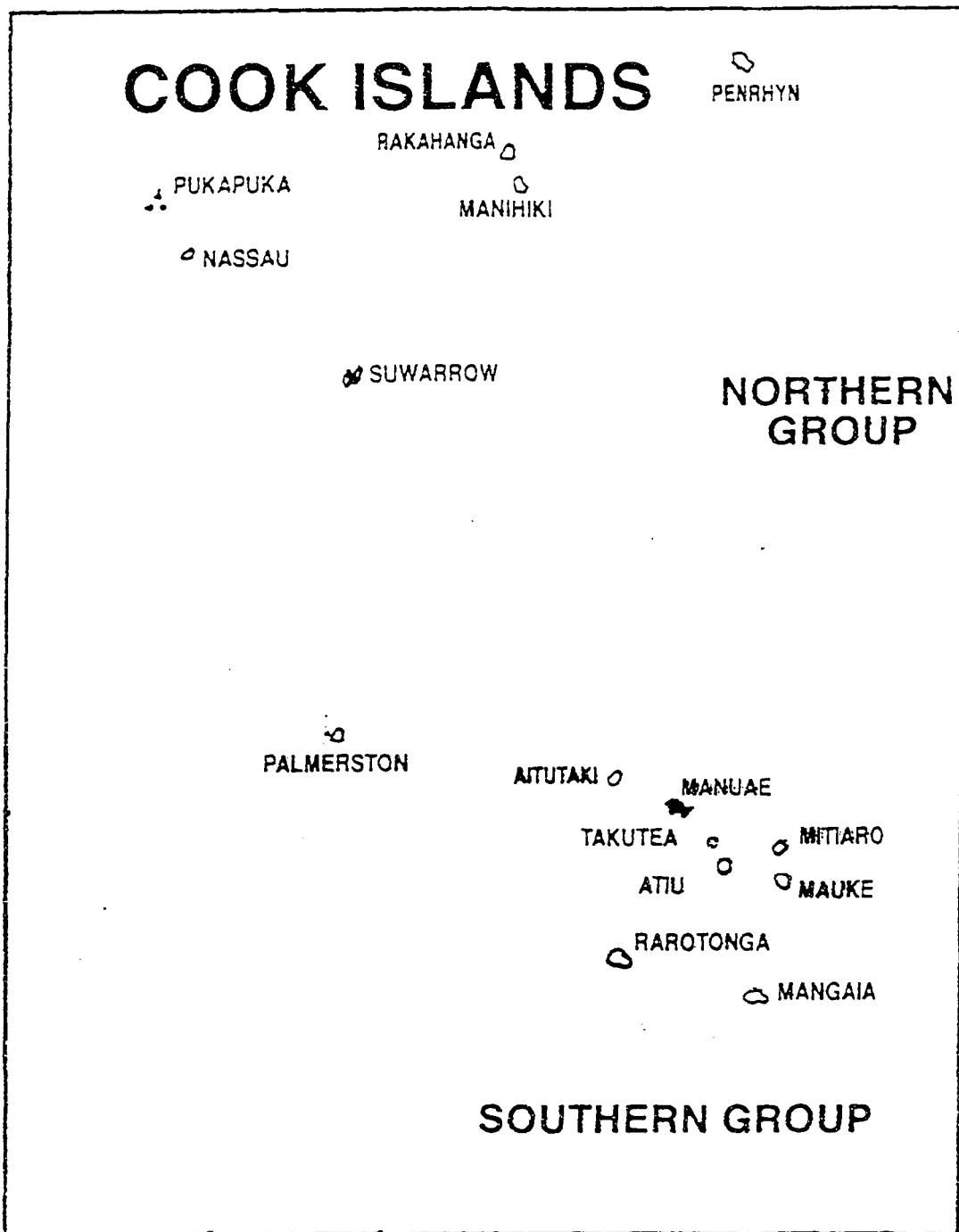


FIGURE 1.2 : Map of the Cook Islands

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework in this study, centers on the idea that, irrelevant of size, the survival or viability of a sovereign country depends on its buoyancy. Even for microstates, this requires an acceptable capacity to pursue economic development directly through its own foreign affairs management program. Subsequently, there is an underlying argument that at least for some microstates, economic development has the greatest general impression on any potential political status change. In his study Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, and the New State, P. J. Boyce (1978) points out that besides the influences of other more established states and internal charismatic leadership, in new states, foreign policy tends to be more a “response to domestic conditions than to external problems” (pp. 6-7). It is my contention that for microstates, this impact of domestic conditions generally reflects economic-development issues and it is often a lasting condition.

Teo Fairbairn (1985) described the Cook Islands, as one of those ‘problem’ economies of the Pacific region. The others are Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau and Niue. He observes that apart from the sea-based opportunities, there many prohibitive constraints: the

poverty of land-based resources, small markets, isolation and increasing populations. Fairbairn concludes that with “virtually no opportunities for growth,” prospects for improved conditions depend on aid and emigration (p. 52). Fairbairn (1994) often emphasizes this common allusion to small size and remoteness from the main trading centers, as the most extensive constraint.<sup>8</sup>

Randal Baker (1992) on the other hand, has a focus on the administrative characteristics of small states and he reevaluates constraints as opportunities (p. 14). He cites an alternative view that small size presents a way of avoiding “bureaucratic rigidity,” (p. 21).<sup>9</sup> Baker argues that this is achievable by adopting more flexible and collective arrangements in public administration. Greater accesses to decision makers, public opinion and mobilization, are also cited as areas of opportunity for microstates.

This research, looks at the Cook Islands Foreign Affairs activities as a study of microstate survival within the confines of a flexible political status arrangement. In search of innovative alternatives, the research underlines the importance of public expectation, and enhanced government preparedness in microstates. The study uses a variety of resources including archival government

documents and unclassified budget reports. A qualitative analysis of constitutional amendments, supplements a survey questionnaire. The survey projects existing activities and trends that could face the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The perception of the sample population is collected through a systematic approach, carried out from March to July of 1995.

The methodology primarily includes structured questionnaires supplemented by personal interviews (see Appendix A and Appendix B). There is a survey of the working adult sector of the Cook Islands community (politicians, government officials, and the business community) and the youth sector, based on the assumption that, of all groupings, they have or will have the most contact with the Foreign Affairs Ministry. For the politicians, 10 of the total 25 Members of Parliament have been interviewed. They were selected based on their availability. Business people were randomly selected from the "Chamber of Commerce" list of members on Rarotonga identified in the yellow pages of the Cook Islands telephone directory. A random table was used in the process.<sup>10</sup> Government department heads or their representatives were also sought for an interview based on availability.

Youth sector information is acquired from all 30 sixth and seventh form students in Rarotonga island's Tereora and Aitutaki island's Araura Colleges. The two colleges represent a nationwide cross section of the country's educated youth. For comparative purposes, 24 Cook Islanders living in Hawaii have also been interviewed. These are Cook Islanders who have recently attended or are currently attending the University of Hawaii or Brigham Young University-Hawaii. Their expectations regarding future trends are used to project selected alternative general futures facing the Cook Islands. All things being equal, the study gauges whether most Cook Islanders generally expect that the government is prepared for the future. It also highlights the four foreign affairs issue areas identifying the most important foreign policy decision making sphere. The relationship between perceived trends and current foreign affairs operations will establish a better understanding of the concept of free association as practiced in the Cook Islands and its continued evolution.

As part of this study, a Cook Islands Maori "buoyancy" concept has been adapted, as a measurement of the relationship between the two countries who have a free association relationship. Figure 1.3

shows measurement levels, ranging from negative two (-2) to plus two (+2). Zero (0) depicts a mutually accepted equal contribution of resources from the two countries. Below zero represents a “sinking canoe” and above zero demonstrates that the “canoe” can float with little assistance. The canoe in this model represents the observed microstate. As an example, the scoring is based on the demonstrated capacity of the island state to carry out its own foreign affairs or defense activities.

The scoring also incorporates the ability to delegate responsibility, by that, showing control (+2). A limited capacity with effective initiatives (+1), is contrasted with a limited capacity without taking initiatives (-1), and a situation where the island country’s foreign affairs or defense is directly under the control of its metropolitan partner nation (-2).

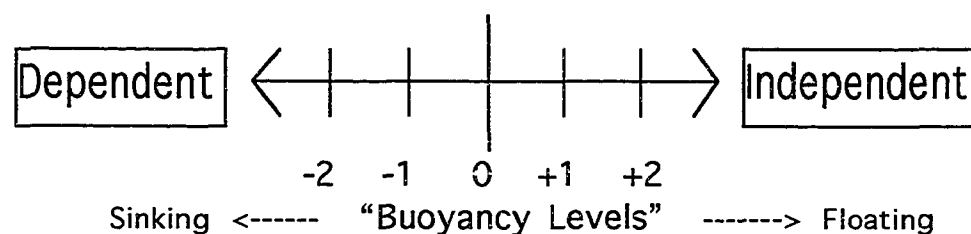


FIGURE 1.3: Free Association - “Buoyancy” after zero?

A mixture of three forecasting techniques has also been incorporated into the last chapter of this examination: trend analysis, which assumes a continuity of past and present trends; analogy, which supposes discontinuity from the present, although similar to the past or the present; and, incasting from the future.<sup>11</sup> This research may underline an escalating expenditure in Cook Islands foreign affairs activities, and a general presumption that the country is unprepared for the years ahead. Nevertheless, most Cook Islanders anticipate a future that continues its dependence on an effective Foreign Affairs Ministry.

### **Presentation of Chapters**

This study divides into nine chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on free association as a political relationship status in the Pacific, and puts forward the argument that free association is a relationship that is flexible by its very nature. The chapter reviews general differences and similarities among five freely associated Pacific nations. The nations include Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau. It proposes that although there are differing buoyancy levels among the five Pacific microstates, all have opted to pursue a foreign affairs management

capability at varying degrees.

Chapter 3, looks specifically at the flexibility in the Cook Islands and New Zealand free association relationship: the changes in the relationship since 1965, some factors that have influenced the process of that change, and the implications for the conduct of foreign affairs. Chapter 4, examines the development of the Cook Islands Foreign Affairs Ministry. It underlines the conscious choice made by the Cook Islands government to develop a foreign affairs capability in spite of the costs. The propensity toward change and the functional aspect of the ministry, point to the influence of specific strategic decision areas.

Chapter 5 continues examining government programs to show that the economic-developmental arena has the greatest impact on foreign affairs activities. The chapter addresses the issue of sustainability and, it explores the capacity of the Cook Islands to effectively continue under increasingly inadequate resources.

Deliberating on the issue of sustainability, economic development and buoyancy, the expectations of a sample population of Cook Islanders are analyzed in chapter 6. It projects an expectation that most Cook Islanders anticipate full political



independence for the Cook Islands primarily because of economic developmental aspirations. In Chapter 7, the study monitors a trend among Cook Islanders who perceive an unprepared government facing a changing political environment.

The next Chapter, presents three alternative political futures. These include free association, full independence and dependence. The management of foreign affairs in an increasingly active sovereign government forms the basis for a discussion on possible strategies in the last chapter.

### **Limitations**

In this study, there is an underlying acceptance that the Cook Islands is a sovereign country, fully capable of managing its own foreign affairs. This point could be debated in constitutional law. However, in this exercise, the main premise is in the reality of an existing Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs that has been operational, independent of New Zealand, for more than twenty years. In addition, both the Cook Islands and New Zealand governments have publicly declared that the Cook Islands is in full control of its own foreign affairs.

A second limitation highlights the survey of 60 individuals

from the Cook Islands and 24 individuals from Hawaii, who may not necessarily reflect the views of Cook Islanders who live in the other islands, outside Rarotonga and Aitutaki. This problem reduces however, by the fact that more than 71% of the total population of the Cook Islands lives in Rarotonga and Aitutaki.<sup>12</sup> Some interviewed Members of Parliament and students also originated from the other islands.

The objective in using the questionnaire is to measure, at a particular point in time, the expectation of a sample population toward selected trends. The responses underline a comparative and cumulative expectation among various sectors for projecting purposes. When these are compared to interviews and government documents, it creates a useful basis for a discussion of future alternatives. The intention is not to identify the accuracy of a particular future scenario. It is to measure the significance of foreign affairs decision making areas in relationship to government's preparedness.

### **Endnotes**

1. Proverbial chant by Ti'avaru Sarah Akakaingaro Mata-ka-vau-a-Pa, who held the Aitutaki island sub chief titles Tini-Tekopua Mata'iapo and Tikivanotau Mata'iapo. As a sub chief responsible for the

investiture of Vaeruarangi Ariki and Tamatoa Ariki, Ti'avaru, often had to learn many chants. This recitation occurred circa 1924, and passed down through oral traditions.

2. Ron Crocombe (1964) alludes to the vaka concept in his Land Tenure in the Cook Islands (p. 27). Cook Islands Maori canoe builders, voyagers and navigators know the concept of "canoe buoyancy." It also applies in everyday life. The Maori people of Rarotonga call the three major tribes (or districts) in Rarotonga as "vaka tangata" or "canoe of people." Tere Ngapare, who holds the title of Puati Mata'iapo and is often the talking chief for Pa Ariki in Rarotonga, points out that success in a canoe of people, often measures their ability to be buoyant against waves of oncoming challenges. T. Ngapare, personal communication, June 15, 1991.

3. In some ways the city-state of Athens in the 5th and 4th century B.C. had similarities to the search for buoyancy by self governing small Pacific Island governments. They had 1,000 square miles of territory, 40,000 citizens and 400,000 of mixed population (Curtis, 19--, pp. 23-29; Wiser 1983: 3-30, Barker, 1918, pp. 19-47), underline an "island" setting which the Pacific nations share. The population composition in island countries also reflects a transient sector in its total makeup. It is much like the old city states where comfort or individual material welfare is not as pervasive nor held with as high a regard as communal pride.

4. *Military-security* exemplifies national security and the military related activities. It includes surveillance, defense treaties, and visits by military aircraft and naval ships. *Political-diplomatic*, incorporates missions abroad and diplomatic visits. *Economic-developmental* includes all activities that have an economic or developmental focus and, *cultural-status*, encompasses cultural or national image-related activities.

5. Originally, Nauru was excluded in this category of smaller island countries possibly, because of the wealth of the country from its phosphate and its various investment activities. Nauru has subsequently been included in the list.

6. Remittances from overseas have been an important revenue for the Cook Islands. However, the country's statistician Andrew Turua has noted that remittances originating from the Cook Islands and sent overseas have dramatically increased (Statistics Office 1995, p. 31).
7. At least four (American Samoa, French Polynesia, Guam and New Caledonia) of the nine island entities have been seeking an increased self governing status if not complete political independence.
8. Teo I. J. Fairbairn. Pacific Island Economies Structure, Current Developments and Prospects (In Douglas, N. & Douglas, N. 1994, p. 13).
9. Randal Baker quoting J. Rajbansee (1972).
10. Random Numbers Table was taken from Earl Babbie (1986, p. 491).
11. Techniques were adopted from a presentation by Dr. James Dator at the University of Hawaii, Fall, 1994.
12. Total population within the Cook Islands for 1991, numbered 18,617. The populations of Rarotonga (10,886) and Aitutaki (2,357), added to 13,243 for the year (Statistics Office, 1995).

## CHAPTER 2

### FREE ASSOCIATION: DIFFERING BUOYANCY LEVELS?

*E oe e taku tama,  
Kia pukuru o nga vaevae  
Kia mokora o kaki.*

*Paddle my child,  
Let your feet become strong as the breadfruit tree  
And your neck as flexible as that of a duck.*

A traditional proverb from Rarotonga.<sup>1</sup>

The political status of “free association,” as it exists in the Pacific, suggests that although it is a buoyant position somewhere between political independence and dependency, it is nevertheless a status that offers the possibility of developing an independent foreign affairs program. When a government effectively embraces a foreign affairs management capability, it proclaims an ability and desire to pursue its own international policy. This chapter looks at the freely associated Pacific states of Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau.<sup>2</sup> It considers how the microstate’s status and historical experience may have influenced the establishment of some foreign affairs management capability.

It is a general observation of the general differences and similarities among five freely associated microstates in the Pacific. The discussion advances the argument that, in spite of some divergent historical experiences and buoyancy levels, all five microstates have opted to pursue foreign affairs' capabilities in varying degrees. A general understanding of the different buoyancy levels existing among the five microstates serves as the broad basis for a more detailed case study, in subsequent chapters. That detailed study covers the development of the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **General Observations**

A general comparison of the five freely associated microstates in the Pacific, highlighted several issues that have direct political ramifications on the general buoyancy of each microstate. These issues could be incorporated as part of the historical experience of the country. They include island type, "isolation," population size, population growth, sea area, dependency, access to metropolitan countries and such social issues as education and health expenditure.

At the outset, it is noticeable that, all of the five microstates

consists up of small islands but their geological nature and subsequent “soil” resources vary. The Cook Islands, FSM, and Palau, include both volcanic and coral islands. Niue is a raised coral atoll, while the Marshall Islands consists up of only atolls (Douglas, 1989).

Potentially, this has a direct impact on the type of agriculture program that each government pursues. Soil making programs become important on atolls while more sophisticated productive activities become a real possibility on volcanic islands.

Additionally, the enormous *Moana-Nui-A-Kiva*, otherwise known as the Pacific Ocean, surrounds all of the island states. Once the islanders commonly viewed the Pacific Ocean as natural protection, a canoe highway, and a rich food source. It has since become more associated with “isolation.” This isolation now carries a perceived notion of an inadequate economic base. It renders all islands extremely vulnerable to external environmental, economic, and political forces. For the islands with a soil base, and a possibility of home-market agricultural production, there remains import substitution advantages. There also prevails the possibility of sustainable development, if countries reintroduce “traditional”

conservation approaches and recognize these for their economic value. However, this would be dependent on the expectations of the islanders. Significantly, island types historically determine the type of enhanced traditional sustainable practice. However, the adoption of imported tastes has shifted the focus of island governments more to external products and foreign ideas.

Another important general observation focuses on people. All the island populations are extremely small by global standards, ranging from an estimated count for Niue of 2,239 (1991) to FSM's 100,749 (1989). By contrast, to their small populations, there are great variances in size.

Table 2.1, shows various sectors of the five freely associated Pacific states. It includes the population density, annual population growth rate, population doubling time in years, and infant mortality rate for life expectancy at birth. The sectors also cover land area in square kilometers, gross domestic product, foreign aid, exports, imports and balance of payments. In Table 2.1, the Cook Islands population of 18,617 is five times smaller than that of FSM's 100,749. It is also half the size of the Marshall Islands 43,300 but more than eight times larger than the population of 2,239 for Niue.



This issue of relativity, emphasizes an underlying role of Foreign Affairs to ensure international interest when pursuing foreign assistance.

Table 2.1, reveals that all island populations project an increase in the future, although the annual population growth rate differs greatly among the five freely associated countries. The Cook Islands has the lowest population growth rate of 1.1% compared to the largest of 4.2% for the Marshall Islands. Subsequently, the doubling of the Cook Islands population will take 63 years, while the population of the Marshall Islands will require only 17 years. Projected work force, education, health, and other social and economic programs underline varying degrees in the urgency of appropriate national and international government policies. For the Marshall Islands the situation is particularly serious with its more rapid population increase.

Table 2.1, show differences in the gross development product (GDP), government expenditure, exports and imports for each island state. The overwhelming imbalance of import over export for the microstates, stress an increased dependency by islanders on the outside world.

TABLE 2.1: Freely Associated States in the Pacific

| SECTOR                                | COOK             | FSM               | MI               | NIUE            | PALAU            |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Population<br>(Pop)                   | 18,617<br>(1991) | 100,749<br>(1989) | 43,380<br>(1988) | 2,239<br>(1991) | 15,122<br>(1990) |
| Males                                 | 9,697            |                   | 22,181           | 1,134           | 8,139            |
| Females                               | 8,920            |                   | 21,199           | 1,105           | 6,983            |
| Land Area<br>(km <sup>2</sup> )       | 237              | 701               | 18               | 259             | 488              |
| Pop Density                           | 79               | 144               | 240              | 9               | 31               |
| Annual Pop<br>Growth Rate             | 1.1%             | 2.7-<br>5.2%      | 4.2%<br>(1980)   | -2.4%<br>(1980) | 2.2%             |
| Pop Doubling<br>Time in Years         | 63<br>years      | 13-26<br>years    | 17               | -               | 35 years         |
| Infant<br>mortality<br>rate           | 25<br>(1991)     | 52<br>(1989)      | 63<br>(1988)     | 12<br>(1990)    | 25<br>(1990)     |
| Life<br>expectancy<br>at birth        | 70<br>(1988)     | 64<br>(1989)      | 61<br>(1988)     | 66<br>(1987)    | 67<br>(1990)     |
| GDP Total<br>(A\$000)                 | 108,737          | 315,399           | 95,815           | 8,835           | 63,291           |
| Govt.<br>Expenditure<br>(A\$000)      | 2,389<br>(1991)  | 1,472<br>(1990)   | 2,624<br>(1991)  | -               | 2,375<br>(1991)  |
| Foreign Aid<br>(A\$000)<br>per capita | 912<br>(1990)    | -                 | 1,386<br>(1990)  | 4,034<br>(1990) | 907              |
| Exports<br>(A\$000)                   | 4,467            | -                 | 12,268           | 138             | -                |
| Imports                               | 80,861           | -                 | 82,452           | 5,349           | -                |
| Balance                               | -76,394          | -                 | -70,184          | -5,211          | -                |

Source: SPC (1995). Pacific Islands Social and Human Development.

All microstates still receive aid from its metropolitan partner. FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau secure significantly larger amounts from the United States as compared to New Zealand's support for the Cook Islands and Niue. The impact of this on people's expectations has often fueled "dependency" discussions.

A significant commonality with the five microstates, accentuates their sea area size. Their sea area is much greater than their land size: Cook Islands - 237 sq. km land/1,830,000 sq. km sea areas, Niue - 259 sq. km land /390,000 sq. km sea areas, Marshall Islands - 181 sq. km land/ 2,131,000 sq. km sea areas, FSM- 701 sq. km land/ 2,978,000 sq. km sea areas, and Palau - 488 sq. km land/ 629,000 sq. km sea areas. This stresses the significance of marine based resources, and the need to direct developmental and educational programs toward those resources. Subsequently, it is not surprising that an involvement in regional and international fishery activities has drawn all of the five island states. Since attaining a free association political status, marine related activities have become a major impetus and focus of foreign affairs' policy in each microstate.

All of the five microstates have also retained use of the

currency of their former colonial power. FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau use the United States currency, while New Zealand currency is the legal tender in the Cook Islands and Niue. The Cook Islands however, added their own currency into local circulation and it has become an effective generator of revenue. However, some problems have arisen because of using two currencies. Many locals have considered Cook Islands coins as too heavy. In addition, the Cook Islands currency is not legal tender outside the Cook Islands.<sup>3</sup>

Of interest also, is the internal public expenditure on education and health in the five states. While the percentage expenditure on education has been steadily increasing in all of the US associated states (Marshall Islands, FSM, and Palau), it decreased for the NZ associated states (Niue and Cook Islands).

Table 2.2, shows public expenditures on health and education in the five freely associated states by percentage of the gross national product. Notably, Cook Islands education expenditure decreased from 9.6% GNP in 1980 to 7.2% two years later. Niue expenditure for the same period also dramatically decreased from 23.8% to 12.4% for the same period. By contrast, Marshall Islands marks an increase from 5.6% in 1980 to 12.8% twelve years later.

TABLE 2.2: Public Expenditure on Health and Education in the Freely Associated States in the Pacific (% of GNP)

| COUNTRY      | EDUCATION<br>1980 | EDUCATION<br>1992 | HEALTH<br>1980 | HEALTH<br>1992 |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cook Islands | 9.6               | 7.2               | 8.0            | 6.2            |
| FSM          | - -               | 15.3              | - -            | 7.6            |
| Marshall Is  | 5.6               | 12.8              | 8.6            | 10.0           |
| Niue         | 23.8              | 12.4              | 4.9            | 10.6           |
| Palau        | - -               | 9.1               | - -            | 9.3            |

Source: Booth & Muthiah (1993). Unpublished Data.

Tertiary education for each of the island governments is primarily with their associated partners and with either, the University of the South Pacific or, the University of Guam. However, Cook Islanders and Niueans also have access to educational programs fully sponsored by Australia, Germany, Netherlands, and Japan. An important role for foreign affairs emerges as the country's involvement in international programs increases. This is also true for health issues.

Table 2.2, highlights the area of health showing the Cook Islands' significant expenditure decrease from 8% GNP in 1980, to 6.2% by 1992. Both Niue and the Marshall Islands show an increase during the same period. In spite of internal budgetary difficulties

existing with the five microstates, there is a continuing need to maintain accesses to updated international health information.

Notably, all freely associated Pacific microstates have retained access to their colonial partner. FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau have their own citizenship but have special arrangements to allow easy travel into the United States. For the Cook Islands and Niue, the islanders have retained New Zealand citizenship. The Cook Islands government has however, been contemplating the possibility of issuing its own passports.<sup>4</sup>

There is another general observation, which centers on the islanders' post European contact experience. The ordeal of the people of the Marshall Islands, FSM and Palau is vastly different from Niue and the Cook Islands. The Micronesian islanders felt the wrath and kindness of the Spanish, the Germans, the Japanese and the United States (Hezel 1978, Hanlon 1988, Peattie 1988, Palomo 1984). Their people saw world war battles. Niue and the Cook Islands have no direct world war "attack" experience, and their colonial exposure was primarily with the English through New Zealand (Scott, 1991). These historical experiences have since become corner posts in learning the extent to which foreign affairs

developed in each country. A closer system, structure and function comparison of the five countries further underlines the similarities and differences.<sup>5</sup>

### **System Comparison**

The environmental impact on the policies of all five freely associated Pacific countries, reflect their history and a continued strong link with their metropolitan partners.<sup>6</sup> Cook Islands had a traditional system of government where traditional chiefs controlled each island and their districts. In 1888, the British established a Protectorate. A Federal Government became operational, with chiefs still in some control. New Zealand annexed the islands in 1901, but the Federal Council continued until 1912. A Legislative Assembly in 1957 formed the next political landmark (Scott, 1995, pp. 279-282). The Assembly chose a free association path in 1964 and subsequently, the Cook Islands became self governing in free association with New Zealand in 1965.

Niue previously had independent and tribal groupings that changed in 1876, when the people of Niue elected their King. By nineteen hundred, the island was a British Protectorate and one year later New Zealand annexed it as part of the Cook Islands. In

1904, the people of Niue established a separate administration (Gilson, 1980, pp. 108-115). By 1966, New Zealand had granted substantial local autonomy but it was not until 1974 that Niue accepted self-government in Free Association with New Zealand.

For the people of the Marshall Islands, they traditionally had chiefly rule over their islands. In 1886, the German government established a Protectorate and German influence continued until Japan seized the islands in 1914. Japan followed through with a mandate in 1921 secured from the League of Nations. Thirty years later, the United States of America took the islands from Japan militarily and eventually acquired a Trusteeship mandate from the United Nations in 1947. The US established a Congress of Micronesia in 1965 and by 1979, had ratified a Marshall Islands Constitution (Crocombe, 1987). However, government was only partially separated from the U.S. Trust Territory administration. The US vetoed the 1982 Compact of Free Association, because it gave the Marshall Islands the option of independence (Ranney & Penniman, 1985). A 1983 Revised Compact, which imparted to the United States control over defense issues, became accepted finally, and internationally recognized by 1986 (Michal 1993, Meller 1985).



Historically, the Federated States of Micronesia had separate island chiefdoms. From 1885 to 1899, the Spanish ruled over the islands as part of the Carolinas, which also included Palau (Hezel, 1983). Spain sold the islands to Germany who in turn established control from 1899 to 1914. Between 1914 and 1921, Japan conquered and annexed the territory. The League of Nations passed the mandate of the islands to Japan, which ran from 1921 to 1945, until the United States took over the islands militarily. By 1947, the United Nations had granted the United States a mandate. Almost 40 years later, the Federated States of Micronesia became "Independent in Free Association with the United States" in 1986 (Crocombe, 1987).

Palau had two traditional confederations. In 1886, Spain formally annexed Palau and other islands. By 1899, Germany had bought the islands from Spain, but Japan conquered it in 1914. Japan received a League of Nations mandate seven years later. After WWII broke out, the United States took military control of the islands in 1944. The United Nations granted control of the islands to the United States in 1947. It became part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI). The Republic of Palau adopted a

Constitution in 1981 but the United States retained control over some issues including defense. It remained as part of the Trust Territory until 1994 (Crocombe 1987, Uludong 1972).

The political system for all of the five freely associated island countries is similar in the sense that all involve inputs and outputs from three areas: the domestic economy, their culture, and society. All had traditional chiefs before colonization and, the domestic economy intertwined with culture. The military, economic, and diplomatic communications however differ significantly. The hesitancy by the government of Niue to assume more control of its foreign relations leaves New Zealand in almost total control. Niue has only one diplomatic/consular post. It is located in New Zealand.<sup>7</sup> Defense responsibilities are left entirely to New Zealand. Almost all economic activities are with New Zealand.

The Cook Islands on the other hand, has gradually assumed control of foreign affairs where her government has felt a need and a capacity to do so. This allows New Zealand to continue a defense role. Subsequently in foreign affairs management, the Cook Islands Government has established a Consular or Representative office in

Auckland, Wellington, Sydney, Canberra, Honolulu, Washington, Oslo, and Papeete (Jonassen, 1982). Economic activity is with New Zealand, Fiji, Tahiti, Hawaii and Australia.

The Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau, all have interests in having representation in the United States, Japan, and Fiji. The continued presence in Fiji of the Marshall Islands links to the South Pacific Forum Secretariat based in Suva. For all three Micronesian countries, a United States active interest in playing a defensive military role, has emerged as a major area of difference in free association arrangements (Plebescite, 1982). Economic activity for all three Micronesian countries is primarily with the United States. However, there is a growing importance of Japan, in aid and tourism as displayed by the establishment of diplomatic offices in Japan.

### **Structure Comparison**

Cook Islands currently has three political parties: Cook Islands Party, Democratic Party and Alliance Party. A Parliament has 25 members elected by universal suffrage every five years. A Parliament elects a Prime Minister to run Government. He in turn selects up to eight Ministers from Parliament. Justice consists of a

High Court that has three divisions: civil, criminal and land. New Zealand appoints two permanent judges to conduct the Court in regular sessions. Justices of the Peace have lesser jurisdiction in criminal, civil, and land matters, while a Children's Court deals with juvenile crime. Appeals from the High Court are presented to the Cook Islands Court of Appeal that comprises three judges, one of whom must be a judge of the New Zealand High Court. Appeals from the Court of Appeal go on to the Privy Council in London.

Niue has had no significant development of political parties. The Legislative Assembly totals 20 elected members; fourteen from village constituencies and six from a common national roll. Government is led by a Premier, who is selected by the Assembly from among its members. The Premier in turn elects his Cabinet from the Assembly. Justice is made up of a High Court under the control of a Chief Justice and a puisne judge, and in their absence a Commissioner and Justices of the Peace. Right of Appeal is to the NZ Supreme Court. The Land Court controls land disputes.

Marshall Islands has no dominating political parties as most members are independents. A Parliament has centralized legislative powers and is made up of 33 elected members. The President leads

Government and he appoints his own Cabinet. Justice includes a Supreme Court, a High Court, a district court and community courts.

Federated States of Micronesia has no political parties.

Congress is made up of 14 elected members representing the four states of Truk (6), Ponape (4), Yap (2) and Kosrae (2). Government is led by a President elected from Congress. Justice includes a Supreme Court consisting of a trial and appellate divisions.

Palau's main political parties are the Liberals and Progressives. Government is led by a President, who is elected by popular vote. The President in turn, appoints Cabinet. The Bicameral National Legislature includes the House of Delegates with its 16 members and the Senate with 14 members. Justice consists of the Bureau of Legal Affairs and the Bureau of Public Safety. The Bureau of Legal Affairs consists of legal and civil law divisions, a registrar of corporations, and immigration and customs.

A comparison of structures for the five island countries underlines influences from the systems of the metropolitan countries to which each island country is associated. All of the island countries have democratically elected political leaders but the justice systems vary.

### **Function Comparison**

Specific activities that enable the political system to formulate and enforce its policies, include socialization, recruitment, and communication. These system functions among the five island countries, has differences. They are differences that link to the history of each island, and the metropolitan country experience with which the island country is associated with. Each government's developmental focus, and their successes in increasing programs such as marine resource development and tourism has a varying impact. There are several examples of this: The Marshall Islands arrangements with the United States for Kwajalein as a military base, a Cook Islands expansion of its pearl farming industry with international assistance, Niue efforts to develop a bee-keeping program with New Zealand assistance, and Palau's efforts to develop tourism with great interest from Japan. Each paves the way for political activities that stretch beyond the shores of the island nation.

The migration of islanders to metropolitan countries often removes them from any direct involvement in system functions in their home country. While these emigrant islanders maintain an

interest in the home country, they are potentially an extremely effective lobby group that can influence elections at home. At times, governing parties view this aspect as disruptive. The Cook Islands addressed this issue of emigrating Cook Islanders by the creation of an overseas seat, to represent islanders overseas. It is a unique difference from other freely associated countries.

### **Pursuing a Foreign Affairs Capability**

The five Pacific microstates are members of all the major regional intergovernmental organizations including the South Pacific Forum and the South Pacific Commission. As an example of the expected cost to the microstate for membership, Table 2.3 shows assessed contributions from the freely associated states to the South Pacific Commission for the year 1994. Table 2.3, exhibits that the costs to the microstates are at two different levels: 0.2477% for the Cook Islands and Niue and the higher 3.3940% for FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau. This amounts to an expected contribution of NZ\$27,500 from each of the two Polynesian microstates as opposed to NZ\$43,745 from the three Micronesian microstates. The differences between the two levels can be attributed directly to the smaller island state (SIS) status of the

Cook Islands and Niue, although, it has been suggested that the earlier founding membership status of the Cook Islands and Niue in the two regional organizations be also a factor.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE 2.3: 1994 Contributions to SPC by Freely Associated States

| COUNTRY          | ASSESSED % | ASSESSED CFP units | Contribution in \$NZ (= 1.6521) |
|------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cook Islands     | 0.2477     | 16 645             | 27,500                          |
| FSM              | 0.3940     | 26 476             | 43,741                          |
| Marshall Islands | 0.3940     | 26 476             | 43,741                          |
| Niue             | 0.2477     | 16 645             | 27,500                          |
| Palau            | 0.3940     | 26 476             | 43,741                          |

Source: SPC (1994). Annual Report. p. 63.

The two differing levels of payments can also be found in the South Pacific Forum. Table 2.4, shows assessed contributions to the South Pacific Forum for the same year of 1994. The contribution to the South Pacific Forum organization from the US associated island microstates (FSM, MI, and Palau) is again at a higher level, than the New Zealand associated microstates (Cook Islands and Niue).

Assessed percentage contributions of 1.014 for the Cook Islands and Niue, amounts to NZ\$23,482 while the 2.433% rate for FSM and Marshall Islands amounts to NZ\$58,348.<sup>9</sup> The SIS status apparently



applies in the South Pacific Forum as it does in the South Pacific Commission.

TABLE 2.4: 1994 Contributions to SPF by Freely Associated States

| COUNTRY          | ASSESSED % of total regular budget of F\$2,049,000 | ASSESSED F\$<br>F\$=A\$0.96<br>=NZ\$1.17 | Contributions in NZ\$ |
|------------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| Cook Islands     | 1.014  | 20,070                                   | 23,482                |
| FSM              | 2.433  | 49,870                                   | 58,348                |
| Marshall Islands | 2.433  | 49,870                                   | 58,348                |
| Niue             | 1.014  | 20,070                                   | 23,482                |
| Palau            | Observer to 1994                                   | -  | -                     |

Source: SPF (1994).<sup>10</sup>

The push by the Marshall Islands government for several bilateral relations contrasts greatly with the increasing reliance by Niue on New Zealand. The need for approval from the Cook Islands over its defense before New Zealand can carry out any military activities in the Cook Islands, diverges from the access “control” of the United States in the Marshall Islands. Though that US controls operates under the banner of defense. All of this suggests that, in terms of defense and foreign affairs management, there are differing buoyancy levels of free association between the island

countries. The Pacific freely associated states depend on their metropolitan partner for security arrangements. For the three micronesians states, the security arrangement is securely tied into the constitution. FSM has less short term military significance for the US than Palau or the Marshall Islands (Ranney, p. 53). However, the US retains a substantial strategic interest through “denial.” This involves commitments that “armed forces of other countries will not be permitted to enter its territories and waters without the permission of both the FSM and the United States,” (Ranney, p. 53). For Niue and the Cook Islands, that constitutional tie is loose.

Figure 2.1 is a simple buoyancy paradigm showing the free association buoyancy levels for defense in the five freely associated states. The paradigm begins in the center at zero (0) which represents an observed legal capacity for government to assign control although undertaking no visible initiatives. The levels move either positively toward the right side or negatively toward the left. A positive movement is designated in the paradigm as “floating” while a negative activity is interpreted as “sinking.”

The code positive two (+2), represents an observed legal capacity to assign control, besides visible permanent initiatives

undertaken by the island state. Positive one (+1) represents an observed legal capacity to assign control but undertaking only limited visible initiatives. Negative one (-1), represents no legal capacity but apparently undertaking some visible initiatives. Negative two (-2), represents no legal capacity and no visible initiatives. In Figure 2.1, the Cook Islands (CIG) is listed as +1, Niue (Niu) is -1, while Marshall Islands (MI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau (Pal) are -2.

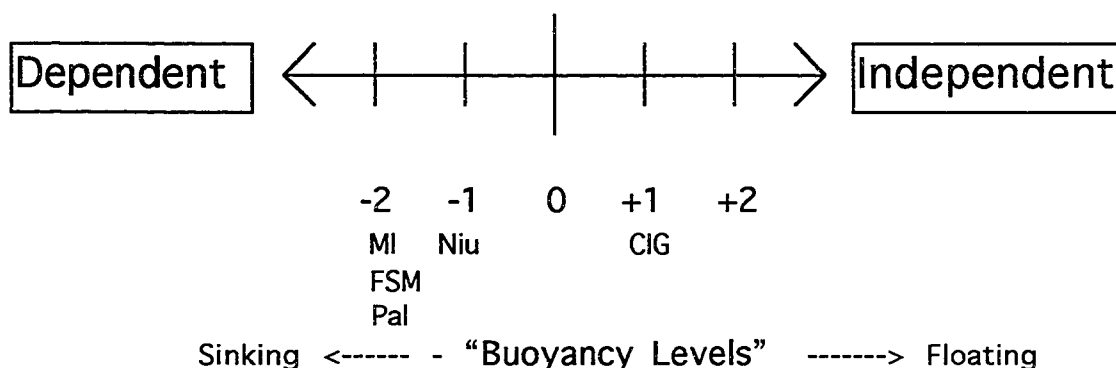


FIGURE 2.1: Free Association Buoyancy levels for Defense

A defense buoyancy level for the five freely associated pacific states, highlights the Cook Islands government's (CIG) ability to assign defense to New Zealand. In addition, the Cook Islands government owns and operates its own small patrol boat

(+1). Niue (Niu) government's assumption of New Zealand's defense role with Niue taking no initiatives (-1), differs from the United States control for the defense of the Marshall Islands (MI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Palau (Pal). By contrast the United States has free access (-2).

Using the same paradigm, four of the five microstates show an active interest in pursuing foreign affairs management capabilities. Figure 2.2 shows all of the microstates moving toward independence thereby reflecting a floating status. Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, FSM, and Palau are all at "+2" with the existence of a specialized designated government entity responsible for Foreign Affairs management.

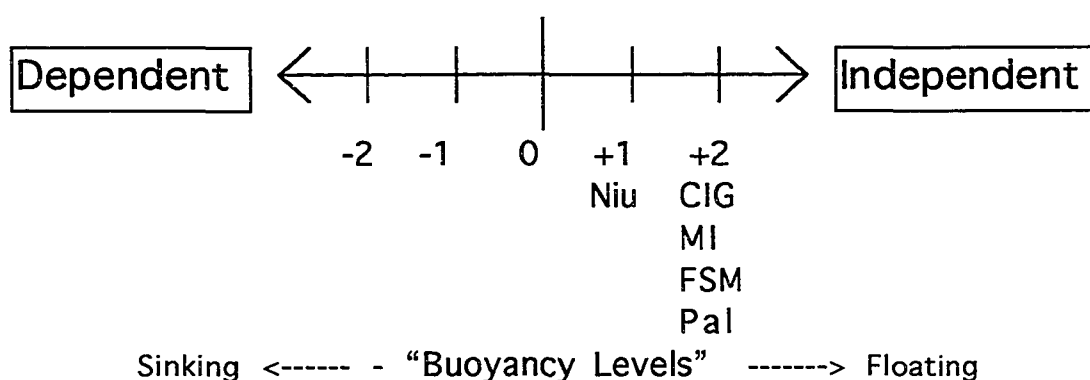


FIGURE 2.2: Free Association Buoyancy levels for Foreign Affairs

Niue does not have such a specialized body. Subsequently, the buoyancy levels for foreign affairs, underline active initiatives and control by all of the Pacific freely associated states. Though, relatively sparse international foreign affairs activities have taken place in the Niue government.

### Free Association as a Category

The simple model on “buoyancy levels” for foreign affairs and defense (Figures 2.1 and 2.2), illustrates that Free Association is a useful category only if defined more as “a dynamic political relationship of a nation (independent or otherwise), which attaches to an independent country.” This is in distinction to the perception that Free Association is an “actual political status existing permanently” somewhere between independence and dependence. Such a political relationship enables what Thomas Hobbes might have described in the seventeenth century as a position where a good law, which is needful for the people and without perspicuous, has taken hold.

Some Cook Islanders compare the Cook Islands-New Zealand relationship, to a young child who has finally turned 21 years old. The “adult” receives the keys of freedom, but is still able to return

to his parents for assistance or advise.<sup>11</sup> This approach allows for the growing universal recognition that all countries, politically independent or otherwise, has a direct impact on each other.

It also suggests that a dynamic and special partnership exists between two countries: one of whom has chosen to assist, the smaller state, through a constitutional recognition of that commitment. Free Association of the five Pacific Island countries differs when reflecting the priorities of their associated partner and their own achievement toward sovereignty.

The concept of free association evolved through the United Nations, as an alternative political status for small non sovereign territories who were aspiring for independence. The Cook Islands became the first experiment, with New Zealand paving the road (Scott, 1991, pp. 270-298). Under the supervision of the United Nations, the Cook Islands became self governing in Free Association with New Zealand, on August 4, 1965 (Jonassen, 1982; Scott, 1991, pp. 299-303). Almost ten years later, a second Free Association political status arrangement was extended by New Zealand to the people of Niue (Fist, 1978; Chapman, 1976). Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau followed.

Unlike the short negotiation period between the New Zealand government and the island leaders in the Cook Islands and Niue, negotiations between the United States and island leaders in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands were lengthy processes (Zafren, 1984; Meller, 1985; Leibowitz, 1989; Michal, 1993).

Difficulties originally focused on efforts by the United Nations, to keep the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands as one political unit. Other concerns, including a United States interest in maintaining security in the region, resulted in the break up of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. The Northern Marianas made the first move. Its Secretarial Order 3989 of 24 March 1976 provided for the separate administration of the Northern Mariana Islands. The covenant of the same date set up "a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America." A Constitution on 9 January 1978 established the government power of the Commonwealth (Leibowitz, 1989).

Marshall Islands was the next to leave the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It formally achieved self government in Free Association status with the United States in 1983. By 1986, the Federated States of Micronesia had become the forth Pacific

country to join the ranks of "Free Association," (Burdick, 1988, p. 252). Palau followed as the fifth when finally after several compact arrangements, it formally embarked on the "Free Association" road in 1994 (Lamour, 1985, pp. 331-352).

Observers often describe Free Association as the best of both worlds. It allows the nation state to pursue self governing policies, which may or may not, include defense and external affairs matter, while maintaining direct access to metropolitan country resources. Such an access includes a visa, which allows the islanders to work or citizenship. It provides a basis for direct aid to the island country, assistance in foreign policy, and the provision of security by the metropolitan country. These benefits are reflected in the constitutional arrangements of the island countries. Other Pacific island countries who do not have the free association status, can be labeled as either dependent or independent. Independent countries do receive assistance from metropolitan countries, assistance that is usually available to the freely associated states as well. However, there is generally no statutory commitment by the metropolitan countries, to give that aid to the independent countries.



In the past, metropolitan countries have been generous in helping independent countries, but observers suggest that with the end of the cold war, such support will decline. Recently, the Australian government made public statements and diplomatic moves that showed a shift of attention away from the Pacific toward Asia.

In 1995, dependent states in the Pacific are: Hawaii (State of U.S.), American Samoa (U.S. Unincorporated Territory), Northern Mariana Islands (U.S. Commonwealth), Guam (U.S. Territory moving to Commonwealth), Wake, Midway, Johnson, Howland, Baker, Kingman Reef, Palmyra and Jarvis (U.S.), Easter Island (part of Chile's Valparaiso Province), Pitcairn (Britain), Tokelau (NZ), and Norfolk (Australia); and New Caledonia, Wallis & Futuna, and French Polynesia (French Overseas Territories).

These states depend fully for their political, economic, and social survival on the metropolitan country to which they are attached to. Unlike the freely associated states, the dependent states have no control over their external affairs, defense, and some if not all of their internal affairs. One such sensitive internal issue centers on immigration. For dependent countries, the

metropolitan country controls immigration, which raises the potential of immigrants outnumbering the island population as has happened in Guam. Freely associated and independent countries do not have this immigration difficulty. As for freely associated states especially, a continued close relationship with the metropolitan partners, enhance the capacity to benefit from control of immigration and easier access to emigration. It is a dynamic process in managing one's own destiny and in having a greater capacity to contribute directly to that future.

#### Endnotes

1. Taru Moana, personal interview, 14 January 1973. Taru Moana, a talking Chief for Tinomana Ariki, points out that in Cook Islands Maori traditions, the breadfruit tree is considered powerful both for its food and ceremonial value. The bark was important for clothing (Gill, 1893, p. 1). The planting of breadfruit cuttings emphasizes personal trees. It marks the place where a new born baby's placenta has been "ceremonially buried" (Te Ariki-Tara-Are, pp. 185-188). Sometimes, breadfruit trees mark land boundaries. Subsequently, the breadfruit tree represents honor, trust, power, and steadfast principles and used in speeches as a symbolism for independence. In contrast, the duck represents flexibility and adaptability.
2. Free association with an independent state, was an option in asserting self determination established under the United Nations General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV).
3. At the time of writing this dissertation, there was a strong move to remove Cook Islands currency from circulation.

4. Sir Geoffrey Henry, personal communication, December 1993.
5. *System comparison* refers to the interaction of government and environment. *Structure comparison* involves bureaucracies, parliaments, political parties, and courts. *Function comparison* underlines specific activities that enable the political system to formulate and enforce its polities. It includes socialization, recruitment and communication. Almond, Powel and Mundt. (1993). Comparative Politics a Theoretical Framework. (USA: Harper-Collins)
- 5.
6. "Visitors" from metropolitan countries have usually carried out the "telling" of such a history in written form. As islanders review their own past, they will undoubtedly reinterpret certain aspects of their history. Many current text books taint the Niue and Cook Islands colonial experiences as more-positive than it was. However, I doubt that this will ever over shadow the tremendous difficulties experienced by the Micronesians.
7. Terry Chapman, personal communication, June 14, 1986. Robert Worthington, personal communication, September 17, 1995.
8. Informal discussions among many delegates at the 1983 Saipan South Pacific Conference, highlighted the respect accorded to founding member countries of regional organizations. Along with the leaders of Western Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand, the Cook Islands and Niue played an important role in the early stages of seriously addressing pacific regional issues. Of the five freely associated microstates, only the Cook Islands and Niue were members of the Committee of Representatives of Participating Governments (CRPG). They were joined in 1983 by the others in a newly constituted "Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations" (CRGA).
9. Since Palau remained an observer country in 1984, they were not expected to process any payments.
10. Assessed percentages were determined by the researcher based

on actual payment amounts for the year. Palau paid no contributions because of its observer status.

11. The celebration of a 21st birthday is a symbolic western practice adopted by many Pacific Island societies. In the island societies however, the extended family system remains intact and, the children often still depend on their parents for moral and spiritual support.

### CHAPTER 3

## COOK ISLANDS RELATIONSHIP TO NEW ZEALAND

### SAVED

*God save the Queen  
At last the British have come  
To claim a dot on the map  
Months after the jack  
Was flown by Ariki Nui Makea  
High Chief of a district  
Through urging from a British  
In fear of the French.*

*Praise them Kiwi men  
For taking from the British  
Full responsibility  
For all of Rarotonga  
And all her little satellites  
To lump them all together  
And call them Cook Islands.*

*Sorry for the locals  
Who never had a say  
In all this hanky panky  
They probably never knew  
That they were really merely  
A card on the table  
Useful when needed  
And ready for the deal.*

Jon Jonassen, 1980.<sup>1</sup>

Several elements have contributed to the changes in the Cook Islands relationship with New Zealand. These include: (1) two underlying historical connections highlighting the Maori and English

heritage between the two countries, (2) the installment of a flexible free association Constitution in 1965, and (3) a continuing desire by the Cook Islands people to control their own destiny.

This chapter discusses all these elements. It asserts that collectively, this was the basic undercurrent upon which the Cook Islands government shaped the free association status that it preferred for its country. The factors also instilled an opportunity for the later developments of a foreign affairs capability in the microstate. It is a development instigated and entrenched by economic-developmental and political-diplomatic issues. These are priority areas in much of the country's international dialogue.

### **Underlying Historical Connections**

The underlying traditional connections between New Zealand and the Cook Islands, installs a sense of "oneness." This enhances modern day values expected under the common citizenship of the two countries. The late New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk called this "shared interests and shared sympathies."<sup>2</sup> It projects a sense of "trust" which is potentially a key ingredient in independent foreign diplomatic activities.

Before European contact in the 18th century, *Avaiki Raro* was

a term used by the Maori people to describe what is now the Cook Islands. It included in particular the main island of Rarotonga. It was an important reference point for the great Maori navigators who were traveling from one *Avaiki* (place of origin) to another *Avaiki*. Such travels included *Avaiki Raro* (Cook Islands) and *Avaiki Tautau* (Aotearoa).

The evolving relationship of the Cook Islands with New Zealand therefore has its roots secured in the shared traditions of the ethnic population of the two countries: the Maori people of the Cook Islands and the New Zealand Maori people (Kauraka et al., 1991).

### **Maori: the First Connection**

That first central but often overlooked relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand remains in their common Maori heritage (Jonassen, 1994). This heritage passes down through similar names for trees, plants, animals, and places. There are also parallel political, social and economic traditions. This very close family relationship is usually lost in the general discussion of the so called wider and broader Polynesian family. Researchers look at the fanciful “Polynesian triangle” and miss the closer linkage between *Avaiki-Tautau* and *Avaiki-Raro*.

Alfons Kloosterman (1976), mentions Maori ancestors who roamed the Pacific Ocean in ancient times (pp. 6-7). Many of those seafarers are common ancestors of modern day Cook Islanders and New Zealanders. Several historical records and studies highlight them (Rere, 1975; MacCauley, 19 --; Wilson, 1990; Jonassen, Te Paepae, 1991; Kauraka et al, 1991), including several references by Stephen Savage (1962) in his Dictionary of the Maori Language of Rarotonga.

The story of the creation of the world is almost the same in both Rarotonga and Aotearoa (New Zealand) legends. The same heroes appear and the heros commemorated on Maori New Zealand *poupou whare* (house posts) are the same ancestors to most Rarotongans.<sup>3</sup> New Zealand Maoris trace their origins directly to Rarotonga. The people often recite several stories of the great armada that left the harbor of Muri in Rarotonga to settle in Aotearoa many hundreds of years ago. Seven sacred stones remain in Rarotonga marking the departure spot.<sup>4</sup>

Even in ceremonial speeches in the 1990s there is a special mutual respect between the two Maori groups. Protocol almost requires that the New Zealand Maori orators refer to the Maori of the



Cook Islands as the “elder brother.” Cook Islands Maoris reciprocate by responding to their New Zealand Maori “younger brothers.” That strong linkage pervades in modern times. It probably played a role in the impressive number of Cook Island Maoris who volunteered to serve in a New Zealand Maori battalion in World War I. Notably, Maui Pomare, a New Zealand government Minister who was also part Maori New Zealand, recruited the Cook Islanders (Scott, p. 133). This had a major impression on Cook Islanders who became more inclined to join because of recognized kinship. The Cook Islands Maori subsequently fought and died side by side with his Maori New Zealand “brother.”

### **English: the Second Connection**

The English culture and language are a second powerful layer in the Cook Islands relationship with New Zealand. While the Spanish and other Europeans had some early contact with the Cook Islands, they had no lasting influence. Exposure to the English language and culture began in the 1820s and continued to the 1990s. In 1777, the famous English Captain, James Cook, visited the island of Atiu (Kautai et al, 1984, p. 12).

Aitutaki was the next island visited by the English with

Captain Bligh calling in just before the famous mutiny. Then there was the undocumented call to Rarotonga by the Bounty mutineers immediately after the mutiny. Captain Goodenough or *Kurunaki* as he became known to the islanders, followed. His visit heralded him as the “discoverer” of Rarotonga.

Goodenough’s real claim to fame however is his unwise open abuse of local customs and his involvement in tribal conflicts on the island. It resulted in his English female companion being killed and eaten. That became a basis for some modern day Maori descendants of the *umukai* (feast) participants to claim themselves as part English. Notably, this may have also been the first diplomatic incident involving a prisoner, experienced by Cook Islanders with the Western world. Goodenough escaped, taking with him the two daughters of Paramount Chiefs, Matakavau, the daughter of Pa Ariki and Kainuku Ariki, and Tapaeru, daughter of Makea Ariki.

Between 1821 and 1823, the English missionary Reverend John Williams brought the new Christian religion to Aitutaki and Rarotonga (Rere, 1982, pp. 44-58). The introduction of Christianity led to a strong religious society. This continued from 1823 to 1888 and became the “hey day” of the London Missionary Society (Gilson,

1980, pp. 20-56). Poor harbors and powerful missionary influence on the chiefs discouraged many merchants, and labor recruiters. The alienation of land from traditional owners was also difficult. However, these factors did not prevent slavers from their onslaught (Maude, 1981). The slave trade eventually fanned a desire for British Protectorate (Scott, 1991, pp. 29-38).

By 1888, Rarotonga and her satellite islands had become a British Protectorate. A Federal Government of the Cook Islands functioned. It included both chiefs and elected representatives (Gilson, 1980, pp. 57-95; Jonassen, 1986, pp. 11-15). New Zealand annexation followed in 1901, and the English was catapulted further into dominance as an entrenched linking force between the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

The New Zealand Commissioner Colonel Gudgeon set out to break the power of the chiefs. He felt that this action was an important ingredient toward the establishment of western style democracy (Gilson, 1980, p. 125). He was successful.

As Professor Ron Crocombe of USP observed, the colonial era was one in which the authoritarian control of colonial government replaced the authoritarian control of the chiefs. The colonial

government abolished higher formal education. Tereora College was “temporary closed,” in 1911. However, it remained closed for nearly 50 years. Apparently, Commissioner Gudgeon, regarded higher education as unnecessary and undesirable for Cook Islanders. During this whole period, the New Zealand administration discouraged the Maori vernacular language (Gilson, 1980; Scott, 1991).

The performance of New Zealand administrators ranged from outstanding to downright disastrous and through it all exploded the English speaking heritage. Since the arrival of the London Missionary Society representatives in the early 1820s, English had gradually become a language of power representing authority, knowledge, and progress. Even the adoption of English first and last names portrayed recognition for those in authority.

This powerful English heritage continues through the 1990s as the only official language of the Cook Islands. Efforts to upgrade the Maori language on to the same level as English has so far been unsuccessful. This has been an elusive goal although many Cook Islanders would rather speak Maori in their homes than English. A recent effort to highlight the Maori language is the defeated 1994 national referendum to adopt a Maori name for the Cook Islands. That

particular issue however continues as the Government pursues other avenues to upgrade the status of the Maori language. This includes a policy requiring knowledge of Maori for many Public Service positions. There is also a plan for a new national name that reflects on Maori traditions.

### **Overlapping Layers**

These two seemingly conflicting but overlapping layers of Maori and English links, enhanced the political process in the Cook Islands. It moved the country from self government in the 1820s to British Protectorate sixty years later. New Zealand annexation followed in 1901. By 1965, it had gone in a full cycle when it attained a new form of self government. The links also became an important ingredient in maintaining trust between the government and people of the two countries. This was true even after 1965. Cook Islands leaders particularly, seem to have built on that trust and on occasions even tested it.

Their efforts underline the desire and ability of the Cook Islands Government to define their own boundaries in their relationship with New Zealand. This filters through as they meet new political challenges. At times constitutional changes have

invited strong responses not from the New Zealand government, but from Cook Islands Maori who have made their homes in New Zealand. The concerns of these Cook Islanders living overseas are probably due to a fear of being alienated from their homeland.

The use of the union jack on the flag of both countries also strengthens the English and Maori heritage. It is a testament to the strength of both the Maori and English traditions and their historical though silent role in continuing a flexible constitution.

### **A “Flexible” 1965 Constitution**

When the Cook Islands emerged as a microstate, its unique political status of self government in free association with New Zealand became a new concept in international law. The Cook Islands Constitution Act 1964 essentially established that (1) the Cook Islands shall be self governing; (2) the Constitution of the Cook Islands shall be the supreme law of the Cook Islands; (3) the external affairs and defense of the Cook Islands shall be discharged after consultation between the government heads of New Zealand and the Cook Islands, and; (4) Cook Islanders shall remain a British subject or New Zealand citizen by virtue of the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act of 1948.

The established 1965 Cook Islands Constitution underlined a very flexible boundary between the Cook Islands and New Zealand. An ambiguity in “consultation” as contained in the language of the Constitution emphasized that point. Most political watchers did not fully understand “free association.” Observers focused on external affairs and defense responsibilities that the New Zealand Government had “retained,” rather than the rights gained by the Cook Islands in its new political status (Adam, 1967, p. 159). The focus on external affairs usually alluded to section five, of the Cook Islands Act of 1964:

“Nothing in this Act or in the Constitution shall affect the responsibilities, of Her Majesty the Queen in right of New Zealand, for the external affairs and defense of the Cook Islands, those responsibilities to be discharged after consultation by the Prime Minister of New Zealand with the Premier of the Cook Islands,” (Cook Islands Constitution Act 1964, section 5).

Some observers extracted the word consultation, from section five of the Act and interpreted it, in terms of a New Zealand Government prerogative. In his legal and political analysis of the government of the Cook Islands, Arnold Leibowitz (1976) pointed to

the ambiguity of the word “consultation.” He strongly implied that the prerogative power of external affairs management was inherently vested in the New Zealand Government. He also questioned the provision for external affairs in the Cook Islands Constitution Act of 1964, because it limits the Cook Islands role to consult (p. 143).

It could also be argued that the “consultation” language inhibited New Zealand’s own freedom in pursuing its foreign policy. Some observers cite the Niue Constitution of “free association,” as containing more clarity in terms of New Zealand’s role. They suggest that perhaps, it reflected lessons learned from the Cook Islands model.

Political scholar David Stone (1971) also alludes to the ambiguity of “consultation.” In his discussion, he points out that “should legislation be necessary, the New Zealand Government has no legal power to ensure that its policies are implemented in Cook Islands law,” (p. 143). Thus the prerogative issue seems unsolved, but it is important to note that Leibowitz published his study in 1976 and Stone submitted his thesis in 1971. Much has happened since although the language of the provision in the Constitution has



not changed.<sup>5</sup>

An exchange of letters between the New Zealand Prime Minister Norman Kirk and the Cook Islands Premier Albert Henry in 1973, clarified the language of the Constitution. Muldoon declared in his letter to Henry, "in the view of the New Zealand Government, there are no legal fetters of any kind upon the freedom of the Cook Islands, which make their own laws and control their own Constitution." The letter reflects the progressive nature of the NZ government. Conspicuously, NZ was a world leader in social welfare and human rights issues having been the first to give women the vote. The NZ government had also guided Western Samoa to become the first politically independent Pacific Islands country in 1962. Conceivably the Cook Islands was merely NZ's latest experiment.

Both the New Zealand and the Cook Islands Governments subsequently recognized that the latter could participate in regional and international matters. They had officially established the existence of an unlimited Cook Islands prerogative to conduct its own external affairs. This evolving relationship of the Cook Islands with New Zealand, continued to sustain the subtle but powerful connections that already existed between the two countries: Maori

and English (MacCauley, 19-; Hiroa, 1927; Wilson, 1990). In addition, the flexible constitution allowed for several developments under political leaders and governments who needed to control the country's own destiny.

### **Control of its Own Destiny**

Since 1965, the relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand changed through a Cook Islands government's active pursuit for increased control of its destiny. It sought this without undermining access to New Zealand citizenship. Constitutional amendments can best show the changes since 1965. From the outset a nationally proud Cook Islands political party under the leadership of Albert Henry dominated Cook Islands politics. That domination was to continue until the infamous court case in 1978 that brought in a new government (Davis et al, 1979).

During that period much of the constitutional amendments reflected an effort by Henry, to establish a capacity for involvement in regional affairs. He also tried to control hiring (and firing) in the Cook Islands public service. He protected his political power by rewarding those who shared and supported his visions. While he tried to revitalize a sense of pride in Maori traditions (Davis et al, 1979).

The policies of Albert Henry also had some successes. There was an upsurge of cultural activities, a tremendous improvement in the infrastructure, the construction of schools and hospitals, and the completion of an international airport. The period also saw many Cook Islanders exercising their right to go to New Zealand and the population decreased for the first time since the 1800s.

It became almost impossible for the opposition party to win an election with most potential supporters departing for New Zealand. In 1973 the leader of the opposition party Dr. Thomas Davis, encouraged Cook Islanders living in New Zealand to exercise their right to vote. Albert Henry successfully blocked the use of polling booths outside the Cook Islands using the argument that those Cook Islanders had already voted with their feet. Davis responded by convincing many New Zealand Cook Islanders to travel back to Rarotonga to vote (Davis, 1992, Island, p. 243). Thus was born the idea of “flying voters.” The ploy almost succeeded. Unfortunately for Davis, many of his supporters who traveled back to Rarotonga were not eligible to vote. They had lived too long in New Zealand and subsequently occupied valuable seats inadvertently denying eligible voters use.<sup>6</sup> The limitation of commercial passenger seats

restricted the chance of success. Henry predicted the consequences and prepared a response (Hancock, 1979, p. 134). At the following 1978 elections, there was wide use of “flying voters.” Both parties used regular commercial links and chartered airlines. Davis supporters from New Zealand paid their own fare, while Henry supporters had their fares paid for by the Cook Islands government (Davis et al., 1979, pp. 164-186, 227-239).

Subsequently, Henry and his Cook Islands Party initially won the election, but an appeal by Davis and his Democratic Party through the court system, resulted in a landmark decision. The Court Judge invalidated the Cook Islands Party “flying voters.” Overnight, Henry lost his two third majority in the Assembly to the Democratic Party (Hancock. 1979, pp. 133-149).<sup>7</sup> The saga of the “flying voters” was an expensive experience (Davis et al., 1979, pp. 243-263). Upon assuming government leadership, Davis subsequently pressed for major amendments to the Constitution.

Constitution Amendment number 9(1980-81), resulted in sweeping changes upgrading the Assembly to Parliament, the Premier to Prime Minister, and increasing the number of Parliament Members to 24.

In addition, the amendment established an overseas constituency that included all qualifying Cook Islanders living outside the Cook Islands; it extended the term of Parliament from four to five years and; it approved a High Court of the Cook Islands. In addition, government recognized Cook Islands Maori on the same level as the English language.

Through the amendment, Parliament approved a new national anthem and a change in the Cook Islands flag. In his study on the special relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand, John Henderson (1995) referred to these Parliamentary efforts as cosmetic changes (p. 103). However, Amendment number 9(1980-81) also abolished any power that the New Zealand Governor had in making regulations for the Cook Islands. It emphasized that the New Zealand Parliament, had no jurisdiction to pass laws for the Cook Islands. For all these changes, the New Zealand government did not interfere.

Amendment 10(1981-82) established the Queen's Representative in the Cook Islands. Amendment 11(1982) made further refinements, but difficulties emanating from a split Parliament between the two political parties, led to five different

governments in 1983. This costly experience, proved the need for an odd number in the total parliamentary seats.

The impact of the refinements in Amendment 12(1986) was minor. This was not true of Amendment 14(1991), which increased both the number of Ministers from six to eight (excluding the Prime Minister), and the number of Parliament Members from 24 to 25. The increase expanded representation for some areas of the country and escalated the pressure on government's budget. The new members represented both a spiral in salaries and an elevation in new demands on governmental policies.

Various changes resulted in a new organizational chart for the Cook Islands government. Figure 3.1 illustrates the Cook Islands Government Structure by 1995. It shows the Queen's Representative as Head of State, the Legislature made up of 25 Parliamentary Members, an Executive Council consisting of the Head of State, the Prime Minister, and Members of Cabinet. It also shows the other sectors including the Justice, Ombudsman, Public Service and the House of Ariki.

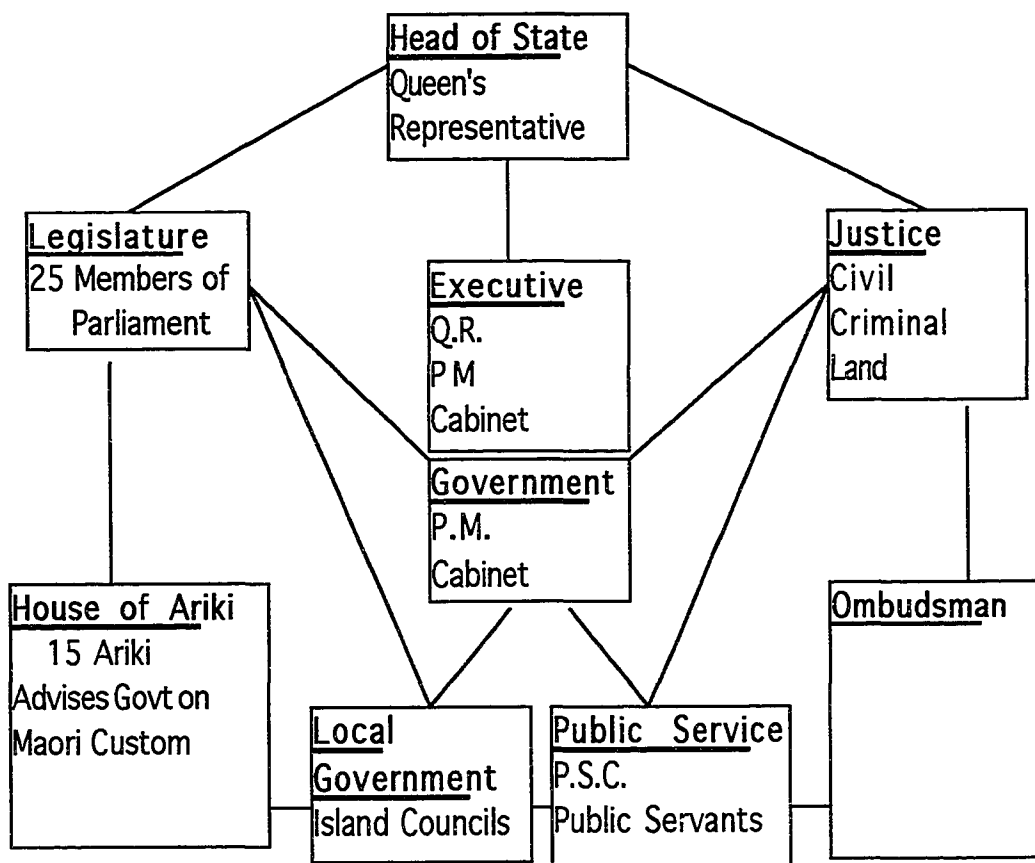


FIGURE 3.1: Cook Islands Government Structure, 1995

The Cook Islands government, have been well aware of the many frustrations of a small developing country, isolated and scattered, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. An agriculture based economy dependent on the schedules of an overseas based shipping line; aspirations for better tourism development, energy diversification, appropriate education, airline links, and changes in customs and import duties practice; access to international fisheries programs and; a whole range of other issues related to the economic and social well being of Cook Islanders became political issues. The Cook Islands Government's awareness of its own resource constraints, vulnerability, and pressure from overseas Cook Islanders, seemed to further underline a desire for better control through direct access to international resources. Not surprisingly, the Cook Islands actively sought membership in organizations deemed to be economically advantageous to the country (see Table 4.2).

The leaders of the Cook Islands government even became founding members of many organizations. These include the South Pacific Forum, the University of the South Pacific, Forum Fisheries Agency, Pacific Islands Development Program and the South Pacific



Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Neemia, 1986; Crocombe, 1985). An existing flexible Constitution between the Cook Islands and New Zealand greatly enhanced this island government effort toward control of its own destiny. Sometimes, Cook Islands efforts to pursue membership in organizations deemed beneficial, emphasized the uniqueness of its relationship with New Zealand. For some observers the relationship clouded recognition of a full Cook Islands legal personality in international law. This emerged in LOME. Curiously, the LOME Secretariat recognized that the Cook Islands had full control over its own destiny in matters relating to both domestic and external affairs. However, it saw the Cook Islands and New Zealand as having the same legal personality in international law (Ghai & Cottrel, 1990, p. 4).

### **Implications for the Conduct of External Affairs**

The establishment of an External Affairs Department in the Cook Islands, which was later upgraded to be a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1984, reflected an extension of the boundaries of operation by the Cook Islands. In essence, the Cook Islands is operating as an “independent” sovereign country. Even in the area of defense, the Cook Islands has to approve any military operations by

New Zealand within the Cook Islands territorial and Extended Economic Zone.

A New Zealand government defense exercises in the Cook Islands in 1986, underlines a recognition of Cook Islands rights regarding security. During that year, the New Zealand government specifically requested permission from the Cook Islands to carry out a military exercise in the microstate's territory. The Cook Islands Cabinet approved the activity. However, in respect of Rarotonga's Paramount Chiefs who opposed it on their island, the military exercise took place on other islands of the Southern group.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike foreign affairs, where the Cook Islands has taken a strong initiative to manage its own international relations, defense has been left in the hands of the New Zealand government. However, the underlying constitutional right of control of the Cook Islanders remains. The area of foreign affairs and defense has served as an attractive measurement of the evolving relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand. While maintaining a New Zealand citizenship status, Cook Islanders control all of their internal and external affairs. They manage all of their internal affairs and most of their external affairs. By choice, they have left their defense to

New Zealand. The Cook Islands government has freely pursued policies to the extent of its own resources. It has expanded its external affairs' capacity by building a strong administrative organization. Additionally, it has established diplomatic links with countries it has felt to be important in terms of aid and trade. Since 1965 its staff has grown from zero to two officers over three years. By 1993, the External Affairs Ministry had thirty workers. In line with that growth has been an increase in financial and informational assistance from organizations or countries other than New Zealand. Notably, New Zealand assistance to the Cook Islands has been slowly decreasing (Table 5.2).

The Cook Islands Legislative Assembly has upgraded its own status to Parliament and the status of Premier to Prime Minister. The country under free association has evolved to reflect an "independent" country in all practical purposes, while maintaining its unique relationship with New Zealand. Future changes are likely to continue as the Cook Islands government pursues the issuance of Cook Islands passports besides free access to New Zealand passports.

New Zealand also continues to benefit through its

import/export advantage, access to trained Cook Islands work force at least cost, and a positive international image. The relationship between the two countries has truly grown. Perhaps it is a result from the original roots. Sir Geoffrey Arama Henry, the Cook Islands Prime Minister emphasized this aspect when addressing the Pacific Islands Political Association (PIPSA) Conference in 1993. " We have evolved into a unique form of independence: as an Associated State with our people retaining free access to both New Zealand and Australia. Moreover, we are willing to consider other associated relationships, for when you are in transition it is best not to close any of your options," (Henry, 1995, p. 22).

For its part, the New Zealand government has viewed the Cook Islands as an important partner. The deputy High Commissioner of New Zealand to the Cook Islands, Mr. Paul Willis, pointed out that the size of the New Zealand office in the Cook Islands was essentially the same as the New Zealand office in Canada. It was clearly an indication of how important New Zealand regarded the Cook Islands (P. Willis, personal communication, July 11, 1995).

Even highly controversial tax haven issues between the Cook Islands and New Zealand, has not deterred the commitment of both

countries in their special relationship.

In the 1980's, the Cook Islands Government created a Cook Islands Offshore financial center and tax haven. It established a separate and distinct offshore regime that meant that the entities were not subjected to the ordinary laws of the Cook Islands. They could operate with much flexibility and freedom. Confidentiality provisions were also incorporated in the Tax Haven. It allowed overseas companies, including those in New Zealand, to use it to protect assets and claims that might be made in their respective countries. Changes in the New Zealand tax laws put pressure on New Zealand companies using the Cook Islands Tax haven.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the New Zealand government has interpreted such issues as the "winebox" inquiry as separate. The "winebox" was an investigation linked to the microstate's tax haven industry.

Other points of contention between the Cook Islands and New Zealand have occurred in the past without seriously causing a rift between the two countries. First, there was the decision by the Cook Islands government supporting any US naval visit to the Cook Islands. This was initiated in spite of expressed concerns from the New Zealand government.

The Cook Islands Prime Minister Sir Thomas Davis effected this decision when a NZ nuclear free policy in the 1980s had resulted in an US-NZ clash over naval visits. Secondly, during the same period, the Cook Islands government negotiated fisheries' agreements directly with Taiwan in spite of a NZ policy that recognized only the Republic of China. Both issues caused controversy but did not affect the free association relationship. The same was also true over the tax haven controversy.

“The relationship is as strong as ever” declared the Honorable Roger McClay, who represented the New Zealand government at the 1995 Constitution Day celebrations of the Cook Islands. He continued to say that the Cook Islands-New Zealand relationship is a brother-sister relationship (CITV, 4 August, 1995).

Notably, McClay did not compare it to a parent-child relationship. Perhaps, he was also signaling that the Cook Islands management of foreign affairs has entered another phase in its development. Based on what had already occurred in the past, that development would most likely continue. It will reflect economic-developmental and political-diplomatic issues as priority areas in much of the country's international dialogue.

### Endnotes

1. "Saved," was first published in Mana, edited by Tongia and Crocombe. Also published in Nuanua, edited by Albert Wendt (1995).
2. See the letter from NZ Prime Minister Kirk to Cook Islands Premier Albert Henry, 1973 (Appendix D).
3. Tere Ngapare, Mapu Taia, Tunui Tereu and Rena Jonassen recited common genealogies and ancestors during a special visit by Tumu Korero, or oral specialists, from Rarotonga to New Zealand, July 1991.
4. Both New Zealand and Cook Islands Maori have similar traditions regarding voyages between the two countries although there are differences in the actual number of canoes and the period.
5. This was the premise upon which my thesis work began in 1982. It seems that the discussion on Cook Islands capacity to manage its own affairs has progressed little in the eyes of some. While both the New Zealand and Cook Islands governments emphasize the sovereign capacity of the Cook Islands, some continue to question what is in practice a reality.
6. Aporo Dean, personal communication, February 24, 1978. Dean, as Chairperson of the 1974 and 1978 Puaikura Democratic Party Research Committee traced overseas voters traveling back to Rarotonga to vote (Davis et al, 1979).
7. Ironically, the name of the Judge in the court case was Chief Justice Donne: "Justice is Donne" declared many Democratic party supporters.
8. Acting for a special delegation of NZ government and military officials, Jon Jonassen, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, carried out the negotiations with the traditional Chiefs and community leaders on the outer islands.
9. The general policy of the Cook Islands government was to avoid

overlaps between offshore and domestic regimes. Entities established within offshore jurisdiction were exempt from any form of taxation, including stamp duties, company tax, turnover tax, capital gains tax, capital issue tax and withholding tax (Govt. Documents; Offshore Banking Act, 1981).



## CHAPTER 4

### MANAGEMENT OF COOK ISLANDS FOREIGN AFFAIRS

*New Zealand has done much on our behalf . . . and should be solicited to continue to assist us while we take the bull by the horns and gradually take it over ourselves.*

Tupui Ariki Henry, former CIGOV Minister, 1982.<sup>1</sup>

*It is not outside the realm of possibilities that in five to ten years time, a formula will be worked out, where, the Cook Islands will have their own passports and citizenship while continuing to have access to NZ.*

Paul Willis, Deputy NZ High Commissioner, 1995.<sup>2</sup>

Under its free association political status, the Cook Islands has always had the opportunity of continuing to rely on New Zealand for the management of its foreign affairs. This chapter attempts to understand the voluntary choice made by the Cook Islands government to develop a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in spite of the costs involved. It examines the role of the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs through Ministry objectives, organizational operations, and costs. It is my contention that the Cook Islands government developed its own foreign affairs' capability, primarily because of an expectation that a direct international assistance approach best achieves the appropriate economic developmental

aspirations of Cook Islanders.

Subsequently, the examination should underline the dynamic propensity toward institutional change in foreign affairs' management and, a concentration of Ministry activities for economic-development. A variety of spheres reflect that convergence including: (1) the advancement of the Ministry, (2) the designated Ministry objectives, (3) the organization of personnel positions primarily based on work functions within divisions of central administration and missions abroad, and (4) the actual cost of operations, embracing contributions to regional and international organizations.

### **The Advancement of the Ministry**

A historical descriptive analysis of the advancement of the Ministry, underlines a deliberate dynamic changes toward an increased role for Foreign Affairs. Under section 5 of the Cook Islands Constitution Act 1964, as amended over the years, the Cook Islands Cabinet makes its own foreign policy. However, the outcome of that foreign policy does not emerge visibly until 12 years later, after the creation of a Ministry. Since then, the Ministry has increased its capacity to manage its own operations.

The title of the administrative head has been upgraded from “Executive Officer,” then “Director of External Affairs,” to what is now “Secretary of Foreign Affairs.” There has also been an imparting on Cabinet Ministers, other than the Prime Minister, the position of “Minister of Foreign Affairs.” The Minister holds full responsibility for “all functions as are necessary or desirable for the conduct of the foreign relations of the Cook Islands.” He is subject only to the directions if any, of Cabinet (FOAFF, Manual, 1990).

Figure 4.1, lists Administrators who directed the Cook Islands Foreign Affairs from 1965 to 1995. Directors varied over the past twenty years. They range from the Premier Albert Henry (1965) to the Acting Secretary (1995). The listing further enforces the rapid increase in the Cook Islands interest in managing its own foreign policy. For the first three years after attaining free association in self government, the New Zealand government handled the Cook Islands foreign affairs. Between 1968 and 1972, the Cook Islands Premier began expressing an interest in regional dialogue. This developed into the establishment of specialized officers within the Premier’s Department. Eventually by 1977, government established a

Foreign Affairs department as one its' important working arms.

| <u>Title</u>                  | <u>Person</u>  | <u>Period</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Premier                       | Albert Henry   | 1965-68*      |
| Premier                       | Albert Henry   | 1968-72       |
| Research Officer              | Geoffrey Henry | 1971-72       |
| External Affairs Officer      | Tamarii Pierre | 1972-75       |
| Director of External Affairs  | Howard Henry   | 1975-77       |
| Secretary of External Affairs | James Gosselin | 1977-81       |
| Acting Secretary of EXTAFF    | Aukino Tairea  | 1981-82       |
| Acting Secretary of EXTAFF    | Colin Brown    | 1981-82       |
| Acting Secretary of EXTAFF    | Aukino Tairea  | 1981-82       |
| Acting Director EXTAFF        | Colin Brown    | 1982-83       |
| Acting Director EXTAFF        | Aukino Tairea  | 1982-83       |
| Acting Director EXTAFF        | Jon Jonassen   | 1982-83       |
| Secretary of Foreign Affairs  | Jon Jonassen   | 1983-87       |
| Secretary of Foreign Affairs  | Aukino Tairea  | 1987-94       |
| Acting Secretary of FOAFF     | Edwin Pitman   | 1994 -        |

\* NZ Government handled all Cook Islands external affairs during this period.

FIGURE 4.1: Administrators of Foreign Affairs 1965-1995

This advancement of foreign affairs also resulted in many diplomatic posts being established overseas. It also exhibited a general growth in foreign affairs activities covering aid, trade, protocol, and international or regional participation. During a 1981 historical developmental study of what had started as the External Affairs Department, these very functions were just emerging (Jonassen, 1982). Since that study, the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expanded its role as “the administrative

machinery,” for the conduct of the Cook Islands foreign policy (FOAFF, Manual, 1990, p. 2).

Like other government departments, the Ministry accedes to the ecumenical objective of the Cook Islands of “shifting increasing amounts of its scarce resources, from consumption to investment,” (CIG, Estimates, 1994, p. 2). Curiously, the government’s treasury department interpreted capital expenditure as deferred consumption, representing jobs and growth for the future. The actual growth and activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not always reflect this. Expenditure often simply underlined an immediate important linking role for Foreign Affairs with other government departments.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs Objectives**

The broad objectives for Cook Islands external policy, covers intertwining areas in military-security, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental, and cultural-status. The first objective involves the promotion of respect, for the national identity and territorial integrity of the Cook Islands. Second, the Ministry aims at maintaining “peaceful, friendly, consultative and, cooperative relations with New Zealand, as provided for by the Constitution.”

Third, the Ministry seeks cooperative relations with countries

and international organizations. It joins with Pacific countries to “promote the prosperity, stability and security of the South Pacific region and the larger international community.” To this end, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has sought out membership in organizations deemed as beneficial to the Cook Islands people.

Other Ministry objectives include, fifth, providing welfare and consular services for Cook Islands citizens abroad, and sixth, promoting national development, through the encouragement of tourism, investments, and bulk purchasing. The Ministry also keeps busy seeking technical assistance to promote development in the Cook Islands (FOAFF, Manual, 1990, p. 1).

A closer look at the Ministry objectives highlights the emphasis on economic-developmental issues. Figure 4.2, shows the objectives by category: military-security, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental, and cultural-status. While economic-developmental category identifies specific activities, the other three categories identify general areas of focus for the Ministry staff. Promotion and cooperation are two significant operational words for Ministry staff. The economic-developmental area shows the highest number of activities by objective.

| Military-Security  | Political-Diplomatic   | Economic-Developmental   | Cultural-Status  |
|--|--|--|--|
| Promote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional security.</li> </ul> | Cooperate with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZ</li> <li>• Countries</li> <li>• Organizations.</li> </ul> | Promote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional prosperity</li> <li>• Services for Cook Islanders overseas</li> <li>• National development: tourism, investments, &amp; bulk purchasing.</li> <li>• technical assistance.</li> </ul> | Promote <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect for the integrity of the Cook Islands.</li> </ul> |

FIGURE 4.2: Ministry of FOAFF Objectives by Category

To carry out these objectives, the Ministry has an administrative office in Avarua, the capital, on the island of Rarotonga. All activities for the Ministry originate and end at its Rarotonga headquarters. It is government's communications channel with all overseas countries and organizations. The Ministry has also established overseas outposts, as either diplomatic missions or consular posts. The missions or posts act as Cook Islands representatives with specific responsibilities in those overseas countries. They protect the interests of the Cook Islands in those countries. Simultaneously, they generally develop economic, cultural and scientific relations with those countries, in areas deemed as beneficial to the Cook Islands (FOAFF, Foreign Service, 1990).

### **Organization**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs operations is streamlined according to the ability of the government to provide personnel and other resources. The ministry divides organizationally, into central administration and missions abroad. These divisions reflect the function that staffs are performing.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the very existence of the positions often reflects government's focal area of interest.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the 1995 organizational structure of the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the head of the organization is the Minister, an elected politician who is a member of Cabinet. The Permanent Secretary who reports to the Minister, is the administrative head responsible for all operations. Figure 4.3 also shows various personnel positions within the organization. It includes the Office of the International Legal Advisor who works in support of the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Notably, he is directly responsible to the Prime Minister.<sup>4</sup> The Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs supervises the Assistant Secretaries in the Central Administration and monitors all Cook Islands Missions Abroad.



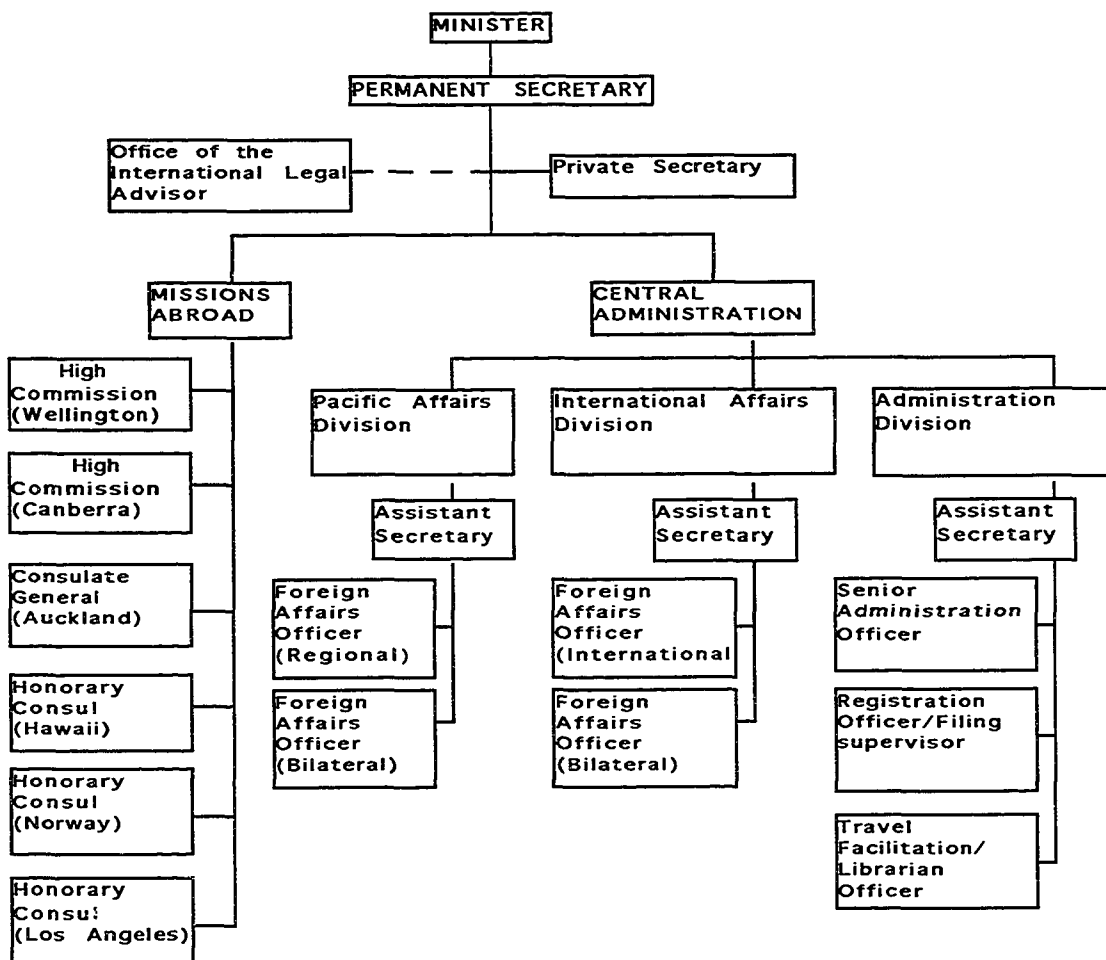


FIGURE 4.3: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Organizational Structure

The Central Administration consists of three divisions each headed by an Assistant Secretary: international affairs, regional affairs and administration (see Figure 4.3). The International Division focuses on Cook Islands bilateral relations with countries outside the South Pacific Region, the United Nations (UN) and its subsidiary organs. The International Division also works with specialized agencies of which the Cook Islands is a member, and the British Commonwealth. It also entails the coordination of bilateral aid with these countries and agencies including technical assistance and scholarship schemes.

The Regional Division focuses on bilateral and multilateral relations with island countries within the Pacific region, encompassing New Zealand and Australia. Coordination of bilateral aid, technical assistance, training schemes and interaction with regional organizations in the Pacific, are all actively monitored.

The administration division incorporates a variety of support responsibilities. These include accounting, budget, transport, office, and communication maintenance. The work of the administration division cuts across all other ministry activities including the missions' abroad program. Essentially the Secretary executes much

his work through the administration division, or directly through the missions abroad. By 1995, the missions abroad included the Cook Islands High Commissioner in Wellington (NZ), and the Cook Islands High Commissioner in Canberra (Australia). It also includes the Consul Generals in Auckland (NZ) and Sydney (Australia), and the Honorary Consuls in Hawaii (USA), Los Angeles and Oslo (Norway).

In Figure 4.4, the Organizational Chart for the Missions Abroad Program details the various personnel positions in six overseas missions. It illustrates the High Commissioner in Wellington and four other personnel including First Secretary, Executive Secretary, Second Secretary and a Receptionist. The Consul General for Auckland shows a larger staff involving three subdivisions of Commercial, Administration, and Protocol/Welfare. Staff positions include the First Secretary, Executive Administration Officer, Consul Commercial Officer, two Executive Officers, a Senior Purchasing Officer, a Senior and Assistant Accountant, an executive Protocol/Welfare Officer, and a receptionist. Honorary Consuls in Hawaii, Los Angeles and Norway have no staff. The High Commissioner in Wellington however, includes a First Secretary, Typist/Receptionist and a Driver/Cleaner/Handyman.

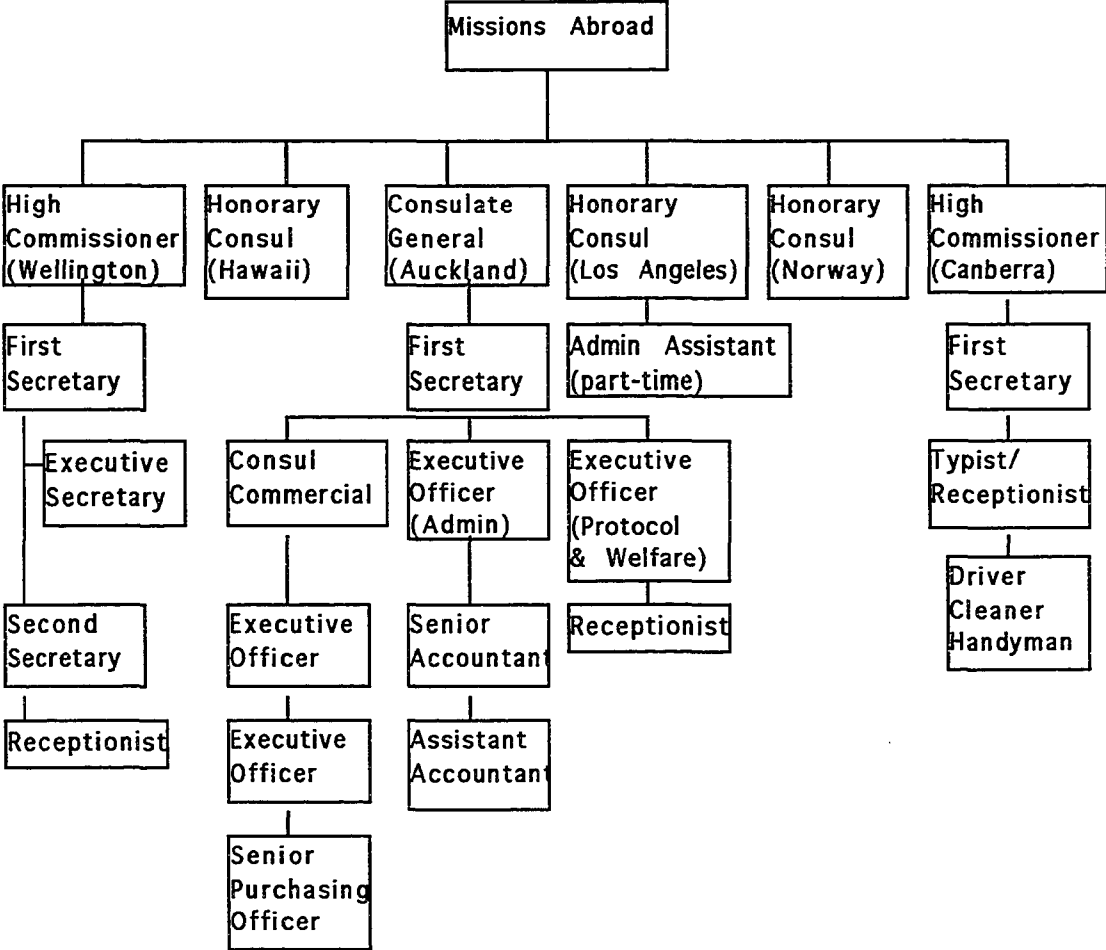


FIGURE 4.4: Organizational Structure of Missions Abroad

Acting on Cabinet's advice, the Cook Islands Queen's Representative appoints Overseas representatives. Their term does not exceed four years (Cook Islands Constitution Act 1964 as amended). The appointment of an overseas representative is subsequently a deliberate action requiring some planning and an awareness of perceived benefits to the microstate. The fact that the size of each overseas mission differs, also reflect a varying focus expected from each representative.

Consular functions for Cook Islands representatives entail the protecting of Cook Islands' interests in the receiving state. They encourage commercial, economic, cultural, and scientific relations. Representatives issue travel documents and passports to Cook Islands nationals, and visas or appropriate documents to persons wishing to travel to the Cook islands. They also perform a variety of other functions entrusted by the Cook Islands government to the consular post. In this regard, the emphasis of areas of activity for the consul post may consequently be in one or more of the following areas: (1) protection, assistance and safeguarding the interests of the state, bodies corporate, and nationals; (2) trade, tourism and economic matters; (3) legal and related duties such as births, deaths

and marriages; (4) general reporting on matters of political, economic, commercial and environmental interest; and (5) the promotion of friendly relations including cultural activities (R. Worthington, personal communication, August 14, 1984).

Cook Islands Representation in Auckland has its focus in three areas: welfare and information, procurement, and administration. Welfare and information include the registration of nationals, providing assistance and protection, repatriation, deportation, quasi legal functions, and the provision of information to the public. Procurement entails the purchase of supplies for the Cook Islands Government while administration involves payment for purchases and the provision of protocol services (B. Teariki, personal communication, August 14, 1995).<sup>5</sup>

The Consul office in Hawaii has its emphasis on expanding trade between the United States and the Cook Islands. The similarity in climate between Hawaii and the Cook Islands highlights an agricultural interest in such products as pawpaw and citrus. Subsequently, the training of Cook Islanders in the University of Hawaii is an important emphasis for the Hawaii Consul General (R. Worthington, personal communication, August 19, 1984).

The two offices in Australia, (Sydney and Canberra), and the Los Angeles office in the United States, all focus on tourism, trade, and aid support. The Oslo consular representative however stresses the interest of the Cook Islands government in Norway's wave energy technical program, seabed resource experience, and its shipping background (N. George, personal communication, July 15, 1984).

The overall administrative head of Foreign Affairs, including Missions Abroad, is the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. He delegates the powers of the Minister in the performance, exercising or carrying out of the functions of the Ministry (FOAFF, Manual, 1990). Increasingly, many challenges face the Secretary, making it difficult to carry out his duties. One significant area embellishes costs.

### **Cost of operations**

An observation of the activities of government reveals a conscious effort by the Cook Islands to increase its capacity, to operate a foreign affairs' program, in spite of a drain on scarce resources. It underlines a recognition of the Ministry's role toward the continued buoyancy of the country. A review of previous annual budgets should show that although the expenditure for the missions abroad and contributions to organizations have spiraled over the

years, there is no sign of decline in Ministry activities. Rising costs reflect inflation to a small degree but the major cause of increases lie in program changes.

Table 4.1 illustrates the budget for the Cook Islands Missions Abroad over three periods: an actual expended amount for 1985, and 1990, and a costs estimate for 1995. The Missions include Wellington, Auckland, Canberra, Hawaii, Los Angeles and Sydney. Notably for these missions, most costs accrue in the area of personnel (program 01) show Auckland with the highest expense.

Escalating costs for Auckland in 1990 and for Canberra in 1995, suggest an expanding focus by government in those countries. The Cook Islands was host to the Festival of Pacific Arts in 1992 and may partially explain the increase in personnel in Auckland. Preparatory activities involved that office.<sup>6</sup>

For Australia, the appointment of a new High Commissioner in Canberra in 1994/95 dramatically multiplied expenditure. Consequently, costs for the four personnel in Canberra in 1995 were NZ\$133,800 more than the total expenditure of five personnel in Wellington. The involvement of the Australian Mission in the Festival of Pacific Arts was minimal. Therefore, a higher inflation



rate and an augmented focus on Australia for future programs seem to be the major cause of the increase.

Table 4.1 also shows that the costs for the Auckland office rose from NZ\$71,900 in 1985 to NZ\$419,000 ten years later. This is an increase of more than five times. The Canberra office presents an even more dramatic rise from NZ\$17,900 to NZ\$441,400 during the same ten-year period. This is an increase close to 25 times. Even the overall total expenditure for all missions, rose at least seventeen times from NZ\$89,800 to NZ\$1,558.3 during that period.

Figure 4.5, exemplifies these increases of Cook Islands' Missions Abroad over three periods. Figure 4.5 develops from Table 4.1, and it shows a bar chart for the three years 1985, 1990 and 1995 for all six Missions Abroad. While Figure 4.5 shows a slight decrease for Auckland in 1985, there is an increase for all missions since 1990. The Canberra Office is again particularly dramatic as already shown in Table 4.1. The increasing expenditure reflected in the Missions Abroad program implies that government is continuing to invest its resources in the expectation that economic-developmental benefits will far outweigh the accrued costs.

TABLE 4.1: Missions Abroad Budget for Three Periods (NZ\$'000)

| Program                              | Wellington                   | Auckland                        | Canberra                       | Hawaii                        | Los Angeles             | Sydney                       |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 01.<br>Personnel                     | a. -<br>b. 75.6<br>c. 98.3   | a. 44.0<br>b. 295.8<br>c. 264.0 | a. 10.5<br>b. 8.8<br>c. 232.1  | a. 18.2<br>b. 49.5<br>c. 24.9 | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 40.0 | a. -<br>b. 48.5<br>c. 100.6  |
| 02.<br>Purchases<br>of Goods         | a. -<br>b. 27.0<br>c. 16.5   | a. 13.5<br>b. 71.2<br>c. 17.0   | a. 5.6<br>b. 6.9<br>c. 36.4    | a. 9.2<br>b. 23.3<br>c. 3.3   | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 1.6  | a. -<br>b. 24.2<br>c. 8.2    |
| 03.<br>Purchases<br>of Services      | a. -<br>b. 15.8<br>c. 50.1   | a. 7.0<br>b. 39.7<br>c. 85.5    | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 136.8       | a. 2.2<br>b. 6.7<br>c. 42.2   | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 3.0  | a. -<br>b. 55.8<br>c. 95.9   |
| 04.<br>Training                      | a. -<br>b. 8.4<br>c. 41.8    | a. 6.7<br>b. 20.1<br>c. 0       | a. 1.6<br>b. 4.0<br>c. 0       | a. 4.5<br>b. 3.0<br>c. -      | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -    | a. -<br>b. 6.5<br>c. -       |
| 05.<br>Other<br>Operating<br>Expense | a. -<br>b. 11.7<br>c. 1.8    | a. 7.0<br>b. 20.5<br>c. 1.8     | a. 2.0<br>b. 2.0<br>c. 28.2    | a. 4.8<br>b. 6.3<br>c. 11.4   | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 4.0  | a. -<br>b. 2.4<br>c. 5.7     |
| 06.<br>Grants                        | a. -<br>b. 4.1<br>c. 1.0     | a. -<br>b. 2.4<br>c. -          | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 4.9         | a. -<br>b. 1.0<br>c. -        | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -    | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -         |
| 07.<br>Fixed Assets                  | a. -<br>b. 10.0<br>c. 25.0   | a. -<br>b. 29.8<br>c. 35.0      | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 3.0         | a. -<br>b. 7.5<br>c. -        | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 24.6 | a. -<br>b. 67.1<br>c. 39.8   |
| 08.<br>Loans/<br>Investment          | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -         | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -            | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -           | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -          | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -    | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. -         |
| Total<br>Expenditure                 | a. -<br>b. 152.6<br>c. 232.7 | a. 71.9<br>b. 479.5<br>c. 419.0 | a. 17.9<br>b. 16.2<br>c. 441.4 | a. -<br>b. 97.3<br>c. 141.8   | a. -<br>b. -<br>c. 73.2 | a. -<br>b. 204.5<br>c. 250.2 |

a. 1985 Expended, b. 1 Source: CIG, Annual Budget Estimates for 1986,1991,1995.

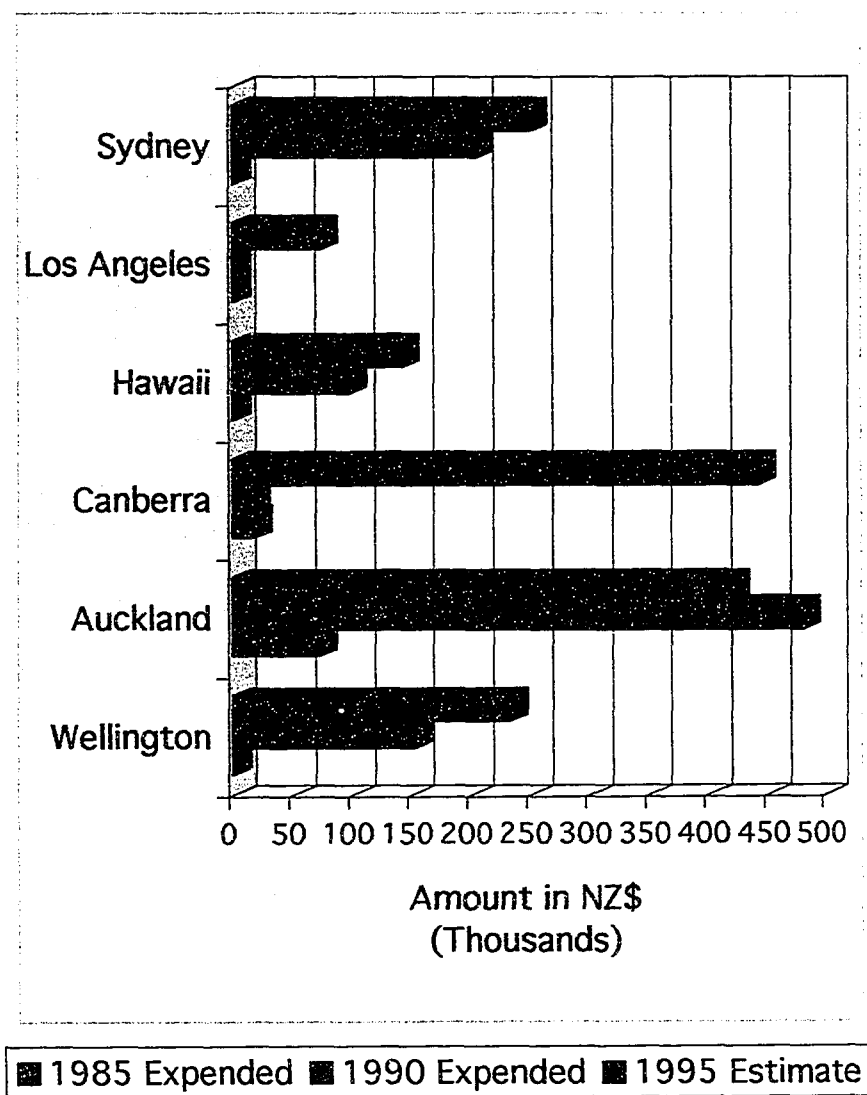


FIGURE 4.5: Cook Islands Missions Budget for Three Periods

Another dramatically expensive area in the operations and maintenance of foreign affairs lies in Cook Islands contributions to regional and international organizations. Table 4.2 lists the annual Cook Islands contributions to selected organizations for the years 1990 to 1995.<sup>7</sup> The record of organizations includes the South Pacific Commission (SPC), the Forum Secretariat (FORUM), Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP), South Pacific Regional Development Programme (SPREP), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), South Pacific Geo-Science Commission (SPGSC), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Asian Pacific Development Cooperation (APDC), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the University of the South Pacific (USP). As a member, annual contributions by the Cook Islands government to these organizations, has steadily expanded over the years. Table 4.2, reviews the contributions over a six-year period running from 1990 to 1995, showing costs spiraling from NZ\$250,450 to NZ\$782,200. A three fold increase.

TABLE 4.2: Annual Cook Islands Contributions to Organizations

|        | 1990    | 1991    | 1992    | 1993    | 1994      | 1995    |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|
| SPC    | 17,320  | 22,800  | 24,500  | 24,500  | 27,500    | 29,100  |
| FORUM  | 34,420  | 20,400  | 22,900  | 22,900  | 23,800    | 24,000  |
| FFA    | 16,400  | 8,400   | 8,600   | 8,600   | 9,900     | 10,200  |
| CFTC   | 9,000   | 9,000   | 18,000  | 21,500  | 9,200     | 36,800  |
| UNDP   | 24,220  | 20,400  | 20,400  | 23,200  | 41,300    | 33,700  |
| UNFPA  | 12,200  | 12,000  | 24,000  | 24,000  | 8,100     | 14,400  |
| PIDP   | 9,000   | 9,000   | 18,000  | 18,000  | 8,900     | 7,900   |
| SPREP  | 11,000  | 17,500  | 5,700   | 5,700   | 10,600    | 9,400   |
| UNICEF | -       | -       | -       | -       | 18,400    | 16,400  |
| SPGSC  | 10,170  | 18,100  | 13,200  | 13,200  | 17,900    | 9,100   |
| FAO    | 88,520  | 49,300  | 49,000  | 52,000  | 61,000    | 54,200  |
| APDC   | 18,200  | 18,200  | 36,400  |         | 13,800    | 16,400  |
| UNESCO |         | 50,000  | 50,000  |         | 54,500    | 60,800  |
| USP    |         | 235,000 | 150,000 | 360,000 | 1,154,000 | 459,800 |
| TOTAL  | 250,450 | 479,700 | 440,700 | 573,600 | 1,458,900 | 782,200 |

Source: CIG, Annual Budget Estimates for 1990 to 1995. Figures were drawn from the annual budget of various Ministries including Treasury, Education and Foreign Affairs.

The University of the South Pacific (USP) underlines a costly involvement for the Cook Islands. In the 1994 year alone, the Cook Islands paid USP over one million New Zealand dollars. The USP cost represents around 77% of total expenditure for Cook Islands contributions in the one year. The payments to United Nations specialized, organizations also display a daunting financial burden on the microstate. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNESCO each cost over \$NZ50, 000 a year (see Table 4.4).

Figure 4.6, expands the image in Table 4.2. Figure 4.6, shows annual Cook Islands contributions to organizations. Through a bar chart it displays total annual contributions over a five year period. Notably, a high contribution to USP for the year 1994 stresses that particular year. Nonetheless, general increases in annual payments, shows a steady escalation, emphasizing the interest of the Cook Islands government in pursuing direct involvement and participation in international and regional organizations. Thus far, based on continued participation, the cost of that involvement is considered worthwhile when compared with the general benefits accrued to the nation.

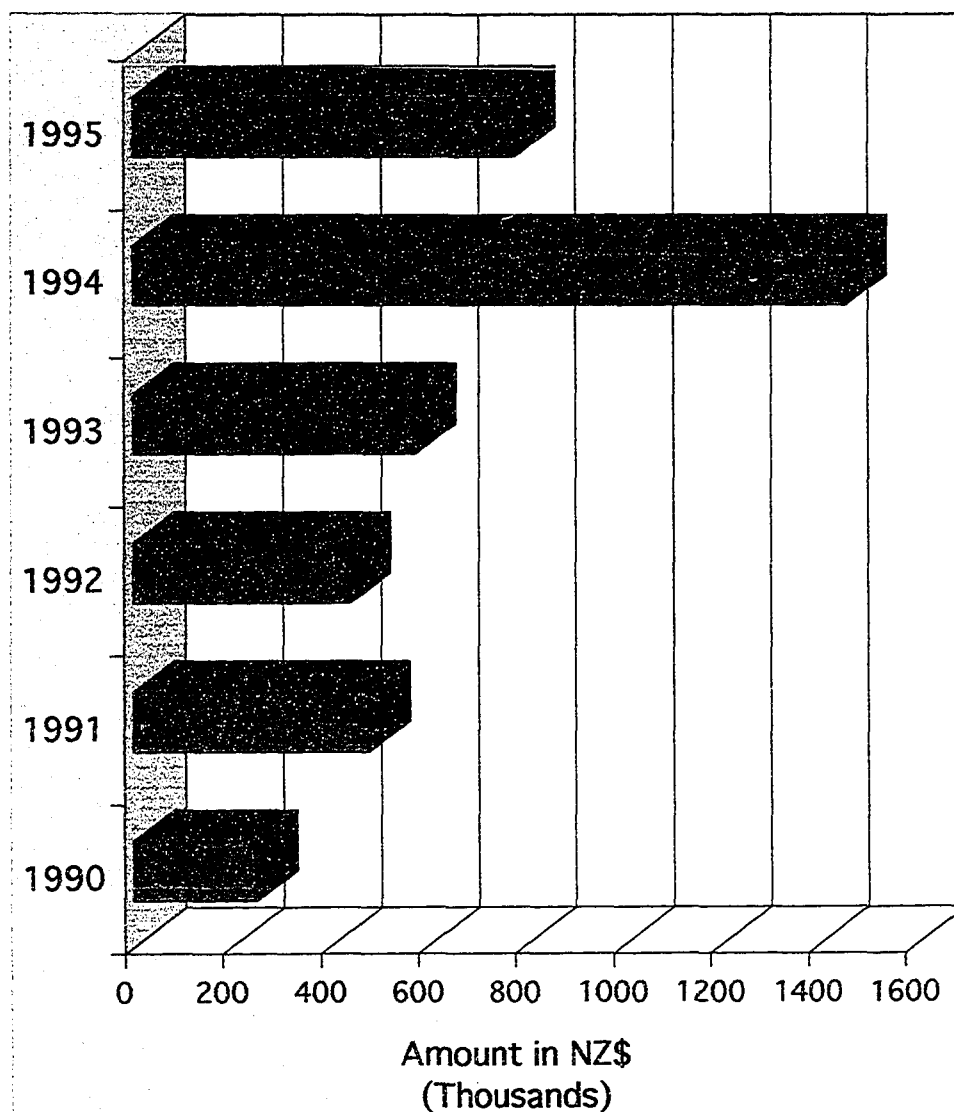


FIGURE 4.6: Annual Cook Islands Contributions to Organizations

All of the organizations in which the Cook Islands has sought involvement clearly have an orientation toward development, ranging from fisheries to agriculture. Contributions to various regional and international bodies, as shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.6, are also not always drawn on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, the Ministry has a role in monitoring those organizations. Subsequently, the budget of the Ministry does not totally reveal the complete operational cost of foreign affairs' activities. Nonetheless the cost reflected, showed a spiraling increase indicative of government interest in continued international involvement.

Between 1990 and 1995, two divisions in the Ministry moved to other government departments. The International Division changed into a National Advisory Board and eventually became incorporated under the Prime Minister's Department (1991-92). The second division involved Protocol, which transferred to the Internal Affairs Department (1992-93). Although these divisions transferred, essentially they continued their functions maintaining a working relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, in spite of the transfers which included absorption of costs by other



departments, the cost of the Ministry budget still spiraled upward.

Table 4.3 breaks down the Foreign Affairs Ministry's annual expenditure for the period 1989 to 1995, into working program divisions. All amounts are in NZ\$'000. Program areas include international relations, administration, protocol services, Wellington office, Auckland office, Hawaii office, Sydney office, VIP lounge and the Los Angeles office.<sup>8</sup> The study includes Protocol because of its long association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since the institutionalization of a full Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1984, both protocol and international affairs have become integral to its operations. Table 4.3 reflects the change in the International Relations, Protocol Services and the VIP Lounge. These were all shifted out of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budget, although government still accrued the costs of running those programs. Table 4.3, also supports the argument that the major cause of increases in the Foreign Affairs budget, lies in the opening of new overseas missions or the expansion of existing ones. These include representation in Los Angeles, Hawaii, Auckland, Wellington and Canberra. Only the Oslo "office" maintained its budget at the same level, although it has been in existence since 1984. <sup>9</sup>

TABLE 4.3: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Annual Expenditure  
for the Period 1990 to 1995 (NZ\$'000)

| Vote Item No<br>Program        | 1989<br>/1990<br><i>a</i><br>Expended | 1990<br>/1991<br><i>b</i><br>Expended | 1991<br>/1992<br><i>b</i><br>Expended | 1992<br>/1993<br><i>b</i><br>Expended | 1993<br>/1994<br><i>e</i><br>Expended | 1994<br>/1995<br><i>e</i><br>Estimate |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>International Relations</b> | 110.9                                 | <i>b</i><br>410.8                     | <i>b</i><br>300.9                     | <i>b</i><br>264.5                     | <i>e</i><br>8.1                       | <i>e</i><br>-                         |
| <b>Admin</b>                   | 385.0                                 | 400.2                                 | 321.2                                 | 358                                   | 341.0                                 | 361.4                                 |
| <b>Protocol Services</b>       | 213.3                                 | 363.9                                 | 257.8                                 | <i>c</i><br>267.8                     | <i>c</i><br>1.3                       | <i>c</i><br>-                         |
| <b>Wellington Office</b>       | 152.6                                 | 519.4                                 | 185.3                                 | 222.6                                 | 235.9                                 | 232.7                                 |
| <b>Auckland Office</b>         | 479.6                                 | 535.8                                 | 407.9                                 | 368.4                                 | 361.8                                 | 419.0                                 |
| <b>Hawaii Office</b>           | 97.3                                  | 114.4                                 | 113.8                                 | 158.4                                 | 145.6                                 | 141.8                                 |
| <b>Canberra Office</b>         | 16.9                                  | 33.1                                  | 23.7                                  | 394.1                                 | 379.9                                 | 441.4                                 |
| <b>Sydney Office</b>           | 204.5                                 | 215.7                                 | 241.3                                 | 193.0                                 | 205.0                                 | 250.2                                 |
| <b>VIP Lounge</b>              | 6.0                                   | 7.4                                   | 5.1                                   | <i>c</i>                              | <i>c</i>                              | <i>c</i>                              |
| <b>Los Angeles Office</b>      | -                                     | -                                     | -                                     | -                                     | -                                     | 73.2                                  |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>           | 1,666.1                               | 2,189.9                               | 1,556.1                               | 1,694.1                               | 1,669.1                               | 1,919.1                               |
| <b>Revenue</b>                 | 2.0                                   | 3.5                                   | 3.1                                   | 27.0                                  | 6.0                                   | 5.3                                   |

- a. Financial year changed from ending in 31 March to 30 June, to be in line with NZ.  
b. The budget for International Division was shifted to a new department called "National Advisory Board." Year's total for FOAFF excludes this identified budget.  
c. The budget for VIP Lounge was incorporated into the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The year's total for FOAFF excludes this identified budget.  
d. The budget for the National Advisory Board is incorporated into the PM's Department.
- Source: CIG, Estimates of the Expenditure and Revenue.

The Ministry personnel is another major challenge for the Secretary of Foreign Affairs. There is a constant need for staff qualified, available and reliable. Between 1990 and 1994, while Administration Division permanent staff increased in from six to thirteen salary workers, most of the newly recruited staff possessed no University degrees. Tertiary qualifications formed an important foundation for research abilities. In 1995, two qualified staff resigned from the Ministry. It further created shortage and placed a heavy burden on the experienced though overworked Acting Secretary (E. Pitman, personal communication, July 3, 1995). Faced with comparatively low salaries by international standards, Foreign Affairs continues into the future with major conflicts between government's desire to increase international interaction and the reality of qualified staff and resource shortage. Table 4.4, lists the Foreign Affairs Personnel (1990 -1995) for all divisions reflecting changes. Table 4.4, shows the number of average salary and wage workers for each year proving that notable staff increases primarily occurred in the administration program based in Rarotonga. While spiraling costs occurred in the Missions abroad, personnel increases have taken place in the Ministry's administrative center.

TABLE 4.4: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Personnel Movement

| Division/<br>Program    | 1990<br>Salary<br>/Wage   | 1991<br>Salary<br>/Wage   | 1992<br>Salary<br>/Wage   | 1993<br>Salary<br>/Wage   | 1994<br>Salary<br>/Wage   | 1995<br>Salary<br>/Wage   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| International Relations | 3/0                       | 3/0                       | 4/0                       | 4/0                       | National Monetary Boards  | Moved to PM's Dept.       |
| Administration          | 6/1                       | 7/1                       | 6/1                       | 7/1                       | 13/1                      | 11/1                      |
| Protocol Services       | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs |
| Wellington Office       | 3/0                       | 4/0                       | 4/0                       | 4/1                       | 3/0                       | 3/0                       |
| Auckland Office         | 9/1                       | 8/1                       | 8/1                       | 8/1                       | 8/1                       | 8/1                       |
| Hawaii Office           | 1/0                       | 1/0                       | 1/1                       | 1/0                       | 2/0                       | 1/0                       |
| Canberra Office         | 1/1                       | 1/1                       | 1/0                       | 1/0                       | 3/2                       | 3/2                       |
| Sydney Office           | 2/0                       | 2/0                       | 2/0                       | 2/0                       | 3/0                       | 3/0                       |
| VIP Lounge              | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs | Moved to Internal Affairs |
| Los Angeles Office      | 0/0                       | 0/0                       | 0/0                       | 0/0                       | 0/0                       | 1/0                       |
| <b>FOAFF TOTAL</b>      | <b>25/3</b>               | <b>26/3</b>               | <b>26/3</b>               | <b>27/3</b>               | <b>32/4</b>               | <b>30/4</b>               |

Source: CIG. Estimates Of the Expenditure and Revenue for the Years 1994 and 1995. Ministry of FOAFF records.

Since 1972, the voluntary pursuit of an expanding Cook Islands Foreign Affairs capability has continued in spite of escalating costs. The advancement of the Ministry, its objectives, the organization of personnel, and the actual expenditure toward particular operations all underlines a strong focus on the economic developmental needs of the country. Subsequently, the management of a Cook Islands Foreign Affairs suggests an inherent and significant link to the economic survival of the nation.

#### Endnotes

1. T. Henry, personal communication, August 15, 1982.
2. P. Willis, personal communication, July 11, 1995.
3. The composition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not vary considerably among countries with its organization usually based on functions (R. Feltham, 1977, p. 9).
4. The Office of the International Legal Advisor transferred from under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995 to directly report to the Prime Minister.
5. Since Cook Islands citizens are also citizens of New Zealand, they can benefit from the New Zealand diplomatic and consular facilities overseas while having access to Cook Islands offices. Cook Islanders living in New Zealand are particularly well placed to tap into both sources of assistance.
6. A National Culture Center construction project in Rarotonga costing at least NZ\$15 million involved major construction material orders through the Cook Islands Auckland office.

7. Other organizations to which the Cook Islands have membership include the Pacific Forum Line, Conference of South Pacific Chiefs of Police, Cook Islands-Niue-New Zealand Joint Shipping Service, Regional Committee on Trade, South Pacific Regional Civil Aviation Council, South Pacific Labor Minister's Conference, South Pacific Regional Meeting on Telecommunications, South Pacific Regional Shipping Council (Foreign Affairs Records).

8. The revenue shown in Table 4.5, comes from the sale of national flags.

9. Because there was no actual expenditure, the Oslo Office does not appear on the Ministry's budget, although, it does operate effectively as an Honorary Consul.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY

*My canoe is getting old . . . and so is Tom's. I can see a fast catamaran coming up from behind that will swamp us both.*

Sir Albert Henry, Cook Islands Premier 1965-78  
(quoted in Hancock, 1979, p. 135).

*The fundamental challenge of change facing all of us as we race towards the Pacific Century, is to overcome the problems jeopardizing our very survival. This will require readjusting our world view, stepping down from our self erected pedestals as the supreme beings on this planet, assuming our rightful humble position in nature's web of life and living in harmony with nature.*

Sir Geoffrey A. Henry (1991, p. 80), Cook Islands Prime Minister 1993,1989-96.

*We must turn bureaucratic institutions into entrepreneurial institutions, ready to kill off obsolete initiatives, willing to do more with less. Eager to absorb new ideas.*

David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1993, p. 23).

The previous chapter examined the development and management of the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accentuating a strong economic theme. This chapter explores that link further by reviewing some major country programs within the strategic decision areas. These areas include economic-developmental, military-security, political-diplomatic and cultural-

status.

The discussion specifically highlights the capacity of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs in microstates to effectively continue under increasingly inadequate national resources. Such existence, intertwines with a variety of projects carried out under free association. Those activities, in essence, reflect the government's efforts to interpret its own aspirations, project possible solutions, and set up acceptable programs. These show a link to the sustainability of Foreign Affairs as an institution.

Sustainable institutions can be viewed as collective entities that recover some of their costs or even become self-financing. They provide benefits regularly and survive over time as identifiable units. A broad definition of sustainability in relationship to institutions, describes it as a system's capacity to produce sufficient valued outputs to sustain continued production.

As an institution, this is the challenge facing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since institutions are typically sustained patterns of social organization, they also have an important internal dynamic human interaction. Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (1990), labeled it the institutional-human dimension that incorporates a variety of many



areas. The areas include knowledge, skills, communication, motivation, participation, public sector linkages, culture and values (p. 7).

In essence, the development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs underlines its capacity to produce sufficient valued outputs to sustain continued existence. An ever increasing expenditure that requires the approval of Parliament, suggests that thus far, the Ministry act to the satisfaction of government. Since its initial development, the Foreign Affairs budget continues to increase. That drain on the nation's limited resources suggests an increased awareness of the Ministry's expanding role that cuts across most other national activities.

Over the past thirteen years, the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs has enlarged its percentage share of the national government budget. Government has propelled an increase from 1.8% (or NZ\$447,000) in the 1982-83 financial year to 2.9% (or almost NZ\$2 million) in 1994-95 (see Table 5.1). The sustainability of such a fast growing foreign affairs program underlines the challenge of buoyancy. It raises the question of the level at which foreign affairs, as an institution, overburdens the country.

Table 5.1 lists, the annual Foreign Affairs expenditure for the fourteen-year period 1982 to 1995. The Table compares the annual government expenditure with that of Foreign Affairs. It figures out the percentage share of the Ministry for each budget year. All figures are presented in New Zealand thousand dollar units (NZ\$'000).

Since the formalization of a Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1984, its percentage share of the national budget increased. The exception covers the year 1992-93 when the budget notably dropped. Government diverted resources to help in the country's hosting of the 6th Festival of Pacific Arts. During that Festival over 2,000 participants visited the Cook Islands in a two-week period.

Conversely, a notable increase in the 1985-86 budget reflects the hosting by the Cook Islands of three major events: the South Pacific Forum, the Pacific Islands Conference, and the South Pacific Mini Games. These three events occurred during the months of July and August, and involved the Ministry directly for financial, material and human requirements. Not surprising, the costs strained the Ministry's regular budget.

TABLE 5.1: Foreign Affairs Total Expenditure

| YEAR         | Total GOVT.<br>National Budget<br>(NZ\$'000) | FOAFF<br>Ministry Budget<br>(NZ\$'000) | FOAFF %<br>share |
|--------------|--|--|------------------|
| 1994-95      | 74,034.50                                    | 1,919.70                               | 2.59             |
| 1993-94      | 72,585.00                                    | 1,669.10                               | 2.30             |
| 1992-93      | 74,839.80                                    | 1,421.20                               | 1.90             |
| 1991-92      | 67,721.20                                    | 1,556.10                               | 2.30             |
| 1990-91      | 79,564.20                                    | 2,189.90                               | 2.75             |
| 1989-90      | 60,152.50                                    | 1,666.10                               | 2.77             |
| 1988-89      | 57,062.40                                    | 1,437.10                               | 2.52             |
| 1987-88      | 55,942.10                                    | 1,209.30                               | 2.16             |
| 1986-87      | 47,257.10                                    | 1,125.90                               | 2.38             |
| 1985-86      | 41,908.00                                    | 1,241.40                               | 2.96             |
| 1984-85      | 34,113.10                                    | 692.80                                 | 2.03             |
| 1983-84      | 29,322.10                                    | 576.10                                 | 1.96             |
| 1982-83      | 24,888.40                                    | 447.0                                  | 1.80             |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>719,387.40</b>                            | <b>17,151.70</b>                       | <b>2.38</b>      |

CIG, Estimates of the Expenditure and Revenue.<sup>1</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs carries out its responsibilities through the two channels of Central Administration and Missions Abroad. Often, the program activities run simultaneously. This institutional approach often cloaks with confidentiality and high level diplomacy. With its specialized staff, much of the work is completed through communication, travel and international board room meetings.

The identification of regional and international affairs as two separate divisions within the Ministry also underlines the microstate's scarce resources. Simultaneously it shows government's appreciation of continuing to have some form of representation. The direct operation of a Foreign Affairs Ministry allows government an opportunity to interpret its own aspirations, and to pursue those ambitions beyond the confines of its territorial boundaries.

Subsequently, there are several advantages for establishing an operational Foreign Affairs institution, best categorized under the basic four decision areas. These areas incorporate security-military, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental and cultural-status.

### **Military - Security**

The aspirations of the Cook Islands government under the military-security area seem to focus on national security from a hostile environment rather than a direct military threat. Nuclear testing and fisheries poaching issues primarily influence foreign policies. The existence of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs created an opportunity for the Cook Islands to play a role in establishing a “peace zone” in the Pacific. A Cook Islands official could express its own concerns more effectively on regional security issues and could secure intergovernmental defense arrangements. The Ministry has subsequently become an important vehicle for communicating specific security concerns. For the Cook Islands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ) treaty, otherwise known as the Rarotonga Treaty. Ministry staff carried out that effort effectively with legal assistance from the Cook Islands Crown Law Office. Officials from the two offices became active participants in several SPF working committees that drafted the treaty.<sup>2</sup>

At the 1985 Forum Meeting in Rarotonga, South Pacific Islands leaders approved and signed into force the Rarotonga Treaty. The

Ministry of Foreign Affairs has since continued to monitor the progress of the treaty in international forums, coordinating with SPF. Soviet Union and China have subsequently supported the Treaty by signing the protocols to the Agreement. Sir Geoffrey Henry the Cook Islands Prime Minister, offered to act as host to France, United Kingdom and the United States, to add their signatures to the protocols (CIN, 1996, January 29, p. 1). In line with the spirit of the Rarotonga Treaty, Foreign Affairs has on occasions communicated protests directly or through international forums to France and Japan on nuclear related concerns. The Cook Islands strongly supported the SPF protest against Japan's decision to transport plutonium across the Pacific (CIN, 1992, July 9, p. 3). A French renewal of testing in Moruroa in 1995 also compelled a Cook Islands diplomatic protest that included the Cook Islands voyaging canoe Te-Au-O-Tonga sailing into French Polynesian waters. The diplomatic maneuvering required was especially delicate for the Ministry because of Cook Islands special ties to the French Polynesian government in Tahiti.<sup>3</sup>

Although many Cook Islanders served in WWI and WWII, military defense issues have since had a low profile in the Cook

Islands. There has been a general lack of interest on the Defense Agreement by Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS). New Zealand's adopted strong nuclear free policies have fueled that lack of focus on ANZUS. Due to such policies, New Zealand conflicts with the United States because of a US "neither denies nor confirm policies" regarding the carrying of nuclear weapons. NZ subsequently prevents any US naval and aircraft ships from entering its ports.

Sir Thomas Davis who was the Cook Islands Prime Minister during the 1980s, offered his country as a port of call to the United States military. Davis may have had other reasons for the gesture since he viewed the United States as better equipped to defend the Cook Islands. Others ask the need to have access to military defense and argue that there is realistically no military threat facing the Cook Islands.<sup>4</sup> Notably a preoccupation on military activities has not been a foreign affairs' focus although, there have been some surveillance activities especially involving aircraft from New Zealand and Australia. In 1985-86, the Australian government offered a patrol boat to the Cook Islands through the island government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However when delivered, the Cook Islands Government passed on the boat, *Te-Kukupa*, to the

Cook Islands Police Department for operations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had served its purpose. Over the years, there have been several naval and aircraft ship visits from New Zealand, Australia, France, United States and once even a submarine from USSR. Since the formulation of the Ministry, foreign affairs' staff has tended to regard such military visits as more of diplomatic rather than a military security related activity (FOAFF files).

### **Political - Diplomatic**

Cook Islanders interest in maintaining peaceful, consultative and cooperative relations with other countries and organizations, directly influences their aspirations in the political-diplomatic area. By its actions, government seems to have deemed organizational membership and the establishment of overseas missions as an appropriate means of attaining those goals. Subsequently, through its foreign affairs Ministry, the Cook islands have become a member of several international and regional organizations and participate in many notable multilateral meetings.

The South Pacific Forum (SPF) in particular, is where the Cook islands have joined other countries in effectively carrying out dialogue on an international stage. Such discussions have occurred



regularly with the United States, United Kingdom, People's Republic of China, Canada, Japan and France.

A survey of activities through the SPF in 1994, underline a variety of issues drawing participation from the Cook Islands Foreign Affairs. It also emphasized a direct link between the country's political-diplomatic efforts and economic-developmental interests. Discussions with the US in 1994 centered on development assistance: the closure of the USAID offices in Suva and Port Moresby, the Joint Commercial Commission (JCC), the Joint Declaration of Cooperation (JDC), and Asia/Pacific cooperation. Environmental issues also gained prominence including the Global Conference on Sustainable Development on Small Island Developing States (GCSIDS), Climatic Change and Sea Level Rise, and issues involving waste disposal. Pacific countries have even proposed a regional convention on hazardous waste and fisheries (E. Pitman, personal communication, July 16, 1995).

The multilateral dialogue with the United Kingdom centered on development assistance, trade, investment, population and environmental issues. With the Republic of China, issues included economic difficulties, ROC's development assistance policy,

population, APEC, trade, investment, and environmental concerns.

Dialogue with Canada covered economic assistance policy, forestry management, Asia//Pacific cooperation, environmental issues, high seas' fisheries, a global conference on the sustainable development for Small Island States, waste management and political and security issues. SPF communication with Japan incorporated their development assistance policy, resource issues, trade, investment, population and environmental concerns. With France, economic issues included airlines technical support, development cooperation, environmental concerns and economic contacts with French territories in the Pacific.

The "Taiwan/ROC-FORUM Countries Dialogue" on 5 August 1994, in the Gold Coast of Australia, underlined a sense of future Pacific direction. Several FORUM countries talked with Taiwan government representatives. Although the Cook Islands did not send a representative, the projects discussed were of some interest to the Cook Islands. This is particularly true in the fisheries' area. The Gold Coast meeting marked an increasing realization among Pacific Islands governments that perhaps the future of the Pacific islands lay with the Asian countries. The Cook Islands expects a foreign

policy impact from that exchange (SPF, 1994).

In 1994 alone, the Ministry of Foreign affairs staff monitored more than thirty major international or regional meetings. Much of the economic-developmental information and assistance the Ministry staff received usually passed on to other governmental departments for internal application.

### **Economic - Developmental**

The aspirations of a poor resource microstate government under the economic-developmental decision area is toward the basic survival of the country (B. Paeniu, personal communication, July 12, 1987).<sup>5</sup> For the Cook Islands, this has highlighted a variety of major concerns all of which has drawn a major involvement for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry has become involved in assisting other government sectors in gaining access to overseas assistance.

A review of aid, agriculture, marine resources and outer islands development, underline the national government's ability to survive as having an intricate link with the efforts of Foreign Affairs. In Foreign Affairs work, one activity transcends all other areas: aid assistance whether as money, equipment, personnel or "know-how." Regarding the Cook Islands foreign ministry, aid has

been an important activity whether carried out directly or in support of the efforts of other government departments.

### **Aid Assistance**

Until 1993, aid to the Cook Islands has been on the increase. Foreign Affairs has played a significant role in securing aid support for other government and private sectors. Since 1993 however, it seems that as Foreign Affairs reduced its direct involvement in aid negotiations, there has been a noticeable decline in aid. The change has been particularly conspicuous regarding the Cook Islands' largest single aid donor: New Zealand. Notably, the island government expects that New Zealand aid will continue to decrease into the future.

Tables 5.2 and 5.3, lists the annual development assistance from organizations and other countries, to the Cook Islands for the years 1990 to 1994. It includes an estimate for the years 1995 to 1998.

Tables 5.2 and 5.3, also shows New Zealand as the largest single aid donor each year to the Cook Islands. It gave over NZ\$14.3 million in 1990 and NZ\$12.3 million by 1995.

TABLE 5.2: Development Assistance to the Cook Islands, 1990-96.

| Source             | 1990<br><i>a.</i> | 1991<br><i>a.</i> | 1992<br><i>a.</i> | 1993<br><i>a.</i> | 1994<br><i>a.</i> | 1995<br><i>a.</i> | 1996<br><i>a.</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| NZ                 | 14320             | 14010             | 14000             | 13500             | 13000             | 12300             | 11900             |
| NZ<br><i>b.</i> BS | 8900              | 8700              | 8500              | 8300              | 8100              | 7700              | 7300              |
| NZ<br><i>c.</i> PA | 5420              | 5310              | 5500              | 5200              | 4900              | 4600              | 4600              |
| Aust               | 1746              | 1392              | 1542              | 1535              | 1535              | 1535              | 1500              |
| Canada             | 200               | 210               | 200               | 173               | 186               | 200               | 200               |
| German             | 42                | 48                | 48                | 50                | 50                | 50                | 50                |
| France             |                   |                   |                   |                   | 25                | 25                | 25                |
| FFA                |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   | 140               | 140               |
| FORUM              |                   | 146               | 166               | 215               | 149               | 140               | 130               |
| UNDP               | 177               | 394               | 100               | 213               | 610               | 200               | 200               |
| UNICEF             | 21                | -                 | -                 | -                 | -                 | 25                | 25                |
| UNFPA              | -                 | -                 | -                 | 247               | 96                | 15                | 15                |
| UNESCO             | -                 | -                 | 405               | 749               | 78                | 180               | 100               |
| WHO                | 351               | -                 | 217               | -                 | 80                | 80                | 80                |
| Hans<br>Seidel     | -                 | 32                | 51                | 46                | 66                | 65                | 50                |
| ADB                | 843               | 1602              | 600               | 4970              |                   |                   |                   |
| TOTAL              | 17700             | 17833             | 17326             | 21696             | 15875             | 14955             | 14415             |

*a.* All amounts are in NZ\$'000 for Year ended 30 June.

*b.* BS = Budget Support    *c.* PA = Project Aid    Est. = estimate

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, July 1995.

TABLE 5.3: Development Assistance to the Cook Islands, 1996-98

| Source             | 1996<br><i>a.</i> | 1997<br><i>a.</i> | 1998<br><i>a.</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| NZ                 | 11900             | 11200             | 10500             |
| NZ<br><i>b.</i> BS | 7300              | 6900              | 6500              |
| NZ<br><i>c.</i> PA | 4600              | 4300              | 4000              |
| Aust               | 1500              | 1500              | 1500              |
| Canada             | 200               | 200               | 200               |
| German             | 50                | 50                | 50                |
| France             | 25                | 25                | 25                |
| FFA                | 140               | 140               | 140               |
| FORUM              | 130               | 130               | 130               |
| UNDP               | 200               | 200               | 200               |
| UNICEF             | 25                | 25                | 25                |
| UNFPA              | 15                | 15                | 15                |
| UNESCO             | 100               | 100               | 100               |
| WHO                | 80                | 80                | 80                |
| Hans Seidel        | 50                | 50                | 50                |
| ADB                |                   | 10                |                   |
| TOTAL              | 14415             | 13725             | 12915             |

*a.* All amounts are in NZ\$'000 for Year ended 30 June.

*b.* BS = Budget Support    *c.* PA = Project Aid    Est. = estimate

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, July 1995.

The source of aid identified in Tables 5.2 and 5.3, covers a range of organizations and countries. It includes New Zealand (NZ), New Zealand budgetary aid support (NZBS), New Zealand project aid (NZPA), Australia (Aust.), Canada, German, France, Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA), Forum Secretariat (FORUM), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), Hans Seidel Foundation and, the Asian Developments Bank (ADB).

The Cook Islands government expects New Zealand to continue to be its most important donor country up to 1998. Notably that aid is slowly declining. The media links this decline to a New Zealand government's displeasure with Cook Islands policies. However, New Zealand officials have often publicly denied it. During the 1995-96 aid talks, Mac Price, the New Zealand aid team leader to the Cook Islands issued a news release. He confirmed that the threat of cuts to the Cook Islands was not an issue in the aid talks (CI Press, 1995, July 30, p. 12). He was alluding to New Zealand's inquiries into issues that linked the latter's tax haven activities (CIN, 1995, July

25, p. 12). New Zealand's aid program to the Cook Islands has been a point of some contention over the years.

While some New Zealand politicians have highlighted the "large" amounts of NZ aid to the Cook Islands, other Cook Islands politicians have pointed to the same "small" amounts. When discussing the New Zealand-Cook Islands relationship, observers underline the Cook Islands advantages of direct aid, project aid, and free access for Cook Islanders into New Zealand.

For New Zealand, the benefits are a lopsided trade in its favor and access to an island labor supply. Neil McKegg, a successful NZ businessperson who has lived for many years in the Cook Islands, emphasizes the fallacy of taking for granted that the Cook Islands gives nothing in return for its aid from NZ. In looking at the relationship, he alludes to a responsibility for New Zealand to maintain sustainability in health, education and outer island development.

McKegg observes that NZ only granted aid as a related response to UN Committee insistence for decolonization. It developed when the Cook Islands ceased to become an integral part of New Zealand (McKegg, CIN, 1995, July 10, p. 5). McKegg underscores that the Cook



Islands did not request for decolonization. New Zealand bowed to UN pressure and as part of its "persuasion" packages. It subsequently offered the Cook Islands budgeting assistance for free health, free education and support for the impoverished outer islands.

Subsequently, the New Zealand aid was in effect a transfer of costs that the New Zealand government had previously been incurring. Apart from the issue of aid, New Zealand is effectively a net beneficiary of the Cook Islands. New Zealand exports to Cook Islands projects this. For year ending December 1993, the exports were worth FOB NZ\$50 million. The following year it was valued at NZ\$85 million. By contrast, Cook Islands export to New Zealand for 1994 amounted to only NZ\$2.76 million. McKegg estimated that the cost New Zealand would have been responsible for, was reaching \$40 million per annum in the early 1970's. It was a much larger amount when compared to what New Zealand was now giving the Cook Islands government (McKegg, CIN, 1995, July 10, p. 5).

Current New Zealand aid to the Cook Islands reduced to 9.8 million and officials expect it to slide down further. For 1995-96, a project aid package of NZ\$4.5 million is designated for specific developmental areas. These are human resources, private sector,

outer islands, public sector reform and resources' management.

Table 5.4, shows the New Zealand aid to the Cook Islands for the year 1995-96 (CIN, 1995, July 30, p. 13). The list includes designated allocations. From negotiations between New Zealand and Cook Islands representatives, officials expect that the total aid package of NZ\$4.5 million earmarks five areas. It will cover human resource development (NZ\$1.5 million), particularly the costs of New Zealand teachers coming to the Cook Islands and grants for Cook Islands students studying overseas.

Another area is private sector development (NZ\$1.5 million), especially tourism development and the Cook Islands Development Bank (ADB) equity funds. The next budgetary allocation goes to outer islands development (NZ\$0.75 million), which spreads over electricity, water and feasibility studies. The balance of the aid package will be designated to public sector reform (NZ\$0.25 million) and to resources management (NZ\$0.35 million) for a variety of activities. Notably, the restructuring issues raised some private concerns among many government workers who feared losing their jobs in the future.

TABLE 5.4: NZ Aid to the Cook Islands (1995-96)  
Designated Allocation

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Human Resource Development         | 1.50 million |
| New Zealand teachers' Study grants |              |
| Private Sector Development         | 1.50 million |
| Tourism                            |              |
| CIDB equity funding                |              |
| Outer Islands Development          | 0.75 million |
| Electricity                        |              |
| Water                              |              |
| Feasibility Studies                |              |
| Public Sector Reform               | 0.25 million |
| Restructuring                      |              |
| Resources Management               | 0.35 million |
| Consultancy                        |              |
| Survey                             |              |
| Other Prospects                    |              |
| Various                            |              |
| TOTAL PROJECT AID PACKAGE          | 4.50 million |

Some government officials suggest that one attraction about aid centers on the fact that you do not have to pay it back. However, drawbacks underline a “dependency tendency” where one relies on the aid. Another difficulty arises as that aid takes on a “strings attached” syndrome where the donor favors funding their own preferred projects. These are not uncommon dilemmas facing the staff of foreign affairs.<sup>6</sup> When compared to trade, aid usually comes in second best. An FAO Cook Islands Country Report expounded those values when it stated, “The Future is trade. You can double, triple or quadruple the aid: it will not do. Trade brings in 50 times more than

aid,” (FAO, 1994). Government recognizes the value of trade as a stimulus to assist growth in the private sector.

For the most part however, that growth has to initially depend on overseas assistance. Agricultural, marine resources and tourism development have subsequently been important focal areas for Foreign Affairs personnel. Government recognizes that these areas cause two important facets linked with trade: (1) an important substitution capability and (2) an export prospectus.

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture developments in a microstate, underline its land scarcity. Even in 1953, of the total Cook Islands land area of 58,452 acres, only 33,826 or 58% was arable land. Of that arable land 9,517 or 28% was suitable for cash crops (Fox and Grange, 1953). Since then, an increasing proportion of arable land has become unavailable to agriculture subsequently creating a worsening situation.

Vegetables, citrus, pawpaw (papaya), banana, root crops, coffee, vanilla, mangoes, maire, copra, and home gardens remain as the main crops grown in the Cook Islands. However, the 1988 Agriculture census show only 15% of all available land as utilized for such planting purposes. The rest were house sites, left fallow, or

unsuitable for planting. In their study of agriculture in the Cook Islands, Saifullah Syed and Ngatokorua Mataio (1993) suggest that migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy (MIRAD factors) constrain the normal incentives to expand local production (p.2).

Fortunately, this bleak picture confines to selected areas. It does not pervade throughout the agriculture program. The New Zealand government's DSIR once completely ran the agriculture research station on Rarotonga, *Totokoitu*, with full NZ funding. The Cook Islands could localize the station by July 1992.<sup>7</sup> Cook Islands Minister of Agriculture, Vaine Tairea, declared that "New Zealand has done its part to gradually put our local people into a position to carry out our own research work and to carry out our own scientific work" (CIN, 7 July 1992, p. 1). However, the Minister recognized fully that the Cook Islands would have to continue to rely on New Zealand for technical assistance on occasions. Sustainability for the operations still looked toward New Zealand.

Table 5.5, lists the percentage share funding from New Zealand and from the Cook Islands governments to the Totokoitu Agriculture Research Station in the Cook Islands. It covers the years 1989 to 1992. The table highlights again a declining commitment by New

Zealand in providing financial assistance to Cook Islands internal projects. Conversely, the table shows an increasing burden on the Cook Islands own financial resources. It also alludes to an increased commitment from the Cook Islands government to maintain the station effectively. It calls on both the Totokoitu Station and Foreign Affairs staffs to search for sources of assistance beyond Cook Islands' shores.

TABLE 5.5: Funding of the Totokoitu Station

| YEAR | NZ FUNDING | COOK IS FUNDING |
|------|------------|-----------------|
| 1989 | 75%        | 25%             |
| 1990 | 50%        | 50%             |
| 1991 | 25%        | 75%             |
| 1992 | 0%         | 100%            |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Rarotonga.

As an export sector, agriculture farmers in the Cook Islands have not been successful in recent years especially, since New Zealand opened its market to international competition. This action effectively removed favorable tariff protection on Cook Islands

agricultural products and undermined a bustling citrus, banana and pineapple export trade. This difficulty in competing internationally, has forced many producers to accept import substitution for the food requirements of local consumers and visitors.

To achieve sustainability in the agriculture industry, as with other industries in the Cook Islands, government introduced incentives and concessions. These initiatives offered enticing features to farming, commercial manufacturing and construction that included tariff protection, import duties' concession, tax incentives and even depreciation allowances.

Foreign Affairs involvement in agricultural activities confines to information gathering and assistance in overseas agriculture personnel training programs. Government has adopted this practical approach. However, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has also had the opportunity to encourage the development of a successful export industry from the Cook Islands to Hawaii. It involves the root crop *taro* and a popular creeping plant used to make the *maile lei*. Apart from this limited potential for specialized exotic exports, the confined land area of the Cook Islands limits the extent of Foreign Affairs involvement.

### **Marine Resources**

Marine resources offer more potential for the Cook Islands than agriculture. Not surprisingly, the Foreign Affairs Ministry has been active in regional organization acting for Fisheries.<sup>8</sup> Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources enters several regional and international programs. These include SPC's Inshore Fisheries Program, Tuna and Billfish Assessment Program, and annual conferences. It also embraces the FFA's fisheries programs and FAO activities. Benefits include training of fisheries personnel, current international information, technology and expertise, and opportunities for developing income generating programs.

Notably, Cook Islands fisheries' activities extend beyond the traditional inshore fisheries practices for local consumption. They include, marine resources of pearl farming (for both pearls and shells) and trochus, which have become important export items (Syed and Mataio, 1993).

Black pearl production in particular, has become the country's major fisheries related economic activity. Pearl farming in the islands of Manihiki, Penrhyn, Rakahanga and possibly Suvarrow,



offers realistic income returns. However, quality pearls and international prices determine the continued sustainability of the industry.

Table 5.6, identifies Manihiki island pearl sales for the three-year period 1989 to 1991. The table includes the number of pearls sold, the dollar value and the price for each pearl. Pearl sales for Manihiki show a steady increase in dollar amounts earned although the average price for each pearl reached its peak in 1990.

TABLE 5.6: Pearl Sales for Manihiki

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Pearl amount</u> | <u>Dollar value</u>   | <u>Price per pearl</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1989        | 3,000               | NZ\$ 200,000          | NZ\$66.67              |
| 1990        | 6,000               | NZ\$ 1.3 million      | NZ\$240                |
| 1991        | 39,000              | Over \$ NZ3.2 million | NZ\$140                |

In addition to pearl farming, the granting of fishing licenses to Distant Water Fishing Nations (DWFN) has added to the financial coffers of the country.<sup>9</sup> The Cook Islands recently licensed China for 50 long-liners to operate in the Cook Islands economic zone at a fee of US\$142,300. The US and Korea have also secured access rights to the Cook Islands waters. According to the Cook Islands Ministry of Marine Resources, foreign licensing has brought in revenues of

US\$300,000 (1990/1991), US\$216,000 (1992) and US\$202,000 (1993). This has become possible because of the passing of the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zones Act (EEZ) in 1977. Consequently, the Cook Islands government attained control of around 2.5 million square kilometers of area. Almost 70% of this is in deep sea ocean at depths of approximately five kilometers.

Within that EEZ, are rich deposits of sea bed minerals including manganese nodules, nickel, copper, and cobalt. In an East West Center PIDP/Energy and Minerals Resources report, researchers investigated the rich deposits in Cook Islands waters. They also looked at the prospects of nodule mining (Clark et al., 1995). The high risk nature of nodules mining, access to appropriate technology, and a need for high capital investment underlines some really difficult challenges facing the Cook Islands people. Government has been considering the options of joint ventures with foreign transnational corporations, a consortium type of development or subcontracting approaches. Consequently, some Cook Islanders are optimistic and expect that the seabed mining potential will be reachable within the next five years. There is an increasing focus on this issue among most government sectors, including the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs (Sir Geoffrey Henry, personal communication, July 4, 1995). Government expects seabed mining to sustain all government operations with an income bypassing that of tourism. Tap Prior advisor to the Prime Minister declared, "The real problem is what to do with all that money once it starts coming in," (Tap Prior, personal communication, July 5, 1995).

### **Tourism**

The tourism industry attracts the most attention with its continuing high profile. Foreign Affairs Overseas Missions receive many queries about Cook Islands tourism. Consequently, tourism is an area specifically identified for Ministry staff assistance.

Additionally, direct representatives for the Tourism Authority are often physically placed in the same office building as that of the Foreign Affairs Overseas missions. This is true for Auckland, Sydney and Los Angeles. The success of the Cook Islands Tourist Authority and the country's tourism industry is subsequently, of significance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Tourist arrivals into the Cook Islands dramatically increased after the completion of the Rarotonga international airport in 1974. Tourism continued to surge upward after the opening of the

Rarotongan Hotel in 1977. Since then, the growth of the industry has primarily been from areas where the Cook Islands has established Overseas Missions. A progress in the number of overseas visitors that has continued as the Cook Islands became a known tourist destination. From 21,000 visitors in 1980, the figure increased to 39,984 in 1991. Those 1991 numbers consist of New Zealanders (11,260), Australians (5,703), Europeans (8,417), USA (4,411), Canadians (3,914) and others (6,279) who come from as far away as Germany (Statistics Office).

Tourism activities generated about 30% of government's total revenue in 1991 (Syed and Mataio, 1993, p. 67). However, as Sir Tom Davis, the former Prime Minister often declared to the senior Foreign Ministry staff, "Tourism is the cream on a cake; one should be careful because it melts," (T. Davis, personal communication, August 1985). That vulnerability of tourism that Sir Tom Davis was alluding to, emerged when tourism figures fell in 1995. However, some businesspeople were not too concerned about the sudden turn of events. In a special presentation by Air Rarotonga Manager, Yuen Smith, he pointed out that "there is one advantage in being small. It is that much easier to change,"(Y. Smith, Chamber of Commerce

Meeting in the Rarotongan Hotel, 4 July 1995). He interpreted poor cash flow and the difficult economic problems of the 1994-95 period, as an opportunity to review business activities. In his view it created a climate where operators had to push for quality and become more serious about marketing. However, economic difficulties meant that some hotels went up for sale, including some government owned properties. Nevertheless, even in this seemingly undesirable turn of events, Foreign Affairs proved an important role.

Through foreign affairs overseas missions, some foreign investors channeled their interest for purchasing hotels in the Cook Islands. By July 1995, potential investors from the United States were looking at various tourist resorts. The properties included the Rarotongan Hotel priced tagged at NZ\$12 million, the Vaima'anga ("Sheraton" Hotel) for \$50 million, and the Akitua Resort for \$3 Million (J. Brown, C I. Press, 1995, July 30, p. 5).

### **Outer Islands Development**

In supporting other sectors in government through institutionalized efforts, the Foreign Affairs Ministry sometimes focuses specifically on outer island development. This centers on the question of the outer island versus Rarotonga main island

development. The constraints in the other islands of the Cook group are particularly severe as migration constantly erodes their small populations. Outward bound migration usually attracts the young and potentially most productive sectors of the population. Shipping transportation in the outer islands is erratic, unreliable and expensive. Private sector development is extremely difficult.

In an attempt to help outer islanders, government has embarked on "Blueprint 2000," which focuses on financial restructuring, institutional development and human resource development (T. Manarangi-Trott, personal communication, July 1995). In 1990, employment by institution showed that of 3,559 employed on the main island of Rarotonga, 51.45 worked for government while the other 48.6% were in the private sector. Compared to the 1,356 employed in the outer islands, the picture was quite dramatically different. Only 15.6% were in the private sector while a whopping 84.4% were working in the public sector (Statistics Office). This lopsided development has become a priority focus for government and some overseas assistance programs have channeled their aid toward outer islands' development (Manarangi-Trott, 1995).

The statistical comparative information also raises another underlying need for the Cook Islands government that has drawn in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: population information. Delegates to an SPC Population Planning Workshop brought out the shortcomings in the regional data base. They point out that policy formulation in Pacific Islands countries is taking place lacking current demographic statistics (SPC, 1993, p. 3). Subsequently, Foreign Affairs work in the SPC and UNFPA population programs underlines the importance of continued participation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also become prime players in initiating potential donor country interest in outer island programs. This often occurs during the official visits of organization representatives to Rarotonga who sometimes continue their travel to the outer islands with Foreign Affairs personnel. When they become aware of grassroots, developmental programs organizational representatives often end up supporting technical or financial assistance to those islands. An example is the SPC Secretary General's visit to the island of Mitiaro in 1988. It resulted in a commitment by the SPC to help efforts by the Mitiaro people for an integrated development program.

### **Cultural - Status**

The Cook Islands Government concentrates its cultural-status aspirations on promoting respect for the country's integrity. A primary aspect of this involves the Cook Islands national flag and the national anthem. The Ministry directly advises other governments on the correct national flag and anthem to use for various international events. In addition, Cook Islands national flags continue to be available to private purchasers through the administration section of foreign affairs. On occasions, the Ministry also becomes involved with cultural activities overseas particularly when the Cook Islands Government celebrates Constitution Day on 4 August of each year.

The Cook Islands social and economic family networks which stretch across other nations are another area of Foreign Affairs involvement, although this usually occurs only occasionally. Foreign Affairs personnel recognize that linkages occur with family members in most islands of the Cook Islands. That connection also stretches across to New Zealand, Australia, United States, French Polynesia and even in some cases to Japan (SPC, 1995). Often, this has served to enhance traditional practices of redistribution of



wealth. From the Ministry point of view, the linkages have often helped in cultural and protocol activities involving the Ministry overseas. The voyages of traditional canoes “Takitumu” and “Te-Au-O-Tonga” to Tahiti, Raiatea, Nukuhiva and Hawaii in 1995 is a case in point. Cook Islanders in each of these destinations assisted Cook Islands Overseas Missions in entertaining the visiting canoes.

### **Sustainability: the Dilemma**

By 1993, Asian Development Bank considered the Cook Islands as having the highest income per capita within the Bank’s SPDMCs. The Cook Islands had an income per capita of about US\$3,400 in 1990 (T. Manarangi-Trott, personal communication, July 1995. Cook Islands Statistics Office and ADB analysis Charts). Government attributes the growth of the country primarily to tourism that causes increases in individual incomes, government revenue, and spending. In contrast, visiting “experts” often describes the country’s economy as mainly subsistence agriculture and fishing with major contributions from tourism (FOAFF files). In the report prepared by EWC on the “1990 Summit of the United States and the Pacific Islands Nations,” it recognized this economic status. That aside, there were environmental highlighted as major concerns for

the Pacific Islands countries in the 1990's. The concerns included resource exploitation, marine pollution, hazardous waste chemicals, nuclear issues, and the rise of the sea level. This general recognition did not deter Foreign Affairs personnel from their every day foreign affairs' duties of assisting such program areas as agriculture development.

The above review of selected strategic decision areas that affect the work of Foreign Affairs, explains the variety of projects involving the Ministry. It emphasizes the underlying dependency of the institution on the success of those programs. As the Ministry works in harmony with other sectors of government, its survival becomes an important issue. Especially since, it directly affects the standing of the state as a sovereign entity.

The question remains, "Has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the capacity to produce sufficient valued outputs to sustain continued existence?" It seems from the interconnections of the Foreign Affairs Ministry with other government departmental activities, it does have that capacity to produce sufficient valued outputs. However, sustainability for the Ministry extends beyond its existing track record. It depends also on the expectations of Cook Islanders

and how they perceive current trends. That perception is the focus of the next chapter.

### **Endnotes**

1. The estimates for various years are listed under Chapter 4 references.
2. Jon Jonassen, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and Tony Manarangi, Solicitor General, represented the Cook Islands at the SPF Working committees that met several times.
3. President Gaston Flosse of French Polynesia often visited the Cook Islands for private discussions with the Cook Islands Prime Minister during the 1980s and 1990s.
4. Makiuti Tongia, personal communication, June 1990. A leader in the anti nuclear movements in the Cook Islands, Tongia opposed any such military presence in Cook Islands territory. Other Cook Islanders share this view.
5. Paeniu was Assistant Economist for the South Pacific Commission (1986-1988) and later the Prime Minister for Tuvalu.
6. Foreign Affairs records. Offers of aid have sometimes declined for precisely one of those reasons. Sometimes aid in kind has lead to new unexpected budgetary expenditures.
7. Minister Tairea suggested that the return to the Cook Islands of Dr. Mateariki (Mat) Porea made this localization possible.
8. Activities have primarily been with SPC, SPF, FFA, USAID and FAO.
9. The Forum Fisheries Agency has often played a pivotal role through Foreign Affairs, in helping the Cook Islands with its negotiations. Examples include agreements involving Cook Islands-Korea (1984-91), Cook Islands-Tuvalu-Western Samoa-New Zealand-

American Tuna Boat Association (1983-85), and Cook Islands-Taiwan (1987-88). See Douglas & Douglas (1994, p. 54).

## CHAPTER 6

### ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: A CHANGE IN STATUS?

*The government . . . in the Cook Islands seems to be actively exploring the limits of its own 'foreign affairs capacity', and constitutional changes in 1981 suggest that 'free association' may not be a permanent condition, and perhaps a stage in a protracted process of decolonization.*

Peter Lamour (1985, p.13).

*The political status continues to develop. While we cherish our close ties with Canberra [Australia] and Wellington [New Zealand], we anticipate diplomatic links with other Pacific FORUM countries such as Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and perhaps even selected nations beyond the Pacific [in South America, Asia, Africa and Europe].*

Hon Inatio Akaruru, Foreign Affairs Minister 1995.<sup>1</sup>

As the Cook Islands government ventures into the future, a question often arises as to the circumstances under which government would give up control over its own foreign affairs. The direct link between the establishment of a Foreign Affairs Ministry and the country's political status, suggests that any conspicuous impact on the Foreign Affairs Ministry will primarily emanate from political status changes.

Theoretically, the nature of the Cook Islands self government agreement in free association with New Zealand, still retains the

possibility of a move to full independence, or a reversal toward more political dependence. Full independence or free association would continue the existence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, a shift to a politically dependent status would likely result in the Ministry's disintegration. Over the years, New Zealand has been decreasing its aid program to the Cook Islands ( see chapter 5). Given this "nudge" from New Zealand for the Cook Islands to move toward greater independence, on the face of it, the option of a reversal seems the least likely.

This chapter looks at how Cook Islanders perceive their own general futures in terms of political status. It is my contention that irrelevant of recognized resource obstacles, most Cook Islanders generally expect their country to move toward full independence, and that economic-developmental issues are primarily influencing such a change.

For the same reason, and traditional ties between New Zealand and the Cook Islands, I would also argue that Cook Islanders generally expect New Zealand to remain as the most important overseas country, at least for the next 25 years. Regardless, there is a growing awareness of the significance of Asia to the future Cook

Islands economy.

The self government in free association political status of the Cook Islands has continued to develop allowing a constant expansion of government's foreign affairs management capability. It essentially reflects a preoccupation with economic development that most Cook Islanders share. There is an impression that the quest for increased self defined economic-developmental programs, influences government's push for an expanded free association status or even full political independence.

A survey of how Cook Islanders' views of the future political status of their country, projects four tendencies. First, there is an expectation of change primarily toward full independence. Many Cook Islanders feel that it is a natural progression of the dynamic nature of free association. There is also the argument that independence will give the Cook Islands government a clearer legal status. Theoretically, a fully independent Cook Islands will expand the country's potential for international economic and political bilateral linkages.

A second significant tendency in the survey projects that Cook Islanders expects their country to eventually become a full member

of the United Nations. Most Cook Islanders regard membership as displaying both the microstate's independent legal status and an expanded outreach program. Third, there are also Cook Islanders' anticipations that in the next 25 years, New Zealand will continue to be their most important outside country. The fourth tendency in the survey underlines a presumption that the most important decision area during these changes will be in the economic-developmental area.

### **Expecting Change Toward Independence**

The first general current trend, underlines an expectation of a continued political status change toward independence.

Constitutional changes initiated by the country's political leaders and the expansion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reflect this. A survey of a sample population also suggests those Cook Islanders expect this trend to continue into the year 2020.

Table 6.1 shows the number and percentage "yes," "no," or "don't know" responses from each of five population sectors to the question: "Do you expect the Cook Islands to have a new political status in the Future?" The sectors include (1) ten senior public servants interviewed randomly from a possible country total of 66



senior public servants, in 33 statutory bodies of government; (2) ten politicians out of a possible 25 Members in the National Parliament; (3) ten businesspeople randomly selected from about 80 businesses located in the capital town of Avarua; (4) all 6th and 7th form young students in Rarotonga Island's Tereora College and Aitutaki Island's Araura College and; (5) twenty-four of the 26 known Cook Islands youth attending College in Hawaii in 1995.

Notably, an indicative trend in each sector asked, affirmed an expectation of a change in political status. It reflected 60% senior public servants, 90% politicians, 80% businesspeople, 47% youth in the Cook Islands, and 59% of the Cook Islands youth in Hawaii.

In Table 6.1, there is a comparison of two groups: the adults made up of public servants, politicians and businesspeople, against the two Cook Islands youth groups in the Cook Islands and in Hawaii. This asserted the general expectation for change in political status among Cook Islanders. However, most of the adult population (77%) inclined to project change than the youth sector (52%). Overall, some 61% of all 84 respondents, show that they do expect a change in the political status of the Cook Islands.

TABLE 6.1: New Political Status.

*Do you expect Cook Islands to have a new political status in future?*

| SECTORS        | RESPONSE *      |                 |                 |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
|                | No              | Yes             | Don't Know      | Total            |
| Servants       | 3 (30%)         | 6 (60%)         | 1 (10%)         | 10 (100%)        |
| Politicians    | 1 (10%)         | 9 (90%)         | 0 (0%)          | 10 (100%)        |
| Business       | 2 (20%)         | 8 (80%)         | 0 (0%)          | 10 (100%)        |
| <b>Adults†</b> | <b>6 (20%)</b>  | <b>23 (77%)</b> | <b>1 (3%)</b>   | <b>30 (100%)</b> |
| Youth (CIs)    | 7 (23%)         | 14 (47%)        | 9 (30%)         | 30 (100%)        |
| Youth (Hawaii) | 8 (33%)         | 14 (59%)        | 2 (8%)          | 24 (100%)        |
| <b>Youth†</b>  | <b>15 (28%)</b> | <b>28 (52%)</b> | <b>11 (20%)</b> | <b>54 (100%)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>21 (25%)</b> | <b>51 (61%)</b> | <b>12 (14%)</b> | <b>84 (100%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off. † Subtotals

Only 39% of all respondents either said “no” or did not know what to expect. Most respondents qualified their answers by pointing to the direction in which the country was already heading. So many, if not most, Cook Islanders anticipate a change in political status, but a succeeding question arises, “a change to what type of status?”

Table 6.2, shows responses to that question. “What do you expect the long term political status of the Cook Islands to be?” The presented options to respondents include: integrate with New Zealand, self government, full independence, another status, or don't know. In Table 6.2, it shows the number and percentage (in brackets)

of sector responses in support of each potential future status. The same sample groups made up the sectors as that listed in the previous table. Table 6.2, indicates that only the youth view integration with New Zealand as a real possibility. In both youth groups, 27% of those in the Cook Islands and 24% in Hawaii expressed the view that there is an expectation of a move away from free association toward dependence. Most of these respondents who perceive more political dependence, highlight the small size of the Cook Islands as the inhibiting factor stifling continued self government. Other respondents who expect another status, perceive a further refinement of free association toward more independence.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, while 32% of all 84 respondents expect that free association would continue in its current form, a further 41% (which includes the 27% who expect independence and the 14% anticipating another status), project a shift toward full independence or a further development of free association. In combining those who expect continued free association, further enhanced free association, or full independence, it essentially represents 73% of the total sample population. Consequently, at least 73% are projecting the country's continuation as a sovereign state.

TABLE 6.2: Future Political Status.  
*What do you expect the long term future political status of the Cook Islands to be?*

| SECTORS         | RESPONSE *          |                     |                     |                     |                    |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|                 | Integrate with NZ   | Self govt.          | Full Independence   | Another status      | Don't know         |
| Servants        | 0                   | 3<br>(30%)          | 2<br>(20%)          | 4<br>(40%)          | 1<br>(10%)         |
| Politicians     | 0                   | 1<br>(10%)          | 5 (50%)             | 4<br>(40%)          | 0                  |
| Business People | 0                   | 2<br>(20%)          | 5 (50%)             | 2<br>(20%)          | 1<br>(10%)         |
| <b>Adults†</b>  | <b>0</b>            | <b>6<br/>(20%)</b>  | <b>12<br/>(40%)</b> | <b>10<br/>(33%)</b> | <b>2<br/>(7%)</b>  |
| Youth (C Is)    | 8<br>(27%)          | 9<br>(30%)          | 5<br>(17%)          | 1<br>(3%)           | 7<br>(23%)         |
| Youth (Hawaii)  | 5<br>(24%)          | 12<br>(50%)         | 6<br>(25%)          | 1<br>(1%)           | 0                  |
| <b>Youth†</b>   | <b>13</b>           | <b>21</b>           | <b>11</b>           | <b>2</b>            | <b>7</b>           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>13<br/>(16%)</b> | <b>27<br/>(32%)</b> | <b>23<br/>(27%)</b> | <b>12<br/>(14%)</b> | <b>9<br/>(11%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off. † Subtotals

The pie chart, Figure 6.1, further illustrates this projected future political status for the Cook Islands. While 11% of 84 respondents did not know what status to expect for the country in the future, 16% of the 84 respondents expected integration with New Zealand. The rest, perceive continued sovereign status as a freely associated country (32%), an enhanced free association status (14%) or even full independence (27%). Former New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange often called for the Cook Islands to become fully independent (David Lange, personal communication, December 1986; CIN, 1996, January 5, p. 4).

Viewed from another perspective, Figure 6.1 shows that there are many Cook Islanders expecting either, a continuation of “free association” in its current form (32%) or, an enhanced form of “free association” (14%). This makes up some 46% of the total population. All of those who perceive either free association or independence, make up an even higher response group, 73%, who project a continued “sovereignty” status. This implies that Foreign Affairs will continue to have an important role. Curiously, only the youth projected an “integrate with New Zealand” future. This group made up 24% of all youth or 16% of the total sample.

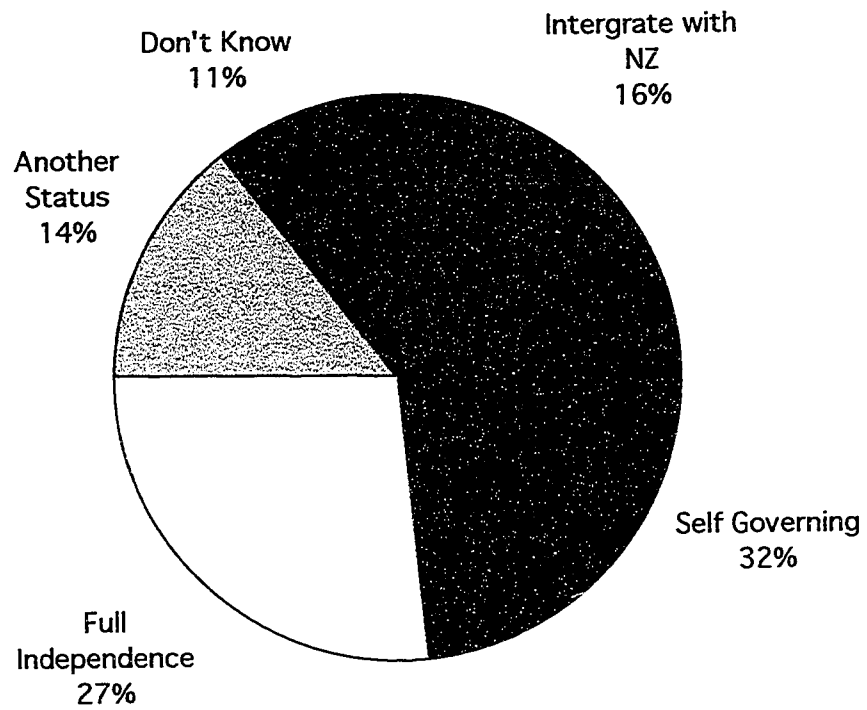


FIGURE 6.1: Cook Islands Projected Future Political Status

### **A Vision of Full Membership in the United Nations**

In line with an expectation that Cook Islands sovereignty will continue, there is also the vision that the country will eventually become a full member of the United Nations. These will display both the nation's independent legal status and an expanded outreach program. Microstate observer and scholar, Richard Herr, refers to this challenge for microstate sovereignty as its international freedom claims "from external restraint except where waved by the state itself," ( Herr, 1988. pp. 182-196).

Table 6.3, measures Cook Islanders' expectations regarding United Nations membership for their country by the year 2020. The thirty people asked were from the working population made up of politicians, businesspeople and public servants.

The same question was posed also to thirty students living in the Cook Islands. These students are identified as "youth" in Table 6.3 that lists their responses. Most of the total working population, some 84%, clearly expressed high expectations that the Cook Islands would become a member of the United Nations. The Table identifies the working population as "adults."

**TABLE 6.3: United Nations Membership.**  
*By 2020, the Cook Islands is a member of the United Nations.*

| SECTORS                     | RESPONSE *           |                  |               |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|
|                             | Not likely to happen | Likely to happen | Don't Know    |
| <b>Adults</b>               | 4<br>( 13 % )        | 25<br>( 84 % )   | 1<br>( 3 % )  |
| <b>Youth (Cook Islands)</b> | 9<br>( 30 % )        | 12<br>( 40 % )   | 9<br>( 30 % ) |
| <b>Total Score</b>          | 13 (22%)             | 37 (62%)         | 10 (16%)      |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Some youth (40%), expect the Cook Islands to become a full member of the United Nations by the year 2020. Most of the youth (60%), either had no opinions (30%), or was not expecting membership (30%) in the United Nations. However, of the total 60 responses, most youth (62%) anticipate membership.

This movement toward membership in the United Nations is already a policy of Cabinet although government is yet to carry it out. The cost-benefits of membership in the United Nations have been the constant issue for government rather than an issue of legal status. Increasingly, there are perceptions that membership expands access to new resources subsequently outweighing the costs of membership.<sup>3</sup> The continued viability of the Cook Islands as a nation



currently focuses on its “status” as a freely associated state. The buoyancy this offers, maintains an intricate balance between dependence and independence. To date, Free Association has created opportunities for the Cook Islands to join international organizations. United Nations membership is a natural “next step” in the minds of many Cook Islanders.

### **Anticipating the Most Important Country in Future**

While most Cook Islanders anticipate membership in the United Nations and a gradual political move away from New Zealand, they nevertheless expect New Zealand to remain as the most important country to the Cook Islands into the year 2020. Historical connections discussed in chapter three and projected economic ties between the two countries, remain as an important link between the two countries.

The significance of this perceived future trend, underline a need to follow up with another query to the sample population. The question: “Which country would be the most important to the Cook Islands by the year 2020?” Several options were presented to the interviewee and these included New Zealand, Australia, United States or others. The questionnaire requested respondents to

identify only one country.

Table 6.4, lists the number of responses to the question on most important overseas country. The envisioned time extended to the year 2020. Some responses specifically identified Asia or France. Those who point to Asia, recognize China and Japan. However, many respondents allude to New Zealand as the most important country to the Cook Islands into the next twenty five years, with Australia, being next in line. Regardless, taken in its total context, most respondents view countries other than New Zealand, as gradually becoming more important in the future.

Table 6.4 illustrates this point. Of the 84 people surveyed, 14% had no opinions and only 33% viewed New Zealand as retaining its current significant role. The rest opted for other countries: Australia (20%), United States (19%), Asia (10%) and France (14%).

Analyzed another way, when totaling all responses that did not select New Zealand, around 53% of those surveyed expect a country other than New Zealand, to be the most important to the Cook Islands in the future. The business sector identified Australia as potentially having a more significant role in the future.

TABLE 6.4: Most Important Country.  
*By 2020, which of the following countries will be the most important to the Cook Islands?*

| SECTORS        | RESPONSE *      |                 |                 |                |               |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
|                | NZ              | Australia       | US              | Asia           | France        | Don't know      |
| <b>Adults†</b> | <b>9 (30%)</b>  | <b>9 (30%)</b>  | <b>4 (13%)</b>  | <b>4 (13%)</b> | <b>1 (4%)</b> | <b>3 (10%)</b>  |
| Youth: Cls     | 8               | 5               | 7               | 3              | 2             | 5               |
| Youth: Haw     | 11              | 3               | 5               | 1              | 0             | 4               |
| <b>Youth†</b>  | <b>9 (35%)</b>  | <b>8 (15%)</b>  | <b>12 (22%)</b> | <b>4 (7%)</b>  | <b>2 (4%)</b> | <b>9 (17%)</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>28 (33%)</b> | <b>17 (20%)</b> | <b>16 (19%)</b> | <b>8 (10%)</b> | <b>3 (4%)</b> | <b>12 (14%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off. † Subtotals.

Surprisingly, respondents did not see France in the same light as Asia, in spite of French aid and soft loans flowing into the country. Other issues have also not influenced the respondents. These include an almost nonstop 12-hour exposure to French television during much of 1994-95, and a close cultural relationship existing between the native peoples of the Cook Islands and neighboring French Polynesia. A comparative analysis between working Cook Islanders (shown in Table 6.4 as "Subtotal: Adults") and the students (shown as "Subtotal: Youth") underlines a strong expectation by the youth that New Zealand will continue to be the

most important country to the Cook Islands as compared to a diminishing New Zealand role distinguished by the adult's sector.

### **Most Important Decision Area During Changes**

This study had earlier alluded to a strong link between the perception of economic-development and the country's evolving status change. It includes the Cook Islands government's vision as a member of the United Nations and its continued relationship to its most important overseas country. One common element in all these anticipated changes is the consistent domineering reflection on economic-developmental issues. Anticipated economic benefits, whether interpreted totally along western ideas of growth, or in some internalness redefined fashion that incorporates traditional values, strongly suggests that the economic-development decision area have an inherent link with political sovereignty.<sup>4</sup>

Sovereignty invariably incorporates (1) the political freedom to make decisions, (2) the social and cultural freedom to pursue self-determined definition of national needs, without the cloud of colonialism, and (3) the economic freedom of access into a wider spectrum of international resources. This subsequently suggests that the move toward full political independence pervade more

among Cook Islanders who perceive a direct link with economic development. It is this interest and not national military-security or culture-status that will drive future changes in the country's political status, UN membership, and the overseas country considered as the most important. A query into Cook Islanders expectations on, (1) what affects the most on political changes and, (2) the significance of overseas countries to the Cook Islands, underlines the role of economic-developmental decisions.

Table 6.5, shows responses to the question, "Which decision area or areas have influenced the most on political change?" The table lists affirmative responses to each of the four strategic decision areas: military-security, political diplomatic, economic-developmental and cultural-status. In this query, affirmative responses from each individual were not necessarily limited to only one area. Of all affirmative responses received as having an impact on the country's status change, only 11% identified military-security. Around 32% recognized political-diplomatic, 37% for economic development and 20% identified cultural-status.

Table 6.5, subsequently highlights the point that economic-development (37%), followed by political-diplomatic (32%), are

considered most influential on political status changes. On the other hand, culture-status (20%) and military-security (11%), are considered as having much less impact on any voluntary decision toward change in the country's political status. The lack of concern for military-security issues was particularly notable. It reflects a perception that many Cook Islanders either, did not feel that their country faced any military threats from other governments or, they satisfied with the ongoing defense arrangements that the Cook Islands had with New Zealand.

TABLE 6.5: Political Change  
*Which decision area(s) has a major impact on political change?*

| SECTORS         | AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES |                      |                      |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
|                 | Military-Security     | Political-Diplomatic | Economic-Development | Cultural-Status |
| Public Servants | 1                     | 5                    | 4                    | 5               |
| Politicians     | 1                     | 9                    | 10                   | 7               |
| Businesspeople  | 1                     | 10                   | 9                    | 5               |
| Youth (CIs)     | 12                    | 18                   | 26                   | 9               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>15 (11%)</b>       | <b>42 (32%)</b>      | <b>49 (37%)</b>      | <b>26 (20%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off. † Subtotals.

A further illustration of Table 6.5 is presented in Figure 6.2 as

a pie chart. It shows four decision areas and their influence on political change. Different color shades highlight each area. The illustration projects a powerful representation of decision areas with the greatest influence on political change. Military-security and cultural-status show less influence than either political-diplomatic or economic-development.

Figure 6.2, emphasizes the prominence of the economic-developmental area. Simultaneously, the pie chart underlines an inherent link between political-diplomatic and economic-developmental decisions.

A closer observation of Foreign Affairs Ministry's political-diplomatic activities, as reviewed in chapter four, shows that an overwhelming majority of diplomatic actions are directly in support of economic programs. The expectations of most of the sample population generally were in accord with those ongoing actions of government. That trend into the future also seems expected and the significance of economic-developmental decisions emerges again when considering the most important overseas country to the Cook Islands.

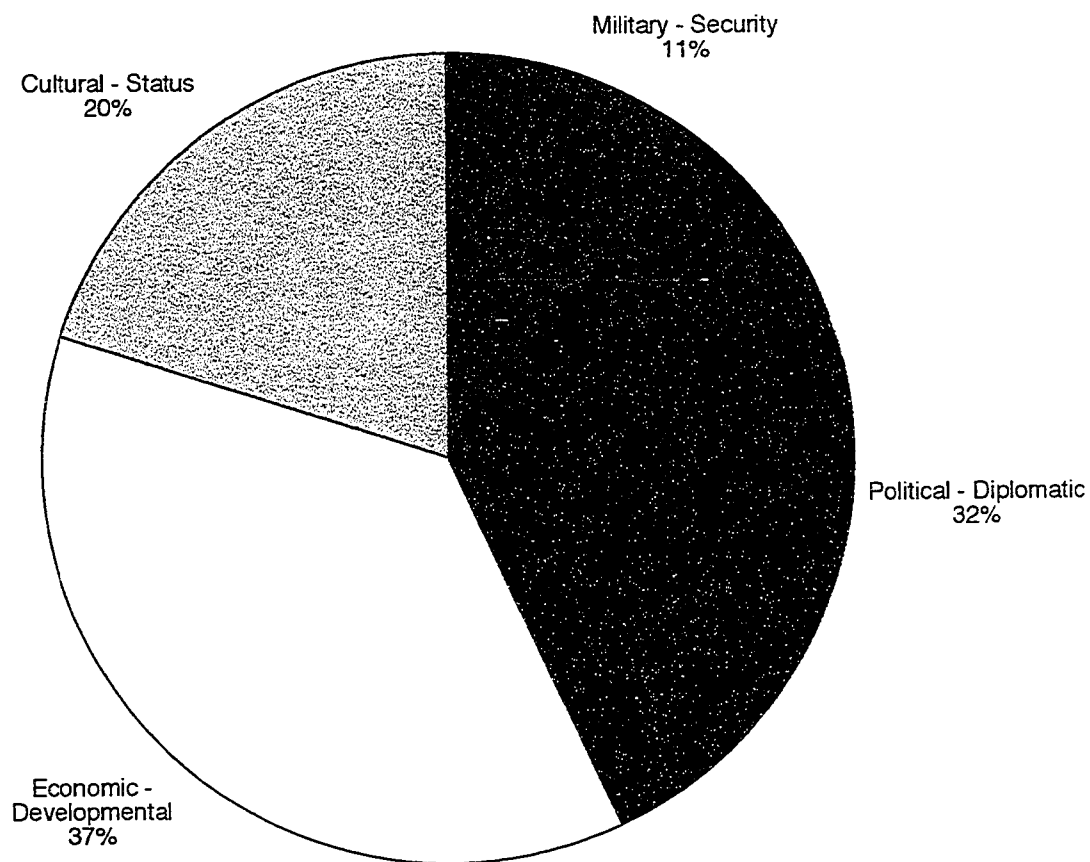


FIGURE 6.2: Influence on Political Change



Table 6.6, lists responses to the question: "Which decision area has a major impact on a country being the most important to the Cook Islands." Table 6.6 shows that of the total affirmative responses received 13% supported military-security as having the major influence in identifying the most important overseas country to the Cook Islands. Around 27% respondents selected political-diplomatic, 45% went for economic-development, and 15% recognized cultural-status.

TABLE 6.6: Decision Area and Most Important Country  
Which decision area has a major impact on a country being the most important to the Cook Islands?

| SECTORS         | AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES |                      |                      |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
|                 | Military-Security     | Political-Diplomatic | Economic-Development | Cultural-Status |
| Public Servants | 1                     | 7                    | 9                    | 4               |
| Politicians     | 3                     | 9                    | 10                   | 6               |
| Businesspeople  | 2                     | 4                    | 8                    | 3               |
| <b>Adults†</b>  | <b>6 (9%)</b>         | <b>20 (30%)</b>      | <b>27 (41%)</b>      | <b>13 (20%)</b> |
| Youth: Cls      | 15                    | 16                   | 26                   | 5               |
| Youth: Hawaii   | 0                     | 8                    | 21                   | 6               |
| <b>Youth†</b>   | <b>15 (15%)</b>       | <b>24 (25%)</b>      | <b>47 (49%)</b>      | <b>11 (11%)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>21 (13%)</b>       | <b>44 (27%)</b>      | <b>74 (45%)</b>      | <b>24 (15%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off. † Subtotals.

A comparison of the affirmative responses from all sectors also shows some interesting trends. In Table 6.6, interviewees were given the opportunity to identify more than one influential decision area. They selected an area influential in their projection of a particular overseas country's future importance to the Cook Islands.

A comparison of affirmative responses from the working population (Public Servants, Politicians and Businesspeople) and the students (youth), shows a similar trend between the two major groups. However, a comparison of responses from the two youth groups signals a major difference. While Cook Islands youth living in the Cook Islands discern no major security-military impact on their selection of important future countries to the Cook Islands, Cook Islands youth living in Hawaii attribute military-security concerns as having a significant influence. At the time of carrying out the research, there was no opportunity to pursue this difference in attitudes and perceptions. Perhaps the fact that Hawaii is the host to a large United States defensive force, created more awareness among Cook Islanders living in Hawaii.

Generally however, military-security and culture-status decision areas, were both negated by most respondents (56%), as a

reason for making their choice, of “most important country to the Cook Island.” By contrast, political-diplomatic and economic-developments were identified as key motivating areas in future relationships for the Cook Islands. The diminished role of culture-status was unexpected, given government’s emphasis on national cultural programs. Government’s Cook Islands Tourist Authority also initiates many cultural activities in support of the country’s tourism initiatives. The few who identified cultural-status, recognized the close traditional ties between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. Respondents did not project the national significance of culture.

On the other hand, the impact of economic-developmental concerns on decision making, is particularly impressive. It is the only decision area where there is no disagreement among all respondents. Almost everyone identified economic-developmental concerns as the motivation behind their response. It could be drawn from this result that, a major driving force in expectations of most Cook Islanders lies in the economic-developmental area. While it is also in this area that Cook Islands foreign policy has operated in the past, it will probably remain so if government is to reflect the

expectations of its people. An ongoing involvement of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in a variety of economic and developmental areas will probably continue, for as long as economic-developmental issues remain to be motivating factors in foreign affairs' policy making.

Interview responses received from the cross section of Cook Islanders, has shown how Cook Islanders perceive their own general futures in terms of political status. Most Cook Islanders generally expect their country to eventually change its status. They anticipate a move toward full independence and the attaining of membership in the United Nations. Additionally, Cook Islanders generally expect New Zealand to remain as the most important country for the Cook Islands, at least for the next 25 years. Notwithstanding, there is a growing awareness of the significance of Asia to the future Cook Islands economy. Economic-developmental issues primarily influence Cook Islanders in all these changes. Cook Islanders expect that trend to continue into the future.

#### Endnotes

1. I. Akaruru, personal communication, July 1995.
2. Some of those respondents cited the small size of the nation as

the very reason for the significance and continued existence of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

3. Personal communication with Foreign Affairs and Economic Development government officials, July 1995.

4. The Cook Islands High Commissioner to New Zealand Mr. Laveta Short, points out that New Zealand long accepted Cook Islands sovereignty. This meant that even the controversial secrecy laws of the Cook Islands recognized as a sovereign matter. Significantly, the laws covered an income generating industry by the Cook Islands government that again highlights the significance of economic developmental decisions (CIN, 1996, January 16, p. 1).

## CHAPTER 7

### POTENTIAL IMPACT

*The real enemy is not present exploitation.  
It is future neglect.*

Allison Quentin-Baxter (quoted in Henderson, 1994, p. 99).

*Aere e the Ra.  
A'aere marie, kia kite I nga ina potea.*

*Go with the Sun.  
Go with care, so you will have a future.  
Traditional proverb from Rarotonga.<sup>1</sup>*

In Chapter six, we saw that most Cook Islanders, project the continuation of a sovereign Cook Islands in the next 25 years, while maintaining close ties with New Zealand. The impact of that continued sovereignty, either as a fully independent nation or as a freely associated self governing state, becomes a focus of discussion in this chapter. Cook Islanders' views are sought on two specific areas: their expectations regarding a selected major economic or environment change, and how they generally perceive the preparedness of their government toward the future. The major change projected, included a new economic activity involving sea bed mining, or an environmental disaster such as a dramatic sea

level rise. The sample population's perceptions become a useful basis for projecting the potential impact of trends on the Cook Islands' political future. It is a future that could be the continuation of a freely associated, or a fully independent Cook Islands.

Since continued sovereignty is a long term expectation, government's ability to be prepared for the future becomes a particularly significant issue. This chapter looks at examples such as seabed mining and sea-level-rise. The premise in this discussion argues that, most Cook Islanders do expect such dramatic economic development and environmental disaster events. However, they generally regard their government as totally unprepared for the future. Subsequently, the potential impact of both alternative political futures, independence and free association, signal an approaching disaster for the country.

Specific questions measure the expectation of Cook Islanders, about the likelihood of selected scenarios by the year 2020. Scenarios, extend to some commonly discussed issues, including the possibility of unknown resources discovered in the next 25 years. There is also the threat of a dramatic rise in the sea level, which subsequently affects low lying atolls and pearl farmers, and an

active seabed mining production. Responses from 84 interview subjects show as percentages (in brackets) reflecting the total of all responses in that category. The responses also illustrate as whole numbers representing actual affirmative, negative and unsure responses.

### **Expectations on Selected Changes: Economic**

Table 7.1 shows responses from 84 interview subjects to the question of new resources discovered in the Cook Islands: "Do you expect that by the year 2020, new resources would have been found in the Cook Islands?" Table 7.1 lists the responses of 30 working adults made up of public servants (10), politicians (10), and businesspeople (10). The adult responses are compared to the expectations expressed by 54 Cook Islands youth, either living in Hawaii (24) or in the Cook Islands (30). In all categories, most of the reactions anticipate the discovery of new resources. A quarter of the total sample does not expect any new resources to be found, while 61%, are optimistic about such a possibility. Most respondents are unable to be more specific in explaining their responses. Nevertheless, some do identify the huge EEZ of the Cook Islands as the most likely source of future resource discoveries.



TABLE 7.1: New Resources?

*Do you expect by year 2020, new resources have been found in the Cook islands?*

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE *           |                     |                     |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                         | Not likely to happen | Likely to happen    | Don't Know          |
| Public Servants         | 5                    | 5                   | 0                   |
| Politicians             | 2                    | 6                   | 2                   |
| Businesspeople          | 3                    | 6                   | 1                   |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>10<br/>(33%)</b>  | <b>17<br/>(57%)</b> | <b>3<br/>(10%)</b>  |
| Youth<br>(Cook Islands) | 6                    | 22                  | 2                   |
| Youth<br>(Hawaii)       | 5                    | 12                  | 7                   |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>11<br/>(20%)</b>  | <b>34 (63%)</b>     | <b>9<br/>(17%)</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>21<br/>(25%)</b>  | <b>51 (61%)</b>     | <b>12<br/>(14%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

All of those who anticipate new assets, are apparently referring to resources that exclude the known seabed resources in the Cook Islands economic zone. Most have an open field, without any particular identified resource in mind. A few, are referring specifically to existing human resources that are currently unrecognized and underutilized. Many of those who expect new resources also project seabed mining to take place within the next twenty five years. Some, even expect such a development within five years, before the year 2000. At least one respondent interpreted the issue of seabed mining as a strategy by politicians to maintain a sense of hope among tax payers. They point to the tendency to highlight the seabed "gold" when elections approach.

Most of all sectors anticipate a Cook Islands future, incorporating seabed mining. However, many expect the mining to take place over a longer term period, perhaps even within twenty years. They cite existing technology, the cost of equipment and production, and existing world prices for minerals, as inhibiting forces (PIDP, 1995).

Table 7.2, lists the expectations of respondents to the question: "By 2020, there is active seabed mining in the Cook Islands." Some 15% express the view that sea bed mining in the Cook Islands EEZ is unlikely to occur within the next 25 years. Around 19% are not sure, and an impressive 66% said that sea bed mining is likely to occur in that period. Even most of the youth had high expectations of seabed mining activities. The attitudes of most respondents are optimistic about the country's economic future, in relationship to both potential resources and known seabed minerals.

TABLE 7.2: Seabed Mining?  
By 2020, there is active seabed mining in the Cook Islands.

| SECTORS              | RESPONSE *      |                 |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                      | Not likely      | Likely          | Don't Know      |
| Public Servants      | 2               | 8               | 0               |
| Politicians          | 1               | 9               | 0               |
| Businesspeople       | 3               | 6               | 1               |
| <b>Adults†</b>       | <b>6 (20%)</b>  | <b>23 (77%)</b> | <b>1 (3%)</b>   |
| Youth (Cook Islands) | 3               | 17              | 10              |
| Youth (Hawaii)       | 4               | 15              | 5               |
| <b>Youth†</b>        | <b>7 (13%)</b>  | <b>32 (59%)</b> | <b>15 (28%)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>13 (15%)</b> | <b>55 (66%)</b> | <b>16 (19%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

† Subtotals

### **Expectations on Selected Changes: Environment**

Expectations of a brighter economic future among Cook Islanders has not dampened the realization that such developments hold real challenges. There is a particular awareness of potential environmental changes in an island environment. The expectation of Cook Islanders for such commonly discussed issues as sea level rise, becomes an important focus in monitoring the trend in expectations among most Cook Islanders.

Table 7.3, illustrates the reactions to the question, do Cook Islanders expect the sea level to rise dramatically by the year 2020. Most of all categories agree that the sea level is rising. Of all respondents, 65% expect a dramatic sea level rise to occur, 11% said that it is unlikely, and 24% are unsure.

A comparison of the working population (listed as "Adults" in the table) and the Youth, project more youth expecting the sea level to dramatically rise. Some 54% of the adults anticipate it as compared to 72% of the youth. The difference can be attributed to the opportunity for students to be exposed to current research and information studies on climatic and sea level changes.<sup>2</sup>

TABLE 7.3: Sea Level Rise?  
*By 2020, the sea level has risen dramatically.*

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE *           |                  |                 |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                         | Not likely to happen | Likely to happen | Don't Know      |
| Public Servants         | 1                    | 6                | 3               |
| Politicians             | 1                    | 7                | 2               |
| Businesspeople          | 5                    | 3                | 2               |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>7 (23%)</b>       | <b>16 (54%)</b>  | <b>7 (23%)</b>  |
| Youth (Cook Islands)    | 2                    | 26               | 2               |
| Youth (Hawaii)          | 0                    | 13               | 11              |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>2 (4%)</b>        | <b>39 (72%)</b>  | <b>13 (24%)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>9 (11%)</b>       | <b>55 (65%)</b>  | <b>20 (24%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Some respondents who project a change in the sea level, also express the view that, those changes would seriously affect the islands. These respondents display a keen awareness of current information on the greenhouse effect, and its projected impact on the sea level. They agree also that because of the rise in the sea level, sea water will inundate the atolls. To monitor that perception, a follow-up question poses the expectation that sea water inundates the atolls and low-lying coral islands, at least during high-tide.

Table 7.4, lists the responses to that question on atoll inundation. Only 15% of all respondents express the view that

inundation at high-tide of atolls is unlikely to happen within the next 25 years. Around 61% said it is likely, while 24% are not sure. A comparison of the “adult” and “youth” subtotals, shows most youth anticipating the occurrence. While 54% of adults expect sea-water inundation, 65% of the youth envision it. There is a notable awareness about sea level difficulties facing atolls. Most of the 61% respondents who express the view that atoll inundation by sea water at high-tide is likely to happen by the year 2020, also add, that they think this phenomenon is already occurring.

TABLE 7.4: Atolls Inundated?  
By 2020, sea-water inundates Atolls at high-tide.

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE *      |                 |                 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                         | Not likely      | Likely          | Don't Know      |
| Public Servants         | 1               | 7               | 2               |
| Politicians             | 1               | 6               | 3               |
| Businesspeople          | 5               | 3               | 2               |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>7 (23%)</b>  | <b>16 (54%)</b> | <b>7 (23%)</b>  |
| Youth (Cook Islands)    | 2               | 22              | 6               |
| Youth (Hawaii)          | 4               | 13              | 7               |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>6 (11%)</b>  | <b>35 (65%)</b> | <b>13 (24%)</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>13 (15%)</b> | <b>51 (61%)</b> | <b>20 (24%)</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Some respondents, express special concern over the issue of sea-level-rise while a few projects this potential disaster as a new set of challenges. Since pearl farming is an ongoing expanding industry in the low lying atolls of Manihiki, Tongareva (Penrhyn) and Suwarrov in the Northern Cook Islands, the expected sea-water inundation pose opportunities for technological adaptations on those islands.

In view of a general Cook Islanders' awareness about the pearl farming industry, a related question looks at the possibility of an adaptation in the lifestyle on those islands. There is general acceptance among respondents that pearl farmers, will not abandon their farms in any likely scenario, short of a major catastrophe on the pearl farm itself. Their response reflects the reality of climatic changes. Many of those who accept a rise in sea level, had no difficulties in welcoming the possibility of adapting to new technologies. Some respondents even suggest, that on Manihiki, the pearl island, there is already an artificial island "home" on the lagoon. The youth, are notably more open to possible changes, than the other sectors. The business sector tends to be skeptical of the whole scenario of floating villages. Generally, the result shows a

small majority of 40% of all 60 respondents in the Cook Islands expecting life on a float.

Table 7.5, lists the responses to the question on floating villages. From a total of 60 responses, 33% said “floating villages” is an unlikely scenario, 40% said it is likely, and 27% are not sure. The working adult group, show an opposite trend with 47% saying it is unlikely, 43% affirming it is likely, and an unsure 10%.

TABLE 7.5: Floating Villages?

*By 2020, pearl farmers are living in modern floating villages.*

| SECTORS   | RESPONSE *           |                    |                    |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   | Not likely to happen | Likely to happen   | Don't Know         |
| <b>Adults</b><br>Public Servants<br>Politicians<br>Businesspeople | <b>14</b><br>(47%)   | <b>13</b><br>(43%) | <b>3</b><br>(10%)  |
| Youth (Cook Islands)  | 6<br>(20%)           | 11<br>(37%)        | 13<br>(43%)        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>20</b><br>(33%)   | <b>24</b><br>(40%) | <b>14</b><br>(27%) |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Trends change with the youth showing only 20% declaring that it is unlikely, while 37% express that it is likely. A notable 43% indicate that they are “not sure.” Although the question on pearl



farmers living on floating villages is subsequently considered less likely by many respondents, most of the youth, expect it as a likely scenario that may occur before the year 2020.

Apparently, the expectation of most Cook Islanders is toward economic development, involving seabed mining amid a changing physical environment that includes a dramatic sea level rise. While possible technological adaptations, such as floating villages, are not as widely accepted, the role of government in anticipating changes become an important issue for many Cook Islanders. The question of government's preparedness especially becomes important. Although most of the sample population is optimistic about the country's potential economic wealth and its political capacity to meet future challenges, they are pessimistic about government's preparedness for the country's future.

#### **Expectation that Government is Prepared**

Several questions arise, to measure the expectation of Cook Islanders that their government is prepared for the future. Responses are collected and presented as a comparative analysis among four sectors of the population. The results of the survey confirm that an overwhelming majority of youth, both living in the

Cook Islands and overseas, do feel that government had not prepared adequately for the future. To a lesser extent, the business sector agreed government was unprepared, although, politicians and public servants generally disagreed.

Table 7.6, shows actual responses to the question, "Do you expect that government has planned for the future." The Table also shows the percentage within each of four sectors of the sample population. Around 60% of Public Servants and 70% of Politicians expected that government planned. In contrast, only 30% of Businesspeople, 17% of Youth in the Cook Islands, and 25% of Youth studying overseas expected any future planning taking place. Of a total of 84 respondents, only 32% expected planning while 50% of the population perceived a government with no adequate planning and preparation.

Many of those who expect a lack of planning, point to failed government sponsored hotel projects and a growing national debt. Around 18% of the sample population said that they did not know whether government had planned for the future. Most of the "don't know" responses, 13 out of 15, were students.

TABLE 7.6: Government Plans Ahead?  
*Do you expect that Govt. has planned for the future?*

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE * |            |            |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                         | No         | Yes        | Don't Know |
| Public Servants         | 40%        | 60%        | 0%         |
| Politicians             | 30%        | 70%        | 0%         |
| Businesspeople          | 50%        | 30%        | 20%        |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>40%</b> | <b>53%</b> | <b>7%</b>  |
| Youth (Cook Islands)    | 60%        | 17%        | 23%        |
| Youth (Hawaii)          | 50%        | 25%        | 25%        |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>56%</b> | <b>20%</b> | <b>24%</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>50%</b> | <b>32%</b> | <b>18%</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Respondents often qualified their responses with concerns over the growing national debt and the unexpected redistribution of government funds. They also referred to the cutting of major public programs, and an unprecedented reduction in the working hours of public employees. The growing national debt was the commonly shared disconcert among most of the respondents who often alluded to the media coverage of those issues. Two years previously, the media had reported that the Cook Islands Government budget deficit reached US\$3 million for the second time in 12 months (PIM, 1993, Dec.). By 1995, the monetary problems continued (J Brown, CI Press,

1995, July 23, p. 1). In 1995, Cook Islands Government Financial Secretary Allistair Rutherford, revealed that while government held NZ\$3 million overseas reserves dollars in 1994, its “public debt was 245.7 million.” He expected a further NZ\$ 4.8 million deficit in the 1995 fiscal year (Audrey Young, 1995, The New Zealand Herald, Feb. 22, P.1).

That concern over the budgetary situation of government financial resources, caused some respondents to express the view that government was “sidetracking” aid money to cover other government projects. They echoed examples of “sidetracking” already publicly released by the media. The amounts asserted, included NZ\$60,000 ADB project funds with government having used only \$7,500 by July 1995, and NZ\$78,000 UNDB funds for fire prevention with a mere \$1,100 spent. The assertions also covered an unused NZ\$16,800 AIDAB fund for a cargo lighter on Mitiaro (Jason Brown, CI Press, 1995 July 23-30, p. 1).

Reports of “unusual expenditure” even resurfaced, receiving guarded reactions from the private sector. In a 1992 NZ\$279,710 loan to a Cabinet Minister, government later explicated as involving NZ\$180,000 diverted funds. It became apparent to many Cook

Islanders that some officials were searching for new avenues to arrange their projects directly with the donors, rather than have the money go through government (CI Press, 1995, July 30, p. 13).

Concerns also extended to programs that government was eliminating. "Government hacked NZ\$233,340 off CITA's marketing vote of \$1,536,955 when the industry needs it most," declared a shocked tourist operator (CI Press, 1995, June 11, p. 5).

Respondents point to other signals regarding government's financial woes. They cite the withdrawal in 1995 by "longtime" auditors, KPMG Peat and Marwick, and their replacement by an unknown Horwath Branniga McCullagh and Company (CIN, 1995, July 22). News reporter Lisa Williams suggests that the pull out meant that, either the fees were too hefty, or it was the action of an image-conscious audit company who did not want to be associated with government's financial woes (CIN, 1995, July 22, p.1).

Respondents additionally allude to Government's announcement of a Cabinet approved 35 hour-weekly times for wage workers, and similar conditions for salary workers. The editor of Cook Islands Press, Jason Brown, interpreted it as a Government moves to "chop \$5 million from workers' pay to meet the next budget," (CI Press,

1995, June 11, p. 16). The public service later responded to government's demand to "save money," by suggesting other options. Mrs. Gill Vaiimene President of the Cook Island Public Service Association (CIPSA), proposed that government take \$500 off salaries per year rather than the 35 hours a week system. Government initially adopted the salary reduction but continued to promote a reduction in working hours.<sup>3</sup>

Respondents seem to translate these images of financial difficulties as a government lacking in futures planning. Such issues clearly impressed on survey responses to the question on how far ahead government plans (see Table 7.6), and how far ahead should it plan (see Table 7.7). Responses show a perceived view that any existing government futures' strategy is less than five years. However, preferably it ought to be for more than five years.

Table 7.7, underlines this point. The table shows responses to the question, "How far ahead does government plan for?" Fifty-one percent (51%) of all sectors expressed the view that government was planning for no more than 12 months ahead. Thirteen percent (13%) projected planning between one and five years, and nine percent (9%) believed that government planned between five and ten

years. Another seven percent (7%) expressed a period of over ten years, and twenty percent (20%) were unsure.

Many public servants, businesspeople and youth sectors were particularly of the view that government did not plan, or that if planning occurred, it was for less than 12 months. Notably, over 64% of the survey sample, express the view that either government plans for less than one year, or from one to five years. This coincides with the five-year length of office of politicians. It also reflects the tendency of government to issue five year plans, which may in turn, link to the five-year general election periods for Members of Parliament. Not surprisingly, work contracts to work for government agencies usually run on a one to three-year basis. Consequently, short term aims usually take precedence over long term ones.<sup>4</sup> This aspect of personnel recruitment emerges consistently in the one to five year planning programs of government.

Table 7.7, shows that most of the youth sectors (52%), even expect that government plans are for a period that is less than 1 year. A comparison of the views of the adults with the youth shows a consistent expectation by most Cook Islanders that government is planning for less than one year.

TABLE 7.7: Actual Projected Plan.  
*How far ahead does government plan for?*

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE*  |            |            |               |            |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|                         | 0-1 year   | 1-5 years  | 5-10 years | Over 10 years | Don't Know |
| Public Servants         | 60%        | 20%        | 10%        | 10%           | 0%         |
| Politicians             | 30%        | 20%        | 10%        | 30%           | 10%        |
| Businesspeople          | 60%        | 0%         | 20%        | 0%            | 20%        |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>50%</b> | <b>13%</b> | <b>13%</b> | <b>13%</b>    | <b>10%</b> |
| Youth (Cook Islands)    | 60%        | 14%        | 3%         | 3%            | 20%        |
| Youth (Hawaii)          | 42%        | 13%        | 8%         | 4%            | 33%        |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>52%</b> | <b>13%</b> | <b>5%</b>  | <b>4%</b>     | <b>26%</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>51%</b> | <b>13%</b> | <b>9%</b>  | <b>7%</b>     | <b>20%</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

This general perception of government planning for less than one year becomes more telling when compared with expectations of how long planning ought to be. Using the same format as in Table 7.7,

Table 7.8 shows the ideal projected plan envisioned by respondents. In this table, most respondents prefer a longer planning period to that currently used. The total survey population agrees that there should be no planning for less than 1 year, unless it is in association with a longer term program. Some 33% prefer the one to five year projections. Another 36% elect a 5 to 10 years of planning ahead, and 30% want planning to be beyond 10 years. Viewed from



another perspective, it seems that 66% of all respondents want government planning to be at least five years ahead. Many prefer plans to extend beyond ten years. This indicative survey proves an expectation by most that, based on the existing planning and utilization of resources, government is unprepared for the future.

TABLE 7.8: Ideal Projected Plan.  
*How far ahead should govt. plan?*

| SECTORS                 | RESPONSE * |             |             |               |            |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
|                         | 0-1 year   | 1-5 years   | 5-10 years  | Over 10 years | Don't Know |
| Public Servants         | 0%         | 20%         | 60%         | 20%           | 0%         |
| Politicians             | 0%         | 30%         | 10%         | 60%           | 0%         |
| Businesspeople          | 0%         | 20%         | 30%         | 50%           | 0%         |
| <b>Subtotal: Adults</b> | <b>0 %</b> | <b>23 %</b> | <b>33 %</b> | <b>44 %</b>   | <b>0 %</b> |
| Youth (Cook Islands)    | 0%         | 37%         | 43%         | 20%           | 0%         |
| Youth (Hawaii)          | 0%         | 42%         | 29%         | 25%           | 4%         |
| <b>Subtotal: Youth</b>  | <b>0 %</b> | <b>38 %</b> | <b>38 %</b> | <b>22 %</b>   | <b>2 %</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>0 %</b> | <b>33 %</b> | <b>36 %</b> | <b>30 %</b>   | <b>1 %</b> |

\* All response percentages are rounded off.

Various responses were also tabulated and presented as Figure 7.1 and 7.2. They accentuate the powerful perception, especially with youth, that their government is unprepared.

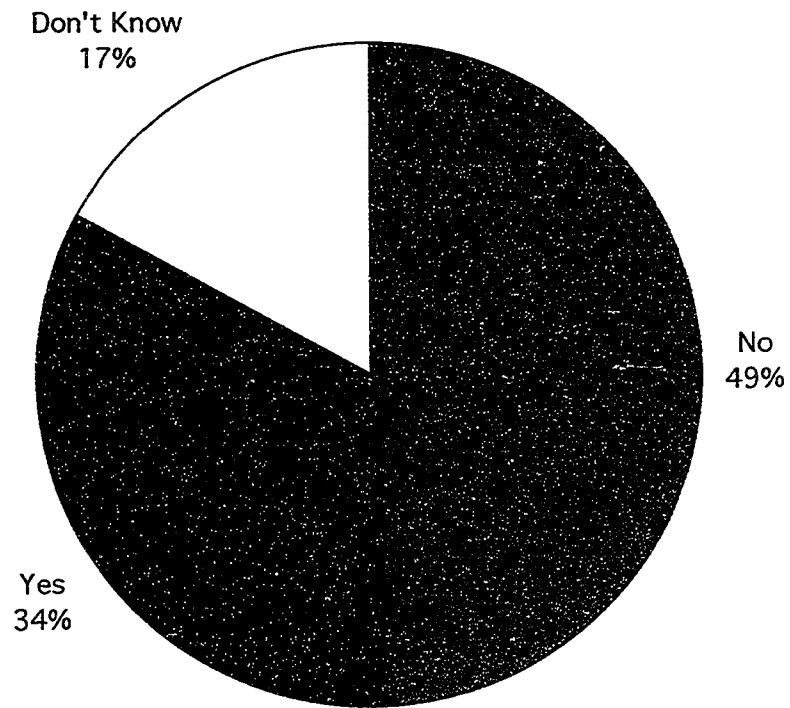


FIGURE 7.1: Is Government Prepared for the Future?

Figure 7.1, is a tabulation of responses to four questions: (1) Do you expect that government does plan? (2) Do you expect that government has alternative plans? (3) Do you expect that government has adequate resources (work force or equipment) for the future? (4) Do you expect that new resources will be found in the Cook Islands by the year 2020? In Figure 7.1, it shows that while 17% of all respondents did not know, 34% felt that the Cook Islands was prepared for the future. Another 49% expressed the view that government was unprepared.

A further breakdown in Figure 7.2, show a comparison among the various sectors of the sample population. In Figure 7.2, of all respondents who express the view that government is unprepared for the future, 56% are youth, 16% businesspeople, 14% Politicians, and 14% Public Servants. Subsequently, it is the youth sectors who are expressing the least confidence in government preparedness toward the country's future. This is significant, since the youth have a self-interest in their future and are the potential leaders of the country. There is also a direct relationship in a perceived government unpreparedness and anticipated new economic and environmental challenges facing the nation.

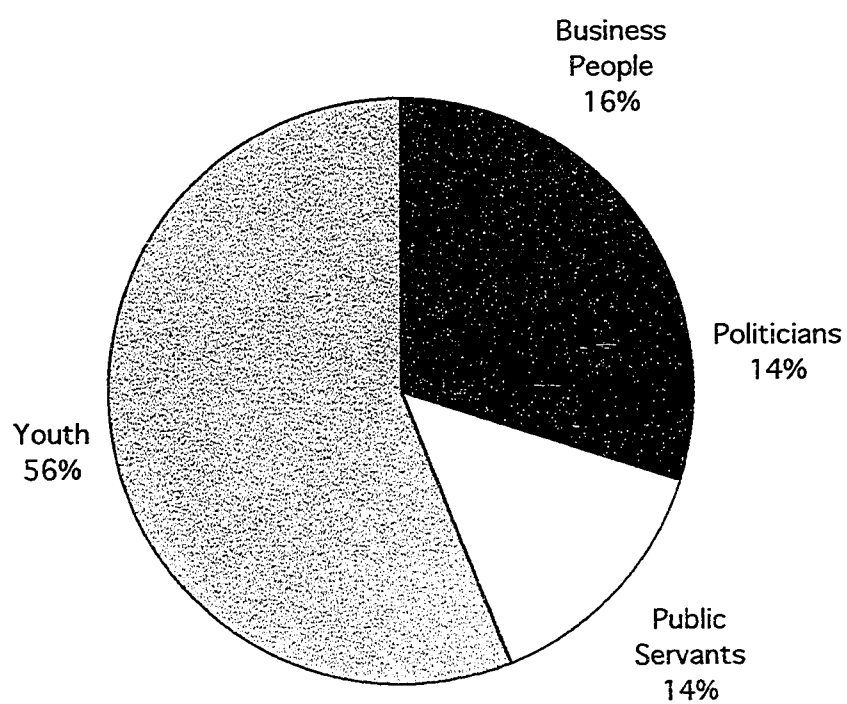


FIGURE 7.2: Expectation that Government is Unprepared

In essence, the expectations of most Cook Islanders on selected issues, indicate that: (1) new economic resources will be discovered; (2) seabed mining will become an active industry in the Cook Islands; (3) the sea level will rise dramatically; (4) new technologies could be adapted to meet the changes in sea level; and, (5) the government is unprepared for the future.

As the Cook Islands looks toward the future, the potential impacts on foreign affairs become evident from the responses discussed in this and the previous chapter. First, there is an expectation that government does not plan as it should. In terms of Foreign Affairs efforts, the implication is that whatever the future scenario, Foreign Affairs has not prepared for it. Subsequently, the approach of the Ministry will increasingly be reactionary with short-sighted goals. It could easily become costly (both in terms of trained personnel and financial resources) and, dependent on outside advice and aid. It subsequently renders the country vulnerable to overseas priorities. This is not due to the microstate's size, it is a lack of prior preparation and identification of the country's priorities under expected scenarios. For example, in spite of a potential sea level rise threatening low lying islands and coastal

areas, there are no current government policies seeking alternative plans for those areas.

Secondly, there are perceptions that government is not using existing resources as well as it could. The lack of confidence in government indicated by the survey population also suggested that a misdirection in the use of current resources will probably escalate unless major changes occur. Such changes could include longer term planning strategies, alternative planning approaches and a more accountable system that more clearly align foreign affairs' activities directly with economic development priorities.

The results of the survey in the previous chapter suggest, that the trend for the future political status is not toward political dependence. It is either the maintenance of free association, the status quo, or it is going to move even closer to independence. Full political independence is an expected eventuality in the minds of most respondents. The survey also suggests, that the economic-development area, has the greatest influence in foreign policy decision making. Subsequently, economic and developmental issues should become the main legacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs if it hopes to survive; a legacy linked directly with buoyancy.

In its continuing struggle for buoyancy, the Government of the Cook Islands has used the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a vital tool to enter overseas resources. For the country's leaders, survival of the nation has been a primary objective. While he was the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Dr. Pupuke Robati alluded to this challenge at the first Pacific Islands Conference, held in Japan in 1988. He declared that although a popular Japanese proverb advises of money growing on a tree of perseverance, he was mindful that "the Cook Islands is a canoe while Japan is a supertanker," (Sasakawa Peace Foundation, 1988, pp. 100-101). Robati featured difficulties in leading a government, with few resources and inadequate, or inappropriate technology. However, Robati was being audacious that the aspirations of the Japanese were the same as those of Cook Islanders.

Since adopting free association, the Cook Islands has managed to stay afloat for over thirty years. Nevertheless, unless the country makes an appropriate adaptations and changes even a seemingly buoyant canoe, may not succeed when subjected to entirely new challenges. This threat is increasingly possible, as the microstate becomes exposed directly to a wider field of outside resources and

forces. Notably, economic-developmental issues have an overwhelming influence on decision making. However, to gain access overseas, the country's use of foreign affairs could become the tool of its own demise. Colonial Pacific history has shown that progress does not necessarily mean adopting the ways of the "outsider." Progress ought to be a maintenance in the quality of life expected by Cook Islanders living in their home country (Makea Nui Teremoana Ariki, personal communication, March 1978). Some respondents argue that, this goal has to be the justification for allocating valuable resources for foreign affairs' activities.

The variety of activities discussed in this and earlier chapters, suggested that a maintenance in the quality of life merge with Ministry of Foreign Affairs goals. However, overzealous international networking could lose sight of the aspirations of its own people. Much like the operations and maintenance of a double hulled canoe in the open sea, the role of the navigator/captain and crew is vital in keeping the canoe buoyant and heading in the right direction. Buoyancy in government operations will not work well without most of its people in unified support.

In focusing on this concern for continuous buoyancy, one major



issue emerges: the perceived preparedness of the Cook Islands government and subsequently its Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Preparedness, highlights a need for adequate and balanced resources concerning finance, equipment, and know how. There is also a need to have future political leadership with an ability to be more attuned to national needs; rather than personal gains and biased constituency projects. The responses from the sample population, suggest that most Cook Islanders anticipate environmental and economic changes. There is an inherent suggestion that these may turn to real disasters because of government's general unpreparedness.

Intertwined with the expected continued sovereignty reflected through political independence and membership in the United Nations, the role of Foreign Affairs seems destined to increase. However, in view of government's general unpreparedness, that expanded role may lead to increased dependency on outside resources. In such a scenario, the future status of the country may depend on the country (or organization) to which the Cook Islands Foreign Affairs turns to for major assistance. If it continues to be New Zealand, the overlapping layers tying the two countries may be the redeeming quality for the continuation of a self governing Cook

Islands. This could also be the most likely scenario if assistance is emanating from a legitimate organization. If that country was not New Zealand (or if the organization was involved with illegal activities), a politically dependent Cook Islands would much more likely occur. A small country destroying its political entity becomes the final likely impact. That projects a Cook Islands that disappears as a sovereign nation.

### Endnotes

1. The proverb implies the importance of two aspects in the progression of any human activity: follow the brightest star and, move ahead with caution. Do not waste time; be like the sun. The second part of the proverb alludes to making the correct decisions to survive.
2. Scott Power, a researcher at the Bureau of Meteorology in Melbourne, echoed an agreement among meteorologists that global warming was occurring and therefore, it was affecting the sea level. "Climate of the NSW Symposium," organized by the University of New South Wales, the Bureau of Meteorology and the University of California, Australia, September 20, 1995. There has been much research on this issue of sea level-rise.
3. However, the idea of a 35-hour week continues as a favored option with some government Ministers.
4. A review of programs in the Ministry of Economic Planning, Department of Fisheries, and Department of Agriculture, underlines the proliferation of short term projects. These projects often link to the availability of specialized personnel.

## CHAPTER 8

### THREE FUTURES

#### Future One: Freely Associated - Buoyant

Based on the analysis in previous chapters, the most probable and perhaps preferable future, may be a continuation of the Cook Islands free association relationship with New Zealand. Changes may continue through economic-developmental expansion, but even that may be kept in check by connections existing between the two countries. Future one projects a freely associated country that is buoyant.

The trend in government policies of establishing an expanded associate relationship with other countries highlights the continued attractiveness of free association to Cook Islanders. The large number of islanders migrating to New Zealand and Australia, underline this point. If the general environment does not change and government can control expenditure, the year 2020 may emerge with a Ministry of Foreign Affairs operating under decision areas reflected in Figure 8.1. The Figure underlines a maximum effort toward independence.

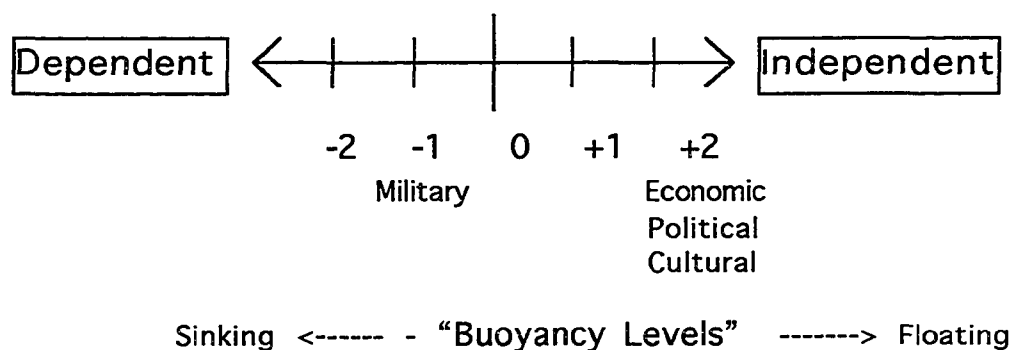


FIGURE 8.1: Free Association Buoyancy Levels in Decision Areas.

The military-security decision area lies limited to “access control” (-1). The Cook Islands still maintains its patrol boat effectively. Bilateral and multilateral treaty arrangements solidify the Cook Islands with New Zealand, Australia, United States and France. While maintaining access control into its own territory, the Cook Islands could rely on the assistance of these countries for its security. Both authorized military and private sector air flights across Cook Islands extended economic and territorial space carries out surveillance. Based on current trends, by the year 2020 the main national threats come from criminal elements. These are criminals who are trying to use the islands as staging posts for international illegal activities. Access to New Zealand, Australia, United States or France reduces such threats. The SPNFZ or Rarotonga Treaty

establishes a nuclear free Pacific region that attracts respect from all nations. All testing of nuclear and other toxic related weapons have ceased in the Pacific region.

Under "Future One," the political-diplomatic decision area lies at a level of full control (+2). The Cook Islands operates diplomatic missions and posts in Canberra (Australia), Sydney (Australia), Wellington (NZ), Auckland (NZ), Hawaii (US), Los Angeles (US), Oslo (Norway) and a new representative in Suva (Fiji). A Fiji representative, primarily monitors all the regional activities of the SPF, SPC, USP and other international agencies based in Suva.

On an annual basis, many diplomats from other countries visit the Cook Islands as a holiday destination. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs works effectively with regional organizations in projecting the needs of Small Island States (SIS). Cook Islands joins more international organizations, based on the economic benefits anticipated through membership. The African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) country association with the European Community finally admits the Cook Islands into its membership.<sup>1</sup>

The economic-developmental decision area lies at a level of full control (+2). Tourism is booming with increased visitors from

the United States, Australia and South East Asia. New Zealand visitors continue to spiral upward. This is due to the expected higher return value from their New Zealand dollars, which the Cook Islands still uses. Licensing fees for fishing in Cook Islands waters is much higher, and the pearl farming industry is now a multi billion-dollar business. There is wide use of modern technology to establish comfortable floating villages on the pearl islands. Cook Islands pearl farmers in the islands of Manihiki, Penrhyn, Suvarrow and Rakahanga, may have even expanded their operations into the nearby Line Islands in Kiribati.<sup>2</sup>

Sea bed mining is still a possibility, but there is limited progress because the projected costs of operation remain high. Local and shipping companies have expanded, and are now profitable through new technology. Agricultural development is effectively providing locally grown food for all local and tourist needs. Agricultural exports to Hawaii for “maire” are booming. On the political scene, women have increased in visibility in a variety of leadership positions.

The Cultural-Status decision area lies at a level of full control (+2). The Cook Islands Government issues its own passport while

New Zealand allows Cook Islanders to maintain New Zealand citizenship, through special arrangements. Cook Islanders increase networking internationally, through community groups, in a variety of countries. This creates an increased visibility of Cook Islanders. Cook Islanders build a multi purpose *marae*, or sacred meeting area, in New Zealand on land presented by the Maori Queen.<sup>3</sup> The national anthem is still the same as 25 years earlier. However, the country has a new flag and a new name.

The potential impact of future one, reflect the existing situation of increases in debt, free access to New Zealand and Australia, and unaccountable decision making at the political level. Future one invariably maintains a continuous movement of Cook Islanders to New Zealand and Australia. While population growth is subsequently, not a major concern, the loss of trained Cook Islanders to Australia and New Zealand, continues to be a drain on government resources. Government dramatically reduces health and education budgets in favor of funds for equipment purchases and overseas travel.

In such a scenario, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could become the most expensive sector of government with the country's

increasing need to maintain access to international and regional organizations. There is a reliance on highly paid overseas “experts,” while most poorly paid locals eventually choose to move to New Zealand. Foreign Affairs jobs become attractive because of travel and other related benefits. Turnover of Ministry staff could also become a problem, as staff seeks out overseas opportunities. Full access to overseas aid and soft loans, continues to entice the government of the small state into uncontrollable debt. The hope for immediate access to potentially enormous seabed wealth stifles realistic short term gains.

### **Future Two: Full Independence - Maintaining Buoyancy**

Based on the responses in chapter 6 and chapter 7, and the analysis in previous chapters, a probable future may be a move toward complete independence. New Zealand’s ending of direct aid to the Cook Islands by the year 2007 enhances this future. Independence may not necessarily mean a complete shift away from the close Cook Islands relationship with New Zealand. Independence will necessitate greater efforts in expanding the economic-developmental relationships with other countries. Fiji, Australia, French Polynesia, Japan, China, United States, Israel and possibly



Norway, will become important partners. Already, these countries have had some contact with Cook Islands officials. Based on the survey research in this research, Australia, followed by Japan, China and the United States will be particularly significant.

The sea bed mining operations will become a key factor in economic-developmental decisions, although, tourism and pearl farming will remain as vital sources of diversified national revenue. Seabed mining may be an instrumental influence in any conscious move toward independence. The trend in government policy underlines bilateral agreements and establishes an expanded economic relationship with other countries. Cook Islanders living overseas may have to renew their rights at home to become a part of the economic boom. As demand increases, land will become an inflated premium with the rights of those inside the country determined as superseding those who "voted with their feet."<sup>4</sup> This opportunity for enhancing access to land rights, may even increase the attractiveness of "independence" to some Cook Islanders. There are three major assumptions in this scenario: (1) the general environment remains the same, (2) government balances its expenditure with revenue, and (3) government adopts an effective

“preparedness” futures approach to its policies. Consequently, the year 2020 may emerge reflecting a Foreign Affairs Ministry operating under the following decision making environment.

In the “Future Two” scenario, the military-security decision area lies at levels similar to “Future One.” The Smaller Island State is limited to controlling access into its territory (-1). However, the Cook Islands could expand its patrol operations to include at least two new boats. While the country may have more financial resources available, its new seabed resources could increase dependency on security assistance. Government actively pursues bilateral and multilateral treaty arrangements with the United States because of technology, military capability and shared interests. Various Memorandum of Understandings will probably be in place linking the Cook Islands closely with New Zealand, Australia and France. While maintaining access control, the country can probably rely on the assistance of these countries for its security. The Foreign Affairs Ministry loses interest in monitoring the SPNFZ or Rarotonga Treaty as the Cook Islands maintains its options of potential technologies for development.

The political-diplomatic decision area lies at a level of full

control (+2). Besides existing diplomatic missions and posts in Canberra (Australia), Sydney (Australia), Wellington (NZ), Auckland (NZ), Hawaii (US), Los Angeles (US) and Oslo (Norway), the Cook Islands will probably open missions in Washington (USA), Japan and China. This extension underlines the rapid expansion of seabed mining. For the same reasons, these countries may also open small posts in Rarotonga. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expands its network and operations and joins various specialized international organizations in anticipation of economic benefits. Cook Islands becomes a member of the United Nations.

Economic-developmental decisions lie at a level of full control (+2). Tourism is booming as in the Future One Scenario. Licensing fees for fishing in Cook Islands waters will probably be lower because of the effect of open sea mining. For similar reasons, the pearl farming industry may sluggish growth. By 2020, sea bed mining may begin to show a tremendous profit. High debts will probably remain, due to previous preparatory activities leading into the mining operations. Local shipping companies may be struggling to compete against international companies who are now in the market for transporting minerals. Agricultural development will be with

ocean resources. The Cook Islands imports most agricultural products from New Zealand, Australia and the United States. On lesser scale, agricultural exports to Hawaii continue for “maire” and other specialized products. Women should have achieved a limited level of success in attaining leadership positions. With its new found wealth, the country’s energy needs diversify to include other technologies. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs staffing includes several specialists recruited from overseas to help in economic related policies and international diplomacy.

The Cultural-Status decision area lies at a level of limited control (+1). This scenario is similar to Future One. A difference lies in the dangers of tremendous economic growth affecting the traditional culture of the nation. From a Foreign Affairs perspective the new found “richness” is enticement to adopt new protocol practices at the cost of old “traditional” ones.

The impact of future two shows the country in a huge debt deficit with great potential for repayments. Cook Islanders return from overseas to find “seabed mining” jobs at home. For the same reason, technicians from New Zealand and Australia will migrate to the Cook Islands. Overpopulation will become a concern for

government and the health and education budgets will become priorities for government.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is only one of several expensive sectors in government. Highly paid “overseas experts” contrast with menial and poorly paid jobs occupied by locals. Foreign Affairs jobs are still attractive because of travel and other related benefits. Full access to overseas aid and soft loans continue to push the country into debt. The political system and its lack of effective accountability remain a problem in Future Two.

### **Future Three: Dependence - Bail Out, Canoe is Sinking**

According to some youth responses in the sample survey population, one probable direction the Cook Islands will head toward is dependency. Their justification for this expectation highlights the difficult challenges facing the Cook Islands. For some, the present course heads toward disaster. These possibilities of disappearance for the Cook Islands as self-governing microstate, faces more than the “trickster” giant along its way. It faces what Dr. Jim Dator might call tidal waves (Dator, 1992). I would prefer to call it the trickster’s wave. The size of its polluted wrath is unimportant because its unpleasant aura alone overshadows normal decision

making processes.

There are at least three polluted waves, and they are all approaching: (1) natural catastrophes, (2) a possible conscious decision by government to change the country's political status without any national referendum, and (3) the country's 1995 destination toward "bankruptcy." Theoretically, like other countries, macro or micro, the nation could ride all three waves. Unlike the larger nations however, getting wet in the process is a higher possibility. In Future Three we treat the approach as a mixture of all four foreign affairs decision areas rolled into one.

The technique used for the analysis of Future Three, is trend analysis by scanning previous issues raised in the previous chapters of this study. The trend shows a continuing rampage destruction of populated islands. Man's insensitivity to the nature of islands is the primary cause. On high islands (Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki and Atiu), gardeners use modern pesticides to protect banana plantations. Pesticides wash into lagoons killing fish and reef based organisms. Introduced goats, cats, insects, rats and pigs continue to ruin the outer islands of the Cook group. The use of inappropriate technology such as bulldozers in erosion risk areas, has also had

drastic consequences. Goats on Mauke island destroy the green maire. A failed ostrich farm on the island of Mangaia creates havoc on the makatea. Banana pesticides on Aitutaki island do kill all lagoon plankton. House constructions on the slopes of Rarotonga create irreversible pollution damage. These various case studies offer a bleak picture of the future of islands and underlines what some may allude to as living beyond the limits. It reemphasizes the need to understand the carrying capacity of the world (Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows and Jorgen Randers (1991). Unfortunately, carrying capacity is far from the minds of many money oriented "converted islanders." This slow death of the island environment is also facing an increasing threat from natural catastrophes. Regional organizations have recognized this perspective and have even regarded such issues as global warming as potentially debilitating to island societies.

Dominated by an ocean environment, the Pacific regional organizations have always looked on the sea as a priority area. In its 1994 Communique, the FORUM agreed that the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks in the Pacific region was important. However, the FORUM declared that the most serious threats to the

region come from global warming and the rise in the sea level (Akinisa Motufaga, PIM, 1994, August, p. 10). An increase in cyclones is the recognized real hazard but other real threats include the sea level rise and climatic changes in the Pacific. For the Cook Islands, the experience with Cyclone Sally brought home the vulnerability of the microstate. The cost in total of damages caused by Cyclone Sally totaled over NZ\$11 million ( JICA, 1994).

Historically, the Cook Islands is prone to hurricanes: Cyclone Sally struck in 1987, Sini and Peni in 1990, and Val in 1991. Those hurricanes caused much coastal damage to public facilities and private properties. It underlined the vulnerability of small island ecosystems to natural disasters. Some would argue that given one major catastrophic disaster, the islands will “disappear” as we know it. In the event the islands survive that, the doomsayer will point to the rising sea level proceeding to engulf low lying atolls and coastal areas.

A second threatening polluted wave that will lead to political dependency, potentially emanates from politicians. The catastrophic temptation to change the political status of the country is forever present. Given the Cook Islands Legislative Assembly’s history of



changing the country's constitution without any prior reference to the general population, an overnight change of status is quite possible. The Cook Islands position as a country, free to pursue its own policies and interests, often becomes a popular call of freedom by politicians (Geoffrey Henry, 1994, p. 22). However, the risk of political status change without comprehensive analysis is a possibility for those who have other motives. This is potentially an extremely difficult wave to ride unless the decision making includes all sectors of the population.

The third approaching polluted wave toward dependency involves possible bankruptcy. For the microstate as a whole, bankruptcy is one sure means of sinking the nation.

Any of the three polluted waves could result in the destruction of the Cook Islands as a nation, and subsequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because of the relationship between the two countries, the assumption is that New Zealand would absorb the Cook. This presumes that the New Zealand government had the desire and inclination to absorb a "sinking canoe." It is also distinctly possible that the islands could end as part of another entity. However, unless there were other extenuating circumstances, the

strong historical connections between the Cook Islands and New Zealand, will unquestionably maintain some form of continued relationship.

In a worst case scenario, the impact of future three shows a decimated physical environment, a breakdown in economic life, a dramatic change in political control, or all three. Other case scenarios will be variations of the worst case. Future three may force a mass migration of those who have the means to escape. As New Zealand citizens, many Cook Islanders will have the opportunity to migrate overseas.

The government would probably collapse although some government departments may continue to act disorderly. There may be some efforts to restore the country to some form of basic existence. The country will have no existing budget because of the bankruptcy situation. There will be much social disorder. In this scenario, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlights a need for increased aid seeking efforts and direct emigration negotiations with other nations.

Under future three, the vulnerabilities of microstates could tempt other countries to take control, guised with aid assistance.

The attraction for them would be the seabed minerals and future potential wealth in ocean and air space.

### **Endnotes**

1. The Cook Islands made two efforts to become a member of the ACP community but technical issues clouded both applications. The quest for membership continues to be an objective of government.
2. Islanders in the Northern group express a traditional link to the Southern Line Islands and are well aware of the potential there for pearl farming.
3. A Cook Islands marae project in New Zealand is quite possible because of the close kinship between the Maori people of the two countries. New Zealand's Maori Queen has reportedly already offered land for such a project. Notably, island groups in other parts of New Zealand have entertained their own community construction projects. During the past ten years the Maori New Zealand people have already built their marae in Rarotonga among various Cook Islands hostels.
4. This is a metaphor Cook Islands politicians often use to describe those who migrated out of the country.

## CHAPTER 9

### POSSIBLE STRATEGIES

*The right to take a risk, to endanger the country's economy and security is the essence of nationhood.*

Claire Clark, 1973, p.86.<sup>1</sup>

The Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs personnel expects to persevere into the 2020s. However, their continued existence will depend much on government's own effectiveness in maintaining and utilizing scarce resources of finance, people, and experience.<sup>2</sup> There is subsequently an additional burden on the sovereign government's international arm, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to project possible strategies. This final chapter proposes some strategies based on various issues and expectations raised in all previous chapters. It revisits questions raised earlier in chapter 1. "Does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of microstates, such as the Cook Islands, have the viabilities to maintain activities adequately into the future? How does this relate to the country's political Free Association status?"

Notably the Cook Islands free association political status, underlines a useful flexibility for microstates. It has enabled

countries, such as the Cook Islands, to initiate their own foreign policy. They have carried this out, although, the experience with their metropolitan partners has influenced the extent in which Foreign Affairs operates. For the Cook Islands, there have been three notable elements highlighted in this research: the special Maori and English ties, a flexible constitution, and the continuing desire by Cook Islanders to control their own destiny. Consequently, the development of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been a voluntary choice by the Cook Islands government, in spite of the high monetary and personnel costs.

A primary motive for the development and maintenance of a Foreign Affairs Ministry, underlines an expectation that economic-developmental aspirations can best be achieved through direct international assistance. Accordingly, Foreign Affairs personnel have pursued activities that focus on a substitution capability and an export prospectus. By doing so, the Ministry has displayed a capacity to be sustainable through a variety of activities. These activities include national efforts in agriculture, marine resource, tourism, and outer islands development. A major impetus of Foreign Affairs efforts has involved activities that seek international or

regional assistance toward such economic-developmental programs.

Since its initiation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has shown that it does produce sufficient valued outputs. That is an important perspective, since most Cook Islanders express an expectation that, the country will eventually achieve full political independence and full membership in the United Nations. Additionally, there is an anticipation that by the year 2020, New Zealand will continue to be the most important country to the Cook Islands. Aside, there is also growing awareness of Asia as a potentially important country in the future. Generally, even among most Cook Islanders, there is anticipation that the economic-developmental area is more important than the security-military, political-diplomatic, and culture-status decision areas. The implication of its continued significance, emphasizes another area: the issue of preparedness.

Most Cook Islanders expect that government is unprepared. Possible major changes such as the discovery of new economic resources, the mining of seabed minerals, the rise of sea level, or the potential for adapting new technologies, does not seem to implant confidence in government's existing preparedness. That perceived lack of preparedness alludes to the areas of finance,

equipment, know-how and unbiased political leadership. This suggests a future Foreign Affairs institution burdened with over reliance on outside resources. Ironically simultaneously, there is a perceived “increase in sovereignty,” as the country “moves toward independence,” (Tangi Kapi, personal communication, July 5, 1995).<sup>3</sup> However, without any form of preparedness, neglect may secure the fate of the self governing freely associated Cook Islands.<sup>4</sup>

Renown Cook Islands traditional navigator Tua Pitman, points out that if a canoe is to be buoyant it must have an acceptable level of preparedness. He explains that it would be tragic if a person navigated for too long without some guiding plan. It would be a high risk situation where one aspires in being overlooked and perhaps even forgotten. It could become a case of a “disappearing canoe that floats aimlessly,” (Tua Pitman, personal communication, January 1991). Based on the general expectation of the sample population, the lack of government preparedness toward the future does not enhance the expected move toward full political independence.

In a world of macro states and global networks, many observers project the lot of the mini microstates as minuscule. Yet thirty years of Cook Islands microstate buoyancy, offers significant

lessons. The successful buoyancy of the Cook Islands for 30 years is as much a reflection of the very flexibility of the free association status, as it is a credit to the efforts of Cook Islanders. Therefore, it seems that any movement toward full independence without adequate preparedness, is high risk. It may be an unintentional counter productive move toward more dependence. Especially, since a political dependence attained in such a voluntary manner, would also be extremely difficult to reverse.

A basic issue arises, focusing on sovereignty because it essentially incorporates freedom: political freedom to make decisions, social freedom to pursue material goods, and economic freedom. Except some perceived limitations in its economic freedom (a lack of resources or perhaps an inability to acknowledge unknown resources), the Cook Islands enjoys all three freedoms. If the Cook Islands already has sovereignty under its current free association status, what more would it gain through full independence.

If the logic is toward an increase of economic developmental benefits, the life line for that decision making, hinges on some direct foreign affairs process. Under both systems, full independence and free association, the Foreign Affairs Ministry can operate quite



effectively. Notably, New Zealand has to assist as part of its constitutional obligation under free association, if the Cook Islands forwards a legitimate request. It seems therefore, that free association is a more advantageous political status. In this study, the expectations of most Cook Islanders highlight a need for government to review possible strategies and alternative scenario projections.

### **Strategies**

A general summary of possible strategies for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, underlines several significant approaches: (1) restructure the system of operations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (2) increase the involvement of international agencies; (3) maintain its flexible free association political status and; (4) adopt some regular futures approaching planning strategies.

### **Restructure the System**

To create better accountability and effectiveness, an initial strategy should consider a complete restructuring of the operations system for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This could incorporate several changes that reflect the size of the microstate, the aspirations of most Cook Islanders, and the people's dynamic and

unique culture. It should also reflect the changing times.

In their work entitled Reinventing Government, David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1993) suggest that “the people who work in government are not the problem; the systems in which they work are the problem,” (p. xxiii). The spiraling costs of the Foreign Affairs Ministry in association with an unfettered institutional expansion, underlines that observation by Osborne and Gaebler. Therefore, the system under which Foreign Affairs functions, requires thorough review if not re invention.

The restructuring ought to begin at the political level. This should create a better representation of the views of most Cook Islanders, rather than allowing too much freedom to Legislatures to initiate self serving government policy changes. Any Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs should have a clear mandate from the people to carry out any high cost program investments involving public resources. That objective probably requires a change in elections format and a change in Ministry operations (a later discussion alludes to these election changes).

In reviewing the current operations of foreign affairs, the high cost of overseas missions stands out. A restructuring would address

that issue. It should involve a direct reduction in the number of Cook Islands representatives based in overseas countries. A more practical multi designated diplomat based in one location would dramatically reduce costs. It would also increase efficiency. The operations could therefore include the main base in Rarotonga and a second support overseas base, possibly in Wellington, New Zealand.

For example, the diplomat in Rarotonga would be considered the most senior and would also hold the position of Secretary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The second senior diplomat based in New Zealand, would be next in seniority and could hold the position of Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Government could appoint other Honorary Consulates in strict accordance to a very limited budget allocation and a fixed term of their appointment. As part of this complete strategy, overseas countries could be encouraged to extend their representation to the Cook Islands. The presentation of his credentials by the Malaysian High Commissioner Datuk Daniel Tajem, to the Cook Islands, is an example of this cost-effective way of maintaining direct international contacts.

Government needs to require all Ministry staff to have a minimum level of formal tertiary qualification. Permanent

appointments, should also hinge on a two-year probationary period of awareness training, in both international and internal programs.

Staff should be highly motivated, innovative and well compensated for their efforts.

### **Involve International Agencies**

A second strategy focuses on international organizations. An increase in the involvement of international organizations in appropriate national programs, will have a direct bearing in government's economic-developmental efforts. Such involvements should also carry with it an accountability for the expert rather than a mere recommendation relationship. Too often, overseas "experts" carry out expensive studies, offer their "educated" recommendations for a country's consideration, and then leave without any accountability for their advice. When the implementation of those recommendations backfires, the experts have usually not been around, and if they are, they express no accountability.

Organizations such as the ADB have expressed real interest in assisting the Cook Islands in a series of steps. These also involve restructuring and the issuing of available funds to the private sector. ADB has already proposed an improvement of the

infrastructure including roads, power, and telecommunications, as part of an effort toward streamlining operations in the long term. ADB has also expressed interest in private sector development by discouraging government's involvement in businesses that could be run by the private sector (CI Press, 1996, January 28, p. 9). As part of that effort, ADB suggests that the public sector reduce dramatically. This is a recommendation that has a direct positive correlation to any restructuring of Foreign Affairs.

On occasions, organizations such as the SPF could also act directly speaking for the Cook Islands government, by that reducing operational costs on the microstate.<sup>5</sup>

### **Maintain Free Association**

A third strategy underlines the advantage of free association. The microstate's greatest strength involves operational flexibility and the potential speed in carrying out appropriate courses of action. The adoption and maintenance of a flexible political status clearly enhance that strength. Free association underlines that flexibility. It seems therefore, that the maintenance of the free association political status, ought to be a priority for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a defined strategy, it could only enhance the operations

of the Ministry. The Ministry's effectiveness links with nationally prioritized economic-developmental programs that should be more clearly outlined and targeted. To be fully effective, however, futures' approaches ought to be incorporated in all Ministry activities.

### **Adopt Futures Planning**

This study has underlined a general lack of long term planning by government and by implication, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The high risk of an unprepared government when facing a totally unexpected future scenario, emphasizes the advantages of incorporating futures planning in all government activities.

Three major agents of change will generally determine for the Cook Islands the potential impact of alternative general futures. These agents include technology, human, and the environment. Drawing on that underlying interaction, for at least the next twenty five years, issues of impact will be the following: (1) environmental changes, including those caused or sustained by pollution, natural disasters, and resource depletion; (2) economic potential; (3) security interest; and (4) societies' adaptability. Adaptability refers to the island societies ability to adapt or survive new technologies

and health hazards.

These concerns have already had an impact in the history of the Cook Islands. Those same interests have also guided the participation of the country in the international and global arena as reflected in the four foreign affairs decision areas: military-security, political-diplomatic, economic-developmental and cultural-status. They still play a vital role in current scenarios, so this trend will probably continue into the future. It is the multi variation and mix of these trends, and the underlying influence of the three agents of change that will determine the actual possible futures.<sup>6</sup>

Whatever that future is, one could never predict it although the projection of various futures is possible.<sup>7</sup> After all while there is no single future that a person could predict, it is quite possible to suggest several alternatives, one of which might almost be the real future. Our inability to predict the future should not prevent the forecasting of alternative futures or even the invention of preferred futures as guidelines for policy making.

With that perspective in mind, three possible futures were presented in "Chapter 8" for the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. It projects into the year 2020.<sup>8</sup> Cook Islanders' current views cogitate three future possibilities: a return toward more dependence on New Zealand, a further expansion of free association, or complete political independence.<sup>9</sup> The expectation of the sample population hinged strongly on the later two, especially Future One, which involves a free association relationship still working well.

### **Possible Strategies Toward Future One**

If most Cook Islanders expect their nation to remain a freely associated country as currently constituted, or some further development of it as expected by some respondents, they must influence Government to control its activities.

The buoyancy of the country cannot be maintained under spiraling and out of control expenditure levels. Budget allocations have to remain within existing resources, and the capacity of the country to pay, must be analyzed realistically. The magic of buoyancy is not so much its sustainability but an adaptability to changing situations. In this sense therefore, any possible strategy toward an acceptable "Future One," must have better control of its politicians.

The fundamental principles ought to be in practice: (1) people's



power must be recognized as the ultimate sovereign power; and (2) those entrusted to represent the people through institutions must be accountable. An effective system of personal accountability involves standardized procedures in all areas including constitutional, legal, judicial, parliamentary, ministerial or simply administrative.

Changes that alter the country's constitution or level of national debt, must seek the support of most Cook Islanders through national referendums. Existing excesses need control. This includes the current number of politicians elected (24), their term of office (5 years), and the number of Cabinet Ministers (8-9).<sup>10</sup>

In 1995, the Cook Islands has twenty-five Members of Parliament, nine Cabinet Ministers and eleven Assistant Ministers. Ideally, the year 2020 should have five Ministers (including the Prime Minister), no Assistant Ministers, and fifteen Members of Parliament representing: Rarotonga (3); Aitutaki and Manuae (1); Mangaia (1); Nga-Pu-Toru, consisting of Atiu, Takutea, Mauke, and Mitiaro (2); Mangaia (1); Manihiki and Rakahanga (1); Tongareva and Parmeston (1); Pukapuka and Nassau (1); and members elected at large (4). The head of government, has to be the member elected at large, who get the most votes. This represents a national mandate

and it reduces conflicts between national responsibilities and potential debilitating constitutional bias.

The term of office for the island-based elected member, is two years, while the member elected at large, serves for four years. It ensures continuity while maintaining some form of stability. The Prime Minister elects four Cabinet Ministers. A suggestion by Ron Crocombe to create a Cabinet allowing, the appointment of an outside non parliamentary members is an appropriate one. However, I would limit that number to less than two (Ron Crocombe, personal communication, July 1995. Subsequently, out of five Ministers (including the Prime Minister), three are elected legislatures and two the Prime Minister appoints, directly from the public.

The term for the outside member is limited to 4 years. In addition, outside members cannot act as the Prime Minister in the event he is out of the country, or is unable to carry out his duties. Subsequently, the Deputy Prime Minister or Acting Prime Minister has to be a Parliamentary member. This ensures maximum participation from the public.

Similarly, legislative powers must approve the opening of government overseas posts or missions before their set up. Special

open committees should screen potential representatives to ensure that the best candidates are selected.

All loans exceeding an identified amount pre approved by referendum, must be cleared through both the Parliament, and a national referendum. A Parliament should install a minimum operational budget for all government departments. Special committees review all alterations of budget base and/or institutional existence. Ideally, such a committee establishes a widely based group made up of representatives from government, private sector and youth groups. A Member of Parliament chairs all such committees.

What might seem as a constraint on government is a realistic reflection of the size of the canoe. As a microstate, a constraint already exists. The reality is limited space. This is one way to avoid that trickster giant: the greed of those who have but their own desires in view. For "Future One," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reevaluates membership in all organization from a cost/benefit perspective. A user pay approach with other government and private sector groups would be a useful approach for the maintenance of membership in international bodies. Since economic-developmental

decision areas have such an impact on foreign affairs' work, the user approach may be the most practical. For other decision areas, guidance emanates from Cabinet. Parliament, also places a ceiling for all funds effective over at least a four-year period.

### **Possible Strategies Toward Future Two**

To become fully independent may be an expectation of some Cook Islanders, but the buoyancy of the country becomes more difficult to maintain without some safety valve. Like Future One, Future Two also depends on control of present spiraling expenditure levels. Budget allocations have to remain within existing resources, but if the seabed resources prove as promising as expected, it enhances the capacities of the microstate to remain buoyant. The ability of the Cook Islands, to adapt to international interests in its resources, is crucial. The tendency for these large international companies to overrun local interests could prove the detrimental to the country. Like future One, control of the politicians will be a critical issue. The same changes in the political system make up Future Two. While the political relationship of the country changes, it remains as a small canoe with the same challenges of maintaining its buoyancy. An only difference lies in access to its very own

resources.

### **Possible Strategies Toward Future Three**

For most Cook Islanders, a political dependency situation is not an option that they aspire toward. Ironically, had Cook Islanders been presented with the option of choosing their political preference before 1965, most would have chosen dependency: integration with New Zealand. As it turned out there was no national referendum. Thirty years later, most Cook Islanders would now regard integration as a poor option. Now, Cook Islanders cherish the opportunity to pursue their own policies. Nevertheless, in spite of a preferred future, future three could come uninvited.

Strategies that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could adopt in the event of an unlikely future three, would focus on better general preparedness. Long term plans ought to extend beyond five years. Bilateral agreements should incorporate a mutual understanding of clauses that cater for unlikely scenarios particularly where there is a humanitarian need. A regionally based foreign policy of free access would enhance the buoyancy of the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs would therefore need to concentrate some of its energies toward an organized migration program, in case of a catastrophe

occurring.

In this study of foreign affairs management, in a microstate, a variety of issues have been reviewed, and the expectations of a sample population sought. The result of the analysis suggests that mostly economic-developmental and political-diplomatic concerns influence the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Cook Islands. The long term role of the Ministry projects through and the preference of the sample population supports the continued existence of the country as a sovereign nation. However, a variety of problems facing the nation have underlined an awareness of an unprepared government. Survival as a nation is a real possibility, although, it hinges on the concept of buoyancy where the dangers of overspending and a lack of accountability, continue to pose threats.

In spite of such threats, there are continued hope and an acceptance of change particularly among most youth. An education program that relays the realities in the beauty and relativity of being small, would serve as an important buoyancy tool toward the future of the Cook Islands. Government needs to plan for that future according to realistic aspirations and known environmental constraints. The need to change the political framework of the

country, underscores an effective Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, a better prepared Foreign Affairs Ministry with effective strategies in place, has to constantly be an important priority. As a microstate, the Cook Islands has survived for over 30 years and it could survive another 30 years. Its survival has a direct bearing on its political status and how it adapts to changes. If continued buoyancy is possible in spite of size, then Microstates have a great future.

The very nature of Free Association as a dynamic political relationship rather than a permanent status underlines an effective buoyancy system. It offers an opportunity to establish a dynamic political arrangement that allows “independence” for a microstate. Free Association purports to be an ideal political option for most microstates.

### **Endnotes**

1. Also quoted in Boyce, p. 22.
2. Peter Boyce called it the three major areas of scarcity that “challenge[s], inhibit[s], or frustrate[s] the developing countries . . . ” (Boyce, p. 23).
3. Tangi Kapi, a former Government Printer who retired to enter the private sector argues that the Cook Islands had matured over the years and had already reached 21. He maintains strongly that “the

celebration is over and it is time to move on.”

4. Several current trends imply that the microstates face increasing economic and political isolation: The reduction of US, British, and Australian aid into the Pacific Islands, the withdrawal of the UK from SPC, notable shifts of Australian political focus away from the Pacific, and the continued French nuclear testing over island country protests.

5. SPF (and other regional organizations) has often represented its member countries in the international arena. However, a more formal representation in the United Nations has often been a favorable issue among many member countries.

6. Future oriented research, a systematic investigation of a set of images of the future, describes characteristics of the future that, either may, or may not take place. Marvin Soroos, Assistant Professor of Politics at the North Carolina State University put it succinctly when he declared that future oriented research tries to answer the question of what should be, what could be, and how what should be could be.

7. There are four categories of futures methods: using one's knowledge of history to anticipate the future (Insight); forecasting the future from the present (Flashlight); incasting from the future (Lighthouse); and, designing the future. All underline possible techniques in futures studies enhanced by three components of the future. That future could be the same as the past or present; it could be a resulting trend from the past or present; or it could be something entirely new.

8. In developing the alternative futures, I have used a mixture of futures' studies techniques that Dr. James Dator incorporated in a class presentation at the University of Hawaii. Those techniques include (1) forecasting which assumes a continuity of past and present trends (trends analysis); (2) forecasting which assumes discontinuity from the present, although similar to the past or the present (analogy); and (3) incasting from the future.



9. The possible futures in this chapter have been influenced by the studies of Ben Finney, Hazel Henderson, James Dator, Ira Rohter, Ron Crocombe, and Richard Slaughter. However, most of the final images are drawn from the results of the survey in chapter six and seven and the general issues raised in chapter five.

10. Following the buoyancy approach, they should reduce to be coincide with the realities of the space available on a small canoe.

## APPENDIX A

### LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED AND/OR INTERVIEWED

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Akaruru, Inatio      | Deputy Prime Minister, MP for Pukapuka.       |
| Brown, Jason         | Editor of Cook Islands Press.                 |
| Crocombe, Dr. Ron    | University Professor.                         |
| Faireka, Tupou       | Assistant Minister of Health, Rarotonga MP.   |
| George, Norman       | Leader of the Alliance Party, Atiu MP.        |
| Heather, Nia         | Musician/Business-person.                     |
| Henry, Alex,         | Foreign Affairs Officer.                      |
| Henry, Sir G. A.     | Prime Minister, MP for Rarotonga.             |
| Jacob, Teariki       | Director of Crown Lands.                      |
| Jonassen, Rena       | Tapetukura Rangatira.                         |
| Kairua, Emile        | General Manager, Cook Islands Television.     |
| Kapi, Tangi          | Retired Government Printer/Business-person.   |
| Kauraka Kauraka      | Government Anthropologist.                    |
| Louie, Claire        | Entrepreneur Business-person.                 |
| MacKegg, Donald      | Business Management.                          |
| Makea Nui Ariki      | Traditional Paramount Chief.                  |
| Makirere, Teata      | High School Teacher.                          |
| Manarangi-Trott, T.  | Director of Planning.                         |
| Maoate, Dr. Terepai  | Democratic Party Leader, Rarotonga MP.        |
| Marsters, Tom        | Minister of Public Affairs, Rarotonga MP.     |
| Okotai, Temu         | Secretary to Prime Minister's Department.     |
| Pitman, Edwin        | Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs.          |
| Pitman, Tua          | Traditional Navigator.                        |
| Pokino, Papa-Mama    | Minister of Internal Affairs, Mangaia MP.     |
| Rere, Sam            | Business-person.                              |
| Strickland, Mana     | Former Minister/Retired Public Servant.       |
| Students             | From Tereora College in Rarotonga.            |
| Students             | From Araura College in Aitutaki.              |
| Students             | Studying/living in Hawaii (Listed next page). |
| Tom, Taraota         | Business-person.                              |
| Tatuava, Arakura     | Foreign Affairs Officer.                      |
| Tavioni, Michael     | Master Carver, Business-person.               |
| White, Taina         | Personal Secretary, Ministry of Culture.      |
| Williams, Dr. Joseph | Minister of Health, MP for Overseas.          |

Cook Islands Students in Hawaii

Akanoa, Grace

Ben, Trina

Cummings, John \*

Ezekiela, Sam \*

George, Tere

Glassie, Leilani (NZ)

Iorangi, Roland \*

James, Tina (Aust.)

Jonassen, Melina

Kalama, Tau (nee Numanga) \*

Kumihia, Rubina

Mahoney, Tanya (nee Sadaraka)\*

Mareiterangi, Kata'i (nee Matapo) \*

Marzel, Mi'i \*

Matapo, Aue

Murraru-Roos, Ti'a (NZ)

Numanga, William

Pi'akura, June

Ponia, Kare Isabel

Puia, Tareta

Robert Robert (NZ)

Taea, Api'i \*

Taea, No'o \*

Tom, Tareta

Waka, Naomi

Waka, Solo

Waka, Teremoana \*

Warren, William

\* Former BYUH students still living in Hawaii.

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE

Identification: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age Group: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section A:

(1) Do you expect that the Cook Islands Government has planned and prepared for the future?

(2) How far should the Cook Islands Government plan into the future?

(3) Do you expect that government has alternative plans for the future?

(4) Do you expect government to have adequate resources to meet future obligations?

(a) Is there enough skilled manpower?

(b) Is there adequate physical resources (equipment)?

#### Section B:

(5) How would you rate the following future scenarios for the Cook Islands in the next 25 years (2020)?

(a) New resources have been found in the Cook Islands.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(b) The sea level has risen dramatically.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(c) Atolls are inundated by sea-water at high-tide.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(d) Pearl farmers are living in modern floating villages.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(e) There are active seabed mining activities.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(f) Cook Islands is a member of the United Nations.

Not likely?                       Likely to happen?                       Don't know?

(6) As you look toward the future, in your opinion, which country will be the most important to the Cook Islands by the year 2020?

New Zealand?                       Australia?                       US?

Other (Identify)                       Don't know

(7) Why?

(a) Military - Security?                      (b) Political - Diplomatic?

(c) Economic - Developmental?                      (d) Cultural - Status?

(e) Other reason? (Identify).

(8) Do you think that the Cook Islands will have a new political status in the future?

(9) What do you think will be the future political status for the Cook Islands?

Fully integrated with New Zealand?                       Don't know?

Self Government in Free Association (as it is now)?

Fully Independent?                       Another status (Identify)?

(10) Why?

(a) Military - Security?

(b) Political - Diplomatic?

(c) Economic - Developmental?

(d) Cultural - Status?

(e) Other reason? (Identify)

## APPENDIX C

### THE COOK ISLANDS CONSTITUTION ACT 1964

#### 1964, No. 69

An Act to make provision for self government by the people of the Cook Islands (other than Niue) and to provide a constitution for those islands. [17 November 1964]

**1. Short Title and commencement** - (1) This Act may be cited as the Cook Islands Constitution Act 1964. (2) . . . This Act shall come into force on a date to be appointed for the commencement thereof by the Governor-General, by Proclamation, being a date later than the date on which the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly of the Cook Islands is held after the first general election of the Assembly held after the passing of this Act. In subs. (2) the words "Subject to the provisions of Article 79 of the Constitution" were omitted by s. 2 (2) of the Cook Islands Constitution Amendment Act 1965. This Act came into force on 4 August 1965, see clause 2 of the Cook Islands Constitution Act, Commencement Order 1965 (S.R. 1965/128)

**2. Interpretation and application** - (1) In this Act - "The Constitution" means the Constitution of the Cook Islands, as set out in the Schedule to this Act: "The Cook Islands" has the same meaning as in the Constitution. (2) This Act shall be in force in the Cook Islands and, unless the context otherwise requires, shall apply to the Cook Islands only and not to New Zealand.

**3. Cook Islands to be self-governing** - The Cook Islands shall be self governing.

**4. Constitution of the Cook Islands** - The Constitution set out in the Schedule to this Act shall be the Constitution of the Cook Islands, and shall be the supreme law of the Cook Islands.

**5. External affairs and defence** - Nothing in this Act or in the Constitution shall affect the responsibilities of Her Majesty the Queen in right of New Zealand for the external affairs and defence of the Cook Islands, those responsibilities to be discharged after consultation by the Prime Minister of New Zealand with the Premier of the Cook Islands.

**6. British nationality and New Zealand citizenship** - Nothing in this Act or in the Constitution shall affect the status of any person as a British subject or New Zealand citizen by virtue of the British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act 1948.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **EXCHANGE OF LETTERS**

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND  
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

#### **LETTER No. 1**

The Right Honorable N. E. KIRK,  
Prime Minister of New Zealand

to

The Honorable A. R. HENRY,  
Premier of the Cook Islands.

Prime Minister,  
Wellington,  
New Zealand  
4 May 1973

My dear Premier,

When you visited Wellington earlier this year, we discussed the nature of the special relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand; and we then agreed to exchange letters clarifying aspects of this relationship.

You explained to me your government's desire that the free association between the Cook Islands and New Zealand should not be regarded as restricting the Cook Island's powers of self-government. I was glad to assure you that, in the view of the New Zealand Government, there are no legal fetters of any kind upon the freedom of the Cook Islands, which make their own laws and control their own Constitution.

That also is the view of the United Nations. The General

Assembly accepted the referendum approving the present Constitution as an act of self-determination, which had ended the dependent status of the Cook Islands.

Thence forward, the relationship between our two countries has been simply one of partnership, freely entered into and freely maintained. The Cook Islands Constitution Act, and the Constitution itself, provide guarantees and guidelines for the conduct of this partnership; but, in the final analysis, everything turns on the will of each of our countries to make the arrangement work.

It is, of course an integral part of that arrangement that the Cook Islands can continue to rely on New Zealand's help and protection. To that end, the New Zealand Government has a statutory responsibility for the external affairs and defence of the Cook Islands. It is, however, also intended that the Cook Islands be free to pursue their own policies and interests - as they are doing, for example, through separate membership of the South Pacific Forum and other regional bodies.

I need hardly assure you, Mr Premier, that the New Zealand Government welcomes the role which your country is now playing, and looks forward to continued co-operation with your government in the wide range of matters which are our common concern. At the same time, I would like especially to draw your attention to the central feature of the constitutional relationship between our two countries.

By their own express wish, the people of the Cook Islands remain New Zealand citizens. Like other New Zealand citizens, they owe allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen in right of New Zealand, and they acknowledge the Queen in Her New Zealand capacity as their Head of State. In this way the Cook Islands people retain the right to regard New Zealand as their own country, even while they enjoy self-government within the Cook Islands.

The very survival of a state may depend upon the belief of its citizens in common ideals and their sense of loyalty towards each other. It is therefore unusual for a state to extend its citizenship to people living in areas beyond the reach of its own laws. That New Zealand has taken this step in relation to the Cook Islands is the strongest proof of its regard for, and confidence in, the people of your country.



For the reasons I have already indicated, the bond of citizenship does entail a degree of New Zealand involvement in Cook Islands affairs. This is reflected in the scale of New Zealand's response to your country's material needs; but it also creates an expectation that the Cook Islands will uphold, in their laws and policies, a standard of values generally acceptable to New Zealanders.

It seems to my Government that this is the heart of the matter. The special relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand is on both sides a voluntary arrangement which depends upon shared interests and shared sympathies. In particular, it calls for understanding on New Zealand's part of the Cook Islands' natural desire to lead a life of their own, and for equal understanding on the Cook Islands' part of New Zealand's determination to safeguard the values on which citizenship is based.

I shall be grateful for your reply confirming that the Cook Islands Government shares the views expressed in this letter, and wishes to maintain the special relationship of free association between the Cook Islands and New Zealand. I would, moreover, suggest that my letter and your reply be tabled by our respective Governments in the Cook Islands Legislative Assembly and in the New Zealand Parliament, as an indication to all who are interested of the true nature of the ties between our two countries.

Yours sincerely  
(signed) NORMAN KIRK

**LETTER No. 2**

The Honorable A. R. HENRY,  
Premier of the Cook Islands

to

The Right Honorable N. E. KIRK,  
Prime Minister of New Zealand  
Wellington  
9 May, 1973

My Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 4 May about the special relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

I confirm that the Cook Islands Government shares the views expressed in your letter, and wishes to maintain the special relationship of free association between the Cook Islands and New Zealand.

I agree that your letter and this reply be tabled by our respective governments in the Cook Islands Legislative Assembly and in the New Zealand Parliament.

Yours sincerely  
(signed) A. R. HENRY

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