

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The New Guinea with which this study begins in 1949 was not the New Guinea with which it comes to an end in 1969. Between those years, there was rapid and radical change. Before this period, NG had been the object of only occasional interest on the part of the metropolitan powers, the Netherlands in the west and Australia in the east, until World War Two, and Japan's advance down through the island. This was the stimulus for those developments which eventually ousted the Dutch from the Netherlands East Indies but not from West New Guinea, and began the process of positive planning for the development of what then was known as the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. By 1969, on the other hand, in WNG Indonesia had replaced the Dutch and, following the Act of Free Choice required by the New York Agreement of 1962 which had settled the WNG dispute and granted them administrative powers there, begun the formal integration of the territory into the Indonesian Republic. By 1969 in Papua New Guinea, a second House of Assembly with an indigenous majority had been elected with its first local Speaker, and target dates had been laid down, at last, for progress towards self-government and eventual independence from Australian rule. This thesis is concerned with some aspects of the process of Australian adjustments to these changes in an area traditionally of vital and special interest to her.

At the outset, this study had Australian foreign policy as its focus. It was intended to examine the significance of the WNG dispute for evolving Australian foreign policy and the proposition that it represented a turning point. However, since any thorough attempt to answer this question<sup>1</sup> would have to await the opening of the relevant Australian archives, it was decided to narrow the investigation to the circumstances under which over a twenty year period Australia's WNG policy came full circle and changed from one in 1949 which was absolutely opposed to Indonesia's claim to WNG, to one in 1969 which

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<sup>1</sup>Aspects of the WNG dispute itself have already been the subject of some study, notably by M. Haupt, "Australian Policy Towards the West New Guinea Dispute 1945-1962", Ph.D. Thesis, (Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 15 April 1970), and W. Henderson, The West New Guinea Dispute and its Settlement, New Jersey: Institute of Far Eastern Studies, (Seton Hall University Press, 1973).

unconditionally supported Indonesia's efforts to maintain its own rule in the west. The development of Australia's WNG policy is interesting in itself. In addition, from this specific examination of the public records available, the nature of some of the general change that was taking place in Australian foreign policy in these years becomes clear. This thesis is therefore firstly concerned with the origins of Australia's WNG policy and the pressures which came to be brought to bear upon it.

As work proceeded in Papua New Guinea and the PNG National Archives, it became obvious that the effects of the WNG dispute in NG itself were also considerable, both in the short term and, in some important respects, in the long term. The Dutch decision to stay in WNG after 1949 and later to leave just after starting to prepare the territory for self-determination, in combination with the Australian-Dutch policy of administrative co-operation in their NG territories between 1949 and 1962, and the course, the climax and the conditions of the eventual resolution of the international dispute over WNG had far-reaching effects, including the encouragement of West Papuan nationalism and of pan-Papuanism. The theme of "Melanesian federation" keeps flitting in and out of this story like Banquo's ghost - and even the Act of Free Choice in 1969 has not completely exorcised it. The result has been that there emerged a continuing WNG question for Australia, as also for Indonesia, exerting an important influence on the relations between them. It is therefore the second purpose of this thesis to examine the evolution and the resolution of what became after the New York Agreement the continuing WNG question.

Because the thesis is an attempt to describe what happened in NG as a result of the WNG dispute and explain those aspects particularly of Australian policy which are relevant to this, its structure is more chronological than thematic. With a chronological approach, it is possible to demonstrate both the build-up of pressures acting on Australia in the WNG dispute for the changes of policy that were made, and to illustrate the response in NG that was a reaction or a reflection of them. It therefore begins with a chapter which describes the origins and persistence of the importance of NG to Australia in order to account for the WNG policy that was adopted in 1949 and for the difficulties which accompanied its eventual change. History had made Australia's opposition to Indonesia's claim almost inevitable.

One result was the policy of administrative co-operation with the Dutch in NG which, for some at least, had as its object the eventual creation of an alternative future for the island other than division. The Australian policy of administrative co-operation with the Dutch, the subject of chapters two and three, reflected one view of where Australia's foreign policy interests lay; it also followed logically from Australia's support for the Dutch position in NG against the claim made by Indonesia following the Round Table Conference and the exclusion there of WNG from the Transfer of Sovereignty over the rest of the former Netherlands East Indies to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia. Chapters four and five describe the development of the WNG dispute and the pressures upon Australian policy created by the policies of the Dutch, the Indonesians and the Americans, while chapter six describes Australia's WNG policy progression through the international dispute to the defence development which followed Indonesia's accession to WNG and its subsequent confrontation of Malaysia.

As troubles in WNG developed under Indonesian rule, and as PNG became a refuge or a base for the opponents of the Indonesian regime, so there arose a possibility of conflict between Australia and Indonesia, or alternatively, of co-operation, accommodation and control. The troubles were created by the emergence of West Papuan nationalism under the Dutch and by its aggravation under Indonesian administration; chapters seven and eight respectively trace the development of these. Chapters nine and ten describe Australia's reaction on the international border in NG to the events taking place in the west in the early and late sixties. In chapter nine this was a border freeze, border build-up and border demarcation. In chapter ten there was a change. Here we trace firstly the problems which faced Australia in NG even after the coup which toppled Sukarno creating the conditions for the improvement of Australian-Indonesian relations, not least on account of Indonesia's decision to carry out the Act of Free Choice. Secondly, we examine the local and international reasons for a change of Australian policy to one of co-operation with Indonesia in border matters and refugee movement.

Finally, in chapter eleven, we turn to the development of PNG opinion on the WNG question, an opinion which eventually emerged as contrary to that of Australia after the latter had swung round towards

co-operation with Indonesia. The development of PNG opinion on this matter, slow, small and late as it was, illustrated that Australia no less than Indonesia, in solving one problem in NG - and in solving it in the way that she did - had created for herself another problem. This was because PNG opinion and reactions to developments that were taking place in WNG, just like WNG opinion, was influenced significantly by the policies Australia pursued with the Dutch and then against Indonesia, both up to and after 1962.