



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**POLICING THE PACIFIC: A PATH
TO BUILDING LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY
IN THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES**

by

Ronald Miller

December 2022

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Shannon A. Brown
Timothy J. Doorey

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2022	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE POLICING THE PACIFIC: A PATH TO BUILDING LAW ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY IN THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Ronald Miller				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) The United States shares a special relationship with the Freely Associated States (FAS), resulting in a virtual extension of the United States. Given the importance of the Pacific Islands Countries (PIC) and the virtually borderless linkages of the FAS as a result of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) agreements, the United States must look for ways to comprehensively invest in policing capacity-building efforts within the region. By analyzing Australia's efforts in the Melanesia region and the actions of the United States in the Caribbean to combat drugs, this thesis proposes a resources-optimized policy framework to overlay onto the Pacific. This thesis uses the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model (LE DEM) to integrate the two policy approaches. The LE DEM incorporates the continuum of preventative measures to response options to enable the recommendation of a comprehensive policing capacity-building strategy in the Pacific. Those recommendations include expanding and equipping the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) West; establishing a Micronesian fusion center; creating four supporting specialized joint task forces; and enabling digital and chemical forensics, maritime domain awareness, and financial auditing. In addition, it proposes five lines of investment efforts for joint technology and asset transfers that should be executed to enable the region to hedge against the evolving Pacific transnational threats.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Pacific Island Countries, PIC, Freely Associated States, FAS, Oceania, CNMI, Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, FSM, American Samoa, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Guam, JIATF South, Pacific strategy, crime, policing, capacity building, Australia, OPBAT, JIATF West, INDO-PACOM, Indo-Pacific, COFA, IUU, maritime domain awareness, MDA, Pacific Patrol Boat Program, PPBP, Pacific Maritime Security Program, PMSP, Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model, LE DEM			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 121	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

**POLICING THE PACIFIC: A PATH TO BUILDING LAW ENFORCEMENT
CAPACITY IN THE FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES**

Ronald Miller
Lieutenant Commander, United States Coast Guard
BA, California Maritime Academy, 2008
MBA, University of Massachusetts, Global, 2016

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2022**

Approved by: Shannon A. Brown
Advisor

Timothy J. Doorey
Second Reader

Erik J. Dahl
Associate Professor, Department of National Security Affairs

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

The United States shares a special relationship with the Freely Associated States (FAS), resulting in a virtual extension of the United States. Given the importance of the Pacific Islands Countries (PIC) and the virtually borderless linkages of the FAS as a result of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) agreements, the United States must look for ways to comprehensively invest in policing capacity-building efforts within the region. By analyzing Australia's efforts in the Melanesia region and the actions of the United States in the Caribbean to combat drugs, this thesis proposes a resources-optimized policy framework to overlay onto the Pacific. This thesis uses the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model (LE DEM) to integrate the two policy approaches. The LE DEM incorporates the continuum of preventative measures to response options to enable the recommendation of a comprehensive policing capacity-building strategy in the Pacific. Those recommendations include expanding and equipping the Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) West; establishing a Micronesian fusion center; creating four supporting specialized joint task forces; and enabling digital and chemical forensics, maritime domain awareness, and financial auditing. In addition, it proposes five lines of investment efforts for joint technology and asset transfers that should be executed to enable the region to hedge against the evolving Pacific transnational threats.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
B.	RESEARCH QUESTION	4
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
1.	Compacts of Free Association: Ethical and Cultural Impacts.....	5
2.	Australia’s Pacific Island Strategy	7
3.	U.S. Actions to Overcome Fragility in the Caribbean	9
4.	Summary.....	12
D.	RESEARCH DESIGN AND CHAPTER OUTLINE	13
II.	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MICRONESIAN ISLANDS.....	15
A.	A HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF MICRONESIA	16
1.	Complex Associations with the United States	16
2.	COFA Connection to the Pacific Territories.....	18
B.	THE HOMELAND SECURITY RISK PRESENTED BY THE COFA AGREEMENTS.....	24
1.	The Evolution from Physical to Virtual Threats	25
2.	Resources Control	29
3.	Conclusion	32
III.	AN EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA’S EFFORTS TO CREATE CAPACITY IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES.....	33
A.	AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICIES IN THE PIC.....	33
1.	Pacific Patrol Boat Program	35
2.	Pacific Fusion Center.....	38
3.	Policing Capacity-Building Efforts	40
4.	Australian Policy Analysis	45
IV.	UNDERSTANDING U.S. EFFORTS TO IMPROVE POLICING IN THE CARIBBEAN	49
A.	JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH	50
1.	Military Assets Underpinning a Law Enforcement Mission	52
2.	Intelligence Fusion	54
3.	Law Enforcement’s Integration Beyond the Liaison Role.....	57
B.	OPERATION BAHAMAS TURKS AND CAICOS.....	58

C.	CARIBBEAN POLICY ANALYSIS.....	60
V.	CHARTING A NEW POLICY PATH WITHIN THE FAS.....	63
A.	MERGING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT DOMAIN EVALUATION MODEL	63
B.	THE NEED FOR AN EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP CONVERSATION IN THE PACIFIC	65
C.	LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN THE FAS	68
1.	Strengthen JIATF West	68
2.	Create a Micronesian Fusion Center	70
3.	Align Law Enforcement Strategic Asset Investments in the Region	73
D.	POLICY FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY	77
VI.	CONCLUSION AND POLICY ALIGNMENT	79
A.	SUMMARY	79
B.	POLICY ALIGNMENT	80
C.	CONCLUSION	83
	LIST OF REFERENCES	87
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Map of the Political Entities of Micronesia	17
Figure 2.	Matson Sea Cargo Shipping Routes	19
Figure 3.	United Air Cargo Route Map.....	20
Figure 4.	Subsea Fiberoptic Data Cables—Marianas Islands and Philippine Sea.....	20
Figure 5.	Southwest Pacific—Australian Defence Engagement 2020 (with Pacific Patrol Boat Locations)	36
Figure 6.	Guardian-class Patrol Vessel	38

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of Australian Strategic Lines of Effort in Melanesia	47
Table 2.	Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of U.S. Strategic Lines of Effort in the Caribbean	61
Table 3.	Combined Results of the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of Both Australian and U.S. Strategic Lines of Effort in Conducting Law Enforcement Missions.....	64
Table 4.	Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model with Proposed New FAS Frameworks	78
Table 5.	Recommendations for U.S. Efforts to Strategically Build Law Enforcement Capacity in the FAS States.....	84

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACSC	Australian Cyber Security Centre
CNMI	Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
CNRA	Consolidated Natural Resources Act
COFA	Compacts of Free Association
DCP	Defense Cooperation Program
DEA	U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
DOD	U.S. Department of Defense
DOJ	U.S. Department of Justice
DOS	U.S. Department of State
ECP	Enhanced Cooperation Program
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAS	Freely Associated States
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HSI	Homeland Security Investigations
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
INDOPACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command
IP	Internet Protocol
ISAC	Information Sharing and Analysis Center
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
IUU	illegal, unreported, unregulated
JIATF	Joint Interagency Taskforce
LE DEM	Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model
MDA	Maritime Domain Awareness
OPBAT	Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos
PIC	Pacific Island Countries

PMSP	Pacific Maritime Security Program
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PPBP	Australia Pacific Patrol Boat Program
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SAFE Act	Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act
SAR	Special Administrative Region
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States has had an enduring relationship with many islands in the Pacific Ocean, commonly referred to as the Freely Associated States (FAS). The Oceania region holds opportunities and challenges, from resource control to an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. The United States' prosperity and security depends on the Pacific region remaining free and open. Strategic frameworks must be developed to support those objectives. The United States' support to the FAS has been robust in providing national security and defense assurances; however, those assurances are limited in scope with respect to improving policing capacity in the region. The adoption of the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) agreements creates a physical and virtual extension of the U.S. border in unique ways that changes the day-to-day living on these select islands. This border extension is now being exploited by state and non-state actors seeking footholds in the region.

A growing number of complex threats face the Pacific Island Countries (PIC). While those threats are not novel, they are resource intensive and have the capacity to erode government stability. This thesis articulates those threats in detail; they include money laundering, corruption, illegal resource exploitation, visa fraud, birth tourism, and digital communications exploitation. Understanding this foundational conversation of the threats in the region creates room to explore a comprehensive law enforcement capacity-building plan in the Pacific.

To develop a law enforcement capacity-building plan for the FAS, this research conducted a policy analysis evaluating the actions taken by Australia in the Melanesia region and the United States in the Caribbean to combat transnational criminal actors. That analysis was normalized and integrated using a novel process called the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model (LE DEM). The LE DEM incorporates the continuum of preventative to response options that an outside country could contribute to in the law enforcement capacity-building policy space while recognizing the interconnected soft- and hard-power influence inherent in foreign donor programs.

Australia, also a Pacific Island nation, has made considerable efforts to improve the collective security capabilities in the Oceania region. Those actions, viewed through the LE DEM, provide valuable insight into a number of policy options that could be replicated or complemented within the FAS. This thesis specifically explores the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, the Pacific Fusion Center, and Australian policing intervention actions in the Melanesia region. The outcome of that extensive analysis is presented in Table 1 and explored in detail in Chapter III.

Table 1. Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of Australian Strategic Lines of Effort in Melanesia

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
Pacific Patrol Boat Program	Low	Low	Med	High	High
Pacific Fusion Center	High	Low	High	Med	Low
Pacific Strategy Law Enforcement Capacity Building	Low	Med	Low	Med	Med

The findings using the LE DEM reveal that Australian policy efforts in the Melanesia region have had a meaningful impact in providing needed assets and capabilities into the region, yet it has limited results in preventing democratic backsliding, comprehensive policing growth, and a regional law enforcement mission management framework.

On the opposite side of the globe, the United States has made significant investments into the Central America region to combat the flow of drugs, people, and money over the past 50 years. That transportation corridor is dotted with islands that struggle with many of the same issues the Pacific Islands face regarding governance, defense, and law enforcement resourcing and implementation. Those actions, viewed through the LE DEM, provide valuable insight into a number of policy options that could be replicated within the FAS. This thesis specifically explored Joint Interagency Task

Force (JIATF) South and Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT). The outcome of that extensive analysis is presented in Table 2 and explored in detail in Chapter IV.

Table 2. Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of U. S. Strategic Lines of Effort in the Caribbean

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
JIATF South	High	Low	High	High	Med
OPBAT	Med	Low	High	High	High

Using the LE DEM, the findings reveal that the U.S. policy efforts in the Caribbean region have produced exceptionally high results in the Oversight, Awareness, and Enforcement Capability categories. OPBAT, a close echo of JIATF South, has produced high results in the same categories, with the noted addition of influence. Within the Caribbean policy analysis section, there was not a strong policy line of effort that corresponded to the Governance category.

By understanding and integrating the disparate policy actions in the Caribbean and Melanesia, the United States can begin to build a comprehensive policing capacity-building path that leverages those lessons learned and complements those actions already in play in the region. The United States and FAS should consider the following policy concepts as mutually beneficial paths to strengthening the islands' policing capacity while hardening against outside malign influences. The proposed frameworks are grounded in the author's firsthand knowledge of the region and built around extensive academic research. The recommendations in Table 3 are not presented as turnkey policy action items but more as policy objectives for varying agencies, both United States and FAS, to scale, adapt, and execute.

Table 3. Recommendations for U.S. Efforts to Strategically Build Law Enforcement Capacity in the FAS States

1	Broaden and resource JIATF West to leverage DOD assets to support collections planning and operational intelligence targeting in the Oceania region.
2	Establish a Micronesian fusion center focused on detecting, tracking, and enabling law enforcement operations within the COFA states and U.S. territories.
2.a	Establish a joint law enforcement digital forensic lab staffed with U.S. and COFA members.
2.b	Establish a DNA sequencing and chemical analysis center staffed with U.S. and COFA members.
2.c	Establish a financial crimes center staffed with U.S. and COFA members.
2.d	Create a framework to gain MDA and supporting communication infrastructure in the region.
3.a	Organize the creation of a Micronesian Regional Criminal Records Management System.
3.b	Invest in MDA tracking and targeting capabilities inclusive of emerging commercial satellite data and other sources, the integration of MDA software applications, and the establishment of communications infrastructure on outlying islands.
3.c	Invest in the FAS to integrate long-range autonomous maritime reconnaissance systems for law enforcement and domain awareness utilization.
4	Invest in cyber communications infrastructure (undersea cables, cell towers, state-owned threat mitigation equipment), Oceania ISAC, and establish a region Cyber Protection Team.
5	Study regional money laundering enforcement efforts to include the impacts and implications of digital currencies within the FAS states.

This detailed table of recommendations can be summarized into three overarching conversations. The first is the retooling of JIATF West to prioritize law enforcement missions within the PIC region and a comprehensive plan to leverage and incorporate the FAS's respective agencies. Second is the establishment of a Micronesian regional fusion center. This regional organization would develop and sustain several specialized task forces focusing on delivering advanced investigative capabilities in scarce supply in the region. The task forces will be jointly staffed with United States, territory, and FAS law enforcement officers with a regionality mandate to support U.S. federal, territory, and FAS agencies in case execution. Last, this thesis calls for an organization and unified law

enforcement capacity-building grant programs between the United States and Australia. A number of synergies could be gained by having the United States pivot to supporting long-range communications infrastructure, persistent sensor acquisition, and a regional case management system that would directly complement and enable Australia's ongoing and well-received aid programs.

This thesis serves as a menu of policy objectives to support the newly released Presidential Pacific Partnership Strategy. It is imperative that senior leaders across a number of U.S. agencies act on the proposed recommendations. Once fully implemented, this policy framework would create regional capacity institutions capable of flexing to meet the needs of the PIC and those of the United States and Australia. In addition, it optimizes the U.S. and Australian costs and hedges against the problem of the diminished border as is a result of the COFAs.

The PIC region is an “arc of opportunity,” and the United States has significant influence in the region.¹ Timing is critical. The United States should not squander this moment; it should use this time to ensure the future of Oceania is a region of laws, responsible resource management, and individual freedoms.

¹ Joanne Wallis, *Pacific Power? Australia's Strategy in the Pacific Islands* (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017), 312–35.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This adventure would have been inconceivable without my advisor, Dr. Shannon Brown, and my second reader, Captain Tim Doorey (USN, Ret.). Without their support and guidance, I could not have completed this thesis. In addition, as a humble ship driver, I could not have produced something that upholds the high standards of the Naval Postgraduate School without the help of Dr. Lauren Wollman and Ms. Greta Marlatt. Thank you for never giving up on my questions and for encouraging my personal growth.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Brigitte Miller, for her tireless support during this program and my almost 20 years of military service. To my children, Charlotte and Theodore, thank you for always understanding when Dad was writing. For all the skating practices and events to which I brought my laptop, I will always appreciate you supporting me as I support you in your dreams as you grow and see the world.

It is my hope that my family can return to the Pacific Island region to see the beauty and uniqueness that my wife and I experienced while living there. This paper's recommendations are an attempt to support the fantastic people of Oceania, in the hopes that collectively we can preserve the culture and ecosystem amid a rapidly changing and increasingly interconnected world.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The United States has an enduring relationship with many islands in the Pacific Ocean, commonly referred to as the Freely Associated States (FAS). Several legal documents called the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) codify these unique and enduring relationships.¹ The COFA agreements are mutually supportive arrangements that designate a few Pacific Islands with a special relationship with the United States. These reciprocal relationships create complex immigration rules, migration patterns, interconnected infrastructure regimes, and a privileged trade and information conduit with the United States.²

Although the COFA agreements are robust in providing national security and defense assurances to the FAS, they are limited in scope with respect to improving policing capacity in the region.³ This policing capacity gap in the face of growing geographically unbound criminal actors needs to be addressed with a comprehensive policy framework. A central element of any nation's homeland defense policies is to prevent threats from crossing the border; however, the privileges accorded to the FAS in the COFA agreements

¹ Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, Pub. L. No. 108–188, § *U.S. Statutes at Large* 108 (2003), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-108publ188/html/PLAW-108publ188.htm>; Joint Resolution to Approve the “Compact of Free Association” between the United States and the Government of Palau, and for other Purposes, Pub. L. No. 99–658, § *U.S. Statutes at Large* 100 (1986), <https://uscode.house.gov/statutes/pl/99/658.pdf>; Department of the Interior, “Compacts of Free Association,” Office of Insular Affairs, October 15, 2015, <https://www.doi.gov/oia/compacts-of-free-association>.

² David Gootnick, *Compacts of Free Association: Populations in U.S. Areas Have Grown, with Varying Reported Effects*, GAO-20-491 (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2020), <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-491>; Ronald Reagan, Executive Order 12572, “Relations with the Northern Mariana Islands,” *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3 (1986 comp.), <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12572.html>.

³ Glenn Peterson and Zag Puas, “Federated States of Micronesia,” in *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, ed. Stephen Levine, 2nd ed. (Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016), 59–60; Frank Quimby, “Northern Mariana Islands,” in *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, ed. Stephen Levine, 2nd ed. (Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016), 202–4; Wouter Veenendaal, “Palau,” in *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, ed. Stephen Levine, 2nd ed. (Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016), 219–30.

significantly complicate this strategy for the United States.⁴ Congress's adoption of the COFA agreements physically and virtually extended the U.S. border in unique ways, explored further in Chapter II. This extension poses risks to various U.S. law enforcement agencies. However, little legislative action has provided additional authorities, jurisdictions, or capabilities to the policing agencies in the region. This policy gap is now being exploited by state and non-state actors seeking physical and virtual footholds in fragile states beyond Western influence.⁵ These malign actors increasingly target highly globalized segments of the world, such as international freight, cyber, and digital banking, threatening regional stability and sustainability. The COFA agreements and the islands' physical location in Oceania make these actions a substantial threat to U.S. homeland security if the United States does not reexamine how it conducts and supports comprehensive law enforcement in the region.

Two particular frameworks may apply when crafting reform that balances the United States as a partner, not an occupying force. The first is an in-depth exploration of Australia's Pacific Island policies, emphasizing their Pacific Patrol Boat Program (PPBP) and the Pacific Fusion Center. The second is the United States' work in the Caribbean with Joint Interagency Taskforce (JIATF) South and Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT). This thesis inventories the strengths and weaknesses of both Australia's actions in Melanesia and the United States' joint programs in the Caribbean to develop a policy path to integrate them into the FAS and possibly the PIC region.

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Homeland Defense*, Joint Publication 3-27 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), 29.

⁵ Jenny Hayward-Jones, "Australia and Security in the Pacific Islands Region," in *Regionalism, Security & Cooperation in Oceania*, ed. Rouben Azizian and Carleton Cramer (Honolulu: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2015), 67, 78.

Australia has spent decades and billions developing organic policing capacity in the Melanesia region.⁶ Many have viewed Australia's actions as a noble endeavor that has directly improved the region's political stability in select islands and enabled regional economic development.⁷ However, the capacity-building efforts have neither completely ensured governance stability nor solved the weak policing problem that it had intended to solve. The political instability in Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Fiji shows that providing equipment and training is only one part of the solution.⁸ Often, limited specialized policing units, corruption, political power abuse, and non-state actors have forced Australian military intervention when Pacific Island organic capacity fails. The strengths and shortcomings of Australia's efforts should provide a guide and integration strategy that the United States needs to consider when charting a new Pacific strategy path.

On the opposite side of the globe, the United States has taken a different approach to improving regional stability in the Caribbean. U.S. leaders have credited JIATF South and OPBAT with the interdiction of countless kilograms of illegal narcotics and as a unified force to curb the illicit movement of people into the United States.⁹ Furthermore, many law enforcement agencies use JIATF as a platform to leverage unique authorities while strategically employing limited resources such as ships, planes, and intelligence assets.

⁶ Helen Hughes, "Aid Has Failed the Pacific," *Issues Analysis* (Centre for Independent Studies, May 7, 2003, 19–21, <https://www.cis.org.au/app/uploads/2015/07/ia33.pdf?>; OECD, *Development Co-Operation Report 2021: Shaping a Just Digital Transformation* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021), 392, <https://doi.org/10.1787/ce08832f-en>; Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Development Assistance in the Pacific," Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/development-assistance/development-assistance-in-the-pacific>.

⁷ Joanne Wallis, *Pacific Power? Australia's Strategy in the Pacific Islands* (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017), 312–35.

⁸ Sinclair Dinnen and Abby McLeod, "Policing Melanesia – International Expectations and Local Realities," *Policing and Society* 19, no. 4 (December 2009): 333–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460903281539>.

⁹ Evan Munsing and Christopher J. Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011), <https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo16331/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>.

However, the United States has made little progress in developing the capacity and legitimacy of the organic policing units within the Caribbean islands, which is used as transient points for drugs, people, and cash moving through the South America–North America narcotics corridor. This Caribbean capacity development gap could be attributed to the limitations in the authorities designated by Congress to enable the Department of Defense (DOD) to “serve as the single lead agency of the Federal Government for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the United States.”¹⁰ JIATF South employs the counter-narcotics authorities outlined in 10 USC 124, but notably missing is the authorization for capacity building of other nations’ law enforcement capabilities.¹¹

The COFA agreements, in their current state, allow malicious actors to use the Pacific Islands as vectors to conduct illegal activities and as staging points for intelligence activities. On its unchanged path, the United States will face a difficult decision to compel the COFA islands to radically strengthen their policing and legal frameworks or divest the partnership. Severing that relationship would serve the interests of neither nation; the United States should propose an alternative path long before this decision point.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the United States support the FAS in the Pacific to address emerging illegal activity in the region, threatening Oceania’s long-term stability and sustainability?

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review discusses the academic debates surrounding the COFA agreements and associated policy actions that the United States and Australia have employed to increase policing capacity and to combat transnational threats in the Oceania region. Academic conversation on the COFA agreement focuses on its humanitarian

¹⁰ “Detection and Monitoring of Aerial and Maritime Transit of Illegal Drugs: Department of Defense to Be Lead Agency,” Department of Defense, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 10 (2022 comp.): 124, <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section124&num=0&edition=prelim>.

¹¹ Detection and Monitoring of Aerial and Maritime Transit of Illegal Drugs: Department of Defense to be Lead Agency, U.S. Code 10 (2022) §§ 124

impacts, the health and education of its member states as a result of different cash transfer structures, and the importance of access to the region for U.S. national security objectives. There is significant gap in the literature relating to the policies and actions to increase policing and policing capacity in the region. Given these gaps in the literature, this review examines efforts in similar regions parallel to the research question.

This section first covers the scholarly conversations related to the ethical and cultural impacts associated with the COFA agreements. It then explores the perspectives of the success of Australia's Pacific engagement strategy as it relates to security. Given the limited discourse on the United States' actions in the Oceania region to strengthen policing capacity, the section overviews the United States' actions in the Caribbean to combat transnational crime to extract lessons that could apply to the COFA agreements.

1. Compacts of Free Association: Ethical and Cultural Impacts

Most scholars mark the beginning of U.S. governing presence in Oceania in 1899, after the Treaty of Paris, which “made the United States a colonial nation and a major Pacific power” with colonial control over Guam, the Micronesian Islands, and the Philippines.¹² After the Treaty of Paris, conflicts in the Pacific caused several global powers to have varying degrees of influence, yet U.S. interest in the region remained. Conventional wisdom holds that current U.S. policy in Oceania began in 1947, two years after the end of World War II, when Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and other Micronesian islands became trust territories of the United States.¹³ It was during this trust transitional period, with the adoption of the COFA, that the islands began a path toward a complex relationship with the United States and sovereignty.

The need for and the equity associated with the COFA agreements provoke active debate. Some argue the COFA agreements are a relic of colonialism and serve as little more than a legal vehicle for the United States to ensure continued access to the region for

¹² Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 107, <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/10517>.

¹³ Kelly G. Marsh and Tyrone J. Taitano, “Guam,” in *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, ed. Stephen Levine, 2nd ed. (Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016), 107–10.

national security matters. The International Center for Advocates Against Discrimination maintained “U.S. [COFA] policy in the region has led to and sustains the current state of underdevelopment [and] describe [s] [U.S. funding] as payments in reciprocity for the U.S.’s military benefits.”¹⁴ Others pointed to the “plight of the Marshall Islanders during the Cold War,” where “the U.S. remained aloof from the problems experienced by the Marshallese, often dismissive of the islanders’ complaints and mounting evidence regarding the health and environmental problems in the Marshall Islands.”¹⁵

Alternatively, the average Micronesian citizen has benefited greatly in some form from their unique relationship with the United States as administered by the COFA agreements. As Camacho noted, “the United States government [has] helped Micronesia in every area from health care and education to the protection of their islands from future invasions.”¹⁶ While preparing to renegotiate the COFA agreements, Underwood emphasized critical goals for the terms of the revised COFAs, identifying the priorities of continued “participation in FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] Disaster programs, Pell Grants for postsecondary education, Head Start, special education, select K-12 programs, and access to key economic program” and continued assistance from the U.S. Weather Service, Federal Aviation Administration, the Postal Service, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.¹⁷ Underwood’s list is representative of the prevailing priorities and the majority of scholarly work as it relates to the FAS states. What is notably missing is anything relating to domestic law enforcement and the protection of the states’ vast ocean resources.

¹⁴ Erin Thomas and Shannon Marcoux, *Compacts of Free Association (COFA) Balancing the Scales in Negotiations between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)* (Chappaqua, NY: ICAAD, 2020), <https://icaad.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/COFA-Strategic-Assessment-compressed.pdf>.

¹⁵ Martha Smith-Norris, “Legacies of U.S. Cold War Policies and the Ongoing Quest for Justice in the Marshall Islands,” in *Domination and Resistance: The United States and the Marshall Islands during the Cold War*, by Martha Smith-Norris (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016), 152–60, <https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/1783438>.

¹⁶ Edward C. Camacho, “Emerging Micronesian Island Nations: Challenges for United States Policy” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1995), <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/31409>.

¹⁷ Robert A. Underwood, *The Amended U.S. Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands: Less Free, More Compact* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 2003), <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/3612>.

Some scholars believe national security and foreign military sea and air space access/denial dominate the agenda of the Pacific Islands. Thus, by extension, these scholars view the COFA agreements as a tool to ensure U.S. national security. Authors such as Goudge, Neal, and Swiney summarized that “the United States should support/renew the FAS Compacts in 2023 (2024 for Palau) and continue funding and support to counter Chinese attempts to seize influence from the United States.”¹⁸ They asserted that if the United States does not increase its commitment to the Pacific Island states, this lag will lead to an increased threat of Chinese influence in the region. Similarly, RAND scholars such as Grossman et al. correlate every dollar of aid spent by China to a decreased level of U.S. influence in the region.¹⁹

Given China’s economic and military growth in the sea and air, that country will continue to have an ever-increasing interest in the Pacific Islands. I begin to diverge from this school of thought in the zero-sum nature of the logic. Just as Australia and New Zealand have discovered, if the Pacific Islands devolve into the “arch of instability,” it will be just as much of a problem for China as it would be for the United States.²⁰ Therefore, an increased global donor base can have net benefits to the region. If China is willing to partake as a responsible donor within the COFA states and it has a direct benefit to the residents of those islands—and they have the tools to fully evaluate the true intent of China’s actions—it is not the United States’ place to dissuade those investments.

2. Australia’s Pacific Island Strategy

Australia, a Pacific Island itself, has had a significant and long-term relationship with the islands in Oceania; the debate around the success of Australia’s Pacific strategy is of considerable value given the lack of a similar conversation regarding the comparable activities of the United States. Dinnen and McLeod credited Australia’s leadership, saying,

¹⁸ Geoffrey Goudge, Christopher Neal, and Mark Swiney, “Freely Associated States,” *Military Intelligence* 46, no. 4 (December 2020): 72, ProQuest.

¹⁹ Derek Grossman et al., *America’s Pacific Island Allies: The Freely Associated States and Chinese Influence* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2973>.

²⁰ Graeme Smith and Denghua Zhang, “China’s Blue Book of Oceania” (Canberra: Australian National University, 2015), <https://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/4129/chinas-blue-book-oceania>.

“although international police-building is not new in the Pacific, a distinctly more robust approach was adopted by Australia ... following the attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, and, closer to home, in Bali in 2002.”²¹ From a national security perspective, Wallis expanded on this: “The islands of the South Pacific have always been regarded as fundamental to Australia’s strategic well-being” as events in Fiji and PNG reaffirmed that Australian homeland defense includes the defense of the Pacific Islands.²²

Australia could be a model of what an engaged nation promoting regional stability in the Oceania region would look like. However, although most agree that the Pacific Island strategy has had an influential role in the Melanesia islands, scholars debate its effectiveness.

Dinnen spoke a great deal about the “doomsday scenario” that played out in PNG that could develop across Oceania to varying degrees. Despite Australia’s investment of time, capital, and assistance into PNG, its inability to evolve into an independent state with functioning governance structures and democratic institutions raises questions about re-envisioning such support in the Pacific.²³ Dinnen and McLeod added that “Australian police-building projects in the Pacific have tended not to focus on police reform, but rather, upon strengthening existing institutional frameworks and mechanisms.”²⁴ The model conversation becomes more complicated when Australia’s actions are viewed in terms of regional influence as a return on investment of resources. Many people within Australia would simply declare that the correct resources and policies are in place and no further investment is needed given the “relative peace the Pacific Islands enjoy.”²⁵ Authors such as Hayward-Jones credited Australia’s Pacific policies as successful, asserting their “continued regional dominance is assured in the medium term thanks to its prominent

²¹ Dinnen and McLeod, “Policing Melanesia,” 334.

²² Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 9.

²³ Sinclair Dinnen, *Law and Order in a Weak State* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001).

²⁴ Dinnen and McLeod, “Policing Melanesia,” 340.

²⁵ Hayward-Jones, “Australia and Security in the Pacific Islands Region.”

position as an aid donor, the strength of its trade and investment links, and the depth of its security cooperation efforts.”²⁶

The Australian approach to the Oceania regional stability question from the macro geopolitical perspective is thus generally summarized as working and consistent; however, within its overarching strategy, individual lines of effort have varying degrees of effectiveness.

When determining what operational programs support Australia’s strategic objective of regional stability in the PIC, authors such as Wallis attribute the success to the Australia Defense Cooperation Program (DCP), which includes the Pacific Patrol Boat Program (PPBP). When speaking about the PPBP program, she summarized, “Australia has been able to use [the ships] as a bargaining chip when seeking approval for its actions ... [and] accept its increasingly intrusive state-building assistance.”²⁷ Wallis endorses the PPBP program as a critical policy tool in combating transnational crime within a fragile governance regime. The significance of the PPBP program, while not routinely mentioned as a first-order effort when up against military intervention and donor-aid funding, should not be overlooked.

3. U.S. Actions to Overcome Fragility in the Caribbean

Given the significant distance and mystery of the Pacific Islands to many Americans, most U.S. residents and, by extension, elected officials have paid significantly more attention to the transnational crime and fragile island governance problems of the Caribbean. The resulting effort was the “war on drugs” and, more specifically, the United States’ efforts to create a whole-of-government approach to international policing in both cooperative and confrontational states in the region. However, scholars question how successful the United States’ actions have been.

While the daily counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean are closely guarded by the United States government, the overarching goals and objectives can be determined.

²⁶ Hayward-Jones, 67.

²⁷ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*

Munroe best summarized the general government administrator's perspective on the accomplishments of U.S. action in the Caribbean: "The connection between the United States and CARICOM [Caribbean Community] states in relation to drugs has been characterized by both conflict and cooperation. By and large, cooperation has been the dominant element."²⁸ Others, such as RAND researchers, itemized the success: "illegal drug flow to the United States has been disrupted ... JIATFS contributed to the disruption of 158 MT of cocaine worth nearly \$3.2 billion wholesale ... 76 percent of the estimated cocaine flow directed toward the U.S. market."²⁹ Furthermore, joint operations have secured the airspace resulting in a documented reduction in illegal air traffic and improved interoperability in the region. Most of those accomplishments happen in a joint interagency and combined collaborative environment. As a result, many in the U.S. government have attempted to replicate pieces of JIATF South, lauding it "as a model for whole-of-government problem-solving in the literature on interagency collaboration."³⁰ The idea of replicating this law enforcement operational objective with a DOD underpinning to create regional stability could have direct applicability in the Oceania region.

At the same time, although JIATF South has had significant success in a highly complex, multi-faceted threat space, some sharply qualify that success. For example, Munroe conceded that since JIATF South's creation,

It can hardly be denied that the perception of failure is underpinned by much of the reality of the anti-drugs war. Instead of diminishing the size of the illegal drugs market in the U.S., that market has grown from \$2 billion to \$100 billion; the number of major money-laundering countries and territories has grown from seven to 33 and the number of drug producing and transit countries from 24 to 31.³¹

²⁸ Trevor Munroe, "Democracy and Political Economy in the Caribbean," in *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*, ed. Ivelaw L. Griffith (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), 183, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230288966>.

²⁹ Angel Rabasa et al., *Counternetwork: Countering the Expansion of Transnational Criminal Networks* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), 129–30, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1481>.

³⁰ Munsing and Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force–South*.

³¹ Munroe, "Democracy and Political Economy in the Caribbean," 186.

Munroe's points are well crafted; however, they are more representative of the evolution of the threat and less useful as a measurement of the actions taken to combat the threats. He fails to fully appreciate the complexity of counternarcotics operations and the projected destination if measures were not taken to contain the growth.

Morris, in his efforts to categorize the varying capabilities in the Caribbean, inadvertently backs into a dominant topic that ultimately drives island nations' struggle with resourcing versus mission orientation in maritime governance. His book *Caribbean Maritime Security* identified that most of the Caribbean states are dependent on the great naval powers to resource them.³² This dependence can be problematic when it comes to operational capabilities offered versus the actual capabilities required; "naval power often may not be particularly useful in the post-Cold War setting, as, for maritime interdiction of illegal migrants and drug trafficking, the constabulary capability of coast guard is often more relevant; but very small island-states are often not even able to field viable coast guards."³³ Morris also noted that while his tiering of naval power favors a state's ability to wage conventional naval war, it fails to sufficiently value criminal actors in the Caribbean.

Morris added that for most Caribbean states, "US foreign aid was supplied on condition of vigorous local anti-drug activities. Latin American countries have objected both to the heavy military emphasis of U.S. anti-drug strategy for the hemisphere as well as to the tied nature of U.S. aid."³⁴ The same aid-to-mission tying problem persists and is relevant in the Pacific Island countries as one "of the most aid-dependent regions in the world."³⁵ Morris highlighted the outlier, which is the U.S.–Bahamian maritime cooperation strategy. "Operation Bahamas, Turks and Caicos (OPBAT) has involved ongoing, close coordination between land, sea and air interdiction of smugglers by U.S.

³² Michael A. Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

³³ Morris, 6.

³⁴ Morris, 134.

³⁵ Matthew Dornan and Jonathan Pryke, "Foreign Aid to the Pacific: Trends and Developments in the Twenty-First Century," *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 386–404, <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.185>.

and Bahamian officials.”³⁶ Morris left a parting thought that will be explored in this thesis: “extensive cooperation between the United States and the Bahamas on land, sea and air would be the model for other [Caribbean] islands.”³⁷ Morris’s identification of OPBAT will go on to be a reoccurring topic, as JIATF South can draw its doctrinal strategy of law enforcement tactics with military capabilities to OPBAT.

Viewed through the lens of the Caribbean, U.S. counter-drug law enforcement strategies have been less developmental and more about disrupting the narcotics business model. Viewed from the perspective of the United States, its actions in the Caribbean have resulted in measurable disruptions in both supply and transit lines of effort. This dueling perspective leaves an in-between space that allows for the acknowledgment that OPBAT and JIATF South have gone past conventional boundaries, becoming a successful and fully integrated interagency command and control platform yet lacking a comprehensive developmental framework that is mutually beneficial and focused on capacity building within the fragile governance paradigm.³⁸

4. Summary

Most of the conversation in the literature on the FAS focuses on the humanitarian aspects of the COFA agreements and how best to transfer, disperse, and track the cash transfers. This trend starkly contrasts with the body of literature on Australia’s efforts to strategically invest in policing capacity in Melanesia. In addition, those in national security focus on the United States’ continued access and influence in the region and, of late, how the actions of China might affect U.S. defense activities. Viewed from this perspective, many see the COFA agreements as a legal document that codifies U.S. national security interests in the region. This perspective ultimately prioritizes national security objectives, thus neglecting proactive measures that reduce fragility, such as protecting resources, combating stateless actors, and creating climate resiliency.

³⁶ Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 144.

³⁷ Morris, 144.

³⁸ Richard M. Yeatman, “JIATF-South: Blueprint for Success,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 32 (2006): 26–27.

This thesis aims to spark debate within the United States about prioritizing policing enforcement and FAS policing capacity. Looking at the strengths and weaknesses of U.S. actions in the Caribbean and at a decade of Australian investment in Melanesia, it should reveal a clear policy option that simultaneously improves the Pacific Island states and strengthens the United States' relationship with the Pacific Islands.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis seeks to comment on policy strengths and weaknesses of the U.S.-led law enforcement and U.S.-championed policing capacity building within the FAS. The analysis is complicated because virtually no formal policy conversation has occurred on this topic. Noting this policy absence, this thesis examines two other strategies that directly apply to this region. After identifying the strengths and gaps in both cases, it extrapolates policy to improve the COFA agreements and subsequent improvements in the FAS, PIC, and U.S. homeland security.

Chapter II establishes a working definition of the “Pacific Islands countries” for this thesis. Furthermore, this chapter provides a foundation as to why Oceania should be within the homeland security conversation space, to articulate the consequences should a call for change be ignored.

Chapter III examines Australia's policy in the Melanesia islands to prevent the “arc of instability” from becoming a regional disaster. It analyzes the Australian White Paper policy in the region and documents the successes and failures of Australia's policing actions in the area and the PPDP. Ultimately, this section calls attention to Australia's substantial progress within the Melanesia islands while weighing the weakness and costs associated with the programs.

Chapter IV covers the different approaches taken by the United States in the Caribbean, with a portfolio analysis of U.S. policies to combat transnational crime and stop the flow of illegal narcotics into the United States. The U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) dominates this effort with the JIATF South and OPBAT. In addition, it collaborates with U.S. intelligence agencies, DOD assets, and several international law

enforcement partners that contribute resources. In this chapter, I map the strengths and gaps of fifty years' worth of effort.

Chapter V considers the strengths of both JIATF South and OPBAT and explores what a new U.S. law enforcement posture and policing capacity-building regime would look like in Oceania. The policy conversation centers on the Micronesia region (the U.S. territories and the FAS) to meet this goal. However, the hope is that this policy work creates the space for others to develop complementary efforts in the PIC region.

Last, Chapter VI closes with policy recommendations for the United States and the FAS to consider during the upcoming COFA revalidation period and as an option to support the larger Indo-Pacific Strategy.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MICRONESIAN ISLANDS

The vast North Pacific Ocean is arguably one of the most significant trade corridors globally. Sea trade within this region accounts for over 5.5 billion metric tons of items critical to the global economy.³⁹ Those items range from energy and manufacturing precursor materials to finished Amazon and Wayfair products packaged in boxes. Along the corridor is a region of islands that play a vital role in the U.S. *National Security Strategy* and is the most western gateway to the United States of America: that region is called the Micronesian Islands or Micronesia.⁴⁰ Micronesia is a complex stretch of oceanography dotted with seven independent political entities governing over 1000 islands, atolls, and reefs.⁴¹ In addition, the Micronesian Islands contribute close to \$350 million per year in fish stocks landed and exported around the world as a vital component of the global protein market.⁴² This region is also a hub for financial transactions and banking for many in Oceania, as it provides access to U.S. and Asian capital markets with a uniquely Pacific way.

With its significance in global trade routes, the region is complicated by its remoteness, fragmented legal framework, and reliance on insular politics, which drive how the islands interact with the globalized world. This chapter covers a brief history of the islands and their relationship with the United States. The COFA agreements will be explored in detail with regard to the linkages they establish with the United States. It will then provide some examples of the law enforcement threats as a result of their connection

³⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “UNCTADstat” (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), accessed June 27, 2021, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=32363>.

⁴⁰ White House, *Indo Pacific Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

⁴¹ “Palau,” The World Factbook, July 26, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/palau/>; “Micronesia, Federated States of,” The World Factbook, July 26, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/micronesia-federated-states-of/>; and “Marshall Islands,” The World Factbook, July 2, 2021, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/marshall-islands/>.

⁴² Henrike Seidel and Padma N. Lal, *Economic Value of the Pacific Ocean to the Pacific Island Countries and Territories* (Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 2010), 30, https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/economic_value_of_the_pacific_ocean_to_the_pacific_island_countries_and_territories_p.pdf.

to the United States. Mapping these complex and interconnected legal governance structures in the region shows that Micronesia's position and access are ideal for malicious actors looking for a foothold in the United States while limiting their exposure to continental U.S. law enforcement and national security tools and capabilities.

A. A HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF MICRONESIA

To fully understand the United States' connection with Micronesia and the need to take action within the region, a foundational understanding of the region's history as it relates to the United States needs to be established. This section establishes the complex and hub-like nature the Micronesian area plays within the Pacific.

1. Complex Associations with the United States

The Micronesian Islands comprise five major governing regions, each of which has various tribal, state, and national laws. The political entities within the Micronesia region that are generally accepted to have enhanced relationships with the United States are the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), the Republic of Palau, and Guam.⁴³ All of these political entities have support agreements with the United States that provide them unique access and services not afforded to many other population segments.

Figure 1 portrays the section of geography discussed in this thesis. While the islands of Nauru and Kiribati are included in the geographic region of Micronesia, they do not fall under COFA or FAS due to their limited governance relationship with the United States. They are, however, generally addressed in Chapter III due to their inclusion in Australia's Pacific strategy.

⁴³ "Who We Are," Office of Insular Affairs, accessed July 10, 2021, <https://www.doi.gov/oia/who-we-are>.

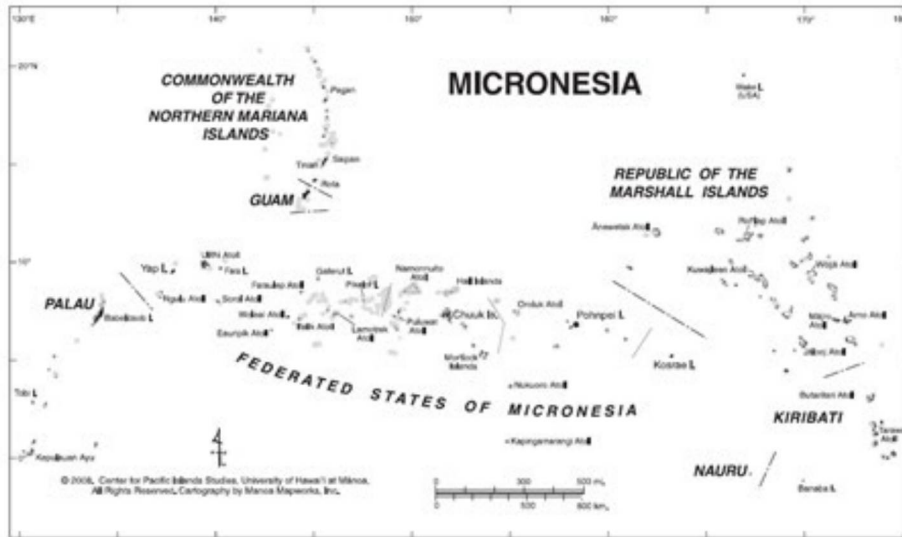


Figure 1. Map of the Political Entities of Micronesia⁴⁴

Within the Micronesia region, the spectrum of legal statuses in relation to the U.S. government runs the full breadth of possible affiliations. As a U.S. territory, Guam is the most defined, just short of being a state, and Palau is on the opposite end of the spectrum, with a loose but enduring relationship as a FAS. The U.S. Department of Interior, via the Office of Insular Affairs, is primarily responsible for maintaining these varying legal and regulatory frameworks that guide the relationship between the United States and the various Pacific Island political entities.⁴⁵

While the relationship between Guam and the United States can be contentious at times, it is generally accepted to be stable. In addition, as a U.S. territory, Guam has parity with the island of Puerto Rico. And, like Guam and Puerto Rico, the island grouping of CNMI became a U.S. territory in 1975.⁴⁶ However, the integration of U.S. governing structures there has been somewhat slower process, with the island region coming under federal minimum wage regulations in 2007. Then in 2008, the U.S. Department of

⁴⁴ Source: *Micronesia Political Entities Map*, Manoa Mapworks, Inc., (Center for the Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2008), <https://hawaii.edu/cpis/wp-content/uploads/micronesia-political-entities.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Department of the Interior, "Who We Are."

⁴⁶ Reagan, Executive Order 12572.

Homeland Security (DHS) took over the CNMI's immigration and border controls with exceptions and special exemptions.

The other islands, FSM, RMI, and Palau, are all independent nation-states that have close and powerful legal associations with the United States via agreements. Those agreements are the COFA, which first took effect in 1986 for FSM and RMI, and was then revised to COFA II in 2003.⁴⁷ For the Republic of Palau, the COFA was approved in 1994. The COFA agreements vary among the islands; however, there are consistencies across all the documents. The agreements allow the uninhibited travel of all FSM, RMI, and Palauan citizens to and from the United States, access to U.S. financial systems with the use of the US\$ as their currency, and the use of U.S. postal and telecommunication conventions (e.g., zip code, area code, I.P. addresses), and allocation of block grants/trusts for financial assistance from the United States to the islands.⁴⁸

The COFA agreements are unique to the Pacific islands. It makes the FASs a special region for the generation of commerce while simultaneously making them unique locations for the exploitation of U.S. homeland security laws. This intersection of increased U.S. access, sweeping geography complexities, and fragile governance within the islands makes it so that malicious actors have the ability to create footholds within the U.S. legal space while limiting exposure to continental U.S. law enforcement and national security tools and resources. To fully understand the COFA nations' connection with the territories requires an expanded conversation of how the COFA nations impact the Pacific territories and how the Pacific territories are connected to the continental United States.

2. COFA Connection to the Pacific Territories

The intermixing of the COFA states with the United States is complex and dynamic and has been occurring for a generation. To understand how COFAs interact with the United States require a careful understanding of the territories' laws, travel policies, and migration patterns as hubs for the region.

⁴⁷ Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003.

⁴⁸ Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003.

The average citizen in independent FAS nations is heavily reliant on the major economic hubs within Oceania . For Palau, FSM, and RMI, that hub tends to be Guam; this interconnectivity can be attributed to the region’s geography and COFA’s structural preference for U.S. markets. Figures 2, 3, and 4 show how almost all modes of cargo, freight, data, and mail move in and out of the region.



Figure 2. Matson Sea Cargo Shipping Routes⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Source: “Guam & Micronesia Shipping Services,” Matson, accessed July 24, 2021, <https://www.matson.com/ocean-services/guam-micronesia.html/>.



Figure 3. United Air Cargo Route Map⁵⁰

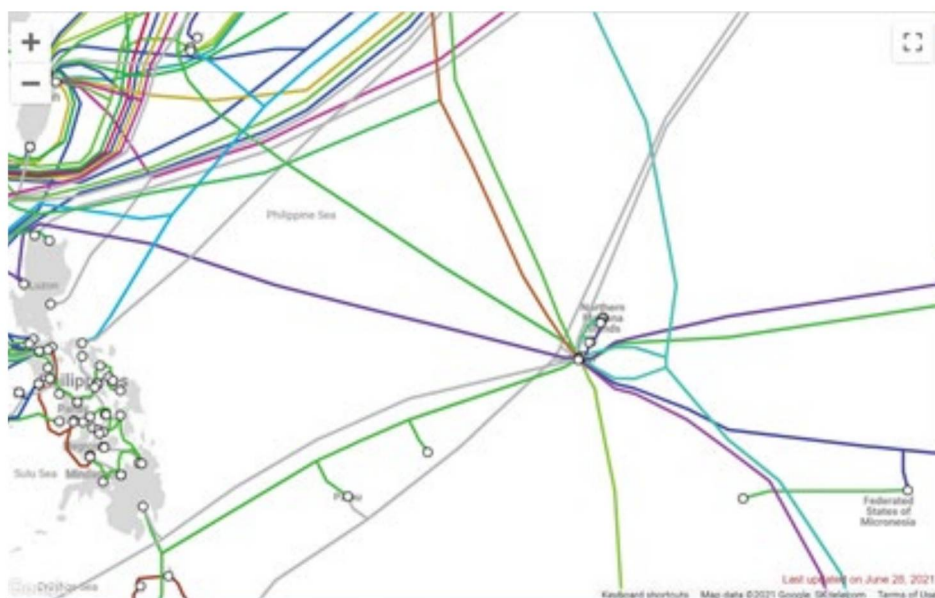


Figure 4. Subsea Fiberoptic Data Cables—Marianas Islands and Philippine Sea⁵¹

In addition to the United States, Japan, New Zealand, and Australia all have governmental and economic interests in the FAS islands. For the past century, those four

⁵⁰ Source: "United Airlines U.S. and International Route Maps," United Airlines, accessed July 24, 2021, <https://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/travel/route-maps.aspx>.

⁵¹ Source: "Submarine Cable Map," Submarine Cable Map, accessed June 16, 2021, <https://www.submarinecablemap.com/>.

countries have dominated the conversation; however, in the last decade, China has had a growing interest in the region, which is still unfolding and is actively being debated by others. This paper specifically focuses on Australia's policies and actions. Australia routinely contributes and provides support to the Pacific Islands and that support draws many parallels to U.S. national and homeland security strategy.

These globalized influences and regionalized logistic centers need to be understood to fully appreciate the region. The average person within Palau, FSM, and RMI would identify Guam as their primary logistical point for mail, cargo, banking, transportation, and other day-to-day services. The FAS to U.S. territories interplay is imperative to understanding the impacts the FAS have on the United States.

Much has been written about the movement of people from the freely associated states into the U.S. territories and the United States. Multiple Congressional reports highlight the state and federal cost of social benefit programs related to the movement of people from Palau, FSM, and RMI. According to the GAO 20–491 report,

More than 94,000 compact migrants ... live and work in the United States and its territories, according to Census Bureau data. ... Historically, many compact migrants have lived in Hawaii, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). From 2013 to 2018, an estimated 50 percent of compact migrants lived on the U.S. mainland. ... Hawaii, Guam, and the CNMI track and report the financial costs related to compact migration, or compact impact, for their state or territory. These areas reported estimated costs totaling \$3.2 billion during the period fiscal years 2004 through 2018.⁵²

These data are representative of most of the Congressional research on the impact to the United States as a result of the COFA agreements. The majority of those impact studies focus primarily on the movement of people into the United States and the cost to federal social service programs as a result of that migration.

For the Pacific territories, Guam and CNMI, laws and homeland security policies are a more direct reflection of those of the United States due to the influence of the DHS and DOD compared to the COFA states; specifically, immigration and customs laws. The

⁵² Gootnick, *Compacts of Free Association*, Highlights.

territories, like the continental United States, have legal frameworks and enforcement tools that focus on keeping the threat outside the physical border. For example, an international traveler will see similar, if not almost identical, arrival processes when entering Guam as they would see when entering Los Angeles, CA. The legal and policy similarities do not stop with the airport; this interwoven structure is representational across many day-to-day activities in Guam and CNMI. For example, no country code is required to call from Guam to New York, a video gamer's I.P. address in Saipan will present as U.S.-based when connecting to online gaming services providers, and money can be transferred via a mobile banking application from a person in Tinian to a person in Arizona with no impediment.⁵³ While the existence of the Pacific territories may be perceived as foreign to some, from the perspective of access to U.S. legal and federal services, it is considered no different from any other U.S. state.

A standout deviation from all U.S. immigration laws is the CNMI. While the current COFA for the CNMI was renewed in 2003 with a legal framework that provides for the free movement of all CNMI citizens to enter the United States, it has yet to fully implement all aspects of the U.S. visa programs for those wishing to enter the CNMI islands.⁵⁴ This creates a path for foreign nationals to enter the island of Saipan and then begin to exist within the U.S. legal space while located within the Pacific territories. Congress passed legislation in 2008 to address this gap, but the implementation has been controversial and incomplete.⁵⁵ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services stated, "on May 8, 2008, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (CNRA) extended most provisions of U.S. immigration law to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The transition period for implementing U.S. immigration law in the CNMI began on Nov. 28, 2009, and is now scheduled to end on Dec. 31, 2029."⁵⁶

⁵³ "Commercial Loans," Business, accessed August 8, 2021, <https://bankofguam.com/business/borrow/commercial-loans>.

⁵⁴ "U.S. Immigration Law in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)," Laws and Policy, June 18, 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/laws-and-policy/other-resources/us-immigration-law-in-the-commonwealth-of-the-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi>.

⁵⁵ Anna Schecter, "Undoing the Abramoff Effect Continued," ABC News, April 1, 2008, <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=4567036&page=1>.

⁵⁶ Citizenship and Immigration Services, "U.S. Immigration Law."

Currently, CNMI has two prominent visa programs that are not available within the United States, the “CW-1: CNMI-Only Transitional Worker” and the “E-2C CNMI-Only Nonimmigrant Investor.”⁵⁷ In simple terms, both of these visas allow a foreign national to travel to the CNMI and establish a home and work with no real constraints on the length of stay. While the governor of CNMI has attested that the CW-1 visa program is vital to the economy of the islands, it has been noted as being rampant with fraud, with foreign nationals creating fictitious companies and then filing CW-1 visa applications for fictitious jobs to bring people into the region.⁵⁸ This was evident when Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) agents arrested two citizens of the Republic of the Philippines for falsifying the CW-1 visas for more than 100 foreign nationals in July of 2021.⁵⁹

The impact of the FAS is seen across all aspects of life within the Pacific territories. One example is as recent as the COVID-19 pandemic: “FSM residents in Guam comprise 10% of the population of Guam, [however] 47% of the COVID-19 deaths in Guam were FSM nationals.”⁶⁰ The majority of FAS’s essential services are connected to Guam and CNMI in some way, and many people frequent the islands for some reason. Some have a blended residence, traveling to the territories often for work or business opportunities while retaining ancestral roots in their home island. Some transition from the FASs and permanently relocate to the territories or to the continental United States with only the hope of returning on vacation. The intermixing of the COFA states with the United States is complex and dynamic and has been occurring for a generation, thus making it very difficult to identify discrete social boundaries and borders.

⁵⁷ Citizenship and Immigration Services.

⁵⁸ “Governor Torres Thanks Trump Administration for Heeding Request to Modify USCIS Policy to Protect CNMI Economy and Workers,” CNMI Office of the Governor, August 26, 2020, <https://governor.gov.mp/news/press-releases/governor-torres-thanks-trump-administration-for-heeding-request-to-modify-uscis-policy-to-protect-cnmi-economy-and-workers/>.

⁵⁹ “ICE HSI Agents Make Arrests Linked to CNMI Visa Fraud Scheme,” Immigration and Customs Enforcement Newsroom, July 12, 2021, <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-hsi-agents-make-arrests-linked-cnmi-visa-fraud-scheme>.

⁶⁰ Steve Limtiaco, “Our View: Grant Should Help Public Health Close Gaps in Services,” *Pacific Daily News*, June 18, 2021, https://www.guampdn.com/opinion/our-view-grant-should-help-public-health-close-gaps-in-services/article_ec3ef773-20bc-59b6-9f99-db607ab10d91.html.

B. THE HOMELAND SECURITY RISK PRESENTED BY THE COFA AGREEMENTS

The expansive language in the COFA agreements thus gives the people of the FAS states unique access to the domestic services of the United States while physically residing on the fringe, if not entirely outside the reach, of the United States law enforcement system. Furthermore, it creates a remote site for freely associated people to arrive in the territories of Guam and CNMI and create a footprint within the U.S. legal space without having to completely comply with all the same entry, oversight, and admissibility processes as someone would have to complete to enter California or Florida. Presented another way, within the U.S. territories, the boundaries of the physical and virtual border are much more permeable, and that permeability can be exploited in unique ways due to the COFA agreements.

The idea of exploiting the unique position the COFA states have is not novel. The most obvious example is from 1995 to 1996, when RMI sold its passport to any person who applied and paid a \$50,000 fee.⁶¹ With this “citizenship by investment” scheme, a person of foreign nationality could buy an RMI passport, then arrive in Guam, establish residence, apply for U.S. benefits, start a business, sponsor the arrival of foreign workers’ visas, and engage in numerous other activities. Furthermore, the RMI passport provided for an indefinite, visa-free ability to enter the continental United States and live and work as if a U.S. citizen. While this program was stopped at the request of the U.S. government, there are other similar programs that still allow people to enter the COFA states with ease. A more recent and relevant example is the arrest by HSI of two employees of a limited liability cooperation within CNMI who exploited the relaxed CW-1 visa rules, allowing the illegal immigration of foreign nationals into Saipan.⁶²

⁶¹ “Marshall Islands Citizenship by Investment, Investment Visas for Passport,” La Vida Golden Visas, accessed August 4, 2021, <https://www.goldenvisas.com/tag/marshall-islands>.

⁶² Immigration and Customs Enforcement, “ICE HSI Agents Make Arrests.”

1. The Evolution from Physical to Virtual Threats

Understanding how people, goods, and ideas move from FASs to the territories and then subsequently into the United States is an essential part of understanding the complexity of the threat. The migration of people from the COFA states into the territories, with a continuation to the continental United States, is a traditional homeland security issue that has an entire regulatory regime dedicated to controlling and stopping it. This migration problem has two entire law enforcement organizations devoted to combating it: The U.S. Customs and Border Protection component and The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement component. Both components have dedicated offices in Honolulu, HI, which are tasked with enforcing the applicable laws within the territories; however, their authorities are significantly curtailed with respect to the FAS. This authority gap is where criminal actors looking for a foothold can operate with minimal regulatory oversight yet with the benefits of being within the U.S legal framework.

The ability of the COFA states to deviate from standard U.S. immigration laws with programs such as the CW-1 visas in the CNMI, the guest worker programs in Palau and FSM, and the sale of RMI passports create alternative, less-known immigration processes into the U.S. legal space. Once admitted to the COFA states, malicious actors can begin moving from the COFA states to the territories and then eventually to the continental United States with far less legal immigration scrutiny than would be applied to a traditional border crossing.

The control measure to this problem has been the creation of multiple layers of airport customs checkpoints. However, in an increasingly digital and connected world, illegal actors have less reason to physically relocate to places like Hawaii, effectively marginalizing this traditional approach. This marginalization of the relevance of airport customs and immigration checkpoints forces us to explore new ways to address these emerging risks.

A clear example of this complex and emerging threat is by the Best Sunshine Live Casino, an out-of-place, prefabricated strip mall casino located on the island of Saipan in CNMI. While the existence of this casino is not unusual, it is the volume of foreign capital

flowing through the casino that has many questioning its legitimacy. In 2016, after one year of being partially open, the Best Sunshine Live Casino was able to record \$3.9 billion in bets from mostly Chinese nationals who traveled to the island.⁶³ By contrast, the established MGM Resorts International, with 14 resorts around the world in 2016, recorded \$4.1 billion in bets.⁶⁴ The entire CNMI island grouping was estimated to have a yearly GDP of \$922 million in 2015; thus, the Best Sunshine Live Casino was able to collect the entire economic output of the CNMI island chain four times over in bets in one year.⁶⁵

These numbers raise the question: What is unique about the Sunshine Live Casino that the casinos in Macau or Las Vegas lack?

The Best Sunshine Casinos chief executive officer reports that the majority of those bets were from Chinese nationals who arrived via private jets.⁶⁶ Why would they not travel to Macau to place those bets? The most significant difference, other than location, is access to the U.S. financial system. Macau is subject to Chinese banking laws, and those laws are very restrictive of the flight of capital from China.⁶⁷ However, by flying to Saipan in the CNMI with banknotes or banknote equivalents, any person within the casino is able to complete banking transactions with a currency that is assumed to have cleared U.S. customs laws. Looking at the alternative, Las Vegas, it is obvious to see the draw of Saipan to a non-U.S. citizen who might not receive a U.S. visa or would be subject to secondary screening measures. Due to Saipan's unique immigration exemptions, a Chinese or Russian national can charter a private jet, enter the CNMI territory without a visa, perform limited

⁶³ Steven Stradbrooke, "Report: Imperial Pacific's VIP Success Attracts U.S. Watchdog," *Casino*, November 14, 2016, <https://calvinayre.com/2016/11/15/casino/imperial-pacific-vip-success-attracts-financial-watchdog/>.

⁶⁴ MGM Resorts International, *2018 Annual Report* (Las Vegas, NV: MGM Resorts International, 2018), https://s22.q4cdn.com/513010314/files/doc_financials/annual/2018/MGM-2018-Annual-Report.pdf.

⁶⁵ Saipan.io, "America's Hidden Gem: Saipan, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)," *Extra* (blog), October 10, 2018, <https://saipan.io/index.php/2018/10/10/an-introduction-to-saipan-the-commonwealth-of-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-americas-hidden-gem/>.

⁶⁶ Daniela Wei and Matthew Campbell, "This Obscure Casino Is Making Money Like You Wouldn't Believe," *Bloomberg*, November 13, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2016-11-13/obscure-casino-run-by-a-trump-protege-is-raising-big-questions>.

⁶⁷ Cissy Zhou, "China's Capital Outflow Controls Have Gone to the 'Extreme', Former Central Bank Adviser Says," *South China Morning Post*, May 29, 2019, sec. Economy, <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3012312/chinas-capital-outflow-controls-have-gone-extreme-former>.

to virtually zero customs clearance, then subsequently have direct access to the U.S. banking system without foreign transaction controls. While no charges have been formally brought against the Best Sunshine Live Casino for money laundering, we can hypothesize that some percentage of the casino's success was a result of the ease of money laundering at the casino.

As depicted by the CNMI casino example, it was not the physical relocation of the people that was the threat to the United States; instead, it was the intersection of weak U.S. law in the territories and access to the U.S. financial system. This same intersection can be overlayed onto the digital domain. In 2016, a "Chinese blockchain insurance company, GT Insurance Inc" applied for a permit to open an insurance business in the state of Melekeok, within the Republic of Palau.⁶⁸ To the island of Palau, this was considered an economic investment and good for the people and the government. However, in 2019, details of the company's plans became more apparent, and it was revealed that the GT Insurance group really wanted to open an international call center to be staffed with 1,600 Chinese nationals who would arrive from China and live within the GT Insurance "industrial complex."⁶⁹ To frame the significant impact of this proposal, in 2019, Melekeok, Palau, had only 271 native residents. The arrival of 1,600 Chinese nationals would significantly lower the native population, making it a minority population (natives would comprise merely 17 percent of the total population).

The question is, again: What makes Palau's location appealing to the GT Insurance group to create a call center?

The Republic of Palau benefits from a newly connected high-speed fiber internet and a digital foothold within U.S. telecommunications, postal, and cyberspace conventions. This foothold is a direct result of the COFA agreements, which allow the island to gain particular U.S. support functions to facilitate commerce and communications to benefit the people of Palau. During COFA's original drafting in the 1980s, one of the most

⁶⁸ "Second Round of Public Hearing for Call Center Project to Be Held," *Island Times*, October 25, 2019, <https://islandtimes.org/second-round-of-public-hearing-for-call-center-project-to-be-held>.

⁶⁹ *Island Times*.

controversial issues was the recuperation of costs for the U.S. Postal Service for first-class letters at 22 cents. There was no way at the time to understand how vital postal services would become in the age of e-commerce shopping and direct to consumer deliverie services. Given the economic significance of the internet, it is equally likely that criminal actors have entered that same paradigm.

Given the significance of the internet, many companies and global applications have adopted geolocation filtering as a fundamental security feature to prevent cybercriminals from entering a website's "front door." However, Palau's unique cyber geolocation, as a result of the COFA, gives it more access to many Western websites and applications. Thus, if a global call center were looking to conduct mass voice over IP (VoIP) calls from Manila, Philippines, to Western nations, it would find routine filtering and encumbering security protocols applied to that business model by varying telecommunications providers. If that same call center relocated to Palau, it would benefit from greater freedom to operate and possibly reduce costs by using the benefits afforded by the island's virtual position given by the global IP conventions. Therefore, if the GT Insurance group were looking to call unsuspecting elderly customers in the United States using VoIP with falsified caller identification numbers, it would have a much greater success rate due to minimal law enforcement oversight from Palau in comparison to other locations in Asia.

As is evident from both the GT Insurance group and the Best Sunshine Live Casino, there are weakness in the emerging-threat actor spaces such as cyber and digital money transfers. Threat actors are finding a foothold in U.S. legal space by exploiting advantages afforded to them by the COFA laws in the Pacific Islands. Then, without ever physically relocating to regions with stronger governance, they can conduct questionable activities while leveraging their geographic proximity to Asia, Australia, and the United States.

2. Resources Control

The PICs are some of the most foreign aid–dependent nations in the world.⁷⁰ Many internal and external leaders are advocating for varying economic approaches to the islands’ long-term strategies to enable independent and sustainable futures.⁷¹ In support of this objective, respected international institutions have proposed a variety of economic development models that would enable the islands to begin the long process of freeing themselves from developmental loans and grants and the commitments that come with them. For these lofty strategies to work, a number of governmental instruments must be implemented and functioning, a challenge that all of the FASs struggle to reconcile.

There have been several efforts to cultivate island-based native agriculture and manufacturing; however, to date, they lack the ability to scale to a point that would truly change the revenue trajectory. While manufacturing has remained limited, progress is being made within the tourism and ocean resource extraction industries. For many in Oceania, there is a complex and deep connection to the ocean. It is revered and, to some, holds almost a spiritual status. In addition, given the ocean’s ever-present influence on the islands, many of the inhabitants derive day-to-day resources from it. This includes (but is not limited to) food, building materials, recreation, income, transportation, and exercise.

The Pacific Islands’ dual use of the ocean as both a preserve and as a basic resource provider puts their interest in protecting the environment at odds with economic development. Through this lens, we can begin to see how the islands perceive external nations and corporations’ actions to advocate for the monetization of the ocean. Islands such as French Polynesia, which has a robust high–net-wealth tourism industry, might be more inclined to resist actions to exploit their exclusive economic zones’ (EEZ) resources. Others, such as FSM, which have virtually no tourism but aspire to grow the industry, are more inclined to liberally allow the processing of tuna but not the mining of their seabed minerals. Thus, from a macroeconomic perspective, the path to economic stability in the

⁷⁰ Dornan and Pryke, “Foreign Aid to the Pacific.”

⁷¹ “Pacific Aid Map - Country Profiles,” Lowy Institute, accessed June 15, 2021, <http://charts.lowyinstitute.org/archive/pacific-aid-map-country-profiles/index.html>.

region lies an intersection of a self-determined balance between responsible ocean resource extraction and vibrant eco-tourism.

The PIC's challenge is how to establish effective maritime domain awareness (MDA) and a robust legal regime to ensure that their path to economic stability is both responsible and enforceable.

The World Bank, in the Pacific Possible series titled "Precautionary Management of Deep Sea Minerals," detailed the struggle between economics and sovereignty for the PIC: "FSM's EEZ is considered to have [mineral deposit] potential, and some indicators of possible [other] deposits. FSM has had initial discussions with an exploration company interested ... but the Government is unable to issue licenses within the EEZ until relevant laws are enacted. There is strong political will to attract DSM investment, to cover budget shortfalls anticipated."⁷² The "Deep Sea Minerals" report offers the PIC a path for modeling deep sea mineral exploitation for economic development; however, the World Bank stressed that the importance of the government,

In addition to supervising implementation, must verify the data through independent monitoring, and compile and analyze the data with a view to identifying potential needs for amending the environmental management plan ... Monitoring should focus not only on environmental aspects, but also encompass impacts on livelihoods, other social aspects and cultural values. The regulator must manage an effective grievance mechanism.⁷³

Yet the World Bank fails to address how such countries are supposed to begin establishing effective governance, a legal regime, and MDA to enforce such lofty oversight goals. As long as reports state "Japan's engineers estimate there's 16 million tons of rare earths [minerals] ... five times the amount of the rare earth elements ever mined since 1900," there will be strong interest in this topic area.⁷⁴ The attractiveness of the economic reward will

⁷² Michael Stanley and Tijen Arin, *Precautionary Management of Deep Sea Minerals* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2017), 26, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/349631503675168052/pdf/119106-WP-PUBLIC-114p-PPDSMbackgroundfinal.pdf>.

⁷³ Stanley and Arin, 51.

⁷⁴ Robby Berman, "Japan Finds a Huge Cache of Scarce Rare-Earth Minerals," Big Think, January 5, 2019, <https://bigthink.com/the-present/japan-rare-earth/>.

inevitably bring both sustainably focused and disreputable companies, and it will be up to the PIC's governance and legal structures to determine who prevails.

While deep-sea mineral exploration is rather new, the PICs have had great success organizing to create a unified fisheries framework. "The Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) strengthens national capacity and regional solidarity so its 17 members can manage, control and develop their tuna fisheries now and in the future."⁷⁵ The establishment of the Pacific Island FFA enabled a multitude of countries' EEZs to be organized into a more unified governance structure, create a vessel monitoring service, and pool enforcement resources. While these multi-national governance structures, such as the FFA and the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission, are critical institutions to regulating the fish stocks, the PICs fail to benefit fully from the economic engine that is the global fish market. Finance professor Chand attributed this gap to "four key principles ... good governance: accountability, participation, predictability and transparency. The inability of Pacific Island countries to promote and implement these principles is generally recognized as one of the key factors underscoring poor socioeconomic performance across the Pacific."⁷⁶

This enforcement gap has become significant enough that countries such as the United States have recently created an entire strategic line of effort called illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fisheries enforcement. In this strategy, the commandant of the Coast Guard expressly acknowledges that

not all maritime nations have the capability to surveil their sovereign waters or the moral conscience to police their fleets; this lack of shared responsibility creates opportunities for exploitation in the form of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. This exploitation erodes both regional and national security, undermines maritime rules-based order,

⁷⁵ "Welcome to the Pacific Islands Forum," Who We Are, accessed April 17, 2022, <https://www.ffa.int/about>.

⁷⁶ Hannah Parris and R. Quentin Grafton, "Finding Common Ground: New Zealand and Regional Security Cooperation in the Pacific," in *Pacific Islands Regional Integration and Governance*, ed. Satish Chand (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at the Australian National University, 2005), 158.

jeopardizes food access and availability, and destroys legitimate economies.⁷⁷

The example of the Pacific tuna fleet underscores the reason for this thesis: If the combined efforts of a number of nations have yet to truly regulate all aspects of the fishing industry, what happens when deep-sea mineral exploration, digital currency mining, virtual residency, and a number of other future problems face the region?

3. Conclusion

The ability for people to live, work, and thrive freely across the COFA states, territories, and United States is simultaneously an extraordinary benefit and an emerging threat. By exploring the highly complicated and interconnected relationships of the FAS, the territories, and the United States, it becomes increasingly clear that strategies need to be refined and new innovative regulatory structures need to be considered to address these threats. With the rise of global power competition in the Pacific and the continued movement toward virtual work, pay, and shopping, if left in a status quo state, the COFA agreements will expose the United States to a high degree of fraud and exploitation over the next 50 years. Given the current and emerging threats, this thesis seeks to leverage the lessons of capacity building in Melanesia and the Caribbean to move the FASs toward a path to combat these problems.

⁷⁷ United States Coast Guard, *United States Coast Guard: Illegal, Unreported, and Underregulated Fishing Strategic Outlook* (Washington, DC: United States Coast Guard, 2020), https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/Images/iuu/IUU_Strategic_Outlook_2020_Final.pdf.

III. AN EXPLORATION OF AUSTRALIA'S EFFORTS TO CREATE CAPACITY IN THE PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

A. AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICIES IN THE PIC

Australia, a Pacific Island nation, has made considerable efforts to improve the collective security capabilities in the Oceania region. This concerted effort comes in part out of necessity to keep the “arc of instability” as far away from its borders as possible.⁷⁸ The other part is out of kinship and responsibility for its neighboring islands. Given Australia’s unique position, they have made measurable advancements, specifically in the Melanesia region, under the evolving Pacific Plans’ strategic architectures. Through a detailed understanding of the capacity-building specific strategies employed in these Australian plans, the United States can look to complement those already in place and adapt those that have worked to support strategic efforts in the FASs.

The current strategy that drives Australia’s actions in the Pacific is outlined in the “Pacific Step-Up” plan announced in the *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*.⁷⁹ This whole-of-government strategy organizes Australian agencies, engagements, and investments around four policy structures: “economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, [and] security for the Pacific through regionalism.”⁸⁰

The honorable former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s 2018 speech “Australia and the Pacific: A New Chapter” is an approachable summary of the larger Australian strategy for the future as it relates to the PICs.⁸¹ In this speech, he articulated,

⁷⁸ Paul Dibb, David D. Hale, and Peter Pince, “Asia’s Insecurity,” *Survival* 41, no. 3 (1999): 18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339912331342893>; Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 14.

⁷⁹ Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Barton ACT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017), 101, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-seven-shared-agenda-security-and-prosperity/.../foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-seven-shared-agenda-security-and-prosperity/stepping-our.html>.

⁸⁰ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration* (Suva, Fiji: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2007), 2.

⁸¹ Scott Morrison, “Australia and the Pacific: A New Chapter,” Prime Minister of Australia, November 8, 2018, <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41938>.

“Australia has an abiding interest in the Southwest Pacific that is secure strategically, stable economically and sovereign politically. This is not just our region or our neighborhood. This is our home. It’s where Australia can make the biggest difference in world affairs.”⁸² He then expressed a number of strategic efforts that will be the lines of effort for regional change. This chapter focuses on the Pacific Fusion Center, the PPBP, and the joint law enforcement capacity-building efforts outlined in this speech. He closed with, “if [Australia’s] standing and influence in the Pacific is to grow, our commitment must be genuine, authentic and enduring. The world is changing, it’s true and we need to ensure that our Pacific partnerships get stronger with time, that we never take them for granted, that we are a reliable and steady member of the family.”⁸³ U.S. foreign policy and domestic policy to the region should consider these same aspirations, as the PIC’s cultures on national security and homeland security are vastly divergent as compared to a Western perspective.

The policy framework that supports Prime Minister Morrison’s 2018 speech is encapsulated in the Australian *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*. In this strategic document, the Australian government stated, “many countries in the Pacific have limited capacity to respond individually to security challenges such as transnational crime, natural disasters, climate change or outbreaks of infectious diseases.”⁸⁴ This lesson has been hard-learned through Australian military and security intervention actions that cost the country capital and lives to keep a number of Pacific Island governments from failing. These actions can best be seen in the armed activities in the Solomon Islands and PNG.⁸⁵ In both examples, Australia deployed significant resources on the intervention and rebuilding side of the operational continuum, arguably out of a lack of capacity building and viable foreign policy planning in the years preceding the failures.⁸⁶ Australian efforts in the Oceania

⁸² Morrison.

⁸³ Morrison.

⁸⁴ Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 103.

⁸⁵ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*

⁸⁶ Wallis.

region can be used as a roadmap to understand what successful efforts worked in the region and as a cautionary tale of their limitations.

1. Pacific Patrol Boat Program

Arguably the most innovative and successful aspect of the Pacific Plans, from a law enforcement perspective, has been the PPBP. Although the program was renamed the Commonwealth's Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP), for the purposes of this thesis, it will be referred to as the PPBP to cover the program in totality from its start in 1985 through the recapitalization plan that is underway today. What the Pacific Plans get particularly right is the identification of the close linkage between economic prosperity and domestic security. The plan recognizes how precious that balance is in the region due to the resource and economic constraints inherent in fragile island nations.

For the vast majority of the PIC, the two most viable macroeconomic paths are eco-tourism and sea resource control and exploitation. Both industries are highly dependent on a number of functioning government processes and capabilities to work, to avoid rampant exploitation. Without those functioning government processes, the first mover gains the advantage; they are able to exploit the environment as quickly as possible until the market is unsustainable or the government moves back in. Examples of these large-scale failures include a tourist market failure in Boracay, in the Philippines, or a sea resources collapse of the cod fishery in the Northeast Atlantic region in the 1990s. To avoid these exploitations in Oceania, the PICs need strong and effective customs border control governance and maritime domain control. Australia understood this need and invested heavily into building those capacities.

Leveraging their own understanding of the customs and maritime capability requirements needed to project power in the Pacific, Australia aptly identified the need for the PIC to have coastal patrol ships to enforce their claimed maritime zones. This fundamental need was addressed and resourced in the Pacific Plans and is currently being recapitalized under the Pacific Step-Up plan. The PPBP is an Australian-funded program intended to design, build, and support all the partnering Pacific Island Forum states with

capable coastal patrol boats.⁸⁷ Once delivered, Australian trainers continue to work with the receiving island in an advising capacity to teach the local crews how to operate the boat, tactics on how to employ the boat, and most importantly, ensure the boat is maintained to Australian standards.⁸⁸ Figure 5 is a visual description of the locations where Australia has granted these boats to varying PICs.

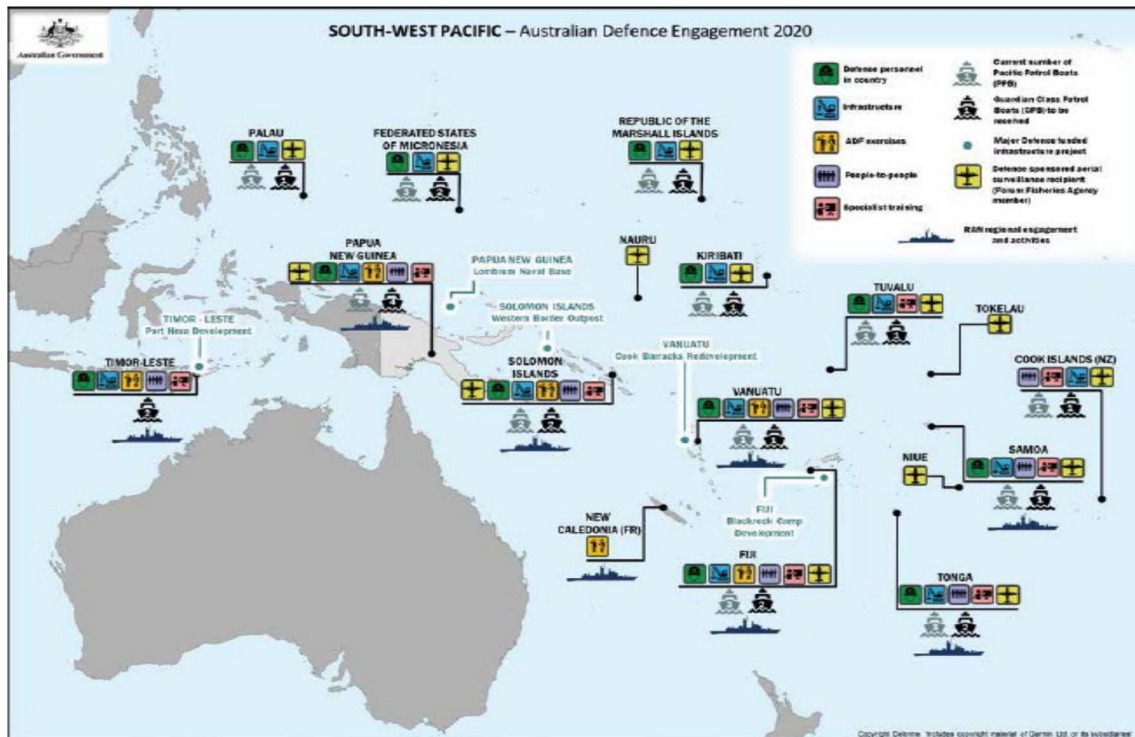


Figure 5. Southwest Pacific–Australian Defence Engagement 2020 (with Pacific Patrol Boat Locations)⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Cristelle Pratt and Hugh Govan, *Our Sea of Islands Our Livelihoods Our Oceania: Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape: A Catalyst for Implementation of Ocean Policy* (Suva, Fiji: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), 2010), 15–17, <https://library.sprep.org/content/our-sea-islands-our-livelihoods-our-oceania-framework-pacific-oceanscape-catalyst>.

⁸⁸ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 130–35.

⁸⁹ Source: Department of Defence, *2020 Defence Strategic Update* (Barton ACT: Australian Government, 2020), 32, <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/2020-defence-strategic-update>.

A key aspect of the PPBP that makes it a distinctly smart solution for international capacity building is how Australia structured the design and acquisition aspects of the program. The PPBP had created specifically designed boats that are both mission capable yet simplistic in technology and maintenance support. This decision acknowledges that Sydney's logistical and contractor support capabilities are significantly different from those located in Colonia, Yap. Second, the standardization of all boats across all participating islands creates efficacies and scalability in training and logistics support. The PPBP program is distinctly different from historical at sea capacity-building operations the United States has supported in the past, with the United States favoring a ship rider approach versus Australia's approach of granting capabilities.

Through the PPBP program, Australia can build an organic maritime law enforcement capacity within the region. This capability allows the PICs to gain capacity in its ability to conduct surveillance activities in critical operating environments, ensuring awareness within the domain. It enables the PIC to patrol and secure their sea resources effectively and independently. Figure 6 shows the power the PPBP program has in joining the two nations together in partnership. This program creates strategic outcomes that enables economic activity to grow in a sustainable way while also preserving the countries' marine ecosystem from abusive or underregulated actors.



Left to right: Lieutenant Commander Emerson Nobuo, Commanding Officer PSS President HI Remeliik II; Minister for Defence Industry, Melissa Price; and Head of Maritime Systems, Rear Admiral Wendy Malcolm.

Figure 6. Guardian-class Patrol Vessel⁹⁰

The PPBP program has been well received by the PIC countries and has been often cited by many island leaders as a valuable asset for multi-mission use. Thus, from an influence perspective, Australia is able to align its foreign policy direction within the region by intertwining continued support or increased support to a nation's gifted patrol boat in turn for a particular action, if needed. Finally, from a domestic perspective, Australia has found general support by having the ships built by shipyards located in Australia, thus acting as a steady revenue stream for their domestic industrial base.

2. Pacific Fusion Center

The year-over-year efforts of the Pacific Plans have evolved while remaining true to the intent of “economic growth, sustainable development, good governance, security for

⁹⁰ Source: “Patrol Boat for Palau,” Australian Government Defence News, September 25, 2020, <https://news.defence.gov.au/international/patrol-boat-palau>.

the Pacific through regionalism.”⁹¹ Since around 2018, there has been considerable effort to grow the PIC ability to obtain MDA throughout the region. Australia has championed and supported a regional Pacific Fusion Center, acknowledging the significant systems and human capital costs associated with establishing and maintaining a modern intelligence center.

Recognizing the significant distance associated with the Pacific Islands countries, it becomes readily apparent that a robust and effective intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) program must be established to economically secure their at-sea resources. The Pacific Step-Up plan identifies this combined success paradox and thus prioritizes the need to grow organic ISR capabilities within the region.⁹² While many countries accomplish this in a number of ways and price points, what is particularly challenging about the Pacific Islands is the availability of some specialized labor segments and a lack of access to the level of supporting infrastructure that is more accessible in other parts of the world. The PPBP was a fundamental investment in equipping the Pacific Fusion Center with the ability to deploy assets to detect and report information. The next identified goal was the acquisition of overhead assets to expand sensing coverage.⁹³ Initially, this goal could be reconnaissance aircraft; however, it may evolve into unmanned systems or access to space-based sensors over time. While this effort is still ongoing, what is relevant is this systematic identification of the needs for training professionals, a fusion center as a platform, and the need for operational sensing assets to achieve maritime domain control.

This Pacific Fusion Center was expected to achieve full mission readiness in 2021 in Port Vila, Vanuatu; however, it has experienced some staffing delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹⁴ While still under development, the Pacific Fusion Center is a lesson hard-learned by Australian capacity-building efforts in PNG, where they yielded few desired

⁹¹ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *The Pacific Plan for Strengthening*, 2.

⁹² Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*.

⁹³ Australian Government.

⁹⁴ Marise Payne, “Australia to Support New Pacific Fusion Centre,” Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, September 5, 2018, <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/australia-support-new-pacific-fusion-centre>.

results: some of the policing objectives and capabilities were beyond the existing institutional structures.⁹⁵ In an attempt to avoid missing the capacity adoption problem in the Pacific Island states, Australia identified the need to pool intelligence and investigative resources at the regional level in the hopes of better managing human resource capital. Then by staffing and equipping just one fusion center (and arguably an operational command center), the Pacific Island states are better able to employ their patrol boats and overhead reconnaissance assets.

The United States has long supported the national defenses and sovereignty of the COFA states. Inherent in those guaranties is some form of defense ISR activities that can be used to ensure COFA states' safety in times of threat. The issue is that those technologies and capabilities are highly guarded and technical in nature. The United States would be reluctant to allow them to be used for routine at-sea law enforcement missions. Australia's prioritization of the development of sensor systems in the region is the ideal path forward and has a profound impact on the PIC's abilities to determine the threats facing them and better deploy limited resources.

The United States has a long history of fusion centers and currently has fusion centers in Guam and Hawaii. While both are tasked with information sharing and combating homeland security threats, both are also focused on crimes and trends on the island on which they are located. Neither fusion center would identify MDA or information flow to FAS states as a mission priority.⁹⁶ This is a narrow-sighted shortcoming and is something that is discussed later in this this.

3. Policing Capacity-Building Efforts

While often overlooked, even with capable law enforcement assets and the ability to have domain awareness, effective policing capacity is dependent on a well-developed legal framework. To this end, the Pacific Step-up Plan has encouraged the development "of governance mechanisms, including in resource management; and in the harmonization

⁹⁵ Dinnen, *Law and Order in a Weak State*, 53.

⁹⁶ "How the MLRIN Was Established," Mariana Regional Fusion Center, accessed May 7, 2022, <https://mlrin.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/23/MenuGroup/MLRIN+Public+Home.htm>.

of traditional and modern values and structures ... [and] where appropriate, ratification and implementation of international and regional human rights conventions, covenants and agreements and support for meeting reporting and other requirements.”⁹⁷ This concerted governance-building effort has helped the islands secure their internal rights to their EEZ and Outer Continental Shelf, improve high seas fishing regulations and sustainability, and develop investigative capabilities. These laws and frameworks allow the Pacific Islands to organize their law enforcement assets toward unified and integrated strategic, operational, and tactical objectives.

Australia’s “state-building assistance,” as coined by Dr. Wallis, has had a long and storied history, the most intrusive examples being the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and the Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) in PNG.⁹⁸ On the opposite side of the spectrum would be some of the recent efforts in the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) and the ongoing support to secure legal claims to the island’s outer continental shelf and the Pacific Island Forum.

a. Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands

Australia’s military-like action to restore government stability in the Solomon Islands is an example of the challenges faced when attempting to create governance frameworks in the Pacific. Once security was achieved, the operation turned its attention toward restoring law and justice. Over the multi-year effort, the issue was that deployed coalition police force officers “exercised executive police powers, thereby effectively displacing the [Royal Solomon Islands Police Force].”⁹⁹ This policing action created a marginalization of the island’s organic policing teams, weakening their position in the community. In addition, the deployment strategy did not grow organic investigative, specialized, or other policing capabilities. Over the span of more than ten years (2003 to 2013), the coalition of Pacific States contributed a significant number of resources to

⁹⁷ Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, *The Pacific Plan for Strengthening*, 38.

⁹⁸ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 148.

⁹⁹ Wallis, 158.

rebuilding basic government functions in the Solomon Islands. The question is: What did Australia, and other PICs, gain from this concerted effort?

b. Enhanced Cooperation Program in Papua New Guinea

Another similar example to the Solomon Islands Coalition actions is the lengthy efforts in PNG. Dinnen spoke a great deal about the “doomsday scenario” that played out in PNG when attempting to analyze the return on investment for law enforcement force augmentation in Oceania. Dinnen and McLeod commented that “Australian police-building projects in the Pacific have tended not to focus on police reform, but rather, upon strengthening existing institutional frameworks and mechanisms.”¹⁰⁰ Dr. Wallis added to this example by providing some of the justifications for the decision to augment the PNG forces: “PNG has only one officer for every 1406. Australia has approximately one officer for every 364 people.”¹⁰¹ In practical terms, the typical approach was to augment a police unit with more people or weapons; this strategy would look like more uniformed officers walking the street or encircling government buildings.

The problem is that these actions failed to change the underlying trust issues associated with the PNG police. It also failed to change the trajectory of policing efforts within the communities in a meaningful way. What PNG needed was new tactics, techniques, improved community relationships, training programs, and specialized gang and homicide squads. What they got was more foreigners covering their shifts at no cost to the PNG government. Furthermore, the style of support completely missed the cultural complexities placed on officers in the PICs: “Across the Pacific, policing and law enforcement agencies are required to operate in parallel with other community norms, social structures, and cultural traditions. Pacific communities place a high value on kinship

¹⁰⁰ Dinnen and McLeod, “Policing Melanesia,” 340.

¹⁰¹ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 151.

ties and communal rights, and in many instances, the rights of the individual may be subordinate to the needs of the community.”¹⁰²

Having spent years on the ground in PNG, Dinnen reflects on the missed opportunity in the state-building efforts in PNG. He explained, “from an institutionalist perspective, the main challenge is to improve the operations of law enforcement agencies and, in particular, the police. A concerted effort is needed to enhance the institutional capacity of law enforcement agencies, provide adequate resources, and build professional skills.”¹⁰³ Despite the significant investment of time, capital, and assistance, PNG’s inability to evolve into a modern, independent state with strong governance, even with substantial Australian support, raises questions about how to re-envisioning state-building in the Pacific.

c. Australian Cyber Security Centre

More recently, and having evolved from the Solomon Islands and PNG lessons, Australia has announced the creation of the Cyber Security Center with a law enforcement focus. Recognizing the specialized law enforcement gap within the PIC and the pervasive threat of cyberspace crimes, incorporating the PICs into the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) is a novel example of a modern Pacific state-building effort. This newly created cyber law enforcement response center “brings together cyber security capabilities from across the Australian Government to improve the cyber resilience of the Australian community and support the economic and social prosperity of Australia in the digital age.”¹⁰⁴

While still early in its creation, the stated intent of the ACSC is to investigate and bring to justice illegal cyber actors within Australia and the Pacific Islands. This

¹⁰² Commonwealth Parliament, *Security Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the Island States of the Southwest Pacific* (Canberra: Commonwealth Parliament, 2010), 25, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Completed_inquiries/2008-10/swpacific/report2/index.

¹⁰³ Dinnen, *Law and Order in a Weak State*, 54.

¹⁰⁴ “Cybercrime,” Australia’s International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement, accessed May 10, 2022, <https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/our-work/security/cybercrime>.

community approach is derived from the underlying understanding that Australian security is forever linked to a regional security doctrine. The PIC's need for specialized law enforcement capabilities to gain awareness of emerging threats is significant. The ACSC could be one tool to combat this challenge facing the region. The PICs face a significant problem on the cyber front as

no Pacific Island state has its own computer emergency response team. A distributed denial of service attack in the Marshall Islands in 2008 saw the Island disconnected from email communication for two days. At present, cybercrime legislation across the region is also fairly uneven. There have been efforts to strengthen cyber-crime legislation, notably in Tonga and Fiji, but for the most part, the capacity to enforce these laws remains unobtainable for most.¹⁰⁵

The cyber domain is an excellent example of the multi-dimensional scope of the problems that the PICs are facing. To find security in the cyber domain, the PICs first need the capabilities to understand and conceptualize threat space, then develop a legal framework to enforce laws. Only lastly can they begin to develop the necessary specialized investigative units to bring to justice malicious actors. As Pitts concluded on PNG, “some reforms [were] too ambitious for agency absorptive capacity.”¹⁰⁶ This same issue would be observed if the Australian Agency for International Development or the U.S. Agency for International Development were to create a \$5 million block grant for Tonga or Samoa to provide access to specialized data sources without considering the necessary skills and agency structures need to execute on such information.

d. Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency

What is arguably one of the most significant Australian-influenced governance structures is the FFA. The FFA is a derivative product of the Pacific Island Forum that looks “to strengthen national capacity and regional solidarity so its 17 members can

¹⁰⁵ Mary Willett, “Cyber in the Pacific Islands,” *The Strategist* (blog), March 27, 2013, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/cyber-in-the-pacific-islands/>.

¹⁰⁶ Maxine Pitts, *Crime, Corruption & Capacity in Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at The Australian National University, 2002), 120.

manage, control and develop their tuna fisheries now and in the future.”¹⁰⁷ While initially created from Australian regionalism ideals, the FFA has been one of the most successful examples of a multi-national fisheries governing body. From a law enforcement perspective, the FFA’s noteworthy accomplishments include the creation of a multi-national catch regulatory framework for fishing quotas and the regional requirements for a vessel monitoring system.

Prior to the FFA, various PICs had a wide array of approaches to the highly profitable tuna fishery stock within the Oceania region. This fractured legal regime was prime for outside corporations located in Japan, China, and the United States to exploit those enforcement gaps to maximize profits. Recognizing that tuna stocks do not acknowledge maritime boundary lines, the FFA coalesced around a regional framework approach. The FFA has had profound effects on the economic viability of the tuna fishery. As Chand attributed, in the 1980s “Pacific island countries’ initial attempts to gain reasonable access to resource rents accruing from their fisheries were hampered by their negotiation experiences.”¹⁰⁸ However, Chand then credits the islands with a level of success twenty years later, after the FFA had managed to organize and begin exerting a degree of collective bargaining and regional governance. The FFA is the PIC’s greatest example of a regional body that is comprised of PIC states having a direct benefit on the Oceania region as a whole.

4. Australian Policy Analysis

Australia’s actions in the PICs have been noble and persistent, yet they have not been without failure. The recent development in the Solomon Islands with the announcement of a land lease deal to China to allow the island to be used as a base for military assets is a representative example of the persistent influence problem Australia

¹⁰⁷ Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency, “Welcome to the Pacific Islands Forum.”

¹⁰⁸ Parris and Grafton, “Finding Common Ground: New Zealand and Regional Security Cooperation in the Pacific,” 152.

and the United States face.¹⁰⁹ Even with significant Australian capacity investments in the Solomon Islands, the ability to influence the countries strategic decisions is still limited. Even with all aspects of the Australian Pacific Strategy in place, good governance building, and policing capacity support, the questions become: Why does the region still have instability, and why does Australia still see limitations on its ability to influence the actions of the PIC? As the United States continues to shift its focus to the Pacific Ocean, these limitations should be understood to help shape its long-term strategy.

Chapter IV compares the strengths and weaknesses of both Australian actions in Melanesia and the United States' actions in the Caribbean to provide policy recommendations in the COFA states. A common scoring table will be used to create a single quantitative evaluation to bring these disparate regional strategies together. This evaluation table consists of five criteria and will score all of the strategic lines of efforts reviewed in the paper against a Low, Medium, and Strong criteria.

In this Chapter, the PPBP, the Pacific Fusion Center, and Australian policing capacity building efforts under the Pacific Strategies were explored in detail. The below table is a scoring of those lines of effort against five categories. The categories are defined in the text following Table 1.

¹⁰⁹ Mary Yang and Jack Detsch, "Australia's Got a Solomon Islands Headache (Again)," *Foreign Policy*, May 19, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/19/solomon-islands-australia-election-pacific-national-security-us-china/>.

Table 1. Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of Australian Strategic Lines of Effort in Melanesia¹¹⁰

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
Pacific Patrol Boat Program	Low	Low	Med	High	High
Pacific Fusion Center	High	Low	High	Med	Low
Pacific Strategy Law Enforcement Capacity Building	Low	Med	Low	Med	Med

The Oversight category is evaluated on the program’s ability to enable a country to gain awareness of a current or future threat. A country must first have an awareness of a threat vector to be able to organize resources to respond to the problem. The Governance category is the law, policies, and institutions that are in place to provide the foundation to a lawful response. This category most commonly looks at legal frameworks but can also include policy, oversight bodies, or information-sharing structures. The Awareness category is the existence of domain awareness visualization and monitoring. This category includes both the assets and technical capabilities to perform sensing in the threat space. It also requires the people, skills, and a platform system to visualize that information for operationalization at the law enforcement level. The Enforcement Capability category is the ability to have the necessary people, equipment, and skills required to effectively enforce the laws and respond to threats. Last, the Influence category is the ability to encourage another country to take action on an issue without the threat of force; this category could be simplified as soft power.

A review of Table 1 shows that the Pacific Fusion Center’s purpose is to produce a high degree of support in the Oversight and Awareness categories. The PPBP was the most beneficial on the response spectrum, scoring high on the Enforcement Capability and

¹¹⁰ Given there is no developed model for evaluating the capacity-building programs in the PICs, this descriptive table was developed to create a common evaluation standard. The varying lines of effort are then assessed against the descriptive criteria. Each effort is assigned a Low/Medium/High score to be later overlaid onto proposed policy options in the FAS.

simultaneously having the benefit of being a strong Influence tool enabling soft power options.¹¹¹ The Australian efforts in the Melanesia region have had a meaningful impact in providing needed assets and capabilities to the region. An overarching controlling and intelligence-enabling function in the region to better leverage the contributed assets is missing.

¹¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 8.

IV. UNDERSTANDING U.S. EFFORTS TO IMPROVE POLICING IN THE CARIBBEAN

Over the past fifty years, the United States has made significant investments into the Central America region to combat the flow of drugs, people, and money that moves from South America into North America and back. That transportation corridor runs directly through the Caribbean region dotted with islands that struggle with many of the same topics the Pacific Islands face regarding governance, defense, and law enforcement resourcing and enforcement. As Morris notes, “naval power often may not be particularly useful in the post-Cold War setting, as, for maritime interdiction of illegal migrants and drug trafficking, the constabulary capability of coast guard is often more relevant; but very small island-states are often not even able to field viable coast guards.”¹¹² Recognizing the larger law enforcement capacity gap problem in the Caribbean island region, the United States has dedicated significant military and law enforcement efforts to combat transnational crimes. Those strategic efforts are executed through a number of overlapping and supportive, yet distinctly different, law enforcement and military lines of effort. It is critical to understand the varying nested U.S. lines of effort to better understand and analyze the law enforcement capacity-building efforts within the region.

From a resourcing and influence perspective, the largest of those government organizations is SOUTHCOM. SOUTHCOM’s stated mission is “responsible for providing contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation in ... Central America, South America, The Caribbean (except U.S. commonwealths, territories, and possessions).”¹¹³ This large and encompassing area of interest and mission space results in a number of interconnected lines of effort within the region. As of 2022, SOUTHCOM’s stated priorities are countering threats, strengthening partnerships, and building its team.¹¹⁴ Under SOUTHCOM is a subordinate command, JIATF South, which “conducts detection and monitoring operations throughout their Joint Operating Area to facilitate the

¹¹² Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 6.

¹¹³ “About Us,” U.S. Southern Command, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.southcom.mil/About/>.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Southern Command.

interdiction of illicit trafficking in support of national and partner nation security.”¹¹⁵ In other words, JIATF South is the operational arm of SOUTHCOM’s assets and capabilities to combat transnational crimes. JIATF South functions as a DOD intelligence fusion center combined with a joint operations command center. The operational success of JIATF South will make it of relevance later in this thesis for operational and tactical approaches that could be replicated in the Pacific.

While not directly subordinate to SOUTHCOM, OPBAT is a joint USCG, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Turks and Caicos, and United Kingdom (UK) operational effort that directly supports JIATF South’s regional efforts. OPBAT’s international agreement and subsequent task force date back to 1982, when it was recognized that the Bahamas faced a large and powerful transnational threat due to its geographical position between South America and the United States. Combating this threat would require robust law enforcement skills and capabilities that the Bahamian government did not possess. This capacity gap ultimately resulted in the establishment of a task force to combine Department of Justice (DOJ) intelligence with Coast Guard assets while using local authorities to combat crime in the Bahamas to the U.S. transit corridor.

This chapter explores elements of JIATF South’s and OPBAT’s actions in the Caribbean islands to combat transnational crimes and increase policing capacity in the region, at the same time acknowledging that both JIATF South’s and OPBAT’s actions are framed under the strategic framework of the U.S. war on drugs. This chapter explores these dominant law enforcement influences in the region and then evaluates them on their ability to grow policing capacity in the region and not just on the ability to stem the flow of narcotics entering North America.

A. JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH

JIATF South’s efforts to work unified international policing in the Caribbean region are significant and have a proven history of success. Many in the United States identify

¹¹⁵ “About Us,” Joint Interagency Task Force South, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.jiatfs.southcom.mil/About-Us/>.

JIATF South as the model of combatant commanders' intelligence integration and operational execution. Yeatman of the U.S. National Defense University summarizes:

Over the last 17 years, the Joint Interagency Task Force–South (JIATF–S) has built an unparalleled network of law enforcement, intelligence, and military assets to focus on detecting the movements and shipments of narcoterrorist organizations. With this evolving structure, JIATF-S serves as a model for bringing the most effective assets to bear on complex national policy issues, whether it be illegal drugs, weapons proliferation, or international terrorism.¹¹⁶

Within the international maritime policing community, those who have interacted with JIATF South agree that the organization is a model that many other similar structures should use to accelerate the relevance of operational intelligence to achieve law enforcement objectives.

While the tactical operations and assigned resources of JIATF South are closely guarded by the U.S. government, we can review overarching goals and structures to understand how the organization works. The RAND Group summarizes some overarching narratives:

Illegal drug flow to the United States has been disrupted. In FY 2014, the JIATFS contributed to the disruption of 158 MT of cocaine worth nearly \$3.2 billion wholesale. This represented 76 percent of the estimated cocaine flow directed toward the U.S. market. ... JIATFS exercised tactical control of U.S. and allied ships and Maritime Patrol Aircraft, along with the Forces Surveillance Support Center's relocatable over-the-horizon radar to detect, monitor, and support interdiction of illicit traffic.¹¹⁷

They also highlight, "Fifty-six percent of JIATFS disruptions happened as a result of Latin American partner nation participation. Additionally, 75 of the 204 (37 percent) illicit trafficking events disrupted by JIATFS were a direct result of the participation of our international allies."¹¹⁸ It becomes clear that in addition to employing defense resources, the integration of foreign-nation partners and the placement of senior law enforcement

¹¹⁶ Yeatman, "JIATF-South: Blueprint for Success," 26.

¹¹⁷ Rabasa et al., *Counternetwork*, 129–30.

¹¹⁸ Rabasa et al., 130.

officers within positions of leadership in the organization are central to the unique way in which JIATF South achieves operational success.

1. Military Assets Underpinning a Law Enforcement Mission

Foundational to JIATF South is that it is a military operation that executes law enforcement missions driven by national security and foreign policy strategic objectives. This clarity of mission and intergovernmental unity is a contributing factor to its success. The operational space that JIATF South primarily operates in is the use of force to combat transnational criminal actors who conduct an array of illegal activities associated with narcotics and human trafficking activities in South America. Those actors then use air and sea transportation routes to move illegal cargoes from South America to North America or Europe. Along with that transportation corridor are many Caribbean islands where criminal actors can find safe havens for logistics and detection avoidance.

The challenge is balancing the need for autonomy to operate in and around the varying islands' air, sea, and cyber domains while simultaneously upholding the fundamental international frameworks on sovereignty, an ideal that the U.S. aggressively supports and actively advocates. Yet the same sovereignty factor is actively cited as a primary limiting factor in executing transnational criminal cases. To reconcile this topic, JIATF South has aptly recognized the need to integrate the other nations into the strategic, operational, and tactical response, transcending the traditional liaison model and moving more toward a unified response effort.

This unified law enforcement effort is tested with the introduction of fragile island governance, which can be found in many Caribbean and Pacific islands. With fragile governance, unpredictable variables can complicate the navigation of law enforcement collaboration; those influence variables can be external (third-party actors) or internal (corruption or incompetence). For some states, they may make the strategic decision to coexist with the illegal actors, and for others, they may completely lack the capabilities or skills to detect the illegal activity.

Ultimately there is a limit to return on investment when looking at the partnership category for law enforcement topics due to the insidious nature of crime and corruption.

The integrity problem will be ever-present; for JIATF South this forces the embrace of best-in-class intelligence and operational fusion. The integration of U.S. military sensors, collection capabilities, and defense intelligence agencies enables targeting and queuing of assets at a far superior level than any domestic law enforcement agency could create independently. In addition, it shines a light on activities that are occurring in places where many, including the government and criminals, enjoyed privacy, thereby making it difficult for law enforcement officials to act on a morally corrupt impulse. When independent intelligence collection capabilities are constantly holding those involved accountable, it can begin to hedge against fragile governance problems at a very low cost.

Along the line of resourcing, the embrace of a quantifiable and transparent intelligence process enables the optimization of resource employment. Admiral Robert E. Kramek explained the approach to Congress: “Where we would have [had] defense in depth with many assets and perhaps using 15 or 20 percent intelligence, we now rely on intelligence for over 80 percent of our operations so that we can focus on what we really know, because we don’t have extra aircraft time or radar time or ship time.”¹¹⁹ The use of diverse intelligence practices and sources enables the reduction of cost and resource requirements, thus enabling better placement of trusted assets or the use of less advanced assets to execute routine missions and creating a degree of accountability in a notoriously nebulous mission space.

Bringing the two concepts together, we see the use of DOD intelligence capabilities combined with surveillance and interdiction aircraft from the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, international partners, and Intelligence Community members to enable robust domain awareness and targeting. Then the incorporation of U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Customs, and internal partners’ ships, patrol boats, and airborne use of force-equipped helicopters fulfills the enforcement arm of the capabilities needs. Richard Yeatman summarizes this intersection best: “the JIATF–S model expands joint operations into combined and interagency operations to accomplish common goals. If organizations want

¹¹⁹ Munsing and Lamb, *Joint Interagency Task Force–South*, 24.

to engage highly mobile threats against both homeland defense and homeland security targets, they must go beyond purely joint operations and adopt this successful model.”¹²⁰

2. Intelligence Fusion

The intelligence gaps within the ocean domain are staggering at best. There is an old adage that the solution to pollution is dilution. The saying is of relevance due to the idea that almost anything can go missing within the ocean domain. Overcoming these unknowns requires robust intelligence planning and collection capabilities, a skill that many nations do not have either the current capacity or resources to develop organically. That skills gap is becoming increasingly pronounced with the advancement of highly specialized technical data sets that are driving all innovation within the defense intelligence communities. Things such as signals intelligence, geographic intelligence, and cyber intelligence are testing even the most developed and resourced countries, let alone the island states. Therefore, when discussing developing intelligence targeting and fusion centers, it is best to be resource-minded so as to select the most appropriate combination of skills to address the problem at hand.

Given the ocean’s significant influence on both Oceania and the Caribbean, this thesis makes many references to maritime topics, but it is not exclusive to those topics. The growing importance of resource extraction and control, cyber domains, air domain, and bio/DNA topics are just as applicable to the maritime-centric topics that are primarily explored. The techniques and frameworks proposed in this thesis are just as relevant to other complex and non-geographically bound domains.

The resourcing demands placed on many organizations to field specialized law enforcement capabilities is an impossible task. Thus, intelligence and collaboration are an answer to that resourcing equation. For JIATF South, those limited resources include things such as ships, airborne use of force aircraft, overhead maritime surveillance aircraft, and digital media exploitation teams. The idea of creating a blockade of ships that have a reasonable domain sensing and control of around 20 to 30 nautical miles is not practical in

¹²⁰ Yeatman, “JIATF-South: Blueprint for Success,” 27.

the Caribbean, let alone in the vast region of Oceania. This distance to resources problem reaffirms the importance of JIATF South's operational intelligence efforts to overcome these challenges.

In the earliest days of JIATF South, the initial solution was the use of land-based radar systems and deployed field observation teams in the most rudimentary forms of human intelligence (HUMINT). At the time, there was significant military investment in advanced deployable radar systems to combat the Soviet threat. With the fall of the Soviet Union, it eased the radar systems' strategic importance, enabling them to become more available for alternative missions. This simple combination of forward-deployed human collection teams with binoculars, integrated with a new radar system feeding information into a single point, was novel and worked well. This approach allowed JIATF South to deploy ships or alert on-ground law enforcement teams to give a time advantage to execute an endgame interdiction and increase arrest rates.

With increased domain awareness came a new problem: authorities. The new sensing data revealed that the United States lacked the authority to enter into a vast number of countries' air and sea space to create a complete picture. This access problem led to the importance of international partner integration into the fusion and operations center. To many, this initiative was to gain access; however, it was quickly realized that the United States needed to give something to get something. Therefore, gaining trust within this international partner operations and intelligence fusion center required hard work and the development of a number of robust information safeguards.

Key to the success of this bi-directional information flow was the assignment of embedded international officers within the JIATF South organization. The assignment of those officers would be carefully selected, and they were typically more of a law enforcement background than a defense background. The integration of these officers unlocked two operational avenues that JIATF South needed. First, it provided access to a flow of intelligence reporting from partner states, often in the form of HUMINT reporting. Second, it allowed U.S. assets to pursue suspect targets into others' controlled spaces.

If an at-sea or in-air interdiction was not possible, the foreign nation liaison could alert on-ground forces to be ready to execute a lawful endgame at the landing location. While the arrest and prosecution aspect of the case may not have always gone the way the United States wanted, it would, at minimum, result in a disruption of the illegal activity. The disruption of illegal activity is still a success on a sliding continuum of results when discussing international law enforcement outcomes. This same approach can, and is beginning to be used in the cyber, banking, and sanctions problem spaces when U.S. authorities limit a specific enforcement outcome.

JIATF South has since excelled in using all-source intelligence-sensing capabilities and fusing them together within a joint operating environment. This approach is used to task Navy, Coast Guard, Customs, and other partner nations' enforcement assets to execute tactical enforcement actions. While aspects of what intelligence sources are used are controlled pieces of information, what can be shared is almost every version of intelligence-sourcing capabilities that can be organized and fused in near real-time is, thus enabling the dynamic positioning of assets.

There is also a net benefit to employing domain information mastery in law enforcement missions that are executed at a high rate of repetition. The symbiotic benefit of training defense assets in creating a targeting profile to seek, find, and influence a 30-foot boat or single-engine propeller plane trains and refines operators' proficiency for seeking and destroying hostile dark targets at the time of conflict. If the U.S. Navy is proficient at fusing all-source intelligence and tasking assets to combat small and highly dynamic illegal operators, it will be proficient at combating state actors when called to do so.

Ultimately, there is a symbiotic relationship to having DOD assets and capabilities support law enforcement missions. The employment of national assets such as warships and aircraft on these law enforcement missions creates capacity for contingency operations. It is not every day that nations employ national capital ships to find, target, and stop other ships. Thus, by using counternarcotics events in the Caribbean as a concepts and tactics training ground, the United States continuously invests and evolves ISR and at-sea use of force tactics.

3. Law Enforcement's Integration Beyond the Liaison Role

From a multiagency integration perspective, what makes JIATF South novel within the United States is the strong integration of defense department assets executing law enforcement missions. While the DOD generally lacks constabulary authorities to enforce laws, there is a process and precedent for defense department assets operating abroad to develop intelligence that has incidental value to global law enforcement objectives. Then by partnering and integrating law enforcement officers with national intelligence capabilities, operational objectives are executed at a far superior quality and success rate while having a net benefit at the regional engagement level of fostering stability and improving international engagement.

Within JIATF South, this fusion has been accomplished in a number of ways, evolving over the past 20 years. The first approach is to embark U.S. law enforcement officers onboard partner defense agencies' assets (planes, ships, boats, or vehicles). This process allows the designated law enforcement officer to make the tactical decision and ensure compliance with the law. In return, it equips the law enforcement agency with assets and capabilities they may not have had access to or are in scarcity within that agency. Practical examples include fisheries officers onboard Customs aircraft or Coast Guard officers on U.S. Navy ships.

Another approach is the embarkation of foreign national representatives onboard a U.S. ship or aircraft, often referred to as a ship rider program. While the concept is similar, it is distinctly different in tactical execution. When U.S. law enforcement officers are embarked on a defense asset, they are highly integrated into the operational planning; they interpret and contribute to the strategies employed and how resources are positioned. Conversely, when the foreign ship rider model is employed, the representative is kept at a much greater distance and is only marginally included in the operational planning process. The primary objective of this approach is more centered on gaining necessary access and authorities. By having the foreign officer on board, the JIATF South assets can gain access to sea or air space it was previously unable to secure and can prosecute with an expanded set of authorities. While this configuration is advantageous to U.S. objectives, it can marginalize partner nations' objectives and rarely results in capacity growth.

While the rider program is a tool in the spectrum of international operations, it fails to fully integrate the host nations' full resources and capabilities. This limitation is where the distinction is drawn between liaison and fusion. JIATF South's model identifies the value of moving its law enforcement officers, both U.S. and foreign, toward the fusion approach. Examples include mixed organizational structures where varying agency members will report to or supervise members from other organizations. Other examples include the deployment of specialized intelligence-collection teams detached to other host countries' law enforcement organizations for real-time processing and exploitation. Inclusive integration enables the fulfillment of multiple strategic objectives. From the U.S. perspective, it grows intelligence sources, gains expanded authorities, and can leverage more resources. From the island's perspective, they gain awareness of the threat space and grow law enforcement capacity in a supported environment. Both sides see a net improvement in training and operational execution.

The idea of intelligence liaison officers generally works better on paper and only produces results in the case of the most extreme threats. The idea of dispatching someone to another country, then asking that individual to share some of the more sensitive information they have on ongoing law enforcement cases that will likely result in arrest, disruption, or eradication of someone's activities, is not a small ask of someone. As a result, more joint operational intelligence structures must move away from the liaison concept and toward the fusion and joint integration model. JIATF South provides us a roadmap on how to accomplish this complex and sensitive transition to such a model.

B. OPERATION BAHAMAS TURKS AND CAICOS

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is strategically located along the major maritime and air transit routes from South America to North America. As a result of this position, it has historically faced significant challenges from transnational criminal actors and their associated illegal activities occurring within the commonwealth's sovereign territory. Those challenges are amplified by an inability to detect, secure, and respond to threats within its expansive area. This challenge is further complicated by a significant resourcing element that limits the commonwealth from fully equipping its defense and

police force, a lack of persistent surveillance capability, significant interoperability issues, and minimal intelligence support to conduct operational predictive analysis for projected joint operations. All these problems are experienced by many other island states in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

This fragile governance issue is exacerbated by the introduction of lucrative transnational criminal actors and intertwined supporting industries. In 1983, the *Miami Herald* conducted an extensive investigation into the full extent of the influence drug smuggling had on the Bahamas, and the final publication declared the nation as a “smuggler’s paradise.”¹²¹ The article states: “by 1988 it was estimated that between 40–80% of all cocaine and marihuana entering the United States first passed through the Bahamas.”¹²² The significance of the problem had permeated almost all aspects of daily life, corrupting government officials, inflating real estate prices, hijacking banking institutions, and creating street violence problems. It became clear to both U.S. and U.K. officials that a new approach needed to be developed to combat the intersection of transnational criminal organizations and fragile island governance.

These problem sets were motivators for the creation of OPBAT, which was originally formed in 1982 to counter cocaine smuggling from Columbia destined for the United States. While the actual tactical structure has evolved, the general configuration has been personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard, the DEA, and the Royal Bahamian Defense Force. All operating jointly under a tri-country agreement between the U.S., Turks and Caicos, and U.K. governments to combat drug smuggling to and from the United States, Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos:

OPBAT employed a true interagency force of Army helicopters and Forward Air Control fixed wing aircraft, U.S. Coast Guard helicopters P-3s and Falcon jets, and DEA personnel to intercept and apprehend drug

¹²¹ Carl Hiaasen and Jim McGee, “A Nation for Sale - Corruption in The Bahamas,” *Miami Herald Special Reprint*, October 10, 1984.

¹²² Bruce Bullington, “A Smugglers Paradise: Cocaine Trafficking Though the Bahamas,” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 16 (1991): 63.

traffickers as they transited north of Cuba in the Grand Cay area predominantly ... OPBAT was truly a team effort.¹²³

In 2015, 37 Coast Guard members and 21 DEA personnel supported OPBAT in executing a multitude of air and sea interdiction missions.¹²⁴ This number does not reflect the multi-use forces that can be flexed into service to meet specific operational objectives, such as ship, aircraft, and remote intelligence collections teams.

Morris aptly identifies OPBAT as having evolved into an “involved ongoing, close coordination between land, sea and air interdiction of smugglers by U.S. and Bahamian officials.”¹²⁵ This idea of a close fusion of law enforcement professionals supported by strategic defense assets results in “extensive cooperation ... on land, sea, and air would be the model for other islands.”¹²⁶ Morris’s assertion aligns with that of a number of other experts who identify JIATF South as something beyond traditional joint law enforcement task forces and legacy coalition combatant commands. It is only logical to seek to understand how these two constructs, JIATF South and OPBAT, could be adapted for the threats developing in the Pacific.

C. CARIBBEAN POLICY ANALYSIS

From an operational execution perspective, JIATF South’s and OPBAT’s efforts over the past 50 years are commendable. In 2014, the RAND Group itemized the success: “illegal drug flow to the United States has been disrupted ... JIATFS contributed to the disruption of 158 MT of cocaine worth nearly \$3.2 billion wholesale ... 76 percent of the estimated cocaine flow directed toward the U.S. market.”¹²⁷ Furthermore, joint operations have secured the air space with a documented reduction in illegal air traffic and improved

¹²³ Daniel L. Whitten, *Perspective on the Military Involvement in the War on Drugs - Is There a Better Way?:* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University, 1999), 21, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA398877>.

¹²⁴ Ashley J. Johnson, “OPBAT – Beyond the Drugs,” Coast Guard News, November 2, 2016, <https://coastguardnews.com/opbat-beyond-the-drugs/2016/11/02/>.

¹²⁵ Morris, *Caribbean Maritime Security*, 144.

¹²⁶ Morris, 144.

¹²⁷ Rabasa et al., *Counternetwork*, 129–30.

interoperability in the region. The idea of replicating this law enforcement operational objective with a DOD underpinning to create regional stability could have direct applicability in the Oceania region.

The critique of the two programs is that the U.S. actions in the Caribbean have failed to develop organic capacity in the region. Over 50 years of concerted U.S. effort and yet the United States is still the dominant contributor of assets, equipment, and resources to the problem space. It becomes clear that when viewed from the lens of the Caribbean states, U.S. counter-drug law enforcement strategies have been less about development and more about disrupting the narcotics business model. This dueling perspective leaves an in-between space that allows for the acknowledgment that OPBAT and JIATF South have gone past conventional boundaries, becoming a successful and fully integrated interagency command and control platform.¹²⁸ Yet, they still lack a comprehensive capacity-building framework that is mutually supportive of both the prevention and response missions.

In this chapter, the JIATF South and OPBAT were explored in detail. Table 2 is a scoring of those lines of effort against five categories.

Table 2. Results Using the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model of U.S. Strategic Lines of Effort in the Caribbean¹²⁹

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
JIATF South	High	Low	High	High	Med
OPBAT	Med	Low	High	High	High

¹²⁸ Yeatman, “JIATF-South: Blueprint for Success.”

¹²⁹ Given there is no developed model for evaluating the capacity-building programs in the Pacific Islands Countries, this descriptive table was developed to create a common evaluation standard. The varying lines of effort are then assessed against the descriptive criteria. Each effort is assigned a Low/Medium/High score to be later overlayed onto proposed policy options in the FAS states.

The Oversight category is evaluated on the program's ability to enable a country to gain awareness of a current or future threat. A country must first have an awareness of a threat vector to be able to organize resources to respond to the problem. The Governance category is the law, policies, and institutions that are in place to provide the foundation to a lawful response. This category most commonly looks at legal frameworks but can also include policy, oversight bodies, or information-sharing structures. The Awareness category is the existence of domain awareness visualization and monitoring. This category includes both the assets and technical capabilities to perform sensing in the threat space. It also requires the people, skills, and a platform system to visualize that information for operationalization at the law enforcement level. The Enforcement Capability category is the ability to have the necessary people, equipment, and skills required to effectively enforce the laws and respond to threats. Last, the Influence category is the ability to encourage another country to take action on an issue without the threat of force; this category could be simplified as soft power.

A review of Table 2 shows that U.S. policy efforts in the Caribbean region have produced exceptionally high results in the Oversight, Awareness, and Enforcement Capability categories. OPBAT, a close echo of JIATF South, has produced high results in the same categories, with the noted addition of Influence. Within the Caribbean policy analysis section, there was not a strong policy line of effort that corresponded to the Governance category. The U.S. actions in the Caribbean have had a significant influence on the transnational criminal actors operating within the Caribbean region; however, it has been found wanting in its ability to break the resourcing and fragile governance problems inherent within most island states.

Chapter V compares the strengths and weaknesses of both Australian actions in Melanesia and U.S. actions in the Caribbean to provide policy recommendations in the COFA states. A common scoring table is used to create a single quantitative evaluation to bring these disparate regional strategies together. This evaluation table consists of five criteria and scores all of the strategic lines of efforts reviewed in the paper against a Low, Medium, and High criterion.

V. CHARTING A NEW POLICY PATH WITHIN THE FAS

The previous two chapters are in-depth policy analyses on the past 50 years of policing capacity-building efforts, or lack thereof, conducted by Australia within the Melanesia region and by the United States within the Caribbean. While that analysis is notable in its own right, the intent of this thesis is to overlay those actions into the Pacific in the hopes of proposing a new, and complementary to existing programs, capacity-building path within the FAS. This chapter integrates the two distinct approaches using the law enforcement domain evaluation model and then overlay and project them on the FAS in the Pacific.

A. MERGING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT DOMAIN EVALUATION MODEL

Chapter III explored a number of efforts within the Melanesia region. Those actions were categorized into three primary lines of effort: PPBP, the Pacific Fusion Center, and Australian Policing Capacity Building efforts under the Pacific Strategies. Those efforts, when analyzed through the law enforcement domain analysis model, presents a discreet way to see what policy approaches could be employed in the five distinct categories to maximize law enforcement readiness and execution. Within the Australian policy section, it was revealed that the Pacific Fusion Center has/will produce a high degree of Oversight and Awareness categories. PPBP was the most beneficial on the response spectrum, scoring high on the Enforcement Capabilities and simultaneously had the follow-on benefit of being a strong influence tool enabling both hard and soft power options.¹³⁰

In Chapter IV, a number of efforts within the Caribbean region were explored; those actions were categorized into two primary lines of effort: JIAT South and OPBAT. That analysis, when lensed through the Law Enforcement domain analysis model, presents a discreet way to see what policy approaches could be employed in the five distinct categories to maximize law enforcement readiness and execution. The Caribbean policy section revealed that JIATF South had produced exceptionally high results in the

¹³⁰ Nye, *Soft Power*, 8.

Oversight, Awareness, and Enforcement Capability categories. OPBAT, a close echo of JIATF South, has produced high results in the same categories, with the noted addition of Influence. Within the Caribbean policy analysis section, there was not a strong policy line of effort that corresponded to the Governance category.

Table 3 presents the combination of the two policy sections in one unified table. Viewed in this format, it becomes apparent that Enforcement Capability has been a primary driver for all lines of effort. Arguably this is where all of them start, and then, out of operational necessity or mission creep, they choose to adopt another category within the model. Conversely, the Governance category has classically been the category that has received the least amount of attention. The lack of emphasis in this category is explored in the next section.

Table 3. Combined Results of the Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation
Model of Both Australian and U.S. Strategic Lines of Effort in Conducting
Law Enforcement Missions¹³¹

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
Pacific Patrol Boat Program	Low	Low	Med	High	High
Pacific Fusion Center	High	Low	High	Med	Low
Pacific Strategy Law Enforcement Capacity Building	Low	Med	Low	Med	Med
JIATF South	High	Low	High	High	Med
OPBAT	Med	Low	High	High	High

Using the model makes it apparent that there is a history of impressive policy work on the enforcement capacity line of effort. These enforcement investments then lend to both soft and hard power influences to effect behavior change within the two examined

¹³¹ Given there is no developed model for evaluating the capacity-building programs in the Pacific Islands Countries, this descriptive table was developed to create a common evaluation standard. The varying lines of effort are then assessed against the descriptive criteria. Each effort is assigned a Low/Medium/High score to be later overlayed onto proposed policy options in the FAS states.

regions. What is missing is a more robust policy path on the preventative and detection side of the conversation, specifically looking at the Oversight, Governance, and Awareness efforts.

B. THE NEED FOR AN EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP CONVERSATION IN THE PACIFIC

As explored in Chapter II, a growing number of complex threats face the PICs. While those threats are not novel, they are resource intensive and have the capacity to erode government stability. Some of the threats that were presented include money laundering, corruption, illegal resource exploitation, human smuggling, visa fraud, birth tourism, and digital communications exploitation. Interestingly, these same problems and threats are being faced by many larger and more resourced countries. Thus, the question becomes: What makes the FAS in the Pacific so unique to require extra emphasis from the United States to combat these problems?

Two issues set the FAS apart: the first is their highly integrated and virtually borderless connection to the United States. This special and enduring relationship and the marginalization of many tools and authorities the United States typically employs to keep threats abroad were explored in the first half of Chapter II. The FAS is a special region for the generation of economic and cultural prosperity while simultaneously making the FAS a foothold location to exploit U.S. homeland security laws. This connection then implies that failures in resource control, immigration control, or the legitimacy of elected officials will have direct and traceable impacts on the United States.

The second and less discussed issue is the rising power and influence of China in the Pacific. While this thesis aims to transcend any single threat actor or specific domain, it would be incomplete if it did not directly address China's stated desire to exert more significant influence in the PICs, inclusive of the FAS. China's multi-faceted interest in Oceania is summarized well by the Australian National University in 2015 in their executive summary of "China's Blue Book of Oceania."¹³² They find "the Chinese government's interest in Oceania bumped up another notch with the recent publication of

¹³² Smith and Zhang, "China's Blue Book of Oceania."

the book's second edition. ... This edition, subtitled China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Initiative and the South Pacific Countries (Yu 2015), reveals how far Chinese academic and government thinking on the Pacific has come in recent years."¹³³ While the *Blue Book of Oceania* is a 392-page strategic conversation on how a whole-of-Chinese government should engage the region, the major assertions of the document are:

Geographically, [the PICs] are the only sea route between China and South America, Antarctica, Australia and New Zealand. [The PICs] are also part of the second and third island chains of defense established by the U.S. and its allies. Economically, [the PICs] are the natural extension of China's new Maritime Silk Road initiative, and can be a testing ground for South-South cooperation. Politically, [the PICs] are central to China's national unification as six of [the PICs] maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Culturally, [the PICs] can be a testing place for China's public diplomacy and soft power strategy.¹³⁴

Understanding this framework outlined in 2015, we can now, almost ten years later, observe how this is being executed at the ministry and operational levels.

The Chinese engagement in the PICs centers around infrastructure and law enforcement capacity building. In March of 2022, the "Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Samoa as a part of a tour to strengthen trade and security ties with the Pacific nations."¹³⁵ What is publicly known is that as a result of this trip, China and Samoa signed letters of agreement for the construction of a cultural center and the intent for China to support a fingerprint laboratory for law enforcement work within the Samoan Islands.¹³⁶

Then, in November of 2021, the Solomon Islands capital city had significant concerns with growing domestic security challenges. The Solomon Islands government looked to outside help to strengthen existing law enforcement capabilities. China filled this

¹³³ Smith and Zhang.

¹³⁴ Smith and Zhang.

¹³⁵ Jennifer Staats, "Four Takeaways from China's Tour of the Pacific Islands," United States Institute of Peace, June 9, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/four-takeaways-chinas-tour-pacific-islands>.

¹³⁶ Adam Schrader, "China Signs Deal with Samoa During Pacific Trip Watched Closely by U.S. Officials," UPI, May 28, 2022, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/05/28/china-deal-samoa-pacific-trip/4781653763474/.

role, supplying them with riot gear, police advisers, and a promise of continued support to train law enforcement personnel.¹³⁷ While it cannot be known if it was a direct result, this strengthening relationship with China contributed to the global flash point event where in May of 2022, it was leaked that the Solomon Islands government had signed a secret agreement to allow China to hub naval capabilities in the Solomon Islands. This secret deal prompted the United States, Australia, New Zealand, as well as most of the Pacific Island Forum member states to push back on the agreement, ultimately resulting in the public unwinding of the deal.¹³⁸ While this was a diplomatic victory for the United States and Australia, it still revealed to many that some of the PICs are looking for a different kind of partnership than the West has historically offered.

Chinese engagement in the PICs culminated in late May of 2022 with a regional diplomatic offer to all the islands. Excerpts of that conversation are: “military talks on Law Enforcement capacity and policing cooperation,” a “high-level conversation on maritime cooperation,” executive engagements between agriculture and resources ministries, and the deployment of advisors to discuss aviation routes.¹³⁹ Most importantly, as it relates to this thesis, “China will, according to the needs of Pacific Island Countries, provide assistance in laboratory construction used for fingerprints, forensic autopsy, drugs, electronic and digital forensics.”¹⁴⁰ China has clearly identified an underserved capacity need within the PICs: law enforcement capacity development and governance growth.¹⁴¹ It is

¹³⁷ John Feng, “China Military Base in Solomon Islands Ruled Out in Blow to Naval Ambitions,” *Newsweek*, July 14, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/china-solomon-pacific-islands-military-base-manasseh-sogavare-1724482>.

¹³⁸ Staats, “Four Takeaways from China’s Tour of the Pacific Islands.”

¹³⁹ “China’s Position Paper on Mutual Respect and Common Development with Pacific Island Countries Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America,” China News, May 30, 2022, http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202205/t20220531_10694923.htm.

¹⁴⁰ Cleo Paskal (@cleopaskal), “China-Pacific Islands Five-Year Action Plan on Common Development (2022-2026) 1 of 2,” Twitter, May 26, 2022, <https://twitter.com/cleopaskal/status/1529849187071926273>; Cleo Paskal (@cleopaskal), “China-Pacific Islands Five-Year Action Plan on Common Development (2022-2026) 2 of 2,” Twitter, May 25, 2022, <https://twitter.com/kirstyneedham/status/1529348547858300930>.

¹⁴¹ It is interesting to note that while the embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America, China’s Position Paper on Mutual Respect and Common Development with Pacific Island Countries and the leaked documents by via social media are virtually identical. The section offering law enforcement capacity building was omitted from the public-facing English version.

reasonable to assume that some of the PIC states will accept this or similar offers from China. The United States needs to consider those offers with Western versions to hedge against PIC backsliding without simply trying to outspend China in the region.

In the hope of keeping policymakers from viewing the PICs as binary decision-makers, a blended path is proposed. As Finin and Wesley-Smith articulated, by exclusively focusing on countering China, it “divert [s] attention from [the PICs] shared democratic values, religious traditions, language, and popular culture embraced by Americans and Pacific Islanders alike.”¹⁴² The United States should create a political space where it is acceptable for a PIC to embrace Chinese infrastructure aid while simultaneously being able to align with Western national security objectives or values. By accepting this blended path as a possible way forward, the Western nations need to be smart with their partnership programs, enabling judicious resource application in Oceania.

C. LAW ENFORCEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORKS IN THE FAS

As the United States continues to evolve the COFA agreements, the following concepts should be considered by the United States and FAS delegations as mutually beneficial paths to strengthening the islands’ policing capacity while hardening against outside malign influences. While all the proposed frameworks are grounded in firsthand knowledge in the region and built around extensive academic research, the following proposed concepts are not presented as turnkey policy action items but more as frameworks for the varying agencies, both the United States and FASs, to scale, adapt, and execute.

1. Strengthen JIATF West

This thesis’s extensive analysis explores the actions of JIATF South and OPBAT in the Caribbean. During that review, it was determined that both JIATF South and OPBAT are operationally unique from their sister DOD intelligence centers. A key aspect of their success is the highly blended and genuinely integrated nature of DHS, DOJ, and international law enforcement partners into the day-to-day operations structure. In addition,

¹⁴² Gerard Finin and Terence Wesley-Smith, “The U.S. Strategy to Counter China in the Pacific Could Be a \$1bn Misstep,” *The Guardian*, September 7, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/08/the-us-strategy-to-counter-china-in-the-pacific-could-be-a-1bn-misstep>.

the use of DOD overhead reconnaissance capabilities to help inform the placement of law enforcement interdiction assets enables a high rate of operational effectiveness. When lensed through the LED EM, both JIATF South and OPBAT firmly address the need for multi-domain oversight and awareness to combat illegal activities in the Caribbean.

When looking at the Pacific, a similar structure exists in Oahu: JIATF West. JIATF West, as it relates to Oceania, is postured as more of a liaison hub for the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) commander and less as a Pacific law enforcement operational intelligence center. However, if modified and resourced, this existing DOD structure could fill a needed multi-domain DOD-supported intelligence fusion center within the region. Referencing back to the Caribbean analysis section, JIATF South brings specialized and limited overhead collection capabilities to the mission set. To achieve this vision in the Pacific, JIATF West would be expected to leverage DOD assets to grow and share a more significant degree of collections planning and operational intelligence queuing in the Oceania region to help inform U.S., FAS, and PIC domain awareness. While the technical and collections aspect is complex and vitally important, there needs to be a complementary FAS and U.S. Law Enforcement Intelligence structure developed in close concert to land and operationalize the data collected; that structure is addressed in the following section.

Broadening JIATF West's lens from a national security perspective to include law enforcement missions is a critical first step in the region. DOD collections capabilities should view Oceania less as a transit corridor to the South East Asia operational area and more as a law enforcement mission space in its own right. Given the unique relationship between the U.S. and COFA states, the Intelligence Community is not as constrained by E.O. 12333 restrictions in the region.¹⁴³

By relensing the region from one that needs continued engagement to one that needs genuine partnership to combat the emergence of transnational criminal operations, INDOPACOM can leverage 10 USC 333 authorities to grow capacity in the region.¹⁴⁴ In

¹⁴³ Ronald Reagan, Executive Order 12333, "United States Intelligence Activities," *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3 (1981 comp.): 200, <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12333.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Foreign Security Forces: Authority to Build Capacity, U.S. Code 10 (2022) §§ 333

addition, under a more strategic structure, we can have a comprehensive development strategy with Department of State (DOS) justice support funding, USAID security programs, and DHS grants in the region.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, by creating these local capacity investments, the region could then better leverage U.S. Intelligence Community surface, sea, and overhead resources that collaterally collect in the region.

There is no well-developed communication process and relationship structure to broker in FAS law enforcement information gaps that strategic collections assets could address. Broadening JIATF West to address this issue would engage DOD collections assets that are already working on the overlapping INDOPACOM mission space. This revised approach would enable JIATF West to contribute significantly within the oversight and awareness aspects of the model.

2. Create a Micronesian Fusion Center

In Chapter III, this thesis explores the role fusion centers play in Oceania. While the concept of intelligence fusion centers is sometimes controversial within the domestic U.S. context, when there is clarity of mission and the fusion center brings a specialized and limited capability to the problem space, that fusion center can thrive. While Guam has a DHS-funded fusion center, its purpose focuses primarily on crimes and trend analysis within the territory of Guam.¹⁴⁶ An enhanced JIATF West would bring new data to the conversation; however, multi-domain data without a platform to ingest, analyze, and operationalize it is useless at the tactical level. Therefore, the need for a law enforcement-specific FAS-focused multi-domain fusion center is clear and would alleviate the legal and regulatory hurdles of saddling all source collections and operationalization on JIATF West.

A Micronesian fusion center specifically focused on detecting, tracking, and enabling law enforcement assets within the COFA states and U.S. territories would be instrumental and draw frameworks proven in the Caribbean. This fusion center, with

¹⁴⁵ “Combating Crime and Corruption: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs,” United States Department of State, November 27, 2018, <https://www.state.gov/combating-crime-and-corruption/>.

¹⁴⁶ Mariana Law Enforcement Regional Information Network, “How the MLRIN Was Established.”

codified linkages to JIATF West, would address the oversight and awareness segments of the model. In addition, the fusion center would act as an enabler in the Enforcement Capability segments as identified by the model. It would serve as a genuine partner and extension of the Pacific Fisheries Forum and the Pacific Fusion Center, helping continue the regional security conversation in the PICs.

As a standalone entity, the fusion center would also serve as a hedge to shifting political landscapes, as the Micronesian region at times had a hot and cold relationship with the Pacific Island Forum and the Pacific Fisheries Forum. Establishing a Micronesian fusion center would serve as a redundancy function should that relationship not be aligned with the FAS and U.S. interests. Creating this overlapping capacity model would avoid inter-island policy conflicts over controversial topics such as China, fish quotas, and mineral harvesting, which the Pacific Fusion Center will face over the next decade.

This Micronesian fusion center would be a landing point for specialized law enforcement capabilities; it would have deep connections to JIATF West and be a specialized enforcement partner of the FAS, territory police, DHS, and DOJ casework in the region. Using the threats explored in Chapter II, it was evident that the area will have a growing demand for digital forensic analysis, DNA analysis, forensic auditing, and advanced MDA. Furthermore, it is evident that if the United States does not address this growing requirements list, China will continue to attract elected officials of the PIC with this same officer. These requirements would look like four major efforts under a leadership & domain awareness team. Those efforts are:

- (1) A joint law enforcement digital forensic lab capable of executing law enforcement casework for all COFA members. This lab would directly support digital media exploitation transcending a number of threat spaces.
- (2) The establishment of a process for DNA sequencing and chemical analysis work for all COFA members in support of valid law enforcement casework.
- (3) The establishment of forensic auditors and financial advisors available to support FAS's casework, internal auditing, and review of foreign grants to hedge sovereign predatory lending practices.
- (4) A framework to communicate targeting priorities of organic and partnered MDA sensors and assets to gain maritime domain awareness.

If made available to the COFA states, these specialized capabilities would create strong linkages between U.S. and FAS law enforcement efforts.

Within this new fusion center, to achieve the outward-looking intent vice an all-U.S. presence, it is critical to incorporate detached law enforcement personnel from the FAS. This concept must transcend the traditional liaison concept and move more toward a joint task force concept. Using the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Joint Terrorism Taskforce (JTTF) community engagement detail framework as a model, FASs would detail officers into the four specialized units within the Micronesian fusion center.

As noted earlier in this thesis, the PICs face a significant law enforcement capacity problem. It is almost impractical for Palau or the RMI to detail their most capable forensic accountant to this fusion center on a permanent basis. The JTTF program solves this same problem faced domestically by local communities. By detailing a community officer over to the FBI, the detailed member and, by extension, the town gain specialized training and access to greater DOJ and DHS reachback. It fundamentally strengthens the regional law enforcement fabric. Then in reverse, to ensure the contributing community does not lose resources by detailing the officer, the FBI JTTF framework grants funding back to the city for contributing the member, thus ensuring the city is able to onboard a replacement officer. The end state is that one more officer is contributing to the law enforcement effort, and the FBI and the city benefit from shared authorities, skills, and community access. Adopting this concept in the Micronesian fusion center would create these same synergies to benefit of the United States and the FASs.

The intersection of detailed FAS officers, working in partnership with DHS and DOJ members, with all servicing in the four specialized services made available to the region, would be instrumental in combating crime and hedging against deceptive state actors in the region. Then by rotating the detailed position every two or three years, that officer would gain experience, relationships, and an awareness of the region's threats and bring them back to their home state. The fusion center would gain insight, expand access, and grow domain awareness within the FASs and, by extension, the PICs. Then, looking out over time, it would be a regional investment in the model's oversight, awareness, and enforcement benchmarks and possible benefits in the Governance and Influence categories.

From a resourcing perspective, this Micronesian regionalization approach hedges from every FAS, articulating the need for individualized advanced operational capabilities. There are currently not enough articulable requirements for each FAS to have its own digital forensics and auditing teams; however, when viewed at the regional level, this need can be articulated. Lensing back to the discussion in Chapter III regarding specialized policing actions in PNG by Australia, this approach avoids the skill and capacity problem that is often found in the PICs. If the detailed officer model is fully embraced, it would have the net benefit of investing in the island's workforce and not just a U.S.-funded solution within the islands.

Many regional scholars hope for singular regional solutions to Oceania's wicked problems; however, that reality does not exist at present. Several polarizing issues face the region, such as China, recognition of Taiwan, global climate change, fishing quotas, resource harvesting, and U.S. involvement. Thus, it is time for an incremental investment strategy, focusing on the FAS. The Micronesian fusion center, with a portfolio of very specialized law enforcement skills and serving as an operations and training center for modern-day criminal investigative techniques, is a reasonable and timely strategic investment in the region.

3. Align Law Enforcement Strategic Asset Investments in the Region

An intelligence center's reason for existence should be to enact a decision or response; thus, if given no collections or enforcement capabilities, the fusion center will be

self-serving and, as a result, destined to fail. In Chapter IV, it became clear that specialized multi-domain collection techniques enable a high operational effectiveness rate in the Caribbean. Chapter III showed that the Australian PPBP has had a significant and net positive enforcement influence in the PIC region. Thus, the question becomes: In Oceania, which asset and technology transfer program should be structured to complement the Micronesian fusion center and, by extension, improve policing capacity in the region?

The United States runs several asset transfer or acquisition programs within the PIC region. Those programs are fragmented across the DOS, USAID, FEMA, and DOD. There is marginal coordination among those agencies and there lacks a whole-of-Oceania strategy as it relates to policing capacity. The decision of what projects to fund or prioritize are often driven by some nebulous intersection of what the requesting country thinks they can get approved, what the donor country wants to give, and what the requesting country needs. This aid construct produces a form of gaming the bureaucratic system that drives this type of aid in the region. This section attempts to propose a number of capabilities that should be considered from a strategic perspective within the FAS region to best complement current DOD, DHS, and Australian capabilities in the region and align with the desired outcomes.

When looking at the Australian PPPB, what distinguishes it from many other aid programs is the clarity of purpose and the committed sustainment of the program (fuel, parts, trainers, recapitalization). The PPPB program has been ongoing in the region for over 30 years and has just entered its second phase of major boat sustainment. The boats achieve multi-missions for the PICs and are not limited to just national security or defense. Creating the multi-mission demand signal incentivizes the PIC state to invest in maintaining the asset as it is in their interest and the donor countries' interest that the asset continues to work. It is to the United States' advantage to embrace this Australian approach when looking at regional capacity-building aid programs in the PICs.

Anyone who has worked operations in the Oceania region will instantly identify the staggering distance problem the region faces in addition to its impact on enforcement activities. Logistics conversations dominate a significant portion of the operational planning process. From a business perspective, the majority of the PICs have accounted

for the fixed cost of their enforcement capabilities. Examples could be through UN funding, stable payroll, or the ship's acquisition cost via the PPBP. The variable costs, such as travel, replacement parts, or fuel, are what limits their effectiveness. Understanding these primary limiting factors makes it easy to see that PIC's enforcement capabilities are utilized best when they are deployed judiciously and with clarity of mission.

Looking back to the issues threatening the region, we identify border and immigration control, MDA, cybercrimes, and financial exploitation as forefront transregional problems. Acknowledging the very robust and effective Australian PPBP, is it not to the United States' advantage to create a redundant program; however, the United States should find more to find ways to complement and enable the PPBP's capabilities. The following five investment strategies should be considered to best combat these threat spaces and complement the Australian efforts in the region.

- (1) **Create a Micronesian regional criminal records management system.** This standard management system, across the region, is specifically designed with information-sharing protocols to tier the exchange of data across targeted levels of partners (PIC, United States, FAS).
- (2) **Provide comprehensive MDA tracking and targeting capabilities.** These capabilities are inclusive of ongoing efforts announced by the Quad (United States, Australia, India, and Japan) to embrace commercial radio frequency satellite data, the integration of MDA software applications, and the establishment of communications infrastructure on outlying islands.¹⁴⁷
- (3) Prioritize the FASs to integrate long-range autonomous maritime reconnaissance systems for law enforcement and domain awareness utilization.
- (4) **Invest in cyber communications infrastructure** (undersea cables, cell towers, state-owned threat mitigation equipment), which will foster the creation of an Oceania cyber information sharing exchange network. The

¹⁴⁷ Leigh Hartman, "Quad Partners Help Indo-Pacific Countries Monitor Waters," *ShareAmerica* (blog), June 7, 2022, <https://share.america.gov/quad-partners-help-indo-pacific-countries-monitor-waters/>.

establishment of a regional deployable cyber protection team will strengthen cybersecurity and thwart malicious cyber activities.

- (5) **Strengthen regional money laundering enforcement efforts** to include an emphasis on the impacts and implications of digital currencies within the FAS states and the global financial system.

Chapter II explores in detail the interconnectedness of the FASs and the U.S. territories to the continental United States. Due to this freedom of movement, there is a corresponding autonomy of criminality. To combat the borderless movement problem within the region, there needs to be a concerted and structured process to share and communicate ongoing casework and criminal information. A number of commercial criminal records management systems could be customized to meet the region's information-sharing needs. That system would empower the collaboration of criminal investigative work and inter-island border control, allowing the region to harden against external actors moving into Micronesia.

The ocean is the dominant feature of the PIC region; thus, it is only logical that PICs would need to have some of the best MDA tools available. Often, most of the policing conversations within the FAS will have some form of a maritime or cross-island aspect. What MDA also affords is the ability to take a proactive posture toward illegal resource extraction and identify actors at sea who threaten the sensitive and changing marine ecosystem that is vital to the islands. This thesis fails to draft a path to solving the international contributions to sea-level rise that is threatening the PICs. It does, however, begin to provide the PICs with a path to gain data to better articulate how and why aspects of their ecosystem are changing.

The internet has forever changed the way the world works and interacts on a daily basis. The PICs are some of the last holdouts of that change. The digital transformation will not skip this region; it is just arriving later. As those foundational decisions are made, they should be supported by the lessons others have learned. Creating a Pacific cyber information sharing and analysis center (Pacific ISAC) would enable the Oceania states to uniquely identify, categorize, and combat their own version of the cyber domain emerging in the region.

These five frameworks align with varying U.S. agency objectives within the region that do not have a voice in the strategic resourcing conversations. The five lines of effort would enable the FASs to better exercise their own enforcement capabilities across these emerging and persistent threat domains. All the proposed investment strategies could be incorporated into existing U.S. aid programs; however, the sustainment aspect of the Australian PPBP model needs to be explored more.

D. POLICY FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

This chapter looked to leverage the strategies examined in the previous section of the paper and propose complementary capacity-building paths within the FASs using the law enforcement domain evaluation model. The final recommendations of this paper are a retooling of JIATF West, creating a joint Micronesian fusion center and capabilities taskforce, and recommending five long-term investment strategies in the region. Those policies are projected into the model in Table 4.

Looking at the two operational structures and the five investment strategies in the LED EM in Table 4, there are strong results within almost all the evaluative criteria. As Dr. Wallis concludes in her review of over 30 years of security and policing capacity building in the PIC region, both the United States and Australia need to view themselves as partners in the region in the hopes of reframing it from an “arc of instability” and into “arc of opportunity.”¹⁴⁸ For the United States, the Micronesian people are now woven into the fabric of society due to the COFA agreements. It is imperative that the United States begin to view the region less from a countering great power and national security perspective and more as a genuine partner in the region. This thesis presents a number policing capacity-building efforts that would improve the FAS states and the U.S. territories in addition to providing complementary benefits for U.S. security and national interests in the region.

¹⁴⁸ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 312–35.

Table 4. Law Enforcement Domain Evaluation Model with Proposed New FAS Frameworks¹⁴⁹

	Oversight	Governance	Awareness	Enforcement Capability	Influence
Joint Interagency Taskforce West	High	Low	High	Low	Low
Micronesian Fusion Center & Taskforce	Med	Med	High	High	High
Investment: Micronesian Regional Criminal Records Management System	Med	Med	Med	Low	Med
Investment: Comprehensive MDA	High	Med	High	Med	Med
Investment: Maritime Reconnaissance Systems	Med	Low	High	Med	Med
Investment: Cyber Infrastructure, ISAC, & Regional CPT	High	High	High	High	Med
Investment: Financial Crimes Analysis	Med	High	Med	Med	Med

¹⁴⁹ Given there is no developed model for evaluating the capacity-building programs in the Pacific Islands Countries, this descriptive table was developed to create a common evaluation standard. The varying lines of effort are then assessed against the descriptive criteria. Each effort is assigned a Low/Medium/High score to be later overlayed onto proposed policy options in the FAS states.

VI. CONCLUSION AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

A. SUMMARY

The United States has had an enduring relationship with many islands in the Pacific Ocean, commonly referred to as the FASs. The Oceania region holds opportunities and challenges, from resource control to an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. U.S. prosperity and security depends on the Pacific region remaining free and open. Strategic frameworks must be developed to support those objectives. U.S. support to the FAS has been robust in providing national security and defense assurances; however, those assurances are limited in scope with respect to improving policing capacity in the region. The adoption of the COFA agreements creates a physical and virtual extension of the U.S. border in unique ways that changes the day-to-day living on these select islands. This border extension is now being exploited by state and non-state actors seeking footholds in the region.

This thesis explores a number of complex threats that face the PICs. While those threats are not novel, they are resource intensive and have the capacity to erode stability in the region. Some of those threats explored in detail include money laundering, corruption, illegal resource exploitation, human smuggling, visa fraud, birth tourism, and digital communications exploitation. An understanding of the FAS's interconnectedness and threat space creates room to explore a comprehensive law enforcement capacity-building policy path within the Pacific.

During the course of writing this thesis, extensive research and comparative policy analysis was conducted. That analysis evaluated the actions taken by Australia in the Melanesia region and the United States in the Caribbean to combat transnational criminal actors. The results of that work was normalized and integrated using the LE DEM. The LE DEM weighted and scored the studied actions as it impacts the varying lines of efforts from preventative activities to response activities that an outside country could contribute to in the law enforcement capacity-building policy space.

The findings using the LE DEM reveal that Australian policy efforts in the Melanesia region have had a meaningful impact in providing needed assets and capabilities into the region, yet it has limited results in preventing democratic backsliding, comprehensive policing growth, and a regional law enforcement mission management framework.

Using the LE DEM (Table 2), the findings reveal that the U.S. policy efforts (JUATF South) in the Caribbean region have produced exceptionally high results in the Oversight, Awareness, and Enforcement Capability categories. OPBAT, a close echo of JIATF South, has produced high results in the same categories, with the noted addition of Influence. Within the Caribbean policy analysis section, there was not a strong policy line of effort that corresponded to the Governance category.

By understanding and integrating the disparate policy actions in the Caribbean and Melanesia, the United States can begin to build a comprehensive policing capacity-building path that leverages those lessons learned and complements those actions already in play in the region. The United States and FASs should consider the following policy concepts as mutually beneficial paths to strengthening the islands' policing capacity while hardening against outside malign influences. The proposed frameworks are grounded in firsthand knowledge of the region and built around extensive academic research. The recommendations are not presented as turnkey policy action items but more as policy objectives for varying agencies, both the United States and FASs, to scale, adapt and execute.

B. POLICY ALIGNMENT

The proposed recommendations in this paper all align with White House strategic policies, UN efforts, Australia's Pacific Strategies, and, most importantly, the interests within the PIC region. This section briefly links varying strategic frameworks that connect to the findings of this paper and could be sources of support for implementation.

The 2022 *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States* calls for unified U.S. actions within the Indo-Pacific region, inclusive of the PICs. The strategy articulates that the United States in the Indo-Pacific region will

innovate to meet civilian security challenges, expanding U.S. Coast Guard presence, training, and advising to bolster our partners' capabilities. ... And we will strengthen collective regional capabilities to prepare for and respond to environmental and natural disasters, natural, accidental, or deliberate biological threats, and the trafficking of weapons, drugs, and people. We will improve cybersecurity in the region, including the ability of our partners to protect against, recover from, and respond to cybersecurity incidents.¹⁵⁰

The final recommendations of this paper all directly support and enable the objectives outlined by the *Indo-Pacific Strategy* within the FASs with scalability to the region.

Within the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, Section 3531 establishes and calls for specific actions concerning the global conversation on IUU. This section, the Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act (SAFE Act), calls to:

- A) increase local, national, and regional level capacities to counter IUU fishing through the engagement of law enforcement and security forces;
- (B) enhance port capacity and security, including supporting other countries in working toward the adoption and implementation of the Port State Measures Agreement;
- (C) combat corruption and increase transparency and traceability in fisheries management and trade;
- (D) enhance information sharing within and across governments and multilateral organizations through the development and use of agreed standards for information sharing;
- (4) promote global maritime security through improved capacity and technological assistance to support improved maritime domain awareness;¹⁵¹

All aspects of the goals and strategic objectives outlined in the SAFE Act would be measurably impacted by adopting the proposed framework outlined in the paper. The PIC region has been combatting illegal fishing for decades and understands the ever-growing

¹⁵⁰ White House, *Indo - Pacific Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2022), 13, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, Public Law 116-92, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 133 (2019): 2000. <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ92/PLAW-116publ92.pdf>.

importance of resource control in the region. The capacity-building efforts listed in this paper not only strengthen the FASs from current IUU threats but hedges against the emerging threats that have yet to be given a DC-based working group.

In addition to U.S. strategy, this proposal aligns with the Pacific Island Forum’s “Boe Declaration on Regional Security,” where the regional organization

commit [s] to strengthening the existing regional security architecture inclusive of regional law enforcement secretariats and regional organizations to: account for the expanded concept of security; identify and address emerging security challenges; improve coordination among existing security mechanisms; facilitate open dialogue and strengthened information sharing; further develop early warning mechanisms; support implementation; promote regional security analysis, assessment and advice; and, engage and cooperate, where appropriate, with international organizations, partners and other relevant stakeholders.”¹⁵²

The final recommendations of this thesis, while focusing on the FAS and the U.S. territories, would have net benefits on the PIC region as a whole. It enables the FASs to commit specialized resources and capabilities in the Pacific without being beholden to the shifting interests of regional frameworks.

While explored in great detail earlier in this paper, the Australian “Pacific Step-Up” EO plan in the *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* calls for Australian action on many of the same topics explored in this paper.¹⁵³ Lending this call for action from a U.S. perspective, it is easy to see the number of complementary topics the United States could and should be embarking on in a multi-lateral way with Australia. Strategic frameworks, such as MDA, are primed for integration with U.S. action called for within the SAFE Act.¹⁵⁴ The intersection of the PPBP, U.S. long-range autonomous maritime reconnaissance systems, and a joint MDA and cyber domain investment strategy would have profound impacts on the region and would find economy of scale through partnership.

¹⁵² “Boe Declaration on Regional Security,” Pacific Islands Forum, September 5, 2018, <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>.

¹⁵³ Australian Government, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, 101.

¹⁵⁴ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020,

C. CONCLUSION

The recommendations of this thesis are summarized in this section. Those recommendations can be generalized into three overarching conversations. The first is the retooling of JIATF West to prioritize law enforcement missions within the PIC region and a comprehensive plan to leverage and incorporate the FAS's respective agencies. Second is the establishment of a Micronesian regional fusion center. This regional organization would develop and sustain several specialized task forces focusing on delivering advanced investigative capabilities in scarce supply in the region. The task forces will be jointly staffed with United States, territory, and FAS law enforcement officers with a regionality mandate to support U.S. federal, territory, and FAS agencies in case execution. Last, this thesis calls for an organization and unified law enforcement capacity-building grant programs between the United States and Australia. A number of synergies could be gained by having the United States pivot to supporting long-range communications infrastructure, persistent sensor acquisition, and a regional case management system that would directly complement and enable Australia's ongoing and well-received aid programs.

Table 5 provides a tabular overview of the recommendations detailed in Chapter V. Great care was taken to be resource minded when crafting these policy changes. It is the hope that this paper bridges the traditional donor-aid state relationship to acknowledge the special and interwoven relationship the Micronesian people have with the United States and the importance Oceania will play on the global stage. In addition, this paper highlights the complementary and compelling call for closer coordination with Australian action in the PIC. While not specifically explored in this paper, other scholars, such as Rutter, have, in great detail, measured the U.S., Australian, New Zealand, and Japanese foreign policy actions in the region. This analysis could be leveraged to further complement the recommendations of this paper.

Table 5. Recommendations for U.S. Efforts to Strategically Build Law Enforcement Capacity in the FAS States

	Recommendation	Action
1	Broaden and resource JIATF West to leverage DOD assets to support collections planning and operational intelligence targeting in the Oceania region.	DOD
2	Establish a Micronesian fusion center focused on detecting, tracking, and enabling LE operations within the COFA states and U.S. territories	DHS, DOJ, USAID, & DOS
2.a	Establish joint law enforcement digital forensic lab capably staffed with U.S. and COFA members.	DHS, DOJ, USAID, & DOS
2.b	Establish DNA sequencing and chemical analysis center staffed with U.S. and COFA members.	DOJ, U.S. AID, DOS, & DHS
2.c	Establish a financial crimes center staffed with U.S. and COFA members.	DOJ, USAID, SEC, Treasury, DOS, & DHS
2.d	Create a framework to gain MDA and supporting communication infrastructure in the region.	DHS, DOD, U.S. AID, & DOS
3.a	Organize the creation of a Micronesian regional criminal records management system.	DOI, DHS, DOJ, USAID, & DOS
3.b	Invest in MDA tracking and targeting capabilities. These capabilities should include emerging commercial satellite data and other sources, integrate MDA software applications, and establish communications infrastructure on outlying islands.	DHS, DOD, DOI, USAID, & DOS
3.c	Invest in the FASs to integrate long-range autonomous maritime reconnaissance systems for law enforcement and domain awareness utilization.	DOD, USAID, & DOS
4	Invest in cyber communications infrastructure (undersea cables, cell towers, state-owned threat mitigation equipment), Oceania ISAC, and the establishment of a regional Cyber Protection Team.	DOD, DHS, DOI, USAID, & DOS
5	Study regional money laundering enforcement efforts to include the impacts and implications of digital currencies within the FASs.	UN, Academia, & Treasury

The world is in the midst of a major shift in the geopolitical centers of influences; the PIC countries are right in the middle of that shift. The United States must strengthen its commitments to FAS and Pacific territories. The two proposed operational structures and the five investment strategies would have a net positive impact on the region as it looks to navigate a building storm poised to cause human, environmental, and economic impacts on the Oceania region.

The proposed topics in this thesis would serve as a genuine investment in the region in the policing and capacity-building line of effort. It creates institutions that are cable of flexing to meet evolving threats in the region. It has synergies with U.S. law enforcement efforts, thus restoring detection and enforcement capabilities in this diminished border region. Furthermore, the recommendations carefully and meticulously interconnect with ongoing Australian efforts in the region.

The PIC region is an “arc of opportunity,” and the United States has significant influence in the region.¹⁵⁵ It is imperative that the United States not squander this moment to ensure the future of the PIC are a region of laws, responsible resource management, and individual freedoms. The Micronesian people are now woven into the fabric of U.S. society due to the COFA agreements.

¹⁵⁵ Wallis, *Pacific Power?*, 312–35.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Australian Government. *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*. Barton ACT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/minisite/static/4ca0813c-585e-4fe1-86eb-de665e65001a/fpwhitepaper/foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-seven-shared-agenda-security-and-prosperity/.../foreign-policy-white-paper/chapter-seven-shared-agenda-security-and-prosperity/stepping-our.html>.
- Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “Cybercrime.” Australia’s International Cyber and Critical Tech Engagement. Accessed May 10, 2022. <https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/our-work/security/cybercrime>.
- . “Development Assistance in the Pacific.” Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Accessed July 17, 2021. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/development-assistance/development-assistance-in-the-pacific>.
- Bank of Guam. “Commercial Loans.” Business. Accessed August 8, 2021. <https://bankofguam.com/business/borrow/commercial-loans>.
- Berman, Robby. “Japan Finds a Huge Cache of Scarce Rare-Earth Minerals.” Big Think, January 5, 2019. <https://bigthink.com/the-present/japan-rare-earth/>.
- Bullington, Bruce. “A Smugglers Paradise: Cocaine Trafficking Though the Bahamas.” *Crime, Law and Social Change* 16 (1991): 59–83.
- Camacho, Edward C. “Emerging Micronesian Island Nations: Challenges for United States Policy.” Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1995. <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/31409>.
- Central Intelligence Agency. “Marshall Islands.” The World Factbook, July 2, 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/marshall-islands/>.
- . “Micronesia, Federated States Of.” The World Factbook, July 26, 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/micronesia-federated-states-of/>.
- . “Palau.” The World Factbook, July 26, 2021. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/palau/>.
- Citizenship and Immigration Services. “U.S. Immigration Law in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).” Laws and Policy, June 18, 2020. <https://www.uscis.gov/laws-and-policy/other-resources/us-immigration-law-in-the-commonwealth-of-the-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi>.

- Cleo Paskal (@cleopaskal). “China-Pacific Islands Five-Year Action Plan on Common Development (2022-2026) 1 of 2.” Twitter, May 26, 2022. <https://twitter.com/cleopaskal/status/1529849187071926273>.
- . “China-Pacific Islands Five-Year Action Plan on Common Development (2022-2026) 2 of 2.” Twitter, May 25, 2022. <https://twitter.com/kirstylnneedham/status/1529348547858300930>.
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of the Governor. “Governor Torres Thanks Trump Administration for Heeding Request to Modify USCIS Policy to Protect CNMI Economy and Workers.” CNMI Office of the Governor, August 26, 2020. <https://governor.gov.mp/news/press-releases/governor-torres-thanks-trump-administration-for-heeding-request-to-modify-uscis-policy-to-protect-cnmi-economy-and-workers/>.
- Commonwealth Parliament. *Security Challenges Facing Papua New Guinea and the Island States of the Southwest Pacific*. Canberra: Commonwealth Parliament, 2010. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Completed_inquiries/2008-10/swpacific/report2/index.
- Department of Defence. *2020 Defence Strategic Update*. Barton ACT: Australian Government, 2020. <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/2020-defence-strategic-update>.
- . Detection and Monitoring of Aerial and Maritime Transit of Illegal Drugs: Department of Defense to be Lead Agency, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 10 (2022 comp.): 124 §. <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title10-section124&num=0&edition=prelim>.
- . “Patrol Boat for Palau.” Australian Government Defence News, September 25, 2020. <https://news.defence.gov.au/international/patrol-boat-palau>.
- Department of the Interior. “Compacts of Free Association.” Office of Insular Affairs, October 15, 2015. <https://www.doi.gov/oia/compacts-of-free-association>.
- . “Who We Are.” Office of Insular Affairs. Accessed July 10, 2021. <https://www.doi.gov/oia/who-we-are>.
- Dibb, Paul, David D. Hale, and Peter Pince. “Asia’s Insecurity.” *Survival* 41, no. 3 (1999): 5–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339912331342893>.
- Dinnen, Sinclair. *Law and Order in a Weak State*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001.

- Dinnen, Sinclair, and Abby McLeod. "Policing Melanesia – International Expectations and Local Realities." *Policing and Society* 19, no. 4 (December 2009): 333–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439460903281539>.
- Dornan, Matthew, and Jonathan Pryke. "Foreign Aid to the Pacific: Trends and Developments in the Twenty-First Century." *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* 4, no. 3 (2017): 386–404. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.185>.
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America. "China's Position Paper on Mutual Respect and Common Development with Pacific Island Countries Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America." China News, May 30, 2022. http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202205/t20220531_10694923.htm.
- Feng, John. "China Military Base in Solomon Islands Ruled Out in Blow to Naval Ambitions." *Newsweek*, July 14, 2022. <https://www.newsweek.com/china-solomon-pacific-islands-military-base-manasseh-sogavare-1724482>.
- Finin, Gerard, and Terence Wesley-Smith. "The U.S. Strategy to Counter China in the Pacific Could Be a \$1bn Misstep." *The Guardian*, September 7, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/08/the-us-strategy-to-counter-china-in-the-pacific-could-be-a-1bn-misstep>.
- Gootnick, David. *Compacts of Free Association: Populations in U.S. Areas Have Grown, with Varying Reported Effects*. GAO-20-491. Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, 2020. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-20-491>.
- Goudge, Geoffrey, Christopher Neal, and Mark Swiney. "Freely Associated States." *Military Intelligence* 46, no. 4 (December 2020): 68–75. ProQuest.
- Grossman, Derek, Michael Chase, Gerard Finin, Wallace Gregson, Jeffrey Hornung, Logan Ma, Jordan Reimer, and Alice Shih. *America's Pacific Island Allies: The Freely Associated States and Chinese Influence*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2973>.
- Hartman, Leigh. "Quad Partners Help Indo-Pacific Countries Monitor Waters." *ShareAmerica* (blog), June 7, 2022. <https://share.america.gov/quad-partners-help-indo-pacific-countries-monitor-waters/>.
- Hayward-Jones, Jenny. "Australia and Security in the Pacific Islands Region." In *Regionalism, Security & Cooperation in Oceania*, edited by Rouben Azizian and Carleton Cramer, 67–77. Honolulu: Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2015.
- Hiaasen, Carl, and Jim McGee. "A Nation for Sale - Corruption in The Bahamas." *Miami Herald Special Reprint*. October 10, 1984.

- Hughes, Helen. "Aid Has Failed the Pacific." *Issues Analysis (Centre for Independent Studies)*, May 7, 2003, 32. <https://www.cis.org.au/app/uploads/2015/07/ia33.pdf>
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "ICE HSI Agents Make Arrests Linked to CNMI Visa Fraud Scheme." Immigration and Customs Enforcement Newsroom, July 12, 2021. <https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/ice-hsi-agents-make-arrests-linked-cnmi-visa-fraud-scheme>.
- Island Times*. "Second Round of Public Hearing for Call Center Project to Be Held." October 25, 2019. <https://islandtimes.org/second-round-of-public-hearing-for-call-center-project-to-be-held>.
- Johnson, Ashley J. "OPBAT – Beyond the Drugs." Coast Guard News, November 2, 2016. <https://coastguardnews.com/opbat-beyond-the-drugs/2016/11/02/>.
- Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Homeland Defense*. Joint Publication 3-27. Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018.
- Joint Interagency Task Force South. "About Us." Accessed June 11, 2022. <https://www.jiatfs.southcom.mil/About-Us/>.
- La Vida Golden Visas. "Marshall Islands Citizenship by Investment Visas for Passport." Accessed August 4, 2021. <https://www.goldenvisas.com/tag/marshall-islands>.
- Limtiaco, Steve. "Our View: Grant Should Help Public Health Close Gaps in Services." *Pacific Daily News*, June 18, 2021. https://www.guampdn.com/opinion/our-view-grant-should-help-public-health-close-gaps-in-services/article_ec3ef773-20bc-59b6-9f99-db607ab10d91.html.
- Lowy Institute. "Pacific Aid Map - Country Profiles." Lowy Institute. Accessed June 15, 2021. <http://charts.lowyinstitute.org/archive/pacific-aid-map-country-profiles/index.html>.
- Manoa Mapworks, Inc. "Micronesia Political Entities Map." Center for the Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2008. <https://hawaii.edu/cpis/wp-content/uploads/micronesia-political-entities.pdf>.
- Mariana Law Enforcement Regional Information Network. "How the MLRIN Was Established." Mariana Regional Fusion Center. Accessed May 7, 2022. <https://mlrin.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/23/MenuGroup/MLRIN+Public+Home.htm>.
- Marsh, Kelly G., and Tyrone J. Taitano. "Guam." In *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Stephen Levine, 2nd ed., 107–17. Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016.

- Matson. "Guam & Micronesia Shipping Services." Accessed July 24, 2021. <https://www.matson.com/ocean-services/guam-micronesia.html/>.
- MGM Resorts International. *2018 Annual Report*. Las Vegas, NV: MGM Resorts International, 2018. https://s22.q4cdn.com/513010314/files/doc_financials/annual/2018/MGM-2018-Annual-Report.pdf.
- Morris, Michael A. *Caribbean Maritime Security*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.
- Morrison, Scott. "Australia and the Pacific: A New Chapter." Prime Minister of Australia, November 8, 2018. <https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-41938>.
- Munroe, Trevor. "Democracy and Political Economy in the Caribbean." In *The Political Economy of Drugs in the Caribbean*, edited by Ivelaw L. Griffith, 183–200. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230288966>.
- Munsing, Evan, and Christopher J. Lamb. *Joint Interagency Task Force–South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2011. <https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo16331/Strategic-Perspectives-5.pdf>.
- Nye, Joseph S. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
- OECD. *Development Co-Operation Report 2021: Shaping a Just Digital Transformation*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.1787/ce08832f-en>.
- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency. "Welcome to the Pacific Islands Forum." Who We Are. Accessed April 17, 2022. <https://www.ffa.int/about>.
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. "Boe Declaration on Regional Security." Pacific Islands Forum, September 5, 2018. <https://www.forumsec.org/2018/09/05/boe-declaration-on-regional-security/>.
- . *The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration*. Suva, Fiji: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2007.
- Parris, Hannah, and R. Quentin Grafton. "Finding Common Ground: New Zealand and Regional Security Cooperation in the Pacific." In *Pacific Islands Regional Integration and Governance*, edited by Satish Chand. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at the Australian National University, 2005.
- Payne, Marise. "Australia to Support New Pacific Fusion Centre." Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, September 5, 2018. <https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/marise-payne/media-release/australia-support-new-pacific-fusion-centre>.

- Peterson, Glenn, and Zag Puas. "Federated States of Micronesia." In *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Stephen Levine, 2nd ed., 59–60. Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016.
- Pitts, Maxine. *Crime, Corruption & Capacity in Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: Asia Pacific Press at The Australian National University, 2002.
- Pratt, Cristelle, and Hugh Govan. Our Sea of Islands Our Livelihoods Our Oceania: Framework for a Pacific Oceanscape: A Catalyst for Implementation of Ocean Policy. Suva, Fiji: Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), 2010. <https://library.sprep.org/content/our-sea-islands-our-livelihoods-our-oceania-framework-pacific-oceanscape-catalyst>.
- Quimby, Frank. "Northern Mariana Islands." In *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Stephen Levine, 2nd ed., 202–18. Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016.
- Rabasa, Angel, Christopher Schnaubelt, Peter Chalk, Douglas Farah, Gregory Midgette, and Howard Shatz. *Counternetwork: Countering the Expansion of Transnational Criminal Networks*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1481>.
- Reagan, Ronald. Executive Order 12333. "United States Intelligence Activities." Code of Federal Regulations, title 3 (1981 comp.): 200. <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12333.html>.
- . Executive Order 12572. Relations with the Northern Mariana Islands, *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3 (1986 comp.) <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12572.html>.
- Rogers, Robert F. *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/10517>.
- Saipan.io. "America's Hidden Gem: Saipan, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)." *Extra* (blog), October 10, 2018. <https://saipan.io/index.php/2018/10/10/an-introduction-to-saipan-the-commonwealth-of-northern-mariana-islands-cnmi-americas-hidden-gem/>.
- Schechter, Anna. "Undoing the Abramoff Effect Continued." ABC News, April 1, 2008. <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/story?id=4567036&page=1>.
- Schrader, Adam. "China Signs Deal with Samoa During Pacific Trip Watched Closely by U.s. Officials." UPI, May 28, 2022. https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/05/28/china-deal-samoa-pacific-trip/4781653763474/.

- Seidel, Henrike, and Padma N. Lal. *Economic Value of the Pacific Ocean to the Pacific Island Countries and Territories*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, 2010. https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/import/downloads/economic_value_of_the_pacific_ocean_to_the_pacific_island_countries_and_territories_p.pdf.
- Smith, Graeme, and Denghua Zhang. “China’s Blue Book of Oceania.” Canberra: Australian National University, 2015. <https://dpa.bellschool.anu.edu.au/experts-publications/publications/4129/chinas-blue-book-oceania>.
- Smith-Norris, Martha. “Legacies of U.S. Cold War Policies and the Ongoing Quest for Justice in the Marshall Islands.” In *Domination and Resistance: The United States and the Marshall Islands during the Cold War*, by Martha Smith-Norris, 152–60. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016. <https://muse.jhu.edu/chapter/1783438>.
- Staats, Jennifer. “Four Takeaways from China’s Tour of the Pacific Islands.” United States Institute of Peace, June 9, 2022. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/06/four-takeaways-chinas-tour-pacific-islands>.
- Stanley, Michael, and Tijen Arin. *Precautionary Management of Deep Sea Minerals*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2017. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/349631503675168052/pdf/119106-WP-PUBLIC-114p-PPDSMbackgroundfinal.pdf>.
- Stradbroke, Steven. “Report: Imperial Pacific’s VIP Success Attracts U.S. Watchdog.” Casino, November 14, 2016. <https://calvinayre.com/2016/11/15/casino/imperial-pacific-vip-success-attracts-financial-watchdog/>.
- TeleGeography. “Submarine Cable Map.” Submarine Cable Map. Accessed June 16, 2021. <https://www.submarinecablemap.com/>.
- Thomas, Erin, and Shannon Marcoux. *Compacts of Free Association (COFA) Balancing the Scales in Negotiations between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)*. Chappaqua, NY: ICAAD, 2020. <https://icaad.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/COFA-Strategic-Assessment-compressed.pdf>.
- Underwood, Robert A. *The Amended U.S. Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands: Less Free, More Compact*. Honolulu: East-West Center, 2003. <http://hdl.handle.net/10125/3612>.
- United Airlines. “United Airlines U.S. and International Route Maps.” Accessed July 24, 2021. <https://www.united.com/web/en-US/content/travel/route-maps.aspx>.

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. “UNCTADstat.” Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Accessed June 27, 2021. <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/TableView/tableView.aspx?ReportId=32363>.
- United States Coast Guard. *United States Coast Guard: Illegal, Unreported, and Underregulated Fishing Strategic Outlook*. Washington, DC: United States Coast Guard, 2020. https://www.uscg.mil/Portals/0/Images/iuu/IUU_Strategic_Outlook_2020_Final.pdf.
- U.S. Department of State. “Combating Crime and Corruption: Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.” November 27, 2018. <https://www.state.gov/combating-crime-and-corruption/>.
- U.S. Southern Command. “About Us.” Accessed June 11, 2022. <https://www.southcom.mil/About/>.
- Veenendaal, Wouter. “Palau.” In *Pacific Ways Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands*, edited by Stephen Levine, 2nd ed., 219–28. Wellington, Australia: Victoria University Press, 2016.
- Wallis, Joanne. *Pacific Power? Australia’s Strategy in the Pacific Islands*. Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2017.
- Wei, Daniela, and Matthew Campbell. “This Obscure Casino Is Making Money Like You Wouldn’t Believe.” Bloomberg, November 13, 2016. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2016-11-13/obscure-casino-run-by-a-trump-protege-is-raising-big-questions>.
- White House. *Indo - Pacific Strategy of the United States*. Washington, DC: White House, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.
- . *Indo Pacific Strategy of the United States*. Washington, DC: White House, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.
- Whitten, Daniel L. *Perspective on the Military Involvement in the War on Drugs - Is There a Better Way?*. Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University, 1999. <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA398877>.
- Willett, Mary. “Cyber in the Pacific Islands.” *The Strategist* (blog), March 27, 2013. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/cyber-in-the-pacific-islands/>.
- Yang, Mary, and Jack Detsch. “Australia’s Got a Solomon Islands Headache (Again).” *Foreign Policy*, May 19, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/19/solomon-islands-australia-election-pacific-national-security-us-china/>.

Yeatman, Richard M. "JIATF-South: Blueprint for Success." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 32 (2006): 26–27.

Zhou, Cissy. "China's Capital Outflow Controls Have Gone to the 'Extreme', Former Central Bank Adviser Says." *South China Morning Post*, May 29, 2019, sec. Economy. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/china-economy/article/3012312/chinas-capital-outflow-controls-have-gone-extreme-former>.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1. Defense Technical Information Center
Ft. Belvoir, Virginia
2. Dudley Knox Library
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California



DUDLEY KNOX LIBRARY

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

WWW.NPS.EDU

WHERE SCIENCE MEETS THE ART OF WARFARE