

**SECESSION IN BOUGAINVILLE AND THE AUSTRALIAN
GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Bougainville is part of the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea and is located nearly 1,000 kilometres from Port Moresby (refer to maps on pages 3 and 4). In November 1988, a dispute at the Panguna copper mine on the island between landowners and the owners of the mine, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), erupted into violence. The subsequent formation of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and demands for secession led to the most serious political and economic problems facing Papua New Guinea (PNG) since independence was granted in 1975.

In the four years since the initial trouble began, more than 1,500 people have been killed in military conflict on the islands of Bougainville and Buka, and the mine, which until 1989 provided employment for 3,500 people, has closed.¹ A blockade of Bougainville by the Papua New Guinea Defence Force (PNGDF) resulted in shortages of food, fuel and medical supplies to the island, the latter resulting in the deaths of 3,000 innocent civilians.² Terence Wesley-Smith of the University of Hawaii writes, "Except for the independence struggle in Irian Jaya, no other conflict in the Pacific Islands region has produced this level of human suffering since World War II."³ The Namaliu Government and the country's image abroad were weakened by allegations of human rights abuses and indiscipline amongst the security forces. The role of the Australian Government, largely through its training of military personnel and the supply of military hardware to the PNGDF, has also been placed under scrutiny by a Commonwealth parliamentary committee and human rights activists.

The dispute has had a significant impact on the economy of the mainland. Closure of the mine resulted in the loss of approximately 40 per cent of export earnings for the country and 17 per cent of the Government's budget revenue. The blockade of Bougainville led to

¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 29 June 1991. It is difficult to be more specific about the numbers killed in military conflicts, as the accounts given by the PNGDF and the BRA vary considerably.

² Based on private conversations with human rights activist, Rosemarie Gillespie. She advised that figures released by the Arawa Red Cross Society show that, of the number who have died of preventable diseases, 2,000 have been children. This is consistent with press reports (refer Sydney Morning Herald 17 February 1991).

³ T. Wesley-Smith (ed.), "A Legacy of Development: Three Years of Crisis in Bougainville", The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs, Vol. 4, No.2,p.241.

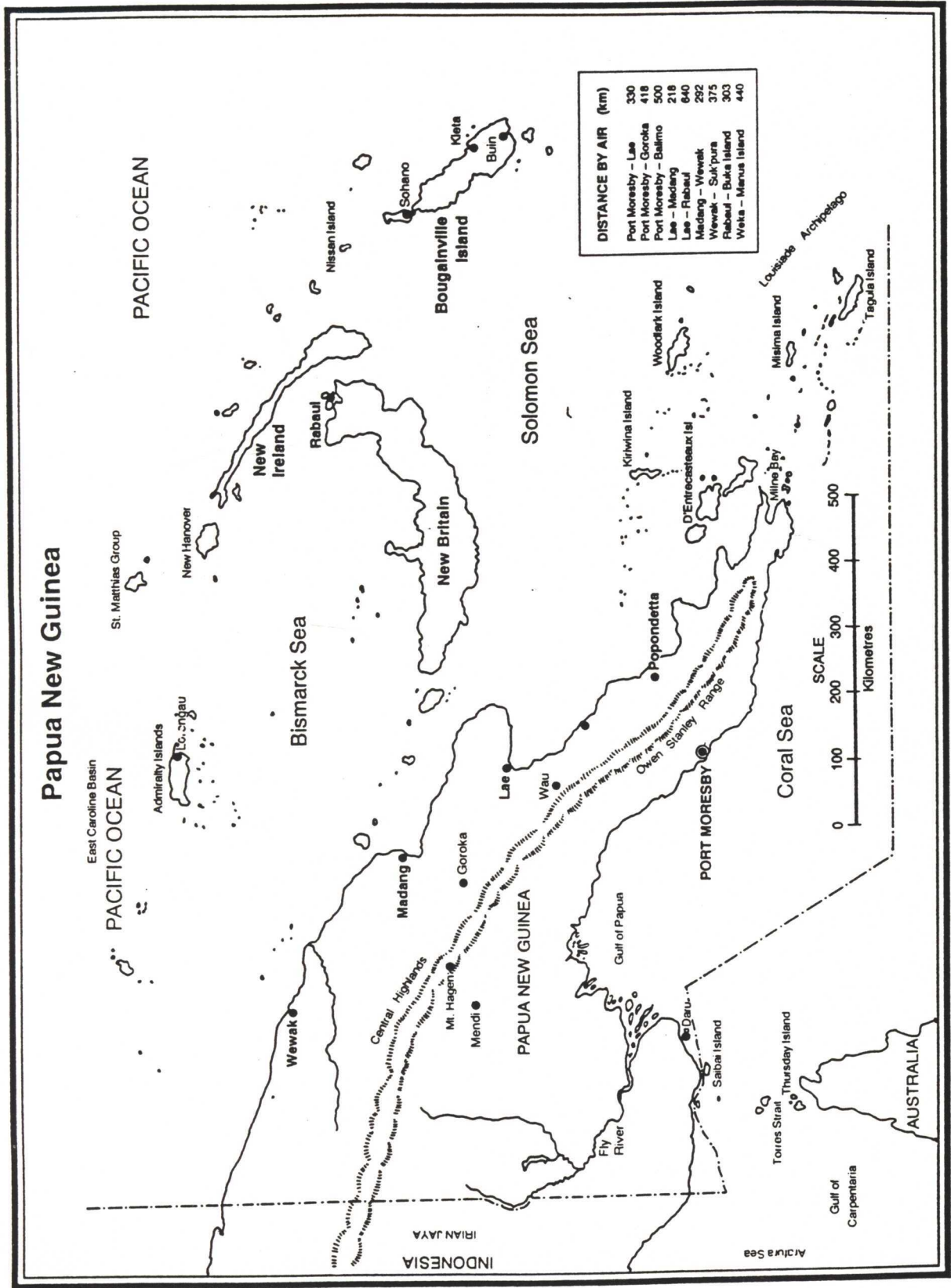
the loss of export earnings from cocoa (45 per cent of PNG's total cocoa production), copra (the province was the second highest producers of copra) and timber. The loss of national income from the mine and other cash crops forced the Government to announce in January 1990 a 10 per cent devaluation of the kina, cuts in government recurrent spending and a firmer line on wage increases.

1.2 Importance of Bougainville

The Bougainville dispute has important implications beyond PNG and for this reason alone it is considered an important area of study. The secessionist movement represents a conflict between Western lifestyle and culture and the traditional way of life of the Melanesian indigenous people. It raises questions concerning the handling of conflicts between a state and its citizens in a country comprising people from diverse ethnic background; a phenomenon that is widespread in the post-cold-war era. Finally, the Bougainville dispute highlights the need for greater scrutiny of development strategies based on resource extraction which result in serious degradation of the environment.

1.3 Thesis Structure

With these points in mind, this thesis examines the origins of the rebellion in Bougainville (Chapter Two) and asks whether the secessionist movement was the product of a unique set of circumstances applicable only to Bougainville or whether similar conditions exist elsewhere in Papua New Guinea. A critique of the response of the Namaliu Government in Port Moresby is provided in Chapter Three and of the Australian Government in Chapter Four; some comparison is made with the Somare Government's handling of the secessionist movement in 1975. Chapter Five concludes with some options available to the parties and some lessons to be drawn from the Bougainville dispute.



Source: Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea. Canberra: Senate Publishing and Printing Unit, 1991.



CHAPTER TWO

ORIGINS OF THE BOUGAINVILLE SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT

2.1 Introduction

Many factors have contributed to the recent events in Bougainville. The roots of the dispute extend back to the colonial period and stem, in part, from geographical and ethnic factors. However, it was the discovery of substantial deposits of copper in 1964 and the commencement of commercial production in April 1972 that galvanised moves for secession. Indeed, the provincial Government unilaterally declared the island's independence on 1 September 1975, only to return to the fold in 1976 after certain concessions were granted by the national Government. Yet many of the grievances and underlying tensions remained unresolved and formed the background to the emergence of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) in 1988.

Among the unresolved issues in 1988 were: the perceived inequality in the distribution of benefits and revenues from the mine; a feeling of political powerlessness vis-a-vis the national Government, historically expressed as demands for provisional autonomy or secession; and a consciousness of racial, cultural and social difference between Bougainvilleans and non-Bougainvilleans. The relative importance of these factors has been the subject of some dispute amongst various scholars, notably James Griffin and Colin Fisher, both of the University of Papua New Guinea. Nevertheless, each of these factors appears to have contributed towards the current dispute.

2.2 Ethnic Factors

For Griffin⁴, the key contributing factor to the Bougainville secessionist movement is a sense of ethnic distinctiveness felt by the Bougainvilleans vis-a-vis the rest of Papua New Guinea. This ethnic outlook arose from the large distance of Bougainville from Port Moresby (approximately 950 kms), the strong affinities and links that existed with the Western Solomon Islands, and the distinctive skin colour of the people. This factor, asserts Griffin, is why the province was called the North Solomons at the unilateral declaration of independence of September 1975. It is, therefore, not surprising that an "us against them" attitude or "black bastards versus redskins", to use the local riposte, developed amongst the people of Bougainville. Leo Hannett, a prominent Bougainvillean, expressed it as follows:

⁴ J. Griffin, "Bougainville is a Special Case", in R.J. May and Mathew Spriggs, The Bougainville Crisis, (Bathurst, Crawford House Press, 1990).

Racially, the peoples of Bougainville are more akin to the people in the British Solomon Islands... The ethnic and family ties between these people ... are very strong indeed. Further, and this is a very important point too, wherever and whenever Solomon Islanders, from North or South, or from any part of the Solomons, meet, they always feels a consciousness that they are one people; they realise that they are a group apart. Quite apart from their ethnic ties, their group consciousness, or consciousness of themselves as a people, is the foundation stone of nationalism, and the political recognition of that fact constitutes nationality.⁵

This view was expressed again almost 20 years later by the Catholic priests of Bougainville who traced the origins of the present crisis to:

an understanding within our people that the North Solomons is geographically, culturally, racially and economically different from other parts of Papua New Guinea and that this is most clearly illustrated by the very name of the province, the darkness of its people's skins and ... the presence of the cargo cult mentality.⁶

2.3 Colonial Factors

The division of Bougainville from the rest of the Solomons and its incorporation into PNG reflected more the political struggles of Britain and Germany than any ethnic and cultural factors. The island of Bougainville was handed by the United Kingdom to Germany in 1898 as part of a deal negotiated in Europe by which the United Kingdom gave up its claims to Samoa in return for German concessions in relation to Tonga, Zanzibar and parts of West Africa. As expressed by Leo Hannett:

Historically the Northern Solomons (i.e., Bougainville and Buka) were once part of the Solomon Islands. We were lumped together with Papua New Guinea due to an accident of history, or, in other words, due to the arbitrary and inconsiderate bungling of foreign powers, who swapped us around like pawns with little consideration of our rights and interests.

The subsequent experience of Bougainvilleans with outside powers tended to reinforce a sense of difference between themselves and people on the mainland. The relative affluence of the island and the presence of Christian missions (mainly Catholic and non-Australian), which provided much of the educational and welfare services, led to the administration playing a relatively small role in development almost until copper was

⁵ Leo Hannett, "Down Kieta Way: Independence for Bougainville?" *New Guinea*, Vol.4, No.1, March/April 1967, p.12

⁶ *Times of PNG*, 24 August 1989

discovered. For example, there was no administration primary school in Kieta until 1960, and then it was begun as a service for non-Bougainvillean police and other government staff. In 1971, the women of Siwai could complain to a visiting UN Mission "that there was not a single welfare officer stationed permanently in Bougainville."⁷ Moreover, all three church missions (Roman Catholic, Methodist and Seventh Day Adventist) had derived from the Solomons and brought personnel and contacts with them rather than made connections with mainland PNG.

An illustration of the antipathy to the record of the European took place two years before the arrival of CRA. When a United Nations Mission visited Kieta in April 1962, they were asked at a meeting attended by about 1,000 people that Australia be forced to relinquish the administration of Bougainville and give it to the United States. The unusual request also indicated that, at this stage, moves for an independent nation had not yet developed.

Griffin emphasises the importance of ethnic and colonial factors in the Bougainville dispute by writing:

*... while acknowledging that the colonial experience of the North Solomons was not unique, that the North Solomonese are not a different 'race' and that there is no traditional cultural institution which unites the majority of the people of the North Solomons Province and simultaneously serves to distinguish them from the majority of people in other provinces..., it is also true that a common identity has been forged among the 20 language groups of the province, that in no other part of the country has such a self image between articulated, and that the North Solomonese are aware of their viability and their clearly defined geographical status and its trans-territorial connections with the Solomon Islands.*⁸

2.4 The Role of Bougainville Copper Ltd

It can be argued, however, that while the above factors provided fertile ground for a secessionist movement, it was the arrival of Conzinc Riotinto Australia Ltd (CRA) and its local subsidiary, Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), which was the real catalyst for the secessionist movement. BCL was owned by CRA (53.6 per cent), the Papua New Guinea Government (19.1 per cent) and other shareholders (27.3 per cent). Some academics, in particular Filer, argue that the origins of the rebellion are to be found in:

⁷ J. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p.6

⁸ J. Griffin, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13

*a process of local social disintegration which is not uniquely Bougainvillean, but should rather be regarded as the typical response of small-scale Melanesian communities to large scale mining enterprise.*⁹

He rejects the view that colonial and ethnic factors explain the present secessionist movement, arguing that such local factors may have influenced the way the crisis has unfolded, but do not explain its origins. He argues that:

*... ethnic loyalties and conflicts have been no more significant in the genesis of the present Bougainville crisis than they have been, and will continue to be, in the development of landowner/company relationships in other parts of the country ...*¹⁰

Filer suggests that the 'cargo cult mentality' is a prominent characteristic of the people in other parts of the country. Moreover, the deep black skin of the Bougainvilleans is one of many physical features which Papua New Guineans use to classify and denigrate people from other parts of the country. He believes that those who argue the secessionist movement was partly motivated by the neglect of the colonial administration should look at the neglect of other parts of the country, in particular the North Fly region.

Filer believes:

... that the most important thing which distinguishes the North Solomons from the other 18 provinces of Papua New Guinea, in historical, political, cultural, social and economic terms, is nothing other than the massive hole in the middle of it.

*The myth of Bougainvillean nationalism has effectively concealed the social impact of the Panguna mine on the landowning community by diverting national attention, first to the balance of power between the colonial administration and the people of Bougainville District, and then to the balance of power between the Papua New Guinea National Government and the North Solomons provincial Government.*¹¹

Many Bougainvilleans had considerable fear and distrust of attempts by the administration and foreign companies to promote economic development which they felt was just a ruse by which the Europeans would exploit the local people and their resources for their own

⁹ Colin Filer, "The Escalation of Disintegration and the Reinvention of Authority", in Mathew Spriggs and Donald Denoon, ed., The Bougainville Crisis: 1991 Update, (Bathurst, Crawford House Press, 1992), p.112.

¹⁰ Colin Filer, "The Bougainville Rebellion, the Mining Industry and the Process of Social Disintegration in Papua New Guinea", in Mathew Spriggs and R.J. May, ed., The Bougainville Crisis, (Bathurst, Crawford House Press, 1990), p.77.

¹¹ ibid., pp.79 and 84.

ends. This impression was probably reinforced by the unwillingness of many Europeans to understand the Melanesian culture. Professor James Griffin, formerly of the University of Papua New Guinea, states that the Australian administration's negotiations to acquire land for the mind in the 1960s were:

*... astonishingly crass. Due regard was not paid to the people's feelings for their land, which not only represents patrimony, livelihood and future security but is also invested with mystical awe.*¹²

The notion, entrenched in the Bougainville Copper Agreement of 1967 and 1974, that subterranean minerals belong to the State was alien to the Melanesian culture.

Bill Standish, a researcher with the Legislative Research Service of the Australian Parliament, writes that CRA were warned about the potential conflict of culture as far back as 1969:

*... there will be inevitably trouble in Bougainville if the people are being forcibly asked to accept a legal system of land tenure for which they have no cultural preparation... Economic pragmatism might be a valid political argument but it is no solution of itself to the people who have been pushed to the edge of some social abyss and are being asked to leap blindly into the twentieth century.*¹³

Gabriel Lafitte, a former press officer to Father John Momis, a former PNG Minister for Provincial Affairs, provides a useful insight into the differences between the Melanesian and European cultures:

*Melanesian political culture is anti-authoritation, often egalitarian, stateless and resistant to large-scale organisation; and this political culture remains the outlook of most villagers. Traditional leadership relies on a balance of power and consensus building ...*¹⁴

In contrast, he believes the investment by Bougainville Copper Ltd (BCL) has brought inequality, and broken down customary loyalties to a clan or region. The emphasis by a multinational corporation on maximising production and profits for its shareholders also stands in sharp contrast to the Melanesian culture with its emphasis on sharing wealth.

¹² S. Dorney, Papua New Guinea: People, Politics and History since 1975, (Sydney, Random House, 1990), p.117.

¹³ Bill Standish, "Bougainville: Undermining the State, in Papua New Guinea", Pacific Research, Volume 2, No.4. p.4).

¹⁴ Gabriel Lafitte, Bougainville Nationalism in 1990: Prospects of War and Peace - The Cultural, Political and Religious Roots of Conflict, unpublished manuscript, pp.1-2.

The entry of BCL saw the development of an enclave economy based on the mine which had minimal links with the rest of the Bougainville economy and was a significant distance from the mainland. The relative affluence of the expatriates in the modern economy deepened the bitterness of the Bougainvilleans. The amenities available to people in the modern economy were seen to come at the expense of the culture and lifestyle of those in the traditional economy. This was particularly true for people who lived in villages that had to be relocated because of the mine. Francis Ona saw the presence of two different economies as being officially sanctioned apartheid:

There are in this company people in top management who have South African identities and ideologies. This is why on the principles of apartheid, there are two nations in one. White and Black. Facts: Two hospitals, two schools, two drinking clubs, worst of all, two living standards. The Government of PNG is not run to safeguard our lives, but rather to safeguard the few rich leaders and white men. This is why there will never be any peace in PNG.¹⁵

Apart from the cultural and social impact on Bougainvilleans, the operations of BCL impacted in two other ways. There was the introduction of large sums of money from compensation for the right to mine the land and there was the subsequent pollution of the environment from the mine itself.

2.4.1 BCL and the issue of Compensation

The system of compensation and how payments should be distributed lie very much at the heart of the Bougainville dispute. From 1972, when the mine began production until its closure in May 1989, BCL generated an income of K1,754 million of which K1,078 million (61.5 per cent) went to the Government of Papua New Guinea, K75 million (4.3 per cent) to the provincial Government of North Solomons and K24 million (1.4 per cent) to the landowners.¹⁶ Non-government shareholders, of whom relatively few would be Papua New Guinea residents, received K577 million (32.8 per cent).

The inequitable distribution of compensation resulted in strong resentment amongst the people of Bougainville. The realisation that Bougainville was subsidising the development of other provinces led to a radical appraisal of the compensation provisions. Similarly, at the provincial level, the North Solomons Government tended to concentrate its efforts on providing services to the more remote parts of Bougainville because Panguna was

¹⁵ S. Dorney *op cit.*, p.126.

¹⁶ D.S. Carruthers and D.C. Vernon "Bougainville Retrospective", in David Anderson, ed. The PNG-Australia Relationship: Problems and Prospects, (Pacific Security Research Institute, 1990), p.69.

relatively well serviced. Friction also arose between the Panguna Landowners' Association (PLA) and younger clansmen. The latter accused the 'old' guard of failing to employ trust funds in the general interest and having been bought off by BCL and not being prepared to fight for a better deal.

Shortcomings in the compensation package were partly the fault of the national Government. The revised Bougainville Copper Agreement of 1974 provided for reviews every seven years. When the first review came due in 1981 there was strong pressure for the provincial Government to be made a full participant in the review. This was rejected by the national Government which was only prepared to accord the provincial Government observer status. There were subsequently no amendments to the agreement. The second year review due in 1988 was met with the national Government pre-occupied with other matters. It was not until after the sabotage attacks of late November 1988 to early December 1988 that Prime Minister Namaliu announced his negotiating team to start preparing the national Government's case.

In early April 1989, the Namaliu proposed a package aimed at increasing the benefits to the provincial Government and the landowners. The main components of the package included:¹⁷

- . Royalty payments would increase from K0.3 million to K1.2 million a year based on BCL's 1988 results.
- . There would be higher rates of compensation for environmental damage.
- . Landowners would be given 5 per cent equity in BCL to come from the national Government's 20 per cent.
- . The Government would undertake a series of public works programs at Bougainville.
- . The Bougainville Copper Agreement would be amended to ensure that the landowners were given preference in business contracts flowing from the mine.

This package along with improvements announced in September 1989 and BCL's own proposals were rejected by the BRA.

The 1974 agreement was still in place when the mine shut down in May 1989.

¹⁷ Dorney, *op. cit.*, pp140-141.

2.4.2 BCL and the Environment

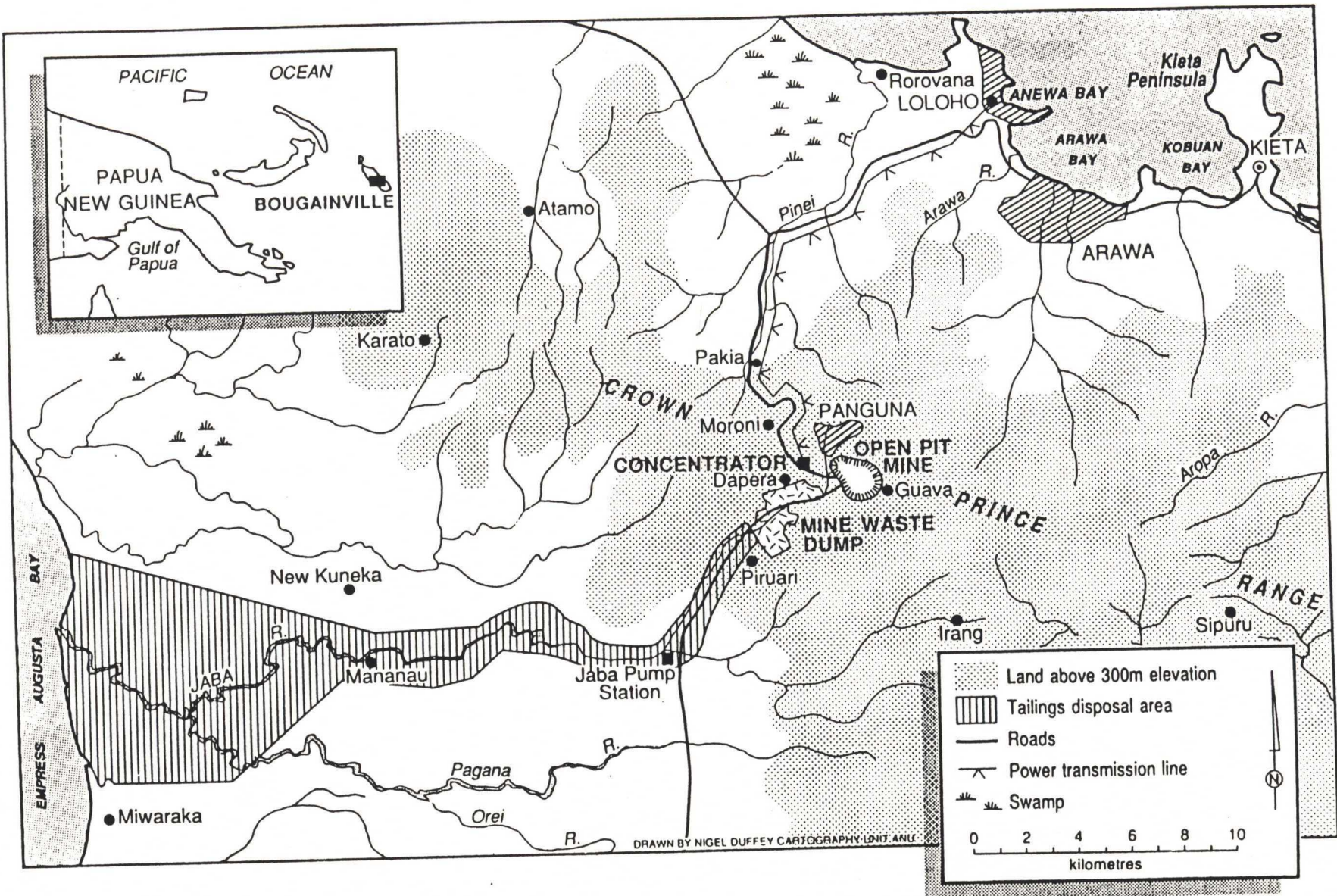
Damage to the environment caused by the mine would rank as one of the major causes for the present dispute and was certainly the trigger for the outbreak of violence in November 1988. The area affected by the operations of the mine is shown on page 13. The Panguna Landowners' Association blamed the company for the extinction of the flying fox, retarded crop growth, poisoning of mango, pawpaw and banana trees, the disappearance of wild dogs and possums and for ulcerous fish. The findings of a study by a New Zealand firm of environmental consultants (November 1988) that the Jaba River was not poisoned was rejected by the Association. BCL, to their minds, was a scourge on the island:

*Our children are born with so many birth defects: deformed hands, legs, nose and whole body. We don't remember this happening so often before. So many girls become old so quickly and so many die now. Before, the girls would have developed breasts before they began to menstruate, today the girls are very young when they menstruate.*¹⁸

Loss of land destroyed the development opportunities in villages such as Piruari while tailings disposal contributed to the loss of drinking water and timber. Moreover, deposition of tailings has blocked tributary systems causing flooding and the loss of fish.

Experiments in revegetation have so far failed and it is unlikely that there would be a significant revegetation program beyond the life of the mine (assuming operations recommence). Village land that has been used in the mining operations is therefore, unlikely to revert to land of any real economic or social value to the villagers. The impact of BCL has obviously been much more pervasive and harmful than was previously contemplated or advised to the local people.

¹⁸ S. Dorney, *op cit.*, p.122.



CHAPTER THREE

THE RESPONSE OF THE PORT MORESBY GOVERNMENT

3.1 Introduction

Before turning to events in the recent period, it is important to examine the political developments surrounding the Bougainville secessionist movement in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Some comparison can then be made of the actions taken by the PNG Government led by Michael Somare with that of the Namaliu Government in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

3.2 Political Developments and the 1975 Bougainville Declaration of Independence

The need to take account of PNG's cultural diversity in forming an independent nation was recognised as early as the 1960s. For example, the then Director of the Council on New Guinean Affairs, Mr Justice Kerr (later Sir John Kerr and Australian Governor-General) at a seminar on "The Role of Law in a Developing Country" said:

*The tendency towards regional pressure blocks [sic] and even towards regional separatism makes it natural to contemplate some kind of Federal structure for Papua New Guinea, to give expression to regional aspirations whilst avoiding attempts at secession.*¹⁹

Such warnings did not stop the Australian Government moving Papua New Guinea in the opposite direction by planning only two layers of Government - national and local. In fairness, this was possibly to avoid excessive Government and bureaucracy in a country of only around 3 million people. It was almost inevitable then, that regional agitation for self-government should come to the surface.

The Bougainville secessionist movement was formally launched at a meeting in Port Moresby on 8 September 1968. The meeting was attended by Paul Lapun and Donatus Mola, members of the House of Assembly for South and North Bougainville

¹⁹ S.Dorney, *op. cit.*, p.153.

respectively and around 20 Bougainvillean seminary students; the most prominent was Leo Hannett.²⁰ The meeting issued a press statement, stating that it:

*... should be known to the House (of Assembly) that already there is an increasingly growing feeling among many Bougainvilleans from various strata of the society, to be on their own as people of a separate nation.*²¹

The MHA's were to ask the administration to carry out a referendum on Bougainville to find out if the people wanted:

*... to remain with Papua New Guinea, or be an independent state, or else join up with the British Solomon Islands Protectorate.*²²

From these small beginnings the issue of Bougainville secession was kept very much alive through to the mid 1970s. During the resistance to the BCL land resumptions of 1969, an organisation called the Napidakoe Navitu was formed:

*... to further the social, political and economic development of Bougainville, to promote political autonomy (and to provide) better education for the people of Bougainville through church and Administration schools.*²³

In March 1971, a motion in the House of Assembly asking for a referendum on the question of Bougainville secession was defeated 57 to 14. Further, in mid-1972 the Combined Land Government Council of Bougainville sought a referendum (to no avail) on the issue.

Support for the idea of secession increased dramatically in September 1972, after two prominent Bougainvilleans were reportedly murdered by "redskins" in Goroka on the mainland. The murders created a backlash of anti-redskin feeling and contributed to a sense of unity among Bougainvilleans.

The third House of Assembly elections, held in February 1972, saw Bougainvillean representation increased to four members. Paul Lapun was returned for the third time

²⁰ The only other member of the House of Assembly representing Bougainville, Joseph Lue, did not attend the meeting.

²¹ James Griffin, "Bougainville: Secession or Just Sentiment?" Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol.48, No.1, February 1972, p.271.

²² James Griffin op.cit., p.271.

²³ James Griffin, Separatist and Secessionist Movements, in James Griffin, ed., A Foreign Policy for an Independent Papua New Guinea, Angus and Robertson, 1974, p.30.

while Father John Momis, who was subsequently to play a prominent role, was elected for the first time.

Bougainville's MHA played an important role in the House Assembly. Chief Minister Michael Somare gave the portfolio of Mines to Paul Lapun, Business Development to Donatus Mola while Father John Momis was made Chairman of Committees, Deputy Speaker and, as Deputy Chairman, de facto presiding member of the Constitutional Planning Committee (CPC). James Griffin, writing in 1974, offered an insightful perspective on Somare's selection:

*... in choosing his Ministry, Mr Somare showed skill in conciliation as well as awareness of talent ... [it is] most disproportionate influence for Bougainville but, in keeping ministers out of Bougainville for long periods and committing them to national policies, it may have a profound influence on secessionist leadership and coherence ...*²⁴

An insight into the thinking of Father Momis on the issue of secession came in February 1973 when he expressed the view that he thought the separatist movement was gaining strength. He said, however, that Bougainvilleans, including himself, did not know what they wanted - adding that some sort of regional government within Papua New Guinea was a possible solution and that he must support the principle that the people had a right to a referendum.²⁵

Representatives of the provincial Government were largely drawn from local Government councils. Significantly, Bougainville was the only province to have been granted interim provincial Government status, although two other pilot provincial Governments would be established, one in the Highlands and one in Papua.

Adding momentum to the decentralisation of Government was the Report of the CPC, which was released in June 1974. It recommended provincial Government for all nineteen administrative districts. In tabling the Report, Michael Somare, the Committee's non-participating chairman, said he disagreed with some of the recommendations and would table a minority Report.

On 30 May 1975, by an almost unanimous vote, the Provincial Assembly of Bougainville resolved to secede from Papua New Guinea. The Assembly, then an appointed not an elected body, was chaired by the District Commissioner, Alex Sarei. The initial reaction from Port Moresby was that the "secession" motion was just a tactic. But the

²⁴ Griffin, *ibid.*, p.30.

²⁵ Douglas Oliver, *Bougainville: A Personal History*, Melbourne University Press, 1973, p.212.

Bougainville Provincial planner, Leo Hannett, told PNG's National Broadcasting Commission: "There is no alternative. This issue is now non-negotiable".²⁶

A Bougainville negotiating team subsequently insisted that it wanted K150 million to set up its own Government and in return it would be lenient in slowly phasing out Papua New Guinea's 20 per cent equity in BCL.

Political developments on Bougainville came at a particularly sensitive time for Papua New Guinea as independence had been set down for 16 September 1975; for Papua New Guinea to emerge as a credible democracy it was important that the challenge to PNG's integrity be met without recourse to military action. The national Government tried to demonstrate, by a fact finding mission led by the then Minister for Justice, Ebia Olewale, that secession was a minority movement whose support was confined to the southern part of the island. Olewale, subsequently reported to the United Nations that allowing Bougainville to secede could result in the creation of 700 potential mini-states. Attempts to label the secessionist movement as being pushed by a radical unrepresentative fringe were contradicted by more reliable sources. Saeri was reported to have said that secession was supported by 86 per cent of Bougainvilleans. This became particularly credible once the indigenous Catholic Bishop, Gregory Simkai, expressed his official support, as around 75 per cent of Bougainvilleans are Catholics.²⁷

A declaration of independence and flag raising ceremony took place on 1 September 1975 and the name North Solomons (to signify ethnic affiliation separate from PNG) was adopted. This independence ceremony was followed up with representation to the United Nations by Father Momis to gain recognition, but with little success. Even the African nations, from whom Momis had hoped for some support, showed little sympathy for Bougainville secession. There were efforts made by some members of the legislative assembly of the emerging Solomon Islands to support North Solomons' secession; for some, eventual union would ensure the economic viability of the two emerging nations.²⁸ Nothing came of this and the North Solomons came no closer to recognition by the international community. At first the Papua New Guinea Government took no action against the Bougainville secessionists. The national Government continued to pay public servants and maintained Government services. However, in response to the breakdown of talks, Michael Somare successfully moved in the House of Assembly that provincial Government be removed from the constitution. The provincial Government of

²⁶ Sean Dorney, *op.cit.*, p.134.

²⁷ James Griffin, Hank Nelson and Stewart Firth, Papua New Guinea: A Political History, (Sydney, Heinemann Educational Australia, 1979), p.216.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.237.

Bougainville was abolished and its assets frozen. The North Solomonese rulers subsequently set about preparing their own independent elections and dismantling of the local Government councils.

Michael Somare's handling of the violence stands in marked contrast to the actions taken by the Namaliu Government. Police action remained restrained in the face of violence erupting in January 1976 (airstrips were dug up and Government property destroyed) and again in May 1976 when riot police were sent in. Moreover, Somare declined to use the army against the rebels, despite being under pressure to do so. Such actions assisted in the prevention of rebel leaders, and particularly Hannett, from being made into martyrs. With the resumption of talks, Somare was able to announce in August 1976 that "a solution had been achieved in a true Melanesian spirit ... that will guarantee the Bougainville people an effective role in running their own affairs within the framework of the Papua New Guinea national Government".²⁹

The province of North Solomons was recognised together with its quasi-State Government. Provincial Government was rewritten back into the constitution, paving the way for provincial Governments to be established in other parts of the country.

In the case of the North Solomons, the national Government was to retain the right to levy and collect export and import duties, excise, taxes on corporate profits and personal incomes and royalties on national resources. It would, however, remit to the province proceeds from taxes, untied grants such as that normally set aside in the annual budget and conditional grants for specific purposes.

The provincial Government was granted an exclusive right to levy a head tax and taxes on goods and services. It would have exclusive legislative rights over community schools, local and village government, village courts and penalties for enforcing Provincial law. Legislation in other areas would be subject to a concurrence law preventing it from duplicating or being inconsistent with national law. Significantly, this included the management and development of major resources. The national Government could also restrain the imposition of taxes which it judged to be excessive or discriminatory. The national Government was bound to assure orderly management of the economy (any hence control of the banks remained under the national Government) and the development of natural resources "for the benefit of all Papua New Guinea".³⁰

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.237.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.238.

The secessionist movement subsequently lost much of its momentum with the formation of provincial Government and disagreements between the leaders representing Bougainville. The period 1976-1980 was largely formative, as statutory and administrative procedures were set in place and responsibilities transferred from national to provincial control. The existence of an elected Government with its province in Arawa as the provincial capital seemed to satisfy the self-determination aspirations of the people and secession came off the political agenda.

3.3 Renewal of the Secessionist Movement 1987 - 1988

There were two significant developments that renewed agitation for Bougainville to secede. A "Bougainville Initiative" was launched under the Melanesian Alliance banner by Father Momis in his campaign for re-election in the 1987 national elections. It came in the form of a letter dated 4 May 1987 (see Appendix 1) addressed to the Managing Director of BCL, and under veiled threat of mine closure, suggested BCL pay direct to the North Solomons provincial Government 3 per cent of its gross income. This was the equivalent of around K12.6 million in terms of the 1986 trading results. The initiative received widespread publicity in the media with the appearance of headlines such as "Tame the BCL Pig"³¹ and "Monster Mine Told to Pay"³².

Understandably the concept of an increase in the level of funds flowing direct from the mining operation to the province received much support from the people of Bougainville. It played a major role in raising aspirations within the province and specifically of the landowners in the vicinity of the mine. While outspoken in denouncing the social environmental impact of BCL operations, the "Bougainville Initiative" saw the answer in further financial gain, rather than of ending mining in the future. In responding, BCL (letter dated 11 May 1987 also contained in Appendix 1) drew attention to the periodic review of the Bougainville Copper Agreement that was scheduled to take place in 1988 and saw this forum as the best avenue to resolve any differences. The review subsequently floundered through the lack of Government commitment, resulting in dashed expectations frustration and discontent amongst the people.

³¹ Post Courier, 6 May 1987.

³² Niugini Nius, 6 May 1987.

A second factor in renewing demands for special treatment of the province was increasing dissatisfaction with, and disharmony within, the Panguna Landowners' Association (PLA).³³

The PLA was formally established in 1980 to provide a forum where the landowners could collectively discuss issues and a mouthpiece when negotiating with other parties - especially the national and provincial Governments and BCL. Prior to its establishment, contact amongst the landowners themselves and between the landowners and other parties, normally took place on an ad hoc basis. Membership of the association included the titleholders of the three main lease zones, the Special Mining Lease, the Tailings Lease and the Port Mine Access Road. The main achievements of the organisation was an agreement between BCL and the PLA (July 1980) which became known as the "minor agreement" to distinguish it from the main mining agreement between BCL and the national Government. The agreement provided for the creation of a trust fund called "The Road Mine Leases Trust Fund" (RMLTF). The aim was to create an investment fund which would provide benefits to the landowners long after mining operations had ceased. It would also provide a range of basic services to landowners, such as education facilities, health care, sponsorship of students in higher education institutions, etc.

Nevertheless, by 1987 there was growing dissatisfaction with the PLA's perceived collaboration towards BCL and with the manner in which cash benefits were distributed (or not distributed) to all entitled members of the extended matrimonial families which owned the land. Henry Okole, described the situation this way:

*There was a growing feeling amongst the membership that the PLA board was increasingly inclined to side with the BCL. We were told that board members had steadily lost the aggressive stance that was prominent in the early 1980s. One of the board members actually told us that the association depended on goodwill between the company and the landowners. It was as if the PLA had come to duplicate the role of the BCL's own Village Relations Office, thus undermining the group's original function as a watchdog.*³⁴

There was also growing mistrust in the management of the RMLTF. There were reports over the recruitment of a Filipino as a general manager of the fund and resentment over the size of the package. There were also allegations that the whole operation of the RMLTF, like that of the PLA itself had come to be geared to the personal gain of the

³³ Discussion of the PLA and its subsequent split is largely drawn from Henry Okole, "The Politics of the Panguna Landowners' Organisation" in RJ May and Mathew Spriggs, eds., The Bougainville Crisis, (Bathurst, Crawford House Press, 1990), pp.16-24.

³⁴ ibid., p.19.

board members. There were also rumours that the fund had begun to operate as an integral part of the Bougainville Development Corporation.

However, Connell provides a different perspective:

In 1983 more adequate accounting principles were introduced, there was much greater pressure on debtors, fewer loans were distributed and the new Filipino general manager took over. In short, where landowners had once had ready access to loans, and there had been limited if any pressure to repay them, there was now strict financial management and very few individuals saw any direct income [loans] from the Road Mine Tailings Lease Trust.³⁵

Whatever the merits of either side, the reality is that tensions caused a split in the PLA. The new Panguna Landowners' Association was formed in August 1987 at a public meeting with Perpetua Sereo as Chairman and Francis Ona, a BCL employee as General Perpetua Secretary. The old executive refused to accept as legitimate the public meeting, claiming the new executive could not be representative as four of its eight members were from one village, Guava. The old executive said it represented the legal titleholders. BCL kept dealing with the old executive for many months, partly because they could not find some of the names of the PLA executive on their lists of registered land titleholders. (It should be noted that Ona did not have primary land rights under the traditional matrilineal system.)

The new executive demanded that the company recognise them as the legitimate unit representing the landowners. They received solid support from the provincial Premier, Joseph Kabui (who was from a relocated village near the mine tailings dump, and was a beneficiary but not a registered titleholder). Support also came from Father John Momis and the Catholic church on Bougainville.

In a letter dated 7 December 1987, Joseph Kabui formally directed BCL to cease recognition of the old Panguna Landowners' Association executive and recognise the NPLA, advising that if the company failed to comply then it must be prepared to meet the consequences.³⁶ By July 1988, at a meeting with the Minister for Minerals and Energy, Patterson Lowa, the national Government appeared to have recognised that the new PLA executive had the right to speak on behalf of the landowners as a whole.

³⁵ John Connell, The Bougainville Crisis, Department of Geography, University of Sydney, September 1989.

³⁶ Quoted from P.W. Quodley, Bougainville Copper Ltd: A History, Submission to the Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee, Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea", Vol. VI, S1128, 1990.

The first evidence of outside (non-landowner) involvement was at a demonstration on 11 March 1988. A petition presented to BCL management was jointly signed by Ona, Serero and Damien Damen as "chairman of the demonstration".

In April 1988 landowner demands, as articulated by the new Panguna Landowners' Association executive included:

- . Compensation of K10 billion.
- . 50 per cent of profits to landowners and North Solomons provincial Government.
- . Consultation on new projects.
- . Localisation (Bougainvilleans) of BCL ownership within five years.³⁷

These demands were accompanied by a number of more limited demands which were seen to require more immediate action. These were:

- . An amendment of the 1969 Land Titles Agreement which had been used as the basis for subsequent compensation payments, and which was said to be in conflict with the matrilineal inheritance customs of the landowners.
- . An entirely new survey of customary land titles to be carried out in the three main lease zones, in order to rectify a number of mistakes which were thought to have been made in the original surveys.
- . An increase in employment, training and business environmental damage and in actual control of chemical pollution, soil erosion, etc.
- . an overall improvement in the living standards, especially housing standards of the landowners, particularly those who had been resettled by BCL, in accordance with promises which BCL was thought to have made and broken.
- . A general change in the condescending attitude of the company and the Government towards the landowners.³⁸

While some of these demands were unrealistic, particularly the demand for compensation of K10 billion, the rhetoric fed the growing discontent on the environmental and social impact of BCL operations. A visit by the Minister for Provincial Affairs and the Minister for Minerals and Energy in July 1988, and the Minister for Conservation and

³⁷ Quoted from Quodling, P.W., *op. cit.* p.19.

³⁸ Quoted from Henry Okole, *op. cit.*, p.21.

Environment subsequently provided an uneasy truce with landowners while they awaited the outcome of an environmental study conducted by the New Zealand firm, Applied Geology Associates Limited. The commissioning of the report was by the national Government. The consultants concluded that:

Although environmental damage from mining operations was substantial, there was no direct evidence of significant levels of chemical pollution and thus it was unlikely that Bougainville Copper Limited's operations were responsible for the loss of wildlife, declining agricultural production or a range of human illnesses.³⁹

Leaders of the new PLA rejected the findings of the report, started destroying mine installations with stolen explosives and commenced a guerilla war from the mountains south of the mine.

3.4 Escalation of the Violence

The campaign of sabotage of BCL installations begun in November 1988, which caused a temporary closure of the mine in December escalated in January. The response of the national Government to the rebellion oscillated between attempts at peaceful negotiation and heavy-handed tactics on the part of the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF). This placed the national Government at odds with the provincial Government which, while it gave substantial moral support to the militant landowners, steered clear of direct intervention.

The national Government imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew in January 1989 in the affected areas and increased police strength on the island. The Government also appointed a Ministerial Review Committee headed by Deputy Prime Minister Akoka Doi, to review the BCL agreement, more than a year after it became due. The Committee considered and approved a review of the Bougainville Copper Agreement (BCA), a reorganisation of the PLA Trust Fund and implementation of social amenities and infrastructural projects in the province, particularly in the mining areas. It also agreed on a Commission of Inquiry to determine the causes of the crisis. These recommendations were agreed to by the PNG Cabinet.

Although a call-out of the Defence Force soldiers had been authorised by the Government-General and had been gazetted on 23 December 1988, it was not until the second half of March, after the militants had extended their campaign to non-BCL targets, (specifically Government offices and public facilities), and had started terrorising non-Bougainvilleans, that the Government sent in troops. The hesitancy in sending in the troops was not for lack of support in the press. For example, the Post Courier

³⁹ Quodling, P.W., *op. cit.*, p.12.

editorialised on 4 January 1989: *"It is time to move in and disarm them for the sake of many innocent lives now at risk."*⁴⁰

Despite the gradual build-up of police and soldiers on the island and the Opposition's more hawkish attitude, dialogue and a negotiated settlement remained the Government's preferred option. For example, at the beginning of February 1989, Francis Ona was invited by the Prime Minister to appoint an intermediary to negotiate on his behalf. The offer was turned down with the BRA believing that PNG should adopt a new economic order because the economy was controlled by the "white mafia". And unless a new economic order was adopted, the province would break away.⁴¹ The Government also ordered a moratorium on raids by the police, preventing the police from going into villages to find Ona. This brought considerable tension between the police and the Government. The Police Commissioner was reported to have threatened to disobey the Government in dealing with the Bougainville crisis, although he later claimed that he was misrepresented. He was reprimanded by the Prime Minister and Father John Momis threatened to have him dismissed if he disobeyed the Government. Father Momis was, in turn, confronted at his home by about one hundred policemen to warn him of trouble if their Commissioner was sacked.⁴² Chief Superintendent Gork Baki, in charge of riot squads, VIP security and the anti-terrorist squad, was suspended in connection with this incident.

Pressure for military intervention increased in March when six policemen were shot and wounded by militants and with the Post Courier urging intervention.⁴³ Paias Wingti, Leader of the Opposition, also implied that he would have sent in troops by that stage.

It was not until the third week of March that the Government decided to send troops to Bougainville. By mid April 1989, it was estimated that there were 300 police and 200 soldiers on the island. Despite the build-up in troops, peace through negotiations was still being pursued. A bipartisan committee under the chairmanship of Rabaul MP, John Kaputin, was announced in response to Sir Julius Chan's urgings for a bipartisan approach to the crisis.

In April, the Government unveiled a package of proposals transferring half of its 19 per cent equity in BCL to the landowners and the provincial Government, and

⁴⁰ Post Courier, 4 January 1989.

⁴¹ Post Courier, 24 February 1989.

⁴² Post Courier, 6 March 1989.

⁴³ Post Courier, 10 March 1988.

providing a special support grant of 1 per cent of the gross value of BCL sales (worth about K4 million a year) as an unconditional grant to the provincial Government. In addition, a number of infrastructural projects, including schools, roads and health facilities worth about K200 million, would be implemented in the province of the next five years. The new improved formula of compensation worked out for the landowners of the new Porgera gold mine in Enga and covering occupation, damage and disruption fees, was offered to Panguna landowners. It was estimated that this would result in an average annual receipt of about K47,000 by each landowner.⁴⁴

The provincial Government and members of OPLA regarded the Government proposals as a promising basis for negotiations. Alarmed by the escalation of the militants' demand beyond the accepted one (for Bougainvilleans) of securing a greater share of the earnings from the copper mine for the landowners and the province (secession had become the primary goal of militants), the provincial Government sought to bolster its position by mobilising opinion through a survey. The survey was conducted in April by a select committee of the provincial assembly under the chairmanship of John Buka, Provincial Minister for Commerce, to determine the wishes of Bougainvilleans over the secession issue. In May, the Committee recommended to the Assembly that it reject calls for secession. It recommended instead that the province press for increased autonomy, with only foreign affairs, defence, and currency to be controlled exclusively by the national Government.

In May, the Provincial Assembly endorsed these recommendations as well as the national Government's peace package. Despite the endorsement and the Premier's positive assessment of the national Government's sincerity, the deadline for the landowners and the provincial Government's response to the peace package expired on 12 May without any firm response. In June, the provincial Government made its counter-offer. But it was not until August that OPLA leaders, claiming to speak for all landowners, made their response. They wanted the entire 10 per cent shares the Government was offering, and demanded tax exemptions for a landowners' company to be formed, and a right to sell the shares at any time to anybody, to national or foreign interests, and new royalty sharing agreements.⁴⁵

Increased militants' attacks on BCL workers and installations led to a permanent shutdown of the mine on 15 May 1989. Three days later, the Government authorised security forces to go and search for Ona, instead of being restricted to guarding installations and

⁴⁴ Post Courier, 20 September 1989. BCL also offered a separate package worth K45.3 million over seven years.

⁴⁵ Post Courier, 9 August 1989.

public facilities and maintaining law and order. But even after this change of policy, the Government still ruled out a declaration of a State of Emergency and full military operations against the militants.⁴⁶ Instead, the Government actively pursued the possibility of a dialogue, through the so-called bi-partisan committee under John Kaputin, and through Catholic Church intermediaries led by Bishop Gregory Singkai, himself a Bougainvillean. Indeed, on 23 May, the Government declared a 15-day truce and invited Francis Ona to come out of hiding and enter negotiations.

The Government's faith in Ona's reasonableness was hard to reconcile with a stream of clear statements from him in February, April and May, indicating that he was not interested in any compromise and that secession had become his primary objective. Ona's responses to earlier Government "raid moratoria" in February, at the beginning of March, and in April, had been consistent with his disdain for compromise. Each time the Government reined in its forces to give peaceful solutions a chance, Ona stepped up his campaign. Admittedly, security forces on the ground had not always abided by the Government's orders on "raid moratoria" and had thus reinforced the militants' perception of Government duplicity. The truce period expired on 6 June with negotiations no nearer than before.

After the expiry of the truce period, the Namaliu Government appeared to embrace the option of a full military offensive against the militants. It received the Opposition's support for that. The BRA was outlawed on 20 June and a State of Emergency was declared on 26 June.

The Government's new offensive appeared to succeed sufficiently for the militants to put out feelers in August for talks, for the mine to prepare to re-open in September, and for a date, 12 September, to be named for the signing of the peace package between the Government, the provincial Government and the landowners. At the beginning of September, the troops were withdrawn to defensive positions, to allow leaders to make a "final attempt" to entice Ona to the negotiating table. The mine re-opened on 5 September but militant activities forced it to close down eight and a half hours later.

Then on 10 September, on the eve of the departure of a provincial delegation for Moresby to sign the peace package, the militants assassinated John Buka, the provincial Minister for commerce. The militants said he was killed because he had been:

heavily involved in destroying support for Ona by preaching that Ona was leading a cargo cult movement ... (and) spreading Government propaganda and trying to

⁴⁶ Post Courier, 18 May 1989.

*create a division amongst the people of Bougainville with the aim of destroying secessionist thoughts and dreams in the heads and minds of Bougainville people.*⁴⁷

Buka's assassination put off the signing of the peace package scheduled for 12 September and triggered developments in several directions. The postponement of the signing of the peace package sparked off bitter public accusations of double dealing against Melanesian Alliance politicians in the province: Momis, Raphael Bele, Joseph Kabui and others. In an "Open Letter to the People of North Solomons and Papua New Guinea", Lawrence Daveona, Secretary of the Panguna Landowners' Company, Road Mining Tailings, Leases Trustee Ltd, accused these people of planting in the minds of landowners the idea of expelling BCL and of secession. He invited them to explain their stand, implying that their aim of replacing BCL with a new mining company was at the root of the problem.⁴⁸

In cabinet, Buka's assassination strengthened the "hawks" who gained an important temporary recruit in Michael Somare. He was reported to have been against the signing of the peace package while Bernard Narokobi, the Justice Minister, Deputy Leader of Melanesian Alliance, declared his disillusionment with the militants.⁴⁹ In the aftermath of the assassination a K200,000 prize was placed on Ona's head. The Parliamentary Committee on the State of Emergency reportedly urged an "all out war"⁵⁰ Colonel Dotaona, who had come to the conclusion that the crisis would not be solved with guns was replaced in October by Colonel Nuiia as commander of the troops on Bougainville, and the contingent was increased by 200 troops.⁵¹

By the beginning of November, the Opposition Leader too had come to the view that the crisis could *"not be solved through the barrel of the gun"*⁵². Peace efforts occupied the rest of the year, with a meeting in Rabaul between the North Solomons Premier and four senior Government ministers in the third week of November. The Prime Minister, somewhat optimistically declared on 6 December that ceasefire talks were going well although two weeks later he admitted that the ceasefire talks had failed. The militants insisted on the total withdrawal of security forces and total secession of Bougainville. At

⁴⁷ Post Courier, 13 September 1989.

⁴⁸ Post Courier, 22 September 1989.

⁴⁹ The Australian, 13 September 1989.

⁵⁰ The Australian, 18 October 1989, quoting Sir Hugo Berghuser, the Chairman of the Committee.

⁵¹ Post Courier, 15 September 1989.

⁵² Post Courier, 31 October 1989, 1 November 1989.

the very end of the year, on 28 December, BCL "moth-balled" the mine, indicating that an early solution was not in sight.

3.5 The Endeavour Accord

The decision by BCL to moth-ball the Panguna mine, along with the failure of successive Government peace initiatives appeared to reinforce the determination of the PNG cabinet to seek a military solution to the crisis. On 12 January 1990, during the Parliamentary debate on the extension of the State of Emergency, the Prime Minister made the following appeal:

*I ask and hope for the last time for the full support of this House to crush the terrorist element which is unable to listen to reason, to negotiation or to commonsense We are now undertaking the military option in place of our peace initiatives ...*⁵³

The Parliament subsequently agreed to "Operation Footloose" which involved an extra 300 soldiers being flown in to the Kangava area of Bougainville. The Parliament also approved a two-month extension of the State of Emergency on Bougainville for the fourth time.

However, the increased military presence only heightened the chances of confrontation and appeared to reinforce the resolve of the BRA. The militants besieged Kaveria Jail on 17 January, killing seven, injuring over 20 and setting the place on fire. The militants' defiant response, exemplified by Sam Kavona's "crazy letter" (Namaliu's description) challenging the Government to a fair contest "you give us arms; give us ammunition; don't use choppers and let's have a fair war with you" sought to widen the scope of conflict.⁵⁴

According to Yaw Saffu of the University of Papua New Guinea, by attacking Australians, the militants sought to draw the Australian Government directly into conflict and thereby reap the benefit of the "David effect"; that is, the sympathy that would flow to a small, weak "exploited" Bougainville fighting Australia and its "lackey" the PNG Government.⁵⁵ The Australian Government declined to become involved. This was despite the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans stating that Australian troops could be used to rescue any Australians at risk on the island and the

⁵³ Sydney Morning Herald, 13 January 1990. Also Post Courier, 12 January 1990, Australian, 12 January 1990, Australian Financial Review, 12 January 1990.

⁵⁴ Post Courier, 22 January 1990; Sydney Morning Herald, 22 January 1990.

⁵⁵ Yaw Saffu, Papua New Guinea, Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol.37, No.2, 1991. p.346.

Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, stating that there would be no military intervention by Australian forces unless there was a direct and immediate threat to the lives of Australian nationals.⁵⁶ But the militants did succeed in widening the geographical area of conflict by drawing the security forces away from the Kongara valley in central Bougainville with their attacks on Buka and Buin, to the north and south.

Hostilities quickened the pace of exodus from Bougainville. By the end of January over 80 per cent of public servants on the island had been evacuated. BCL reduced its workforce from 2,300 to 300 by end of February. The plantations had lost their labourers and, in most cases, their managers as well. Commercial life came to a standstill with banks closing, airlines suspending flights to the island and insurance companies refusing to provide cover.

In the early stages of Operation Footloose, the PNG Government expected that they could negotiate from a position of strength. Contrary to such expectations, there appeared to be a real danger of the security force camps being overrun by the BRA, the PNGDF being heavily outnumbered by highly motivated, if not disciplined, rebel forces. For this reason, as well as concern about increasing criticism both at home and abroad for its handling of the crisis, the Government accepted a proposal for a ceasefire. On the militants' part, a ceasefire was as good as victory. A ceasefire would herald negotiations, constitute de facto recognition by the Government, and probably mean the resumption of imports and services. On 1 March, less than six weeks after claiming that there was no other option but a military one, Sam Kavona, on behalf of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), and Colonel Leo Nuia, on behalf of the PNG Government, signed a ceasefire agreement.

The agreement called for a complete withdrawal of all security forces by 16 March. Kavona insisted that regular police on the island before the build-up were also to be withdrawn. Paul Tohian, the Police Commissioner and controller of the State of Emergency, apparently out of fear of his men if they were not withdrawn, agreed with Kavona's interpretation. Without notice to the Government, he withdrew all security personnel, including general duty policemen. The BRA, for its part, agreed to surrender its arms. But while the Government expected that the arms would be surrendered to a team of international observers appointed by the Commonwealth Secretariat, the militants insisted that surrender meant handing the arms in to BRA headquarters. And that is what the international team confirmed as having happened. In effect, the ceasefire left the rebels in absolute control of the island while the Government waited for talks to begin. It was the BRA which welcomed the international observers and looked after them on the

⁵⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, 22 January 1990.

island. No wonder the Post Courier editorialised, more than a month later, when the expected talks were pushed further and further away: "In reality, we have lost Bougainville."⁵⁷

An eleven-member international observer team which arrived on 12 March and remained for several days on the island, said that the BRA had substantially complied with the provisions of the ceasefire and that the situation was basically calm and orderly. Yet while the BRA leadership appeared committed to the maintenance of law and order, there were doubts about its ability to control its own members and criminal elements operating under BRA auspices.⁵⁸

Concerns about the security of delegates, a lack of agreement over the venue and most importantly, fundamental differences over the question of secession, resulted in the repeated postponement of the promised Government-BRA talks. While the BRA and the provincial Government insisted that secession be included on the agenda, the national Government maintained that the issue was non-negotiable.

Showing some flexibility in the Government's position, Prime Minister Namaliu stated in early May 1990 that the national Government would be prepared to grant Bougainville a unique status within PNG, as an "autonomous province".⁵⁹ This would entail a major increase in the powers of the North Solomons provincial Government, to control "almost all internal affairs ... especially those affecting the daily lives and welfare of the people of the Province". And in offering an olive branch to the BRA, he said

As Prime Minister, I completely reject the use of military force as a way of dealing with the situation ... Let the people of Bougainville be sure - there will not be any military invasion ... (my Government) is fully committed to a comprehensive program of reconstruction and rehabilitation on the island."

On 17 May, the BRA declared Bougainville independent and renamed it the Republic of Meekamui (Sacred Island), under interim President Francis Ona. The interim Government included Joseph Kabui and the heads of all the religious denominations on the island. However, the new republic failed to gain international recognition from any other country. At about the same time, the Namaliu Government imposed a communication blackout and economic blockade of the island. Significantly, Nissan, the Carteret and

⁵⁷ Post Courier, 25 April 1990.

⁵⁸ Papua New Guinea: Human Rights Violations on Bougainville, 1989-1990, Amnesty International, 1990, p.7.

⁵⁹ Australian Financial Review, 2 May 1990.

other outer islands, where support for the PNG Government were strongest, were excluded from the blockade. All Government and banking services were suspended, while troops were withdrawn to 80 kilometres north of Buka. There appears to be some confusion in the literature concerning the sequence of events regarding the imposition of the blockade by the PNGDF and the declaration of independence by the BRA. Yaw Saffu writes that "the Namaliu Government responded to the declaration of independence by imposing a communication blackout and economic blockade on the island ..."⁶⁰ In contrast, Mathew Spriggs and Ron May state that "the unilateral declaration of independence on 17 May may have been in response to the blockade (as was claimed at the peace talks) or may have been planned, at least in general terms, some time earlier."⁶¹

The effectiveness of the blockade, plus the failure of the new Republic to secure recognition, eventually persuaded the BRA leaders to work towards a negotiated settlement. Peace talks were set to start in Honiara on 13 June, but Somare refused to attend unless the Bougainville team included BRA leaders Francis Ona and Sam Kavona. They were unwilling to attend because of fears for their security, fears which seemed justified by the announced visit to Honiara of two PNGDF patrol boats just before the commencement of talks. The patrol boats were ordered to leave by Solomons authorities and Papua New Guinea's Defence Minister, Benias Sabumei, was despatched to Honiara to apologise. This was the first of many incidents to cause tension between the countries.

On 29 July-5 August 1990, talks between the PNG Government (led by Michael Somare and Justice Minister Bernard Narokobi) and the BRA led by Joseph Kabui) on a New Zealand frigate, Endeavour, resulted in an accord, the Endeavour Accord, being reached (see Appendix 2). Under the terms of the agreement, the PNG Government undertook to restore Government services, particularly health, education and communications. For its part, the Bougainville delegation accepted an indefinite deferral of all political declarations and continuing dialogue on the long-term status of Bougainville. The Accord then, was simply a framework for the restoration of services to Bougainville; it did not touch on the basic issues of the unilateral declaration of independence and secession. These were deferred to future talks.

Not only did the Endeavour Accord fail to make any reference to the main issues underlying the Bougainville dispute, but the language of the Accord was vague, possibly deliberately so. According to Mathew Spriggs:

⁶⁰ Yaw Saffu, *op. cit.*, p.347.

⁶¹ Mathew Spriggs and Ron May, "Postscript" August 1990", in RJ May and Mathew Spriggs, The Bougainville Crisis, Bathurst, Crawford House Press, 1990 p.113.

The vagueness of the wording was all in Papua New Guinea's favour The clearly superior negotiating skills of Sir Michael Somare and his colleague Bernard Narokobi produced a document useful in presenting a positive image of the Government in the face of seeming Bougainville intransigence but useless, indeed damaging, in promoting the causes of peace.⁶²

For example, the return of services to Bougainville was to be conducted by 'all practical steps consistent with the Constitution of Papua New Guinea'. Although the agreement made reference to services being restored 'without force', the reference to the constitution could also be interpreted to allow the involvement of soldiers in the restoration of services. This was certainly the Papua New Guinea Government's interpretation when it attempted to land soldiers with the supply ships at Buka Passage on 31 August to "assist civilian personnel".⁶³ The landing was prevented by the BRA because in a statement attributed to Joseph Kabui:

all supplies had to be landed first at Kieta, where security checks would be made before the vessels be allowed to land supplies in other ports.⁶⁴

This possibly reflected the BRA's interpretation of the clause, 'The Government of Papua New Guinea will consult regularly with the present Bougainville Delegation on the restoration of services'.

Questions concerning the interpretation of the Endeavour Accord and the resumption of services became rather meaningless when two police riot squads and fifty PNGDF troops, along with some public servants, landed on Buka on 21 September. The grounds for this action was contained in a statement by Bernard Narokobi,

... villagers of Hahalis, Lemanumanu and Lemankoa met and petitioned the national Government to send in security forces to maintain security and safety of the villagers. The petition is signed by 125 people. Minister Narokobi said ... leaders of Buka, including some BRA, issued a demand to the national Government to send in security forces within 48 hours to protect the innocent people. We have now acceded to their request.⁶⁵

⁶² Mathew Spriggs, "Bougainville Update: August 1990 to May 1991", in Mathew Spriggs and Donald Denoon, The Bougainville Crisis, 1991 Update, Crawford House, 1992, p.10.

⁶³ Post Courier, 13 September 1990. Quoted in Mathew Spriggs, 1992, ibid., p.9.

⁶⁴ Post Courier, 5 September 1990.

⁶⁵ Post Courier, 24 September 1990.

The landing of troops illustrates the Government's strategy of providing support to those districts where resistance to the BRA was greatest. While the public reason for the landing was to restore law and order, the real reason appears to have been to provide a firm base upon which to re-establish control over the whole of Bougainville. As Mathew Spriggs asks,

*But why had the initial attempt at restoration of services been directed to Buka rather than the capital Arawa, the site of the main hospital and other services such as communications facilities?*⁶⁶

The Bukas, who were generally not in sympathy with secessionism, formed the Buka Liberation Front in September 1990 to fight BRA. While this was initially welcomed by the people, evidence soon emerged of indiscriminate killings by the BLF, and their presence was feared as much as that of the BRA. Mathew Spriggs states that the formation of the BLF raises doubts about the level of support for the PNGDF:

*This raises real questions as to what level of support there really was on Buka for the return of the PNGDF and more particularly for the leaders associated with the BLF. Why did the Defence Force need to sanction or at least turn a blind eye to the behaviour of an ill-disciplined vigilante force. Can it be that support for the Government on Buka was not as solid as claimed by Prime Minister Namaliu and leaders such as Sam Tula.*⁶⁷

Buka was eventually designated the new temporary headquarters of the province with a new Administrator appointed in place of the suspended provincial Government of Joseph Kabui. But the Administrator's writ did not run on the main Bougainville island.

In the final months of 1991 the prospects for a peaceful settlement following the signing of the Endeavour Accord seemed to fade. The PNGDF gained control of Buka, with occasional clashes with the BRA. Reports of the intensity of the fighting varies with the source. Figures released by the PNG Department of Defence in early October showed that 22 BRA members and one PNG soldier had been killed since the landing of troops on Buka on 21 September. In contrast, Joseph Kabui claimed that 30 PNG soldiers had been killed on one day alone (22 September) when 18 BRA members staged a suicide raid. A second raid on 25 September resulted in the killing of 6 more PNGDF soldiers.⁶⁸ There

⁶⁶ Mathew Spriggs, 1992, *op. cit.*, p.10.

⁶⁷ Mathew Spriggs, 1992, *ibid.*, p.12.

⁶⁸ Sydney Morning Herald, 11 October 1990.

were also reports of the shelling of Kieta by a PNG patrol boat in November and again in December.⁶⁹

Public statements also indicate the polarisation of the two sides. For example, Bernard Narokobi stated in late September that it was possible that [Bougainville itself] eventually could come under permanent military administration unless the secessionist crisis was resolved. On the other hand, Joseph Kabui, speaking for the BRA, said that there would be no further negotiations with the PNG Government as laid down in the Endeavour Accord, until the security forces were withdrawn from Buka.⁷⁰

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of the Bougainville crisis, and specifically the blockade, was the effect on innocent civilians. Press reports indicated a bleak situation on the island of Bougainville:

*Consumer items such as soap, salt, cooking fat, pins, paper and clothing are non-existent. The food shortage in the towns where there are no gardens is acute and many of the village gardens... (are) ... washed only by heavy rains... Most of the people are surviving on sago ... Young children are dying from malaria. Mothers are dying because there is no hospital, no doctors, no medicine... There is an outbreak of what appears to be breast cancer among young mothers for some unknown reason. They require urgent medical treatment and they are not getting any. The main hospital in Arawa has been closed for several months and the medicines that were dropped by the New Zealand Navy in August have run out. This means that there are no supplies of vaccination, medicines or anaesthetics on the island.*⁷¹

3.6 The Honiara Declaration

The promised follow-up talks to the Endeavour Accord did not take place until the end of January 1991. There were two factors which brought the PNG Government and the BRA back to the negotiating table. Firstly, there were the pressures applied by PNG through the blockade which was taking its toll on the people and support for the BRA. Secondly, PNG's Minister for Provincial Affairs and member for Bougainville, Father John Momis, was asked by the BRA to act as an intermediary, obviously reflecting their distrust of the Government. His contact in early January 1991 with the BRA was pivotal in leading to the resumption of negotiations in Honiara.

⁶⁹ PNG Times, 29 November 1990 and 20 December 1990.

⁷⁰ Post Courier, 28 September 1990.

⁷¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 13 October 1990.

The official meeting of the PNG Government and the BRA, held under the auspices of the Solomon Islands Government and the Solomon Islands Christian Association, convened on 22 January and lasted two days. PNG's principal delegate Michael Somare, was attended by Bernard Narokobi, Father John Momis and Benais Sabumei, the Minister for Defence. Joseph Kabui, the leader of the Bougainville delegation, was attended by the Rev. John Zale (Head of the province's Uniting Church), James Singko (Counsellor to Francis Ona) and Patrick Etta.

The negotiations resulted in the signing of the Honiara Declaration on Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation on Bougainville (Appendix 3). The Honiara Declaration provided for:

- . "a joint programme of peace, reconciliation and rehabilitation, within the current constitutional framework;
- . the establishment of a legal and representative authority on Bougainville;
- . the constitutional role of the PNGDF;
- . a Multinational Supervisory Team (MST);
- . an amnesty for BRA members; and
- . the restoration of all Government services."

As with the Endeavour Accord, the Honiara Declaration side-stepped the issues of secession and independence, the reopening of the Panguna mine and whether the BCL would be allowed to return to operate the mine. Father John Momis stated,

To deal with all the issues together would lead to an impasse in a short time. Patience is the mother of success in this exercise.⁷²

The ending of the blockade and the restoration of services was the centrepiece of the Honiara Declaration. A civilian task force, to be headed by Father John Momis, was set up to oversee reconstruction on the island. This was expected to take up to 3 years and assistance would be provided by the MST, comprising approximately 200 personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands. One of the tasks of the MST was to supervise the disarming of the BRA.

According to Yaw Saffu, the installation of the MST had advantages for both sides.⁷³ From the point of view of the BRA, such a force would not only stop the Government

⁷² Post Courier, 25 February 1991.

infiltrating security personnel back on to the island, but it could also supervise a referendum on secession. For the Government, a wish to appear conciliatory and the belief that the presence of such a force might convince the rebels that it was safe to disarm were the probable reasons for agreeing to a multinational force. By involving outside forces, the PNG Government was 'internationalising' the Bougainville dispute, however much it tried to maintain it as a domestic problem. The risk was that the PNG Government would be forced to accept an eventual solution with which it might not otherwise agree.

Inherent in the installation of the MST - not written into the Declaration but confirmed afterwards by Michael Somare - was an understanding that the PNGDF would not return to Bougainville:

*We decided, we need to leave our people, our security forces out, they can operate in other parts of Papua New Guinea.*⁷⁴

However, almost as soon as the Accord was signed, there were disagreements relating to the terms of the Declaration. According to the Bougainvillean delegates, the clause relating to the destroying of arms was an oversight and should have been removed:

*Either it is mistake [sic] or they have tricked us. But we did not agree to the destruction of the arms.*⁷⁵

This was later confirmed by Father John Momis.⁷⁶ Clearly, the BRA was determined that should the Declaration collapse, they would not be left defenceless.

Given the mistrust between the two sides and their irreconcilable objectives (Bougainville secession versus national unity), it is not surprising that the Honiara Declaration quickly became unstuck. Within a month of the Agreement, food delivered by the first ship to call at Kieta wharf since the imposition of an economic blockade in May 1990 was rejected, although fuel and medicine were accepted.

The incident raised doubts about discipline within the BRA. While BRA Government Ministers had agreed to the delivery of food, it was rejected by a local BRA commander. In addition, the BRA commander, against the orders of Francis Ona who wanted the

⁷³ Yaw Saffu, Papua New Guinea, Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol.38, No.2, 1992. p.263.

⁷⁴ Sydney Morning Herald, 25 January 1991.

⁷⁵ ibid.

⁷⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, 26 January 1991.

supply ship impounded, allowed it to leave Kieta. The subsequent burning of buildings in Panguna, Arawa, Kieta and Toniva by 'rascal' BRA elements reinforced the view of outside parties that sections of the BRA were beyond the control of the central leadership and could not be trusted. Of immediate concern was whether an order from the central command of the BRA to surrender arms to a multinational supervisory team, as specified in the Honiara Declaration, would be obeyed by all sections of the BRA. The implications for the implementations of the Honiara Declaration were contained in an Australian intelligence report:

*The fairly uninformed level of understanding by the BRA leadership of the diplomatic and political implications of their acts is a cause for concern when considering the deployment of a peace-keeping force, a Defence source said. There is now no law and order authority on Bougainville and little likelihood that one can be reasserted in the near future without use of force by the central PNG Government.*⁷⁷

Scepticism towards the BRA and its ability and willingness to delivery on its obligations under the Honiara Declaration appeared to be justified with statements made by BRA commander, Sam Kavona on Australian television. He rejected the surrender of arms as stipulated in the Honiara Declaration and believed that the negotiating team of Honiara led by Joseph Kabui did not have a mandate to make the agreement it had. He added that the BRA would not implement every aspect of the Honiara Declaration.⁷⁸

A further, and perhaps final, nail in the coffin of the Honiara Declaration occurred in April, when the Commander of the troops in Buka, Colonel Leo Nuia, landed troops in the north of Bougainville and destroyed a strategic bridge at Manetai, effectively cutting the island in half.

While the landing was clearly in breach of the Honiara Declaration's prohibition on the use of force, it is unclear the extent to which the actions were sanctioned by the PNG Cabinet. As Mathew Spriggs points out,

*the attack was initially denied as BRA propaganda, then claimed as totally unsanctioned by the Government, then admitted as an action which had been planned for some time but whose commencement Colonial Nuia had failed to communicate to the Government, and then the confusion blamed on faulty communications equipment.*⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Sydney Morning Herald, 16 February 1991.

⁷⁸ Melbourne Age, 27 February 1991.

⁷⁹ Mathew Spriggs, 1992, op cit., p.20.

Father John Momis, who was co-ordinating the restoration of services to Bougainville, had no prior knowledge of the planned attack. His response to the incursion indicates that it was not just the BRA that had problems of internal discipline:

What Colonel Nuia - or whoever has authorised it - is guilty of is misuse and abuse of power. The actions of the defence forces calls for total condemnation - and calls for the dismissal of those who are responsible. The incursion was totally illegal and against the spirit and principles of the Honiara Declaration. It seems many of us are powerless when it comes to actually effectively directing our officials to carry out legitimate Government political decisions.⁸⁰

By mid 1991, the prospects for peace based on the Honiara Declaration were almost non-existent. Fears for the safety of a multinational supervisory team partly led the PNG to abandon this option. This is not to deny that the PNG Government was half-hearted about an international supervisory team in the first place, preferring to keep Bougainville out of the international limelight. Evidence of the Government's apathy was that no detailed proposal had been received by any of the prospective participants. As early as April, the PNG Minister for Defence, Benais Sabumei, said that plans for an outside neutral force was likely to prove unnecessary. The Prime Minister, at about the same time, endorsed this view, believing that a 'hearts and minds' campaign was likely to render such plans irrelevant.⁸¹

The establishment of an Interim Legal Authority was never carried out, largely reflecting disagreements over membership of such a body; the BRA believed that their interim Government would become the Interim Legal Authority with oversight of the restoration programme. This was clearly unacceptable to the PNG Government who envisaged their own nominees to comprise at least part of the Interim Legal Authority.

Plans to implement an amnesty for members of the BRA were never proceeded with. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the BRA honoured their obligations under the Honiara Delegation to release any prisoners.

The Honiara Agreement envisaged a second round of peace talks at the end of July. For those talks, the Government insisted that both rebel leader Francis Ona and the BRA Commander, Sam Kavona attend and that political questions should be discussed.⁸²

⁸⁰ Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1991.

⁸¹ Sydney Morning Herald, 29 April 1991.

⁸² Post Courier, 27 February 1991.

However, by renewing attacks on the troops in northern Bougainville and inflicting casualties at the beginning of July, the rebels gave notice that the talks were not on.

In an interesting development, members of the BRA's negotiating team attended in August a meeting in Geneva of the United Nations Sub-Committee on Indigenous People to lobby for the plight of Bougainvilleans and to exert pressure on the PNG Government to recognise their right to self-determine. The Bougainville secessionist leader, Joseph Kabui, told the UN Sub-Committee that PNG had breached the Honiara and Endeavour peace accords by refusing to set up a multinational peace-keeping force on the island. He also told of atrocities allegedly committed by PNG troops on Bougainville.⁸³ Rabbie Namaliu rejected the allegations saying he was prepared to set up the peace-keeping force as soon as PNG could set up an interim authority in Bougainville - the view being that it is impossible to send in foreign troops to keep peace until a legal authority has been set up on Bougainville, as laid out in the Honiara Accord.⁸⁴

The Government announced that 26 August had been agreed on as the new date for the talks. However, there were doubts as to whether the chairman of the Bougainville Government, Joseph Kabui could return to the island in time because the Australian Government had refused him a transit visa to allow his return from Geneva.

It was not until 13 September that officials from the PNG Government and the BRA met for the first time since the signing of the Honiara Accord. Talks held on the MV Kris in Kieta harbour focussed on setting a date (8 October), venue and agenda for the review of the Honiara Declaration. It was reported that the PNG Government refused to discuss a Bougainville proposal that before negotiations, a working group be established with assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The leader of the Bougainville delegation, Martin Miriari, said a working group was needed so that a concrete framework for a multinational supervisory team or peace-keeping force could be negotiated before the formal negotiations. He also asked that the blockade of Bougainville, which was lifted after the signing of the Honiara Declaration, be removed at once.⁸⁵

However, the round of talks were postponed indefinitely. The BRA wanted the talks to take place in New Zealand, or another neutral country while the PNG Government insisted the talks be held on PNG territory. However, there were doubts as to whether the chairman of the Bougainville Government, Joseph Kabui, could return to the island in

⁸³ Sydney Morning Herald, 6 August 1991.

⁸⁴ ibid.

⁸⁵ Sydney Morning Herald, 14 September 1991.

time because the Australian Government had refused him a transit visa to allow his return from Geneva.

Meanwhile, the task force, under the leadership of Father John Momis, continued with the establishment of district co-ordinating authorities on Bougainville to win the peace, by restoring services and initiating reconstruction. By November, the PNG Cabinet had approved the establishment of six district authorities, four on Bougainville and one each for Buka and the atolls, Nissan, Carteret and Bismarck.

Military activity by the PNGDF was also being stepped up, although tactics had changed. The PNGDF adopted a policy of winning the 'hearts and minds' of the people. This involved demonstrating to villages outside nominal government control how better supplied their politically more compliant neighbours were faring. The new approach met with some success. By early 1992, the PNG Government had more or less secured large areas in the north of the island, including a semblance of law and order. By May 1992, troops had landed at Torokina, on the western coast of South Bougainville. The BRA maintained control of the central and southern parts of the island.

3.7 The Wingti Government

At the time of his election in July 1992, Paias Wingti said it was too early for his Government to commit itself to any policy change towards Bougainville. However, he did appoint a special Minister of State responsible for Bougainville, the Bougainvillean, Michael Ogio, and indicated that he wanted to see a political solution of the crisis.⁸⁶ In reality, the election of Paias Wingti indicated a more aggressive position on the part of the PNGDF. The first real indication of the new Wingti Government's policy on Bougainville, was when the Minister of Defence, Paul Tohian said in September that he would not condone the withdrawal of the more than 400 troops from the island. This was supported by Michael Ogio:

I would not like to see any changes to the arrangements of the deployment of the security forces on the island as yet I must commend them for the good work they are doing to assist the people on the island to restore peace and order and also Government services.⁸⁷

At the time, Mr Ogio was expected to make a submission to the PNG Cabinet for a special allocation of up to 60 million kina (\$A87 million) for the restoration of services to Bougainville.

⁸⁶ Sydney Morning Herald, 5 August 1992.

⁸⁷ Sydney Morning Herald, 1 October 1991.

An offensive was launched by the PNGDF in late October into Central Bougainville, although it was not until February 1993 that they were reported to have secured Arawa.

At the time of writing (March 1993) a military solution still eludes the PNGDF. While government forces control approximately three-quarters of Bougainville, the BRA remain entrenched in the central area around Panguna and the coastal towns of Kieta and Komoria.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Sydney Morning Herald, 2 March 1993.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESPONSE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND OTHER EXTERNAL PARTIES

Before turning specifically to the subject of Bougainville, it is useful to provide some background to the Australian-PNG relationship.

The importance of PNG to Australia stems in part from historical factors but also from its proximity to Australia, the wealth of the country and the large Australian investment in the country. Moreover, our defence posture is based on maintaining secure northern approaches to which a well-disposed, stable PNG has always been seen to be crucial. The relationship between the two countries was embodied in the Joint Declaration of Principles (December 1987) which reaffirmed co-operation in defence, trade, development assistance and cultural matters.

4.1 Australian Trade with Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is an increasingly important trading partner of Australia. Australia dominates Papua New Guinea's imports, providing around 45 per cent of its imports, followed by Japan supplying nearly 20 per cent. In 1991/92, Australian exports to Papua New Guinea totalled \$A880 million. Imports from Papua New Guinea were \$A950 million, producing a surplus for Papua New Guinea of \$A70 million. Imports have increased by just over \$A700 million over the past two years, reflecting the shipping to Australia of oil from the Kutubu field in the Southern Highlands.⁸⁹

Investment along with security, have been the two dominant motives behind Australia's interest in Papua New Guinea. Papua New Guinea is the sixth largest recipient of Australian investment. Australia's investment stock in Papua New Guinea is currently estimated at \$A1.6 billion, up from \$A0.9 billion in 1985/86. Industry estimates suggest the flow of new investment from Australia to Papua New Guinea over the next 5 years could be as much as \$A4.2 billion.⁹⁰

Mining remains the single largest target of Australian investment. Over the past couple of years there has been a significant increase in the number of new projects, offsetting the closure of the mine at Panguna. These include the mining of gold at Mt Kare, Porgera

⁸⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue Nos. 5436.0 and 5437.0.

⁹⁰ Sydney Morning Herald, 23 August 1991.

and Misima; the extraction of oil at Kutubu and gas from Hides and Iagifu; and copper from Ok Tedi.⁹¹

4.2 Australian Aid to Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea is the largest single recipient of Australian aid and provides about 70 per cent of PNG's total aid receipts. Current Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Papua New Guinea is provided under the treaty on Development Co-operation, signed in 1989, which provides for the transfer of \$A1.5 billion in the 5 years from 1989/90 to 1993/94. Funds are transferred largely by way of budgetary support, with more recent transfers through project aid and through a structural adjustment grant associated with the World Bank Consultative group for Papua New Guinea. The Treaty provides, however, for the pattern and level of our aid to change during the 5 year period. Australia is to give \$A275 million a year in budgetary support until 1992/93, then \$A260 million in 1993/94. Increases in project aid will partly offset this decline. Project aid will rise in steps from \$A20 million in 1989/90 to \$A135 million in 1993/94. By 1993/94, Australian Budgetary aid will represent about 10 per cent of PNG budget revenues compared with 27 per cent in the early 1980s.⁹²

In addition to the current programme of ODA, Australia also provides PNG with substantial military assistance. In 1992, such aid amounted to \$A45.2 million or nearly 40 per cent of PNG's expenditure on its defence forces. Under a 1977 Supply Support Arrangement, the Australian Defence Department also sells at cost to the PNGDF most of its weapons. This arrangement states that "items of Australian manufacture sold to Papua New Guinea ... may be employed without let or hindrance from Australia".⁹³

4.3 The Australian Response to the Bougainville Crisis

The Bougainville crisis has exerted a major influence on Australia's relations with Papua New Guinea. It has highlighted at least two important issues: the level of Australian aid to PNG and the extent to which Australia may become involved in the internal affairs of a neighbouring country. The Australian Government appears to have sought, not always successfully, to balance policy between providing assistance - and risking complaints of internal meddling in PNG affairs - and providing too little assistance, which might have weakened the PNG government. Certainly the fragmentation of PNG itself, creating the

⁹¹ On 29 March 1993 CRA announced that it was abandoning the Mt Kare mine, claiming that its employees' lives were at risk from landowners.

⁹² Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Australia's Relations with Papua New Guinea, Canberra: Senate Publishing, 1991. Chapter 9.

⁹³ Sydney Morning Herald, 23 September 1992.

potential for destabilising activity in the region was seen as a very real threat by the Australian Government. Australian Foreign Affairs Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, wrote in 1990 about Australia's concerns with the situation in PNG in the following terms:

"For the early part of 1990, my most immediate concern, of course, was the safety of the remaining Australians still living on Bougainville. As the situation deteriorated, we had to advise all Australians to leave. Other important concerns have been for a large Australian investment; the damaging consequences for Papua New Guinea's economy of the prolonged shutdown of the mine and the damage to Bougainville's plantation sector; the possible flow-on effects for investment in other large mineral resource projects in Papua New Guinea; and the consequences, if a settlement is not found in Bougainville, for the PNG Government's authority in other areas of the country."⁹⁴

Australian foreign policy towards Bougainville, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been guided by three principles.⁹⁵ The first is that the Bougainville crisis is essentially a domestic problem to be handled by the PNG government. This reflects the preference of the PNG government who have not sought Australian military intervention. The second principle is support for PNG's territorial integrity. Finally, Australian policy has been guided by a willingness to be engaged, particularly in the provision of humanitarian and technical expertise. One could possibly also add military assistance.

4.3.1 The Australian Government and Military Assistance

Although unwilling to help PNG directly fight the rebels, the Australian Government has shown a willingness to provide strong military support to the PNG Government. Such support has been directed towards equipping the security forces and more recently donating helicopters and funds for operational expenses and expatriate civilian aircrew. Specific assistance given to the PNG Government has included:

- . Sending Australian soldiers on secondment to the PNG police to establish communications at the headquarters of the joint police-army operation on Bougainville.

⁹⁴ Gareth Evans, "Australia and Papua New Guinea" in David Anderson (ed), PNG-Australian Relationship: Problems and Prospects, Pacific Security Research Institute, 1990 p.5.

⁹⁵ Michael Thawley, The Bougainville Crisis Two Years On: Australian Policy, in M.Spriggs and Denoon, op: cit.

- . Providing special Air Service Regiment instructors to train a platoon of reconnaissance troops in reconnaissance and patrolling in close country.
- . Paying for a private firm to photograph the topography of Bougainville for the PNGDF.
- . Sending Australian military officers to Bougainville during the conflict to ensure the safe operation of Australian-supplied helicopters.
- . Allowing discounts of 50 per cent on the sale of about \$1.8 million in small arms and ammunition.
- . Increasing defence and police assistance by \$A17 million for 1990/91. This was on top of the \$A40 million already promised.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) appeared to be of the view that the close working relationship with the PNGDF means that we are inextricably linked with any PNGDF operation. "It is not possible to isolate assistance provided principally for the external defence role of the PNGDF from internal security applications".⁹⁶

Illustrating the fine line between pursuing Australia's national interests (i.e., protecting Australian lives, property and investments) and being seen to be interfering in the internal affairs of PNG was the supply by the Australian Government in late 1989 of four ex-RAAF Iroquois helicopters for use by the PNGDF. As stated by Prime Minister Bob Hawke, the supply of the helicopters was subject to the conditions that they:

*".. would not be used as gunships. They would be used for troop transportation, for patrolling and surveillance activities, and for medical evacuation purposes for both civilian and military (personnel)."*⁹⁷

The first of these conditions - that the helicopters not be used as gunships - appears to have been crucial in gaining support for the proposal within the Australian Government, and from Senator Evans in particular.⁹⁸ A major concern appears to have been that if they were used for offensive purposes, then the safety of the two thousand or more Australians remaining in Bougainville at the time would have been in jeopardy. Their fears were apparently justified as days after the first three helicopters arrived on the

⁹⁶ The Australian, 23 July 1990, p.2.

⁹⁷ As cited by Paul Austin and Stuart Rintoul, The Australian, 8 July 1989.

⁹⁸ Canberra Times, 8 July 1989.

island, at least five Australians were attacked and letters threatening the safety of others were sent to the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby.⁹⁹

By late 1989, doubts were being expressed as to whether the restrictions placed on the use of the helicopters were being observed: Senator Evans had to explain why helicopters with machine guns attached by rope were not to be considered as gunships.¹⁰⁰ By May 1990, the Australian Government appeared to have abandoned any pretence that the conditions actually might have applied. In response to a question in Parliament from the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Hewson, Bob Hawke said:

*"The only conditions we, properly, imposed ... was that no Australian defence personnel would be used in the operation of those helicopters. But since you have made a decision as Government disposing of equipment to a sovereign independent nation, then what that nation does with that equipment that it required from you, is its business."*¹⁰¹

In other words, as an independent and sovereign State, PNG had every right to use the equipment it had acquired in whatever way it saw fit. To expect that the PNGDF, engaged in operations against the BRA, would not use all the resources at its disposal in the most effective manner possible may have been wishful thinking. Moreover, as Senator Evans recognised, once the helicopters had been handed over the PNG, there was effectively little, if anything, that the Australian Government could do to police the conditions attached to their use.

The killing of some Australians in January 1990 raised the question of whether, and under what circumstances, Australia might be prepared to send troops to the region. The question was of particular relevance given that it was in December 1989 that Senator Evans had presented to Parliament a major paper on regional security, which canvassed this issue. Protection of Australian citizens overseas was one of the circumstances Senator Evans had cited which might justify military intervention overseas.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, Sydney Morning Herald, 13/15 July 1989 and The Age, 15 July 1989 and Brian Woodley, The Australian, 15 July 1989.

¹⁰⁰ The Australian, The Canberra Times, 14 August 1989.

¹⁰¹ "House of Representatives", hansard, 9 May 1990, p.114.

¹⁰² Whether the Australian army was in fact trained and equipped to fight on Bougainville is another matter. See Michael O'Connor, Australian Financial Review, 26 January 1990.

According to the Journalist and commentator of Pacific Affairs, Peter Hastings, the then Defence Minister Kim Beazley, and to a lesser extent, Senator Evans, were in favour of intervention under certain conditions (refer Chapter 3.5). Some Defence Department officials too, he argued, were anxious to deploy elements of the SAS to the island.¹⁰³

Following the first shootings, Senator Evans said that while ADF participating in the conflict was "completely inappropriate", its involvement in the protection of Australian lives "could not be ruled out". He went on to state that:

*"Given the injuries that have occurred to Australians in the last 24 hours and the possibility of heightened risks to our countrymen that have been foreshadowed by these developments ... some appropriate involvement by Australian defence forces can't be completely ruled out."*¹⁰⁴

However with the rapid reduction in Australians living on Bougainville by May 1990 the likelihood of military forces intervening similarly diminished.

4.3.2. The Australian Government and Human Rights

Australian Government reaction to the atrocities committed by the PNGDF and the BRA (well documented by Amnesty International) has been rather muted. In response to the reports of the killing of 6-8 civilians on 14 February 1990, the then Defence Minister, Kim Beazley stated:

*that any of these [human rights violations] have taken place ... there's a plethora of rumours of which this is one [but] we have no evidence for them apart from the speculation we've seen in the media.*¹⁰⁵

Foreign Affairs Minister, Gareth Evans was a little bit more forthcoming:

*"It certainly does look possible that there was something in the nature of an execution which took place by members of the PNGDF of militants, or alleged militants, and as such, it's a hair-raising story that concerns us a great deal."*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Peter Hastings, Sydney Morning Herald, 18 and 22 January 1990.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted by Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, Sydney Morning Herald, 20 January 1990.

¹⁰⁵ Sydney Morning Herald, 10 March 1993.

¹⁰⁶ ibid.

Senator Evans sidestepped the issue of whether human rights abuses would damage Australian-PNG relations:

*"These things can regrettably happen but what matters is that there be a proper, detailed investigation and that if it shows something like this did happen, that appropriate PNG action is taken against the people concerned."*¹⁰⁷

Certainly, the public record would indicate that the Australian Government has wished not to be too critical on the PNG Government regarding human rights.

4.4 The Response of Neighbouring Governments to the Bougainville Crisis

Relations with the Solomon Islands have possibly been most affected by the Bougainville crisis. The Solomon Islands Government refused to recognise the proclamation of independence by the BRA and at the same time has expressed resentment of PNG's blockade of the island. There is concern that secessionist talk could cause trouble in the Solomon Islands. The Prime Minister, Mr Solomon Mamaloni, who offered to host the Honiara peace talks has raised concerns about the spillover effect from the crisis:

*"We have to protect ourselves, the worst we could allow is for another nation to sit between Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. If the secession takes effect then certainly it would seem that along with Bougainville would go the Shortlands or Choiseul which means part of our country is also split. That's the biggest fear we have."*¹⁰⁸

There has also been concern about the activities of Bougainvilleans in the Solomon Islands. In March 1990, PNG and the Solomon Islands agreed to close their common border until the conflict was resolved. Later in the year they agreed on combined border surveillance for the purpose of monitoring the movements of illegal border crossers.¹⁰⁹ In September, the Solomon Islands Minister for Immigration, Edmund Andresen, banned the entry of all Bougainvilleans. The Solomon Islands Government subsequently became involved in the Bougainville secession issue when it provided the venue for the talks which produced the Honiara Accord (Chapter Three).

Matters became complicated when Solomon Islander and Australian Associated Press reporter Alfred Sasako was banned from entering Papua New Guinea after he travelled to Bougainville to interview secessionist leader, Francis Ona. Then in May 1991, former

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1990.

¹⁰⁹ *Solomon Nius*, 14 August 1990.

Solomon Islands Prime Minister Ezekial Alebua, leaders in Western Province and some Solomon Islanders with relatives in Bougainville sent messages of congratulations to mark the first anniversary of the Republic of Bougainville's unilateral declaration of independence.¹¹⁰ Friction was reported in December between the Governments of the Solomon Islands and PNG over the latter's request that two Bougainvilleans in Honiara be deported to Port Moresby.¹¹¹

Relations between the two countries quickly deteriorated when PNG troops carried out two raids on the village of Karaki in the Shortland Islands, destroying a fuel depot and burning several houses. Karaki, on Fauro Islands, is less than 40 kms from Bougainville along the PNG-Solomon Islands common sea border, where regular supplies of food, fuel and medicine were transported into Bougainville in defiance of PNG's official blockade.

Indonesia has remained a watchful observer of the situation. A stable PNG would appear to be in Indonesia's interests so as to help contain the Free Papua Movement. Jakarta would be unlikely to intervene in a weak PNG and take on the far stronger national sentiment there than exists in East Timor and Irian Jaya. Indonesia is likely to refer any possible request for help to Australia, if the situation deteriorates. It has been reported that General Murdani, Indonesia's Defence Minister, urged Dr Hewson that Australia should take a bigger role in helping PNG crush its Bougainville revolt and appears to have implied Australia ought to send troops, if necessary, on the grounds that with only three battalions PNG's defence forces were not adequate to maintain the integrity of the country.¹¹²

New Zealand could possibly be described as playing the most constructive role amongst the regional countries. In July 1990, New Zealand hosted peace talks about Navy vessels although was not a party to the talks. It too has declined to recognise the declaration of independence by the BRA.

4.5 Conclusions

The situation in Bougainville raises serious questions for Australian regional policy. Was the maintenance of Papua New Guinea's political unity an overriding interest of Australian security? It would appear from official statements that the Australian Government obviously thought so. Did support for such unity require Australia to side with the central authorities and ignore the grievances of ethnic or social movements?

¹¹⁰ Solomon Star, 17 May 1991.

¹¹¹ Solomon Star, 6 December 1991.

¹¹² The Australian, 26 July 1989.

Could Australia have done more for alleviating the suffering on Bougainville caused by the blockade and the abuse of human rights? The answer appears to be in the affirmative. Would such steps have been seen to be an unwarranted interference in the domestic affairs of another country? The Australian Government would appear to believe this would be the case. What part did Australia's investment in PNG play in formulating Australia's policy towards Bougainville. The Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investment signed by the two countries in September 1990 was an unambiguous signal that the Hawke Government was committed to strengthening the flow of Australian investment into PNG, and increasing the degree of financial and political security enjoyed by Australian capital. Would this have been put at risk by strong criticism of PNG's human rights record? Such factors appear to have been important considerations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

A possible outcome for the national Government could be some form of increased autonomy for Bougainville. As a special case, the province could be granted virtually full autonomy - reflecting the distinctive personality of the North Solomons - within PNG. Equity in Bougainville copper could be transferred to the provincial Government with increased compensation and royalties to the landowners. The PNG government has already gone some way towards offering this. A formula such as that of a Compact of Free Association, as used between the Micronesian countries and the United States could be used as a model. Under the Compact, the Marshall Islands and Federated States control their internal and foreign affairs, with the US remaining responsible for defence and security. Within the South Pacific there is also the example of the Cook Islands which since 1965 has been a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand. Cook Islanders retain New Zealand citizenship and the latter is responsible for defence and a significant aid programme. Niue has a similar relationship with New Zealand. Yet another model, although one that failed to materialise, was the plan put forward in 1985 by the then French government to solve New Caledonia's political crisis over the independence issue. Under the Pisani plan for independence with France, New Caledonia was to have, if approved by referendum, sovereignty but with defence and public security being guaranteed by France along with a National development programme.

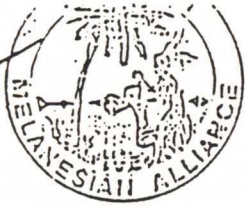
However, for the national Government to surrender power to an armed band rather than democratically elected representatives would weaken the government's authority throughout PNG, may encourage secessionism elsewhere and severely damage the confidence of foreign investors in the country's future. The possible fragmentation of PNG into a number of mini-states, most of them possibly economically unviable, would be a recipe for instability and poverty in the South Pacific. In the meantime, no Melanesian Government has recognised the secessionist regime and it seems highly improbable that any other government will.

One must conclude that Australia's options are rather limited. Further military support risks being seen to protect commercial interests at the expense of human rights. Given the fact that Australian military support of the PNGDF has ruled us out of brokering a peace, we must continue to provide humanitarian and technical aid when the opportunity arises.

The Bougainville dispute reinforces the need for greater respect for people of other cultures and for the environment. By world standards, BCL may be considered an exemplary corporate citizen. Yet this was itself insufficient to avert tremendous dislocation to the economy and the social fabric of Bougainville. Greater scrutiny of mining projects and their environmental impact are needed. Once mining commences, rigorous adherence to high environmental standards are required. The Bougainville dispute would also teach us that support from the indigenous people for large-scale mining projects is crucial. Given the events on Bougainville and more recently, Mt Kare, leaders of government must start to question whether the short-term economic benefits derived from extractive industries are worth the destruction of the country's culture, environment and social cohesion.

APPENDIX 1

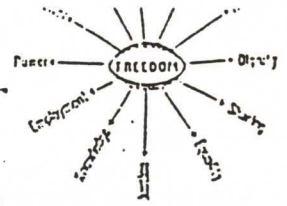
THE BOUGAINVILLE INITIATIVE



MELANESIAN ALLIANCE

P.O. BOX 6516
BOROKO
MCD

271625
Phone: 272161



BOUGAINVILLE INITIATIVE FUND

Paul Quodling,
Managing Director,
Bougainville Copper Limited,
Panguna,
North Solomons Province,
Papua New Guinea.

4 May 1987

Dear Paul,

I come to you, having been a leader of this nation for over 15 years, to offer you a gift on the eve of your retirement. You have lived among us for many years. Perhaps the mine you created will not long outlast your retirement.

The gift I offer you is on behalf of the Melanesian people, and particularly on behalf of the people of Bougainville. You will come to see that what I am proposing is indeed in the hearts of all the people of Bougainville.

What I offer you is the gift of understanding, of knowing in your heart the people of this island. I offer you the opportunity to crown your long career with the achievement of gaining the friendship of the people, who currently regard BCL with great resentment. I offer you an initiative which will break the deadlock which has long frustrated us all, a way out of the stalemate which leaves us feeling exploited, and leaves you frustrated at being denied permission to explore, fearful lest our resentment again boils over, as it has in past years.

What I propose in fact offers a win for everyone, and loss for no-one.

Consider the problems inherent in the present situation. Some of what I say, you may not want to hear. Yet in your heart, you know it is true. To reject the painful truth is a mistake. The fundamental truth is that BCL has colonized our people, it has taken their land, it has reduced them to passive dependence. Our people - who to you are just Bougainvilleans, or even more anonymously 'nationals' - are now servants in a land where once they were masters. They keenly feel it, and deeply resent it. In your heart you know this to be true, even if it is your company's policy to keep a low profile, to keep such distance from the people that no-one says it to your face. So few of your staff are nationals, except for the unskilled and semi skilled who do the dirty shiftwork, breathing the dust you make when you make a hole out of a mountain. After fifteen years of mining, only a handful of nationals have a rank higher than foremen, and that number is not growing but shrinking.

I do not come to you to cause you pain. As you will see, I have come to offer a fresh initiative, based deeply in our Melanesian culture, which can do much to resolve the impasse which frustrates us all. Yet the starting point must be an honest acknowledgement of the truth, even if it is painful.

No solution can undo what has been done. Some things are irrevocable. The BCL mine has forever changed the perceptions, the hopes and fears of the people of Bougainville. You are invaders. You have invaded the soil and the places of our ancestors, but above all, your mine has invaded our minds. It is like



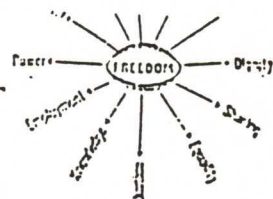
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BOUGAINVILLE-INITIATIVE-FUND



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those great alien spaceships, the flying saucers, which so haunt the fearful imagination of Western movie audiences. The spaceship, with its unknown and vastly powerful technologies, lands in the village, terrifying local people who cannot be sure if the aliens wish them ill or good. The people of Bougainville speak of BCL as a monster, and you know it. In recent months our theatre troupes have presented just this view, to you in your own mining company town.

You say you are good corporate citizens. You pay taxes to the national government, you pay wages, you pay royalties, you trumpet your public relations stunts such as the Bougainville Copper Foundation, which doles out small sums to local sports clubs and the like. You build infrastructure, you compensate landowners. Yet those very monies are also very much the problem.

You have been so determined ^{to} take our earth and send it to Europe and Japan as quickly as possible, that you have created an operation on a scale which makes it overwhelming. Because of that massive scale you pour fifty million tons of our earth into the Jaba River every year. Because of that massive scale, you have made such massive profits that our economy has been reduced to colonial dependence.

You are not ruthless exploiters. You are the modern faceless corporation which takes care to observe local laws, and incorporates local people, locking them into minority shareholdings in trading operations you so generously call a foundation. The vast sums of money you make by selling our gold, silver and copper has created amounts of cash undreamt of before. And that cash has tragically seduced some of the best leaders of our people. It has robbed us of some of our finest men, who have ceased serving their people, and instead line their own pockets with the money of BCL. You may not be legally responsible for the Bougainville Development Corporation scandal, but morally it is your shame as much as ours.

So many of your executives inhabit a fantasy world. They suppose they can merely maintain correct, formal relations with the democratically elected government which represents the people of this province, and there will be no problem. There is a problem. It is all the worse because it has remained unspoken for so long. The problem is that your way and our Melanesian way are different. Our people want to improve their lives, to improve their skills and abilities. They want to learn skills appropriate to village development. Not only does BCL have almost nothing to offer that is relevant to assisting the self-reliance and dignity of our people, it actually saps the confidence, reducing our people to dependent wage slaves, cogs in a wheel. You have parked your bulldozers in our living rooms, yet you pretend that you can simply go about your business, and we go about ours, and never the twain meet. I tell you this is not so.

The time has come for such delusions to meet the test of reality. Our culture has an ancient entrepreneurial tradition, which, if nurtured, could restore the lost dignity and self-reliance which has descended on us in the lifetime of this gigantic mine. Our Melanesian entrepreneurial tradition differs markedly from yours. Material wealth was not an end in itself, but a means to gain renown, the esteem of one's people. Thus accumulated wealth was regularly distributed back to the people who helped create it. By contrast, you are the head of a corporation, a body which lives and breathes even when you have retired to your farm in Australia. The corporation is an entity which uses the energies of men, but has its own life.

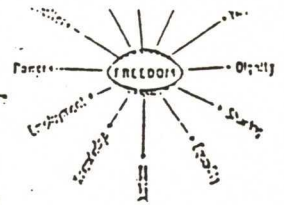


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BOUGAINVILLE DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

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The modern corporation does not obey the natural rise and fall of life and death, as does our Melanesian tradition, which distributes a leader's wealth when he dies. The modern corporation obeys the ideology of the cancer cell, to ever grow and grow, without ceasing.

I want you to understand our Melanesian way. I offer you the gift of understanding our culture, because such understanding is the key to transforming BCL's relations with the many peoples of Bougainville. If you appreciate the true nature of Melanesian culture, then you can leave as our friend, knowing we have made a start to building the bridges we must build between your way and ours.

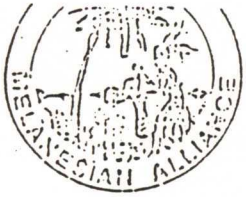
The Melanesian way is energetically struggling to adapt to the invasion which BCL has brought. In every village, people now have fresh expectations. They want vocational training, to build timber houses with long lasting roofs. They want training in self-reliant cash crop growing. They want better roads, and transport, and access to markets. They want trading companies to market their produce, companies which do not grow uncontrollable, but which follow Melanesian tradition, which return profits to the people whose energies create wealth.

While the Melanesian way is struggling with the cash society you have brought, BCL has shown so little understanding or appreciation of the Melanesian culture. So many of your employees are racist, openly contemptuous of us, just as the kiaps were. You have lived alongside us, but not among us. Consider the example of an earlier invasion, that of the Church. It was initially alien, but it brought the good news of compassion, love, justice and humility to the hearts of our people. It is now a national church, evolving a Melanesian theology. Your company shows no such sensitivity. BCL eats, roots and leaves. Your employees insult our national dignity, renaming our nation as Papua Yuginma. BCL workers are told only to keep a low profile. They are given no training whatever in our way of seeing. And you know that our women can be procured for K5 at the Panguna mine.

Thus I come to my specific proposal. This proposal achieves several aims. It meets the needs of our people. It restores our dignity, confidence and self-reliance. It gives us the resources to tackle the law and order problem at its roots. It sets an example to the nation of the dignified way equals meet to resolve their differences. It gives you the friendship of a people who for long have deeply resented you. Once you have won their genuine friendship, it may be possible to begin negotiations over the moratorium which prevents exploration of the rich copper neighbouring the existing mine.

What I propose is not just my idea. You will come to see, in this current national election campaign, and through the North Solomons Provincial Government election campaign which starts as soon as the national election is past, that this proposal has the active support of the people of North Solomons. The will of the people will prevail. If you do not immediately appreciate the wisdom of our proposal, I say to you now that you will, once you can clearly see the dignity and determination of the people.

This proposal represents a fresh start. It puts behind us the shameful hijack of Bougainville Development Corporation by selfish interests, and it puts aside BCL's power of patronage through your Bougainville Copper Foundation.

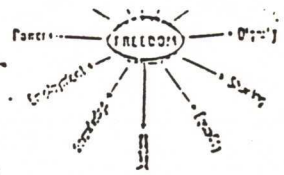


MELANESIAN FEDERALISM

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BOUGAINVILLE INITIATIVE FUND

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The proposal is this: that BCL set aside each year three percent of its gross income from selling our minerals, to be given directly to the North Solomons Provincial Government. This is untied aid, without strings. It is up to the government of the province to assert its dignity, capability and competence, to determine how that money may best be spent so as to foster the application of the Melanesian entrepreneurial tradition to creating small scale ventures which meet the needs of the people, and which return their benefits to the village people. As a matter of national dignity, it will be for the government to apply such funds. If we are to recover our confidence in ourselves, this is essential.

There can be no question of BCL's ability to pay. Three per cent of gross sales is, on 1986 figures, K12.6 million, a modest figure which will greatly assist the government which has most directly borne the brunt of BCL's presence. BCL staff have told us that you could easily save enough for such an annual payment, simply by utilizing more efficiently the machinery and manpower you have. Gross sales are an appropriate base line, as we do not accept your practice of salting away K60 million a year which you return to the smelters who buy our copper, for the privilege of having them accept your concentrates. We are well aware of transfer pricing and of the existing cartels. If you find three per cent of gross sales unacceptable, our alternative is four per cent of the net sales revenue you declare in your annual report.

The agreement between the national government and BCL is outside the scope of this agreement. This is an agreement to assist the people who most immediately must accommodate your massive operation. We place on notice the urgent necessity of renegotiating the national agreement, given the likelihood that superconductor technology will slash world copper demand, quite possibly as soon as five years from now; and because the mine, when it is closed, will leave us an enduring legacy of pollution, and metal concentrations in our fish for thousands of years to come. By any standard your mining benches are incredibly steep and dangerous. Landslides will be the legacy. The government, national and provincial will inherit from you not only a giant hole where once there was a mountain but also the long term expense of cleaning up, and this has not even been discussed with you.

We have another reason for this BOUGAINVILLE INITIATIVE. We are concerned not only for the people of Bougainville. The nation of Papua New Guinea is at a crossroad. One road leads to the repetition, all over the nation, of the tragedy of Bougainville. We have had the Bougainville Development Corporation ripoff, we have had the Placer Pacific ripoff. We can tell the nation right now the names of the next such tragedies. The names are Ok Tedi, Lihir, Misima, Porgera. Each time a few of our leaders surrender to the politics of greed, the nation as a whole moves closer to the rule of money, of a rich few holding onto power, backed by an army which protects them from the wrath of the dispossessed. So many countries have degenerated into corruption and dictatorship. PNG is a vital democracy, and can be saved such a fate, if the people can see how to live with such massive gold mines in a way which asserts the dignified right of sovereign people to ensure that benefit is distributed to all.

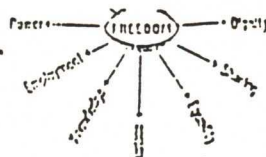
The alternative road facing the nation is to make good use of our deep-seated



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entrepreneurial tradition, adapting it to the modern need for an indigenous commercial culture which brings development to the villagers, harnessing the energies of collective family effort, and ploughing profit back into enhancing that collective strength. Nurturing such enterprise will take time. But there are examples of such enterprises, even if we have now created an elite of rich men who attach themselves to foreign businesses, to whom the Melanesian entrepreneurial tradition is no longer visible.

As the BOUGAINVILLE INITIATIVE takes shape, you will ^{hear} more from the North Solomons Provincial Government.

One further issue needs to be clearly stated. Because the essence of the Initiative is to encourage local enterprise, we cannot permit BCL to swamp local enterprise by establishing giant supermarkets, at places such as Buin, or Buka, to compete on unfair terms. No local trader can possibly compete with the freight rates we get, through the availability on the ship used to bring in mine supplies or space for imported foods. The National Investment Development Authority cannot permit such expansion of BCL's activities. Be content with mining, and feeding your expatriates on expensive imported food. Do not hide behind your public relations Foundation, and pretend that such supermarkets are a charity. We are asking that you encourage initiative, not stifle it.

The social, economic and environmental impact of fifteen years of mining has not been dealt with constructively and openly until now. If it is left much longer, BCL will be gone. The people of Bougainville are determined to set a positive example to the nation. We will set a standard for dealing constructively with giants such as BCL, so that our people can again control their own lives. We will restore self-reliance, through projects funded by seed capital from the Bougainville Initiative Fund we here propose. Such money can succeed if it is spent by provincial and local community governments. They are the governments closest to the people. Only they can select projects which not only meet community needs, but which in turn generate self-sustaining financial independence for community development. We are resolutely opposed to handouts and the passive dependence they create. What we are after is seed capital, to generate communal funds which are self-sustaining, and which instil pride in community development. I am sure you will acknowledge that BCL has never attempted such intimate understanding of our Melanesian way as to be capable of identifying such projects and patiently nurturing them. Your explicit BCL policy has always been to restrict your funds for large scale projects. Only our own democratically elected representatives can wisely administer such a fund.

I played a major role in the creation of provincial governments, in part as a constructive response to the acute frustrations felt by the people of this home province of mine, Bougainville. Having been a national leader for so long, it is my belief that we must deal directly with each other, as human beings equal in dignity. I do not believe in making splashy press releases. Before publicizing this proposal I have come to you, face to face. I talk straight and true. What is proposed here must come to pass. It will be the public agenda of the coming weeks of election campaigning. But first I come to you, to offer you our friendship, and to wish you a happy retirement to top off a successful career. We invite you to retire in the knowledge that you are not only a mine builder but also a community builder.

May God bless you,

John Mchis
Fr. JOHN MCHIS

BOUGAINVILLE COPPER
LIMITED

INCORPORATED IN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA



PANGUNA,
BOUGAINVILLE, P.N.G.

CABLES:
"BOLCOP PANGUNA"

11th May 1987

Fr. John Momis,
Melanesian Alliance,
P.O. Box 6516,
BOROKO, N.C.D.
Papua New Guinea.

Dear Fr. John,

In responding to your letter of 4th May, I must first assure you that it has long been my objective to see a larger proportion of the revenue generated by Bougainville Copper Limited remain within the Province. However, there are certain legal and statutory constraints under which I am bound to administer the financial affairs of this Company. These place your "Bougainville Initiative Fund" outside my authority.

It is unfortunate that we did not have the opportunity to discuss this issue more meaningfully in an environment less dominated by pre-election politics. I believe that the periodic review of the Bougainville Copper Agreement as provided in the legislation under which we operate is a suitable venue for the parties to discuss relative Government revenues.

In the light of your stated intention to make this issue "the public agenda of the coming weeks of election campaigning", I will no doubt be forced to defend the activities for which I am responsible. I am reluctant to be placed in this position and will do my best to stick to the facts and maintain political neutrality.

The sensationalism which the press have attributed to the issue I see as unfortunate and counter productive to the Company's relationships with Government. To me it is a cause of great personal grief to have this vote of censure cast on all that I have set out to achieve in moulding B.C.L. into a responsible and sensitive corporation. Nevertheless, my disillusionment will not militate against my continued efforts to assist this Province to the best of my ability within the responsibility vested in me.

Yours sincerely,

[Handwritten signature]
P. W. QUODLING
Managing Director

APPENDIX 2**ENDEAVOUR ACCORD ON DIALOGUE AND RETURN OF SERVICES TO BOUGAINVILLE**

A delegation of the National Government led by the Right Honourable Sir Michael Somare GCMG MP held broad-ranging talks with a delegation of Bougainville, led by Mr Joseph Kabui, from 29 July to 5 August 1990 outside of Kieta Harbour, aboard Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship, Endeavour.

International observers from Canada, Vanuatu and New Zealand were present at the talks.

The two delegations welcomed the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue, and agreed that this process should continue.

They agreed that the long-term political status of Bougainville is to be addressed as part of the continuing dialogue.

Meanwhile all political declarations with respect to that future status are deferred.

The National Government delegation confirmed that at the earliest opportunity it would take all practical steps consistent with the constitution of Papua New Guinea to bring about the return of services to Bougainville.

Such restoration of services would be done without force. But should personnel responsible for restoring services be interfered with, the Government of Papua New Guinea reserves the right to withdraw services where such interference occurs.

The return of services, particularly health, education and communications are accepted as a matter of urgent priority.

The two delegations agreed that in order for services to be restored on Bougainville, the security of personnel must be fully safeguarded.

The Government of Papua New Guinea will consult regularly with the present Bougainville delegation on the restoration of services.

The two delegations agreed on the desirability of the full participation of Bougainvilleans in future security arrangements on Bougainville.

The two delegations thanked the Government of New Zealand and the Royal New Zealand Navy for their generous assistance in making a venue and support facilities available for the talks.

The two delegations also thanked the observers for their co-operation.

Further meetings of the two delegations to review implementation of arrangements for the restoration of services will be held. The next such meeting will be held within eight weeks.

Michael Somare
Leader
National Government
Delegation

Joseph Kabui
Leader
Bougainville
Delegation

Signed on Board HMNZS ENDEAVOUR
5 August 1990

APPENDIX 3

HONIARA DECLARATION ON PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND REHABILITATION ON BOUGAINVILLE

1. Further to the Endeavour Accord signed on 5 August 1990 concerning dialogue and return of services to Bougainville, a meeting comprising representatives from the Papua New Guinea National Government led by the Right Honourable Sir Michael Somare and Mr Joseph Kabui from Bougainville was held in Honiara from 22-23 January 1991 at the initiative and auspices of the Solomon Islands Government and the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) to review and formulate a common strategy and programmes for the implementation of restoration of services to enhance Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation on Bougainville.
2. Other Ministers included on the National Government side were Honourable Bernard Narokobi, Honourable Benais Sabumei, and Honourable Fr John Momis, on the Bougainville side were Mr Ken Savia, Bishop John Zale, Pastor Jeffrey Paul, Mr Patrick Itta, Mr James Sinko, Mr Philip Takaung, Mr Raphael Bele, MP and Mr Peter Kungka, MP.
3. Observers from the Solomon Islands Government and the South Pacific Council of Churches (SPCC) and Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) were also present at the Talks.
4. The two delegations expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the Solomon Islands for their generous hospitality and excellent facilities for the meeting. They also thanked the Chairman of SICA, Bishop Leslie Boseto for his role as Moderator for these talks.
5. The two delegations welcomed the opportunity for their continuing face-to-face dialogue; and committed to searching for a lasting peaceful solution of the Bougainville crisis, Declared on the following principles and arrangements:

Principles

6. We desire peace and reconciliation with each other and with our Heavenly Father.

We take a joint responsibility to restrain from the use of weapons and arms to help us to create an environment of peace and harmony as well as a pre-condition to justice and peace.

We agree to defer discussions on the future political status of Bougainville and have further agreed to embark upon a joint programme of peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation, within the current constitutional framework of the Nation of Papua New Guinea.

We reject violence and seek meaningful consultation as a means of solving the crisis, and deeply mourn the loss of lives and destruction of properties, and trust in the common fatherhood of God and resolve to find lasting justice, peace and security on the island of Bougainville.

We recognise the importance of establishing legal and representative authority in Bougainville to assist in returning the Island to normalcy.

We recognise the constitutional role of Papua New Guinea Defence Force.

We agree to accept external assistance including a Multinational Supervisory Team (MST) to contribute to the implementation of this Programme under the framework determined in this Declaration.

We commit ourselves to the welfare and security of all individuals and organisations who participate in this Programme.

We endorse maximum Bougainvillean involvement in the implementation of this Programme.

Definition of "Programme"

7. The "Programme" in this Declaration means the Package of phased arrangements for the restoration of services on Bougainville including:

Phase I

- (i) Peace and Reconciliation;
- (ii) Lifting of the Blockade;
- (iii) Establishment of Task Force;
- (iv) Establishment of Interim Legal Authority.

Phase II

- (i) Restoration of Services;
- (ii) Rehabilitation Programme including maintenance and reconstruction; and other associated activities determined by the Legal Authority in Bougainville in accordance with this Declaration;
- (iii) Future negotiations.

Task Force and Membership

8. In order to facilitate the execution of this Programme, we agree to hereby establish a Task Force which shall consist of representatives appointed by the National Minister for Provincial Affairs, in consultation with an Interim Legal Authority.

Terms of Reference

9. We agree that the terms of reference for the Task Force shall include:
- (i) Planning, Co-ordination and implementation of this Programme;
 - (ii) Monitoring and supervision of this Programme;
 - (iii) Investigate and determine the scope and components of the projects under this Programme;
 - (iv) Investigate, mobilise and secure all financial avenues at its disposal to finance this Programme;
 - (v) Develop a detailed timetable to implement this Programme which must be submitted to the Minister of Provincial Affairs for final approval as soon as practicable following their appointments;
 - (vi) The Task Force shall report to the Legal Authority in Bougainville;
 - (vii) Furnish monthly reports or otherwise as directed by the Legal Authority in Bougainville; and
 - (viii) Undertake other responsibilities as directed by the Legal Authority in Bougainville to implement this Programme.

Obligations and Responsibilities

10. Parties agreed to take the following actions:

National Government

Bougainville Side

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| (i) | (i) Disarms the BRA, BLF; and its associated militant activities, including the surrender and destruction of arms under the supervision of the Multinational Supervisory Team. |
| (ii) Grant amnesty and immunity from prosecutions to the members of BRA, and BLF in accordance with legal and constitutional requirements of Papua New Guinea. | (ii) Release of all detainees held as a consequence of the conflict. |
| (iii) Organise a Multinational Supervisory Team to participate in this Programme. | (iii) Guarantee the safety and welfare of the members of the Multinational Supervisory Team. |

National GovernmentBougainville Side

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|--|--|
| (iv) Commit and disburse funds to the Programme under its normal budgetary allocations. | (v) Allow and facilitate non-Governmental agencies, including Churches and Community Groups to contribute towards the successful implementation of this programme. |
| (v) Allow and facilitate non-Governmental agencies, including Churches and Community Groups to contribute towards the successful implementation of this programme. | (v) Receive and facilitate non-Governmental agencies, including Churches and Community groups to contribute towards the successful implementation of this programme. |
| (vi) Resume all Government services including public and statutory administration, law and order and justice. | (vi) Provide conditions and environment conducive for the restoration of services under this programme. |

Programme Schedule

11. We agree that the following Time Schedule shall be adopted to implement this Programme from the signing of this Declaration:
 - (i) One (1) week to one (1) month - establishment of the Task Force and the assembling of the MST.
 - (ii) Between one (1) month to 6 months project identification and resource mobilisation.
 - (iii) Eighteen (18) to thirty-six (36) months completion of Programme, abolition of the Task Force, return to normalcy.

Review and Consultations

12. We agree that this Declaration shall be reviewed at least on a six (6) monthly interval until the conclusion of the Programme in accordance with the Programme Schedule.
13. Notwithstanding the foregoing paragraph, the National Minister for Provincial Affairs may request a review either independently or on advice of the Legal Authority or the Task Force.
14. The Programme under this Declaration does not for the time being include the programme of restoration of services undertaken by the National Government on Buka and adjacent islands.
15. The National Minister for Provincial Affairs shall determine and reconcile the relationship between these two programmes on advice from the Legal Authority in Bougainville.

Dispute Settlement

16. We agree to resolve any dispute including conflict or misunderstanding arising from the Programme under this Declaration through consultation and dialogue.
17. Where resolution of disputes cannot be reached, each party may recommend Arbitrators for approval by the other. When appointed, the Arbitrators shall work towards resolving any such conflict and misunderstandings.

Termination

18. The Declaration shall be terminated upon completion of this Programme or by one Party when acts of sabotage or similar action inconsistent with the spirit and letter of this Declaration taken by the other.

Declared at Honiara this 23rd day of January 1991.

Sir Michael Somare GCMG CH MP
Leader of the PNG Delegation

Joseph Kabui
Leader of the Bougainville
Delegation

Witness
Bernard Narokobi MP

Witness
James Sinko

Witness
Fr John Momis, MP

Witness
Bishop Zale

Witness
Benais Sabumei, MBE MP

Witness
Patrick Itta

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