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 The *National Maritime Security Strategy* and the recently released *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* both describe the importance of maritime security to the safety and prosperity of all nations and describe an array of threats to the security of the maritime commons. One of those threats, foreign fishing vessels engaging in illegal fishing, threaten the security of the Micronesia, and therefore, threaten U.S. interests in the Pacific Command's (PACOM's) area of responsibility. This paper examines why illegal fishing is a threat, looks at current maritime security efforts in Micronesia, concludes there is more PACOM can and should do, and recommends a change to PACOM's Theater Security Cooperation Plan to increase PACOM's security engagement in Micronesia.

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**LEVERAGING PACOM THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION  
FOR A STRONGER U.S. ROLE IN OCEANIA'S MARITIME SECURITY**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: Douglas R. McCrimmon, Jr.**

**06 November 2007**

## **Abstract**

### *Leveraging PACOM Theater Security Cooperation For A Stronger U.S. Role in Oceania's Maritime Security*

The *National Maritime Security Strategy* and the recently released *Cooperative Strategy for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seapower* both describe the importance of maritime security to the safety and prosperity of all nations and describe an array of threats to the security of the maritime commons. One of those threats, foreign fishing vessels engaging in illegal fishing, threaten the security of the Micronesia, and therefore, threaten U.S. interests in the Pacific Command's (PACOM's) area of responsibility. This paper considers examines why illegal fishing is a threat, current maritime security efforts in Micronesia, concludes there is more PACOM can and should do, and recommends a change to PACOM's Theater Security Cooperation Plan to increase PACOM's security engagement in Micronesia.

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# LEVERAGING PACOM THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION FOR A STRONGER U.S. ROLE IN OCEANIA'S MARITIME SECURITY

## Introduction

Global maritime security is a vital national interest. The *National Strategy for Maritime Security* (NSMS) begins by saying, “The safety and economic security of the United States depends on the secure use of the world’s oceans” and goes on to say that the safety and prosperity of all nations depends on global maritime security.<sup>1</sup> It explains that this is because the oceans provide highways for international commerce as well as recreation, mineral wealth and food.<sup>2</sup> The NSMS also states that the ocean “domain is a vast, ready, unsecured medium for an array of threats by nations, terrorists, and criminals” and suggests that since all nations benefit from safe and secure oceans they must therefore help in maintaining maritime security.<sup>3</sup>

The potential for traditional armed nation-state conflict between powerful naval combatants exists and U.S. forces should be prepared; however, most recent literature focuses on the growing challenges of *non-military* maritime threats. For example, Martin Murphy, in assessing a suitable role for a navy, suggests the world’s population has begun a “migration to the sea” driven by increased demand for energy, drinking water, minerals, waste disposal, food, and leisure activities.<sup>4</sup> In fact, 2.2 billion people live within 100 kilometers of a coast, and that figure is expected to grow 35 percent by 2025.<sup>5</sup> The result, says Murphy, is a more populated ocean with more illicit activity accompanying greater economic activity. The illicit activity includes smuggling of arms, people, drugs and weapons; black market commerce; piracy; toxic waste dumping; and illegal fishing.<sup>6</sup> Morgan and Martoglio develop a similar list and add religious extremism and terrorism. They maintain that the cumulative effect of these threats is a significant increase in “lawlessness in the maritime domain-thereby impacting peace and prosperity in a globally interconnected economy.”<sup>7</sup> What is the role of the U.S. in this environment?

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The U.S., as the global hegemon, is largely responsible for enforcing some semblance of order on the global common, the oceans of the world. But, its naval vessels are generally too large, too expensive, too capable and too few to control all of the numerous, far less capable transnational threats. Unfortunately, in the absence of a capable naval presence, criminal activity and disorder appear.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, Admiral Mike Mullen realized that “the ungoverned and under-governed parts of the maritime domain can no longer be ignored”...and that “today’s threats reverberate throughout the global maritime commons.” He said that the Navy cannot go it alone, that the ocean commons are too large and the threats too varied for any one nation to secure. He proposed a voluntary cooperative effort of the naval forces of the world, a Global Maritime Partnership (a 1,000-ship navy) of interoperable ships, as a means to achieve maritime security and assure collective security and economic prosperity. Further, he proposed that all nations should participate according to their abilities, but that some may need to ask for security assistance from a trusted partner.<sup>9</sup>

This paper examines the idea of cooperative effort to increase maritime security at the theater-level, the level of a U.S. Combatant Commander, specifically the Pacific Command (PACOM). PACOM’s Mission Statement says PACOM will work “with other U.S. government agencies and regional military partners to promote security and peaceful development by...advancing regional security cooperation.”<sup>10</sup>

PACOM’s area of responsibility covers more than 50 percent of the Earth’s surface, stretching from the West Coast of the United States across the Pacific and Indian Oceans west to the East Coast of Africa. It includes 60 percent of the world’s population, and Asia-Pacific nations (not including the U.S.), account for about 34 percent of the Gross World Product (the U.S. accounts for 21 percent of GWP).<sup>11</sup> Thus, PACOM’s area of responsibility is vulnerable to

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the lawlessness and illicit activity described by Murphy, Morgan and Martoglio, and Mullen. Furthermore, there is an “under-governed” ocean region right in PACOM’s front yard called Oceania. The Pacific Island Countries (PICs) need the help of a ‘trusted partner.’

The maritime security concern in Oceania is foreign fishing fleets and illegal fishing that threatens the sustainability of the main natural resource, fisheries. The U.S., Australia, New Zealand and France have territory in or bordering Oceania and are therefore interested in the security of the region. They are coordinating their efforts to increase security through a Quadrennial Defense Coordination Talks structure.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. is particularly interested in the security of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) surrounding U.S. territories in Oceania and the PIC EEZs that adjoin those U.S. EEZs. Additionally, the U.S. has security obligations to three PICs that are freely associated with the U.S. This paper reviews the economic and maritime security challenges in Oceania and the security efforts already being made with the thesis that PACOM should expand its Theater Security Cooperation efforts to take greater responsibility for the maritime security of the PICs because of PACOM’s larger resources and capabilities, its role in supporting U.S. Mission Plans, its direct interest in the sovereignty and security of U.S. territories and because of its security obligations with the Micronesian countries.

### **The Case for Greater PACOM Engagement – The Region, Challenges, Threats**

The argument for my thesis rests on the conclusion that Oceania is important to PACOM and that it merits greater attention. Others may argue that the PIC governments are stable, that there is no significant threat in the Western Pacific, that PACOM’s effort is rightly focused elsewhere on higher concerns such as North Korean nuclear proliferation, Chinese military expansion and threat to Taiwan, and terrorism in Southeast Asia. In this section I explain: (1) that a particular part of Oceania is especially important to PACOM, (2) its stability is fragile,



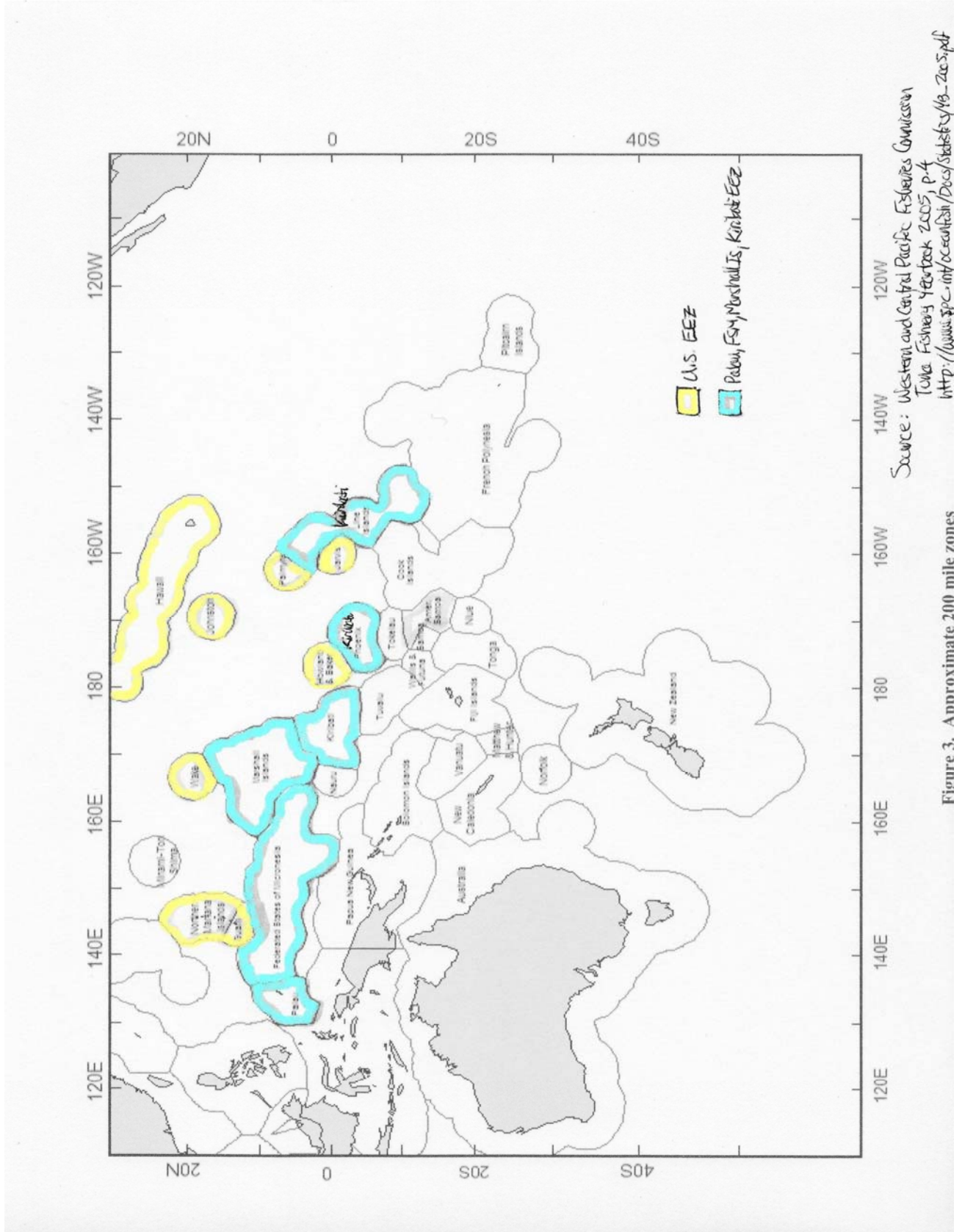
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(3) that there are real threats requiring protective security action, and (4) that PACOM has a duty to take more responsibility.

Oceania is a vast area of the Central and Western Pacific Ocean that includes the state of Hawaii, a number of U.S. territories, and the many small island nations that make up Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia, an area of roughly 15 million square miles. The Micronesian countries of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Marshall Islands and Kiribati are of greatest security interest to the U.S. because the first three have Compacts of Free Association with the U.S. and because all four have EEZs that adjoin U.S. EEZs. These four Micronesian countries (MICs) lie mostly north of the equator and are widely scattered over 3,500 miles of the Western Pacific due south of Hawaii west almost to the Philippines. Map 1 (next page) displays the countries of Oceania and the proximity of U.S. territories to Micronesian countries. Map 1 and table 1 (end) display the relationship between certain U.S. EEZs and adjacent Micronesian EEZs.

Micronesian economies are not diverse and are reliant on fishing. The islands of Micronesia are small and have little arable land (less than 10%) so that agriculture is mostly subsistence farming, although there is some copra production. Mineral wealth is limited to high-grade phosphate on some islands, and Palau has a small amount of gold. Palau also has a small tourism industry. There is limited infrastructure in Micronesia. Populations of MICs are small; the FSM has the largest population at 107,862. The FSM has the highest GDP at \$277 million (including grants). Per capita GDP in Micronesia is less than \$3,000, except on Palau where it is \$7,600. The economies of Compact countries are significantly augmented by U.S. grant aid and the government is often the largest employer. The greatest economic activity in the MICs is usually centered on government services and fishing.<sup>13</sup>

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Map 1: Exclusive Economic Zones

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Fortunately, Oceania is one of the last remaining profitable tuna fisheries in the world. The United Nations (UN) reports that “Sixty four percent of the total world catch of the principal market tuna species were taken from the Pacific in 2003”<sup>14</sup> and that 11 million tons of fish were taken from the Western Central Pacific in 2004.<sup>15</sup> But, Pacific fishery managers are concerned that their waters will be targeted by increasing numbers of illegal fishers using more sophisticated methods.<sup>16</sup> There is concern about over capacity in the world's tuna fleet to the point managers have proposed barring entry of more large vessels and rules for allocating catch. Pressure on the healthy fishery stocks will increase as other fisheries decline; 75 percent of fisheries are reported as fully or over exploited.<sup>17</sup> The Coast Guard reported that foreign fishing fleets are increasingly tempted to raid healthier EEZs as their own fishing grounds are depleted and demand rises.<sup>18</sup> The UN and Australia both issued reports expressing concern that illegal fishers are hurting the work of fishery managers to conserve tuna populations. Australia's report says the fisheries conservation battle has been lost on the high seas.<sup>19</sup>

Oceania tuna managers' concerns about overfishing and illegal fishing may already be coming true. Scientific advice to the PICs on tuna fishery management is that catches must be reduced by at least 25 percent for bigeye and 10 percent for yellowtail, two of the four principal species of tuna in Oceania.<sup>20</sup> It is likely that illegal fishing is making sustainable management more difficult and is contributing to this deterioration in the health of tuna stocks. Despite penalties as high as \$1 million in FSM for illegal fishing, foreign fishing vessels continue to fish illegally in Micronesian and U.S. Western Pacific EEZs as demonstrated by the arrest of at least nine foreign fishing vessels in MIC EEZs since May 2006, and at least three in U.S. EEZs.<sup>21</sup>

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From a global security perspective, sustainability of fish stocks is crucial. Forty one million people in the world work in the fishing industry, 49 percent growth since 1990, and 88 percent of the world's 1.3 million decked fishing vessels operate in Asia.<sup>22, 23</sup> The population of the world and increased standards of living will boost demand for food 50-60 percent over the next 20 years,<sup>24</sup> and "about 44 percent of the world derived at least 20 percent of its animal protein diet from fish. Fish is crucial in the daily diet of countries where there are not many alternative protein foods..."<sup>25</sup> Worldwide demand for seafood is forecast to be 100 million tons by 2010, but catches may only reach 70 million tons.

From a neighborhood security perspective, 50 percent of the world's tuna catch is from Oceania. The total estimated value of landed tuna from PIC waters is more than \$1B per year. 30-40,000 Pacific Islanders are directly or indirectly employed in the fishing industry, a significant part of the economically active population. PIC governments receive \$60-70 million annually in fishing access fees.<sup>26</sup> A failed PIC tuna fishery would adversely affect regional employment, income and a critical food supply, potentially leading to instability.

Under international law, MICs have a duty to protect the health of all fish stocks in their EEZs. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) requires coastal states to take appropriate conservation and management measures to ensure that living resources in their EEZs are protected from over-exploitation and to cooperate with regional management organizations when fish stocks migrate between their EEZs and other countries' EEZs.<sup>27</sup> As signatories of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean, Micronesian countries are obligated to "adopt measures to ensure long-term sustainability of highly migratory fish stocks" such as tuna.<sup>28</sup>

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Monitoring and control of foreign fishing vessels, particularly the illegal operators, is important for reasons other than fisheries protection. Fishing vessels are notoriously unsafe; Martin reports to the Secretariat of the Pacific Community that there are an estimated 24,000 fishing fatalities and an unknown number of accidents per year worldwide.<sup>29</sup> Fishing vessel mishaps create search and rescue and investigative demands. Martin also reports that foreign fishing vessels in Oceania are often involved in or facilitate to some extent illegal activities that undermine social and legal structures and can destabilize small states. These activities are the oft-cited transnational crimes of money laundering; smuggling of drugs, commercial goods, weapons, and people; and prostitution (which introduces HIV/aids, drug abuse and other social problems). Martin does report that foreign fishing vessels are not a terrorism threat in Oceania.<sup>30</sup>

Micronesian countries provide little deterrence to illegal activity in their EEZs. None of the MICs have a military and their police have very limited capabilities. Fishing vessels are supposed to obtain permits and operate vessel monitoring systems when fishing but PICs are challenged to enforce these requirements for legal fishing, or to stop illegal fishing or illegal at-sea transfers of fish to unlicensed vessels. As discussed in the next section, PICs do operate a small number of patrol boats that provide a small but important enforcement presence in their huge EEZs, and that presence may reduce spill-over of illegal activity into adjacent U.S. EEZs.

It can be argued that the U.S. has a duty to protect MICs against foreign fishing vessels. The U.S. entered into Compacts of Free Association with the countries of Palau, FSM, and Marshall Islands. Title Three of those Compacts regards security and defense relations and it gives the U.S. "full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters, in or relating" to those states and this "includes the obligation to defend those states and their people from attack or threats thereof as the United States and its citizens are defended."<sup>31</sup> That section of the

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Compact is open to various interpretations. Some argue that this section of the Compact should be interpreted more broadly to include economic and internal security as well as security from trans-national threats.<sup>32</sup> PACOM tends to consider that section as more narrowly calling for defense from the external threat of attack by armed forces of other nations.<sup>33</sup> Any definition broader than the narrow defense against armed attack definition would say the U.S. has a duty to provide a greater level of security across the wide spectrum of threats than it currently provides.

Another area of concern for PACOM is the view of some experts that lack of U.S. involvement in Oceania and its problems is allowing China to grow its influence in the region, and China's intentions are unclear. The Congressional Research Service reports that some estimates are that China is now the third largest aid provider in Oceania behind the U.S. and Australia. China has opened diplomatic missions in all PICs with which it has relations, and has more than 3,000 state-owned and private businesses in the Pacific. To an extent, China is countering the dollar diplomacy Taiwan pursues for diplomatic recognition. However, unlike the U.S. and Australia, China provides aid without performance conditions, often for large, visible construction projects that make island leaders look good but that do not promote sustainable development the U.S. and Australia are striving for. China also operates a large tuna fishing fleet in Micronesia.<sup>34</sup> Martin reports that the Chinese operate the fishing vessels with the primary purpose of establishing a presence, and that fishing profits are a secondary concern.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of Micronesia can also be considered under the operational factor of space. It is readily apparent from Map 1 that the security of Micronesia is in the U.S. interest for several reasons. A secure Micronesia protects sea lines of communication between the U.S. and Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean, as well as with strong allies New Zealand and Australia. The Federated States of Micronesia form a protective ring around Guam, which is becoming an

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important southwest Pacific strategic location for the U.S. after the loss of Subic Bay, with plans to move Marines out of Okinawa, and growing Chinese military capability.<sup>36</sup> Also, Kwajalein atoll in the Marshall Islands is vital as a U.S. satellite and ballistic missile tracking facility.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Case Against Greater PACOM Engagement - Support is Already Provided**

If one accepts the premise that there are legitimate maritime threats to the security and stability of Micronesian countries it is reasonable to ask what is already being done. This section reviews ongoing maritime security activities Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. conduct in support of MICs. This review shows that the support is very helpful but also that it is not equitably distributed among the supporting countries. New Zealand and especially Australia provide for a very significant portion of MIC maritime security, more than their fair share.

After the UNCLOS established the authority for coastal states to extend exclusive economic rights from 12nm out to 200nm in 1982, Australia and New Zealand assessed the maritime patrol needs of PICs and determined that PICs had unsuitable or no patrol assets to protect these expanded rights, or EEZs. In response, Australia created a Defence Cooperation Project (DCP) that delivered patrol boats, associated infrastructure and crew training to PICs. The program is run by the Pacific Patrol Boat (PPB) Systems Project Office of the Royal Australian Navy. Australia began delivering PPBs to PICs in 1987 for a total of 22 PPBs to 12 countries at a cost of \$A155.25 million.<sup>38</sup> Table 2 shows PPBs delivery information for each MIC. A key factor is that all PPBs completed a 7-8 year half-life refit and will receive a life extension refit at year 15, a point that often prompts a program viability and cost/benefit review.

The Australian PPB Program includes advisory teams made up of a senior sailor or two who provide technical advice on maintenance and an experienced patrol boat officer who provides operational advice, training, and liaison with the Royal Australian Navy. These

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advisory teams guard Australia's investment and provide Australia with eyes and ears throughout Oceania. Although the U.S. has missions in MICs, the advisory teams provide a level of access the U.S. does not have in Micronesia. New Zealand also provides some security training.

Australia also funds a fishing Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and a satellite-based Maritime Surveillance Communication Network run from the Regional Fisheries Surveillance Center of the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara.<sup>39</sup> These systems provide a valuable increase in MIC awareness of where law abiding fishers are operating. Unfortunately, these systems are of little help in finding and catching illegal operators. Maritime patrol aircraft do help find illegal fishers. In 2000, Australia and New Zealand provided approximately 450 hours and 300 hours of aerial surveillance respectively to the South Pacific, about 1 hour/day.

The USCG also supports MIC maritime security. On a periodic basis USCG District 14 in Honolulu sends one of its three sea going buoy tenders on patrols of the U.S. EEZs in Micronesia supported by HC-130 aircraft flights from Oahu and intelligence support from Maritime Intelligence Fusion Center in Alameda, California. However, cutter time in Micronesian U.S. EEZs is limited by competing mission demands and the long distances that cause many-day transits to and from Micronesia. HC-130 patrol hours are limited by demands for aircraft time for search and rescue missions and deployments to the Bering Sea for fisheries enforcement along the U.S. boundary with Russia and deployments to the Eastern Pacific for drug interdiction patrols. Two 110-foot patrol boats based in Guam patrol the Guam and Marianas EEZs but have limited endurance than keeps them near Guam. While the cutters are on patrol they sometimes coordinate their patrols with MIC PPBs, sharing HC-130 sightings and meeting to conduct "professional exchanges" in lieu of formal training. The USCG has no appropriated funding it can use to deliver formal training to the MICs.<sup>40</sup>



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Australia, New Zealand, France and the U.S. meet regularly at Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Talks to discuss maritime security assistance issues and efforts in Oceania. A Policy Stream at the Flag officer level meets annually to provide guidance to an Operational Stream which meets biannually and coordinates maritime security assistance operations. This coordination includes sharing information on intended individual operational activities in Oceania and coordination of multilateral maritime surveillance and law enforcement operations in the Western Pacific.<sup>41</sup>

There are no specific engagement or security assistance activities described for Oceania in the PACOM Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP). Fiscal year 2006 interim TSCP guidance discussed building relationships to promote U.S. interests, establishing secure and stable regional environments, supporting access and building competent coalition partners, all goals applicable to MICs. However, TSP guidance was to focus those activities on regions with high profile concerns such the North Korea nuclear threat and terrorism in Southeast Asia.<sup>42</sup>

PACOM does provide some recurring civil-military support to the MICs. Per the Compacts of Free Association, PACOM periodically tasks Civic Action Teams, on a partially reimbursable basis, to carry out small infrastructure improvement projects. Also, PACOM designated U.S. Army Pacific, supported by Service Components and in coordination with U.S. government agencies, the Executive Agent for Defense of the State of Hawaii and U.S. Territories, Possessions, and Protectorates that make up the land domain in the PACOM AOR. In response, Joint Task Force-Homeland Defense (JTF-HD) was created. When requested, JTF-HD coordinates Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) for all hazards.<sup>43</sup> JTF-HD also conducts an Interoperability Campaign in the Compact countries that includes annual training team visits to raise government abilities to plan for and respond to all types of hazards

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and to increase interoperability with the U.S. should the U.S. be asked for assistance.<sup>44</sup> PACOM provides occasional P-3 support out of Guam to multi-national law enforcement operations in Micronesia but I could not develop more precise information.<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusions**

From a global security perspective, the U.S. should help protect the sustainability of fish stocks wherever it can. Regionally, the Micronesian Countries (MICs) of Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands and Kiribati are particularly important to PACOM and warrant protection from transnational threats as well as traditional military threats. The MICs straddle the sea lines of communication between Australia, New Zealand, Southeast Asia and the U.S. They form an outer barrier of protection for Guam and the Hawaiian Islands, and are home to critical forward bases of military operations and a vital ballistic missile tracking facility as the Pacific Rim rises in importance. There are more than 600,000 square miles of U.S. EEZs that adjoin MIC EEZs. Treaty obligations with Palau, FSM and Marshall Islands obligate the U.S. to provide for their security and defense. Chinese influence in the region is growing and Chinese intentions are unknown. A full-time U.S. security presence is needed in Oceania to improve U.S. awareness of maritime activity in the MIC EEZs and to visibly demonstrate U.S. commitment to MIC security.

The economic stability of the MICs is very vulnerable. The countries of Micronesia have fragile, non-diversified economies challenged by scarce natural resources, little industry, small domestic markets, a shortage of skilled labor, and long distances that are barriers to governance, communications, and export of agricultural products. The MIC economies are largely dependent on healthy fisheries. As Admiral Mullen said, "What I have seen in countries around the world as I have talked about this [Global Maritime Partnership], is that security, that stability is about economics. The concerns we have which are WMD, piracy, weapons, illegal immigration,

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slavery, fishery violations, drugs, the common things we all face, this is a way to start to try to address those.”<sup>46</sup>

Tuna stocks are the MICs' greatest natural renewable resource but they are in danger. The tuna fishery of the Western and Central Pacific has been one of the few healthy fisheries in the world. Permits for tuna fishing provide irreplaceable revenue to the governments. The tuna fishery provides the growing world population with huge quantities of food protein. Micronesian countries are responsible for protecting those fisheries under several international treaties. The Micronesian countries do work with regional management bodies and foreign partners to improve their management regimes and the skills of their fisheries managers. Yet, assessments of the health of tuna stocks in the Western Pacific are showing that the tuna stocks are under growing pressure and may have started to reach an overfished status.

Foreign fishing vessels that illegally fish in MIC EEZs are a significant threat to the MICs, and the U.S. These fishers steal vital current income from MICs and they endanger the sustainability of fish stocks by removing unaccountable numbers of fish, making scientific management difficult. Foreign fishing vessels, particularly the illegal actors, are also a source of other threats to the welfare of Micronesia countries by their involvement in transnational criminal activities and are vectors for disease. Unregulated foreign fishing vessels may be tempted to fish in neighboring U.S. EEZs. The poor economies of the MICs limit their ability to protect their vast EEZs against illegal fishing and other maritime crime without outside help.

PACOM should use its Theater Security Cooperation Plan to help the MICs with their maritime security. PACOM only provides annual emergency management training for MIC government officials ashore and occasional P-3 patrols. To some extent, PACOM relies on the USCG to help the MICs. The USCG is a good fit for the MIC support mission but it lacks

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authority and capability. The USCG is prohibited from spending appropriated funds on training PPB crews and has no authority to enforce laws on foreign vessels in MIC EEZs. The USCG cannot devote significant maritime patrol aircraft time to support of Micronesia because it has a full plate of U.S. safety and security missions in the 2,005,838 square miles of U.S. EEZ in the Central and Western Pacific. USCG surface patrols are also limited by cutter availability and capability. Aircraft and cutters are both constrained by the huge time-distance challenge.

Australia, on the other hand, has taken a generous, leading role in enhancing maritime security in Oceania. Australia provided Patrol boats that have given 12 PICs, including the 4 MICs, an at-sea enforcement capability they would not otherwise have. Australia is carrying too large a share of the burden for the maritime security of the Micronesian Countries, the Oceania countries furthest from Australia whose maritime security has a potential direct affect on U.S. national sovereignty and security. The U.S. should take some of that burden from Australia where it makes imminent sense – in Micronesia.

It is an opportune time to review with Australia whether PACOM could pick up a share of Pacific Patrol Boat Program. The Pacific Patrol Boats are at a key point in their life-cycle for such a review. Australia started delivering the boats 20 years ago so Australia has started a patrol boat life extension refit program, a perfect time to make program changes that could include simple maintenance of current capability, upgrade, replacement with more capable boats, or even increasing the locations and number of boats.

A review of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program for PACOM participation should include the Maritime Surveillance Advisors (MSAs) and technical advisors that are part of the program. The MSAs not only provide PIC authorities invaluable advice on maritime operations, and the maintenance and administration of the patrol boats, they also give Australia continuous access to

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sources of information not otherwise available and are able to coordinate combined operations and coordinate all hazards response.

The Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Talks provide a ready forum for discussing proposed changes to the PACOM TSCP and the current security assistance situation in Micronesia. The Policy Stream members are senior enough to be heard by their respective countries' leadership. The Operational Stream provides enough staff power to work the details.

Maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) support is sorely lacking in the MICs. Greater MPA support or other overhead sensor support would make the few PPBs far more effective and result in much greater deterrence. U.S. MPA data were not readily available to pursue this line of investigation for this paper but it merits further consideration.

### **Recommendations**

PACOM should adjust its Theater Security Cooperation Plan to increase support for maritime security in Micronesia. Specifically, the Theater Security Plan should seek to assume responsibility for the provision and maintenance of patrol boats to the Micronesian countries of Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands and Kiribati. PACOM should work with Department of State and the USCG to propose the assumption of responsibility for providing patrol boats to the MICs at Quadrennial Defense Coordination Talks. This proposal would relieve Australia of the total burden of providing patrol boats. It would give the U.S. more direct influence over how the boats are operated. It would demonstrate an obvious U.S. security commitment to the MICs, to our Quadrilateral partners, and our competitors such as the Chinese. The relatively small investment would pay off in enhanced cooperation with our Quadrilateral partners, increased interoperability with U.S. enforcement assets and strengthened relationships with the MICs.

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PACOM should also seek to establish billets to deploy Maritime Surveillance Liaison Officers (MSLOs) and maintenance technicians to each MIC in place of the current Australian personnel. The MSLOs and technician billets should be filled by USCG personnel who have practical patrol boat and maritime law enforcement boarding experience. This would ensure the patrol boats are properly operated and maintained. It would provide continuous U.S. access to information on maritime activity in MIC EEZs that would improve U.S. maritime domain awareness. It would enable the USCG to provide continuous training and improve coordination of U.S. cutter and aircraft patrols with MICs. It would provide a developmental opportunity for junior officers. It would increase U.S. presence in the "outer defense layer."

### **Summary**

U.S. national strategy emphasizes the importance of maritime security to the safety and prosperity of all nations and describes an array of threats to the security of the maritime commons.<sup>47</sup> Micronesia is a region within PACOM's area of responsibility that is especially challenged by one of the array of maritime threats, that of foreign fishing vessels engaging in illegal fishing from Micronesian EEZs. Those illegal fishers can undermine the stability of MIC society and governance, and because the MICs have poor economies they need outside help in policing their vast EEZs.

The MICs are able to defend against the illegal fishing vessel threat only with the help of Australia, New Zealand and the U.S. Although the U.S. supports the MICs with occasional Navy and USCG maritime aircraft patrols and coordinated USCG cutter patrols, the PACOM TSCP does not address MIC maritime security. The most vital help is provided by Australia and their Pacific Patrol Boat program. I contend that Australia is carrying an excess share of the

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burden for maritime security in Oceania and that PACOM ought to relieve the Aussies of the burden in Micronesia. Micronesian security is essential for U.S. security.

Insecurity in the MICs can have adverse impact on U.S. EEZs, on U.S. military installations in Micronesia, on vital sea lines of communication and on the security of Hawaii and U.S. territories in the Pacific, as well as an adverse impact on world hunger. PACOM has a treaty obligation for the 'security and defense matters' of the MICs. Chinese influence is growing in the MICs. The PACOM TSCP is the tool for assuming the maritime security mantle for Micronesia by taking ownership of the patrol boats and associated advisory billets. The venue for coordinating this change in responsibility with Australia is the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Talks.

Assuming ownership for the patrol boats of Palau, FSM, Marshall Islands and Kiribati enhances international cooperation, maximizes domain awareness, and deploys layered security, three of the five strategic actions required to achieve the objectives of the NSMS.<sup>48, 49</sup> It provides evidence of genuine political commitment, sends a deterrent message to competitors, increases tactical interoperability, improves access to maritime intelligence, and is a venue for U.S. training. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs recently said "We are seeking to expand our engagement and reverse any perception that the U.S. has withdrawn from the Pacific...Toward that end we are labeling 2007 'The Year of the Pacific' and developing a 'whole of government approach'...to expand our presence and activities in the region."<sup>50</sup> Employing PACOM's TSCP to assume ownership of MIC patrol boats is a perfect first step. As the National Security Strategy says, "America must lead by deed as well as by example."<sup>51</sup>

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**Table 1: Micronesian Countries and Adjoining U.S. EEZs**

| Country          | EEZ (mile <sup>2</sup> ) | Adjoining U.S. EEZ         | EEZ (mile <sup>2</sup> ) | Adjoining PICs       |
|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Palau            | 233,201                  | none                       |                          | FSM                  |
| FSM              | 1,156,944                | Guam                       | 81,420                   | Palau, Marshalls     |
| Marshall Islands | 768,561                  | Wake Island                | 156,878                  | FSM, Kiribati, Nauru |
| Kiribati         | 1,328,913                | Palmyra Is. & Kingman Reef | 153,685                  |                      |
| Kiribati         |                          | Jarvis Island              | 122,106                  |                      |
| Kiribati         |                          | Baker & Howland Islands    | 167,864                  |                      |
| Sub-Totals:      | 3,487,619                |                            | 600,533                  |                      |
|                  |                          | Hawaii                     | 810,232                  |                      |
|                  |                          | Midway Island              | 134,367                  |                      |
|                  |                          | Johnston Island            | 167,898                  |                      |
|                  |                          | Northern Marianas          | 292,717                  |                      |
| Sub-Totals:      |                          |                            | 1,405,305                |                      |
| Totals:          |                          |                            | 2,005,838                |                      |

Source: University of British Columbia, Fisheries Centre, Vancouver, BC, Canada. "Web Products: Countries' EEZ," *The Sea Around Us Project*, 2007. See: <http://www.seaaroundus.org/eez/eez.aspx> (Accessed 19 Oct 2007).

**Table 2: Micronesia EEZ Sizes & Patrol Resources**

| Country/Territory | EEZ (mile <sup>2</sup> ) | Patrol Boats | Delivered | Operator   | Patrol Aircraft |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Palau             | 233,201                  | 1            | 1996      | Police     | 0               |
| FSM               | 1,156,944                | 4            | 1990-97   | Police     | 0               |
| Marshall Islands  | 768,561                  | 1            | 1991      | Sea Patrol | 0               |
| Kiribati          | 1,328,913                | 1            | 1994      | Police     | 0               |
| Totals:           | 3,487,619                | 7            |           |            | 0               |
|                   |                          |              |           |            |                 |

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### NOTES

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