EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: THE PACIFIC IN THE NEW WORLD DISORDER

In 1993, the countries of the South Pacific are challenged by a new and dynamic international environment. The most notable achievement of Mikhail Gorbachev's attempt to reform Stalinist-socialism was the destruction of the USSR as a unified state. However, in doing so, he fundamentally altered the fabric of international politics. From a global perspective, former US President George Bush's view that the Soviet demise marked the birth of a "new world order," has proven to hold as much substance as his 1988 "read my lips" election campaign pledge not to introduce new taxes. In contrast, history has returned, consuming both Gorbachev and Bush, and releasing a number of powerful forces long suppressed by the cold war. Today, conflict and disorder, political instability and disintegration characterise the so-called "new world order" across much of the globe.

The end of the cold war has fundamentally altered political relationships between great powers, and in turn, the relations between powerful states and their less powerful cold war allies and opponents are also changing. The small countries of the South Pacific, most of which gained independence during the cold war, will be forced to adapt to new configurations of world power. For most of the five decades since World War Two, the South Pacific has indeed been pacific - if judged in comparative levels of civil and interstate peace. However, this peace was contingent upon a variety of social, political, military, and economic relationships which were integrally woven into the fabric of the cold war's ideological rivalry. With the end of the cold war, the logic upon which these relationships were constructed is no longer intact.

The contributors to this volume of *The Journal of Pacific Studies* have begun to probe a number of the important questions and ramifications of the present world disorder. The first two articles are conceptually oriented toward rethinking seldom-challenged ideas of mainstream political thought. Mark Berger examines critically the concept of the "third world" by providing a concise yet comprehensive history and historiographical review

of the concept. He effectively argues that the term has little contemporary value, and he provides a thorough examination of some of the most recent theoretical literature - a gentle reminder to many scholars that reading should not cease the moment one's graduate degree is obtained. Tim Luke's critique of the nation-state concept is an outstanding example of this type of new thinking. In an essay written in the powerful, yet initially challenging syntax of deconstructionist discourse, Luke argues that the world political economy has juxtaposed the local and the global, creating "glocal" communities. Luke's new constructs of the world community are created and defined by high technology networks which bypass the traditional territorial basis of nation-state sovereignty. Both Berger's and Luke's articles confront mainstream paradigms and should spark a lively discourse.

Ganesh Chand and Martin Farrell explore the rising fortunes of two traditionally secondary powers in the Pacific: France and China. Chand reviews French colonialism in the Pacific and provides a historical analysis of its attempts to infiltrate and influence the small island states in the South Pacific. He argues that France has been able to maintain its imperial presence through a variety of economic and political policies, focusing primarily on French attempts to control the agendas of regional organisations. Farrell explores the rising fortunes of China and its potential for becoming a new Pacific superpower in wake of the Soviet demise; even to the point of overtaking and displacing the United States' prominent position in the Pacific. Farrell probes the fundamental question of China's own stability as a nation-state in this time of explosive economic growth. He effectively questions the viability of the present totalitarian regime in Beijing and its growing inability to control events, including ethnic unrest and possible secessionist moves by China's various peoples and regions.

Of equal importance (and warning) to the countries of the Pacific is the coverage of the post-cold war arms race in the Asia-Pacific region provided by Steven Ratuva and Douglas Borer. This article argues that the so-called "peace dividend" is a myth. Starting with an analysis of the ongoing disorder in the post-Soviet states, the authors show that the Asia-Pacific region is rapidly rearming itself, and that traditional types of interstate conflict, most notably over territory and resources, loom on the

horizon.

Roman Grynberg's analysis of the future of the Fiji sugar industry shows that the cold war was not only a military struggle, and that the economics of the cold war had far reaching implications for the development of small states. Grynberg forcefully argues that the foundation of Fiji's wealth, its sugar industry, was a product of European and American economic policies after World War Two. With the end of the cold war, and accelerating moves toward free market world trade, the foundations of Fiji's sugar industry are rapidly being eroded. It is an apt warning for all developing countries which rely heavily on the export of single-commodity raw materials for their economic well being.

In a related article Steven Majstorovic recounts Malaysia's political evolution. He conceptualises Malaysia as an "ethnic state", thus providing a clear model of what will most likely characterise a significant part of world politics in the 1990s. Across the globe, ethno-nationalism and racial violence have filled the vacuum left behind by the end of the US-Soviet conflict. In many states, including Fiji, ethnic struggles define politics and have destroyed legitimate democratic governments. Majstorovic provides a useful analysis of how this process has already played itself out in Malaysia during the last three decades. He shows that policies designed to promote the interests of a politically dominant ethnic group rarely succeed as planned.

Readers may find that these articles raise as many questions as they answer. Taken as a whole, they are not optimistic of the future of world politics. However, all of these articles provide a wealth of knowledge and should challenge readers to think about what the cold war was, how the end of the cold war may impact their lives, and most importantly, how politics must be changed in the future. The 21st Century is rapidly approaching, and it will indeed be the Pacific Century. History will show that the cold war period was one of the darkest, bloodiest, most wasteful and perilous times in human history. Hopefully, in contrast to the early prognosis of these authors, the Pacific Century will mark a turning point forward to a better future.

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December, 1993.