

## Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick

### 'The Right to Intervene'

*Australia created the pretext that is now being used to eliminate sovereignty in the Pacific nations.*

At the Oct. 27-30 Pacific Islands Forum, composed of Australia, New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga, Samoa, and Vanuatu, the two dominant nations rammed through an agreement allowing external intervention in the domestic political crises of member nations.

Named the Biketawa Declaration, after the Kiribati resort island on which the forum was held, the agreement forecasts political and economic instability for the region, and, in response, ushers in a new era of British Commonwealth interventionism, enforced by the muscle of Australia and New Zealand.

The Biketawa Declaration first affirms the Forum's commitment to the British Commonwealth mantras of "good governance," "the rule of law," and "indigenous rights," and lists various diplomatic measures to be pursued in the resolution of a crisis, including fact-finding missions and third party mediation. Then, in Section 2 (iv), the very last line, comes the blank check for intervention: "If, after actions taken, the crisis persists, convene a special meeting of Forum Leaders to consider other options *including, if necessary, targeted measures*" (emphasis, punctuation added).

The Oct. 31 *Canberra Times* summed up what is afoot: "The signing of the Biketawa Declaration by Pacific leaders in Kiribati at the weekend represents a dramatic change in the principles underlying the regional co-operation of the past 30 years. It moves the South Pacific away from an ASEAN-style regionalism, in which the non-intervention principle is fore-

most, to a Commonwealth model in which the Biketawa Declaration mirrors the role of the Commonwealth's Harare Declaration. . . . This move also suggests a shift beyond state sovereignty as the organising principle of the region."

Justifying the Biketawa Declaration to the Pacific Island Forum delegates, Australian Prime Minister John Howard spoke ominously of an unstable future for the region. "We have been reminded not only in relation to East Timor, but also in relation to what has occurred in Fiji and the Solomon Islands, that we do live in a less stable part of the world than we might otherwise have thought," he warned. He also foreshadowed a massive increase in Australia's defense budget next year, in the order of 5%, including \$350 million to extend an Australian patrol boat program in the region for another 25 years. The increase comes out of a new Defense White Paper to be released next month, which he described as the most "fundamental re-examination for decades of the security environment in which Australia now finds itself."

In fact, Australia has *created* the security environment it now finds itself in, first by its malicious intervention into East Timor, and then through dirty tricks that have created the crises it is now using as the pretext for overriding the sovereignty of its neighbors. It was Howard's personal interference in pressuring former Indonesian President B.J. Habibie over East Timor, that brought on last year's independence referendum and the ensuing violence, and the subsequent Australian-led UN peacekeeping that continues to flout

Indonesian sovereignty; later reports revealed that Australia's crack Special Air Service was operating in East Timor *illegally*, months before the referendum. Last June, Australia refused a request from the Solomon Islands government for police reinforcements to avoid an ethnic uprising, instead waiting until the government was overthrown to broker last month's "peace" talks, and lead the peacekeeping mission that arrived in the Solomons on Nov. 6.

However, the most egregious case of Australian—and British—dirty tricks, is the Pacific Islands Forum member-nation Fiji. Just four days after the military coup in Fiji on May 19, Australia gave virtual approval to the overthrow of the pro-development, anti-austerity Labour government of Mahendra Chaudhry, by declaring that it didn't consider it necessary for Chaudhry to be reinstated, as long as "democracy" were restored. Whilst the coup was publicly led by failed businessman George Speight, the mastermind was retired British Special Air Services (SAS) Colonel Ili-soni Ligairi, and the elite, 30-man Counter-Revolutionary Warfare Unit he led. The coup plotters demanded the appointment of a British agent, Samanunu Cakobau, as Fiji's President. Cakobau was the granddaughter of Ratu Sera Cakobau, the King of Fiji who ceded his country to Britain in 1874; she spent most of her adult life in Britain, where she was married to a British Army officer; she is understood to have participated in the planning of the coup. In May, an Australian counterterrorist expert told *EIR*, "They [the coup soldiers] would be close to Australia. ASIS [Australian Secret Intelligence Service] would have some links to them. ASIS knows everything that goes on, and their job is to keep an eye on everything that goes on in the South Pacific."

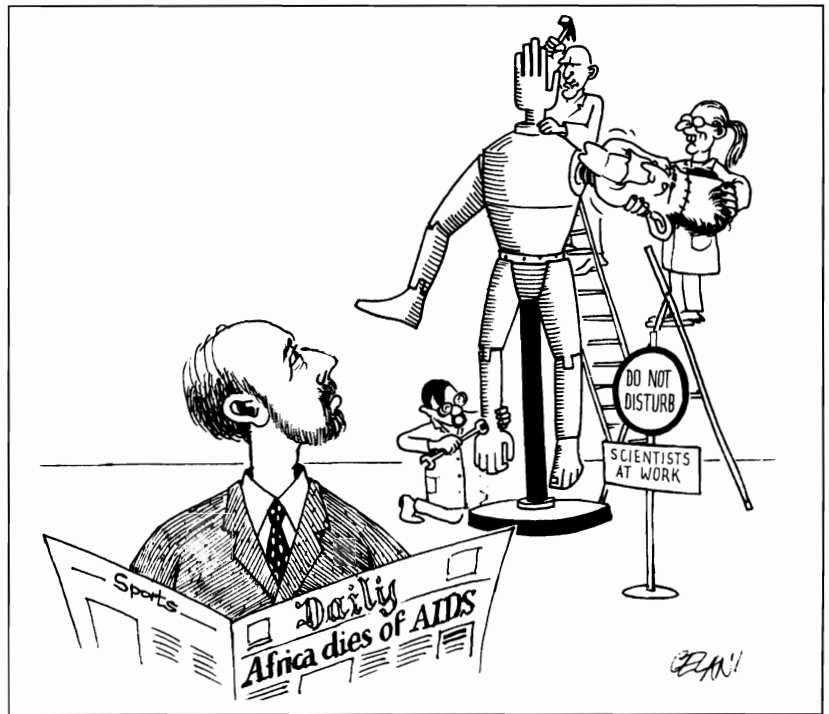
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