USA, Australia Militarizing PNG:
Softly swallowing sovereignty, rendering a vassal state

An independent geopolitical perspective

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Background of terms

I have read around some online databases such as google, Wikipedia and quora for assistance in affording clarity on how different categories of colonialist are to help in understanding the historical background to which some of the key players, particularly US as the global hegemon is playing out.

For this purpose, there are at least three categories of colonialist to deal with. **Neo-colonist empires** are different from **classical** and **colonial empires**.

Persia, Rome, China, Aztecs and Egypt are **classical empires**, their civilizations that had expanded their territory through war, religion, trade colonialism. These incorporated lands under the direct control of the Metropoli, but were fully integrated as a single unit to their dominion.

Belgium, England, Spain and Japan for instance are **colonial empires**. They expanded over far away territories in search of resources and trade monopolies. Depending on their individual case, they could be fully integrated as the metropoli lands as Spain with the viceroyalties that were just like states and inhabitants Spanish citizens, or totally exploitative regions without any local political control nor native rights as in the case of Kenya and Uganda, before independence and Hong Kong where locals were sub-humans with no rights ruled by a elite, lived in apartheid with absolutist power plundering the possession to feed the development of the metropolis.

**Neo Colonist Empires** are such as USA and Russia. They do not need to annex new territories, nor take direct control of colonies. They exert and impose their control over other states through a mix of soft and hard power. It is not needed to colonize a country to have it occupied nor to directly take over it.

A **neo Empire** doesn’t waste resources directly controlling other territories. That is expensive in hardware and soldiers and ends up bad with revolutions, independence wars and genocide, like the US discovered in Philippines carrying out massacres to silence Filipino resistance.

In a **neo Empire**, it leaves other territories to self-govern and do whatever they want, as much as they follow a set of rules that are of interests and you can access to their resources.

The US does have certain items in all the classifications for empire.

As Classical Imperialist, the US expanded aggressively against Mexico, Spain, Natives and Canada. To demonstrate some fairness, US also peacefully bought Florida, Louisiana, Alaska.
By 19th century, the US was a pure classical empire in expansion. History informs that from the 13 colonies, the US colonized westward, slaughtered natives, waged a fiery unstoppable war with Mexico, forcefully acquiring half that country’s territories from Texas to Nevada and Carilfonia, fought a war with British Canada and settled its borders in convenient barriers that prevented the arising of border threats.

As a colonialist empire, the US forcefully annexed, closest to PNG, the Kingdom of Hawaii. Following Hawaii, WWI started and the era of colonial empires commence its final stage. The interest shifted against colonialism as her expanding trade needs required open markets and free access to resources all around the world. WWII ended colonial empires and its reign. US began a process to polish its image by granting self-governance to colonies as a form of redress while holding sovereign and military control. US then proceeded in dismantling threats to her global dominance posed by the English and French empires, exploiting the United Nations Decolonization effort.

Since then, the US became the most dominant power on earth and turns into a Neo Empire.

- Post-colonial states claimed sovereignty and become members of the UN.
- US dollar assumed defacto global currency status.
- Use of soft power from the media, music, customs that way it shows custom to the world – Cocoa cola world.
- Weapons sales.
- Dependency
- Network of organizations and treaties binding countries around the world to certain rules and conditions imitating other countries to do things that are not in the US interests or they lose preferences and cooperation with them causing large problems to the countries that dare.
- Countries with independent policies that support competing powers of the US or do not favor US companies are usually ‘educated’ through a serious of political and economic pressures only the US can do. If they don’t work the US tends to violate other countries sovereignty by meddling in their elections, financing opposition, arming terrorists and supporting guerrilla or coup de’tats all in different levels depending on the interests and needs for each case. Most African and Latin American dictatorship happens this way. Civil wars and the arab spring.
- Ultimately the US will resort to unilateral illegal invasions of sovereign countries without UN approval to topple governments and kill leaders, impose their interests, protect the dollar dominance or favour US companies to win exploitation rights, reconstruction and weapon sales.
Pax Americana post WWII has also recorded success despite the historical glitzes. US’ non-imperialistic policies have caused the reconstruction of Germany, made South Korea and Japan developed countries and prevented communism in Latin America.

Vassal states are independent states that are lapdogs and obeys the empire. Under this classification framework, one could bring in England who follows the US to every conflict and represents the US interests in the European Union working against European interests. It follows that any country that hosts a military base with US forces is a vassal state. No matter how independent their government is, foreign forces in your territory are a declaration of submission and dependency. This is quite in contrast with an ally – that shares interests and work together in an equal foot, saying no when it doesn’t suits their own interests and not ceding to pressures. An ally is to respect.

That would be France, who opposed the US invasion of Iraq under lies in 2003, doesn’t host US forces and has left NATO command when their interests were to not fight Russia and negotiate a bilateral non-aggression pact upon the force of nuclear weapons.

The contention

USA and Australia have inserted militarily in PNG territorial jurisdiction oblivious to many uncanny eyes. Marape-Rosso government would do good to the constitution, laws of this country and the people if it does good in detering the soft, covert and illicit vices of these Indo-Pacific region powers.

By getting them to show respect for PNG’s constitution, their strategic competitive art would be no different to Russia’s deadly act of a high intensity kinetic war, swallowing up Ukraine’s sovereignty to render her a vassal state.

A vassal state is simply a lap-dog or puppet state that is under the control of the more superior state.

Much of it has to do with the duet states’ traditional fear carried over since the cold war, in particular Australia’s terminal fear of China.

China’s phenomenal rise to become an oriental rival economic superpower comparable to US’ hegemonic superiority in the region closest to PNG seem to have caused a state of frenzy among the traditional ANZUS Treaty powers, with the inclusion of the Quad – India, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, and Singapore. These have strategically codon off the blue pacific ocean region and softly through a combination of foreign policy and military strategies and operational plans such as Free and Open Indo-Pacific region (USA), Pacific Step-Up (Australia) and Pacific Re-set (NZ). The ANZUS Parties have also brought in the United Kingdom to join the fray through military formation AUKUS.
PNG’s sovereign territorial jurisdiction, particularly its maritime domain seem set as AUKUS-Quad and ANZUS’ far east strategic centre of gravity in the south-west Pacific beyond the South China Sea.

In 2006, this author saw it coming and postulated in Sunday Chronicle that in all the places, PNG’s Manus Province and the Admiralties would be such a centre of gravity when the Western Alliance move to the Pacific to gang-up against China from South China Sea.

**The Island Chain strategic military construct**

![Map of the Pacific](image)

The cold war ‘island chain’ strategic construct that had afforded US and its allies a structured approach to contain the spread of communism and its political ideology is being re-visited. Indo-Pacific Region construct of the 21st century region unto which the geopolitical and strategic competition will be played out – in the maritime domain environment – is the new battleground for such strategic competition.

Ostensibly, PNG sits squarely in the line of the second island chain straight down from Tokyo, Iwo Jima (Saipan) and Guam where the US’ so called ‘big spearhead’ looking into China, Taiwan, South China Sea and North Korea in the Korean Peninsula region is.

In all measure, like Russia of today, being accused of waging a war on Ukraine in an effort to swallow up her sovereignty, albeit kinetically, China too is similarly being touted by geopolitical, military and strategic experts and buffs of kinetically preparing to swallow up Taiwan’s sovereignty when time is opportune.
It is impossible for small nations like PNG to stop such a behavior by big powers them given our state of being. Unless PNG remains true to its universalist neutral engagement policy enshrined in the constitution, and defend the constitution of its stock legal capital, it is easy to see why this generation of political and bureaucratic leaders will make history for enabling the death of sovereignty, independence and integrity of our home-grown constitution. Indeed, the PNG High Court holds precedent of how Governor of Morobe, the firebrand Luther Wenge went to the supreme court holding back Australia when it tried to intervene with an external policing force into the PNG jurisdiction. Australia still hasn’t learnt to respect that constitutional episode.

PNG constitution’s National Goals and Directive Principles - NGDP Goal 3 in the preamble stipulates so succinctly:

“We declare our third goal to be for Papua New Guinea to be politically and economically independent and our economy basically self-reliant”. The directives are precise and points directly the leaders exercising power and authority:

- **Our leaders to be committed to these National Goals and Directive Principles**, to ensure that their freedom to make decisions is not restricted by obligations to or relationship with others, and **to make all of their decisions in the national interest**; and
- All governmental bodies to base their planning for political, economic and social development on these Goals and Principles; and
- Internal interdependence and solidarity among citizens, and between provinces, to be actively promoted; and
- Citizens and governmental bodies to have control of the bulk of economic enterprise and production; and
- **Strict control of foreign investment capital and wise assessment of foreign ideas and values** so that these will be subordinate to the goal of national sovereignty and self-reliance, and **in particular** for the entry of foreign capital to be geared to internal social and economic policies and to the **integrity of the Nation and the People**; and
- The State to take effective measures to control and actively participate in the national economy, and **in particular** to control major enterprises engaged in the exploitation of natural resources; and
- Economic development to take place primarily by the use of skills and resources available in the country either from citizens or the State and **not in dependence on imported skills and resources**; and
- The **constant recognition of our sovereignty**, which must not be undermined by dependence on foreign assistance of any sort, and **in particular** for no investment, military or foreign-aid agreement or understanding to be entered into that imperils our self-reliance and self-respect, or our commitment to these National Goals and Directive Principles, or that may lead to substantial dependence upon or influence by any country, investor, lender or donor.
Lying embedded in these constitutional directives and goal is the energy and spirit of Papua New Guinea in which the Constituent House of Assembly had covenanted and given the nation, the constitution and ‘ourselves’ to God, in the country’s belief, the Creator Being.

Directive four (4) is emphatic. Papua New Guineans must “……in particular to control……..wise assessment of foreign ideas and values so that these will be subordinate to the goal of national sovereignty…..and to the integrity of the Nation and the People…”.

Directive seven (7) reaffirmed that “The constant recognition of our sovereignty, which must not be undermined by dependence on foreign assistance of any sort, and in particular for no investment, military or foreign aid agreement or understanding to be entered into that imperils our self-reliance and self-respect, or our commitment to these National Goals and Directive Principles, or that may lead to substantial dependence upon or influence by any country, investor lender or donor”.

How did PNG fare when Australia revisited Lombrum in Manus under the pretext of the Pacific Maritime Domain Assistance Package?

As Section 9 – Access and Use Activities - and its yet secretive ‘Implementation Arrangement” indicates, daringly that PNG may have faulted yet again without due cognizance of the constitution in allowing the redevelopment of the Lombrum Naval Base on the Island of Manus.
The MoU’s ‘secret’ Implementation Agreement attachment to the MoU is succinctly clear on how her military-defence interest would play out inside PNG without the knowledge of political leaders, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, who principally are guardians of the constitution and sovereign independence.

Australia it seem has also militarily intervened and inserted herself inside the PNG jurisdiction through the Lombrum.

‘Access and Use activities’ of the MoU did not have an exit or sunset clause that would have demonstrated Australia’s genuineness as to when she (and US) will bail post redevelopment of the PNGDF sovereign Naval facility. It leaves the conspiracy that the combined US and Australia’s redevelopment of the naval facility is to render the naval base their own in peacetime PNG.

The absence would mean PNG has unwittingly agreed for Lombrum within its sovereign jurisdiction to become an addition to US 800-plus naval bases around the world, thus qualifying as a – base nation in global geopolitics and strategic completion much contrary to the dictates of the constitution.

The issues of command and control, of non-discriminate inter-operabiliy and training of naval offices, the parking of Australia’s hypersonic military transport assets and munitions are not particularly transparent and clear for the national and provincial government and the people of this nation on count of sovereignty and national interest and foreign policy.

Compelling legal issues such as conflict of jurisdictional laws in the event of criminal commission by foreign forces have not been openly discussed that may carry immense liability implications upon the state and the visiting foreign force.

Interventions of such behavior by nations that boast a deep history and mutual trust and respect for each other tantamount to an unfriendly act of undermining constitutional limits, trust and good neighborliness.

Section 9 specifies describes amongst other things:

- the types of activities that may be undertaken at Lombrum Naval Base;
- the periods of access to, and use of, Lombrum Naval Base each year;
- the facilities and areas which may be accessed and used at Lombrum Naval Base;
- the types of Assets that may be located, stored and used at Lombrum Naval Base, on a temporary or ongoing basis;
• processes for consultation between ADF and PNG Defence Organization commanders at Lombrum Naval Base; and
• any other relevant matters.
• The ADF will limit interruptions to PNG Defense Organization activities at Lombrum Naval Base during Access and Use Activities.

It says quite clearly, Papua New Guinea will not impede the prompt repatriation of ADF Assets from Lombrum Naval Base where necessary and that the ADF may undertake activities other than as specified under a specific operative paragraph with the approval in writing of Papua New Guinea. Furthermore, Australian military/defense department ‘may undertake activities other than as specified under a specific operative paragraph with the approval in writing of PNG. Those other military-defense activities remain unexplained to PNG Defense Force and the people of PNG including the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, National Security Agencies, the Foreign Ministry, the State Solicitors Office and people of PNG.

Patronizing and covert, the letter of the MoU clearly indicate Australia’s long term desire to insert and assert her charges in Lombrum without an exit strategy. There are no reciprocity clause offering PNGDF Navy access and use of ADF naval facilities, neither are there provisions addressing command and control and leadership authority at the naval base during the period of access and use. Access and use is long-term.

The MoU is void of specifying the types of military assets that may be located, stored and used at the PNGDF naval base, nor are clauses allowing PNG’s navy shared access and use of such assets including interoperability. Perhaps the yet secret Implementation Arrangement held between Murray Barracks and the ADF’s Russell Offices in Canberra holds descriptions of the types of modern weaponry, and military transport both air and sub-sea would be placed in Lombrum.

The Pacific Maritime Assistance program between PNG and Australia afforded cover for the PNGDF naval base to be used as ADF’s forward maritime maintenance, asset anchorage and store without realistic benefit to PNGDF. It raises implication Australia is deliberately enabling her military jurisdiction to absorb and swallow PNG’s own and in the process extend her military district to include PNG.

505 Articles Agreement with USA

Prior to election 2022, PNG Foreign Ministry succumb to US diplomatic-military pressure to sign US’ 505 Article’s Agreement. PNG did. The Articles agreement entitled USA to designate and place anywhere within PNG’s territorial jurisdiction unspecified military assets.
US’ Cee Bees and Winscosin Guards are both here with US military Seebees inserted in Lombrum assisting the ADF revamping the northern most maritime frontier base.

**US Ship Rider Agreement**

Recently, PNG Foreign Affairs Minister Justin Thakhenko signed the Ship Rider Agreement allowing PNGDF servicemen and women ‘to serve aboard US Coast Guard Cutters – considered US’ second Navy for military-defense interdiction duties. The Cutters effectively are military gun-ships loaded of US’s most sophisticated and modernized technology and weaponry beyond PNGDF’s own maritime capability. USCG is the global hegemon’s second navy in service worldwide.

Allow this author corrections.

Treaty law entitles only sovereign states’ police force members’ right to carry weapons and ammunition for interdiction duties on jurisdictional waters, not the military during peacetime. Jurisdictional waters include PNG’s Exclusive Economic Zone - EEZ, National and Local Seas.

These are separate laws prohibiting, as well as safeguarding and preserving national interest from excessive external military and defense intrusions into domestic waters of sovereign states.

Artisanal fishery activities are undertaken by PNG fisher-folks scattered throughout its islands and coastal areas. It seem people-centred human and resource security considerations have not been taken into effective consideration under the Ship Rider agreement.

PNG succumbed to US’ persuasion to sign the Fragility Act (FA) without much public scrutiny, including that of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense.

Signed at the margins of a White House tea-party for PIC Presidents and Prime Ministers, by US President Joe Biden, the signing was nothing more than the final act of alleged assault and hostility by the global hegemon - nail on the coffin of PNG’s ‘sovereignty’, ‘constitutional independence’ and ‘territorial integrity’.

Assuming Australia’s notorious academic imperialists campaign driven out of Canberra of branding fragile states in the Melanesian sub-region of the Pacific as being shoe-stringed on the arc of instability appear to have met fate for the PNG and her sub-regional brethren post-colonial states.
Both the US and Australia have before PNG, two ‘separate’ bilateral security propositions. PNG must read these and critically understand their motivations. Common in these offers are soft strategies to gobble up PNG’s sovereign, independence and territorial integrity. The protruding questions must be asked: Does PNG’s own military and defense interest would be best served under the framework of these separate bilateral treaties and that PNGDF’s own integrity as a sovereign defense force, it’s desire for modernization and force capability development is best served under these bilateral treaties?

Reading concurrently, the cold war and WWII legacy ANZUS Treaty in Article 4 and 5, and 7, this trilateral military defense treaty provides for and entitled treaty parties at the point of the treaty coming into force for members in 1952, to prepare defense and military capabilities for then territories under their colonial jurisdiction. Art. 4 and 5, spells clearly that any threats, military or otherwise that impinges on the territories of the Parties under their respective jurisdiction is a direct threat upon the sovereignty of these metropolitan powers. Art. 7 called for structuring and operationalizing a Military-Defense Council comprising respective Ministers supported by a Council of Heads of militaries.

PNG diplomats and military strategists and policy planners failed to put both the ANZUS trio to the challenge of simply revisiting the ANZUS Treaty, only this time and given PNG’s sovereignty and constitutional independence, including for purposes of equity and reduction of a daring trust deficit, particularly between PNG and Australia, that the best option would be for a quadrilateral defense/security treaty. What the ANZUS failed to accomplish for the defense of the greater Pacific region over the last 76 years that it must do now.

Stall the separate bilateral security treaties and subject the ANZUS trio to a high bargain – invite PNG to accede to the ANZUS Treaty of 1952 as a quad Party. PNG would hold dear her sovereignty, constitutional independence and territorial integrity, including national interest. Even more so, military-defense constitutional duties achieves respect, dignity and equity, avoiding subservience and puppetry. ANZUS has an unfinished responsibility to build up PNGDF as military frontline buffer state. There would not be need for soft, covert and illicit military insertion into a defense district or influential sphere.

Illicit interference and insertion does not do good to trust-building, nor does it to respect for sovereignty, the constitution and territorial integrity of sovereign states like PNG.

Constitutional sovereignty for now is PNG’s only defense, indeed indemnifying assurance against bullish vices of others. It is not what former Australian Defense Minister Alexander Downer declares as old shibboleth. Sovereignty, particularly the profound expressions by our forebears embodies in the NGDP, Goal 3 of the constitution’s preamble is the country’s only vanguard against soft, covert and or kinetic invasion.
Global Fragility Act championed by the US

In 2019, the Global Fragility Act presented a new and necessary opportunity for the US government to prioritize conflict prevention and transform how it partners with countries affected by fragility and conflict to foster a more peaceful and stable world.

The GFA demanded for a 10-year strategy to be referred as ‘Global Fragility Strategy’ that will contribute to stabilization of conflict-affected areas, address efforts to prevent extremism and violent conflict.

Section 505, Selection of ‘Priority Countries’ and ‘Priority Regions’ for the purposes of implementation of the GFS, such selection would be on the basis of “A” the national security interests of the USA. US National Security Strategy is among priority country and regional plans.

Section 507 Implementation of the GFS mentions close consultations between the President of the USA and ‘geographic combatant commanders’ implies military inter-operatibility between air, sea and land combatant commanders in countries and regions selected under Section 505.

There is comfort however in Section 511 Rule of Construction that guarantees – Nothing in this title shall be construed as a declaration of war or an authorization for the use of military force.

However, the proposed bilateral security treaty by USA and Australia may have provisions for the use of military force in the different geographical domains of combat. SOFA is being discussed under these arrangements as well.

US, Australia and PNG (Lombrum) history

History teaches that ANZUS Treaty became what it is because of the interest of Australia, the USA and China over a piece of PNG.

During the period of ANZUS Treaty negotiations from 1946-1949, US President Truman refused to allow ADF/RAN access and use of her 800 naval bases around the world, Lombrum in Manus among them. US had seen Australia’s ANZUS proposition as Australia’s soft desire to establish a mini-Monroe doctrine or sphere of influence in the Pacific region and so was Truman’s hardline.

However Australia’s colonial Minister for External Territories Evett and Prime Minister Robert Menzies forced him into a tough corner – sign the Treaty or vacate Lombrum.
Truman ordered the US navy out of Lombrum in 1949, signing ANZUS reluctantly in San Francisco Bay, in 1951. China’ Central Communist Party closely monitoring the ANZUS Treaty formation had sent in agents to Lombrum, Manus with instructions to cannibalize WWII Allied Forces’ strategic communication tower standing atop Loniu village on Los Negros Island. While the hegemon and Australia were fighting over Lombrum, China targeted their most priced communication technology.

As the centre of gravity in global geopolitical and power axis competition deepens, it is worthwhile holding the US and Australia’s offer of a bilateral security treaty at bay while PNG’s diplomatic, military planners and strategists be instructed to strike a hard bargain with the ANZUS trio to revisit the legacy cold war and WWII treaty to invite PNG to become a treaty party for sovereign equity. The obvious consequence will confirm PNG as a lap-dog blue pacific region’s post-colonial littoral vassal state.

**PNG-USA and PNG-Australia Bilateral Security Agreement**

These proposed security agreement merely seeks to counter-balance against China’s security treaty with PNG’s Melanesian Spearhead Group neighbor in Solomon Islands.

I have always argued that instead of a separate individual bilateral security treaty with USA and Australia, it would have been ideal for both ANZUS Treaty Parties to invited PNG in ANZUS. Though it is a legacy construct of the cold war and WWII, revitalizing this regional defense treaty and modernizing by restructuring it as a quadrilateral treaty would be more respectful. ANZUS could then accommodate Australia, New Zealand, US and PNG.

Australia’s terminal fear of China in the region appear to have thrown her into brinkmanship she has abused regional treaty agreements such as Boe Declaration, Biketawa Agreement that have no effect of legal operations in PNG’s domestic law as license to intervene militarily into PNG as if constitutional law entitles her to do so.

**Bougainville’s future status**

Both proposed bilateral security treaties perhaps do not cater for future security circumstances in relation to Bougainville’s status as a possible future sovereign state. Whether these treaties has disclaimer provisions is yet unclear. PNG would be blindly signing these treaties without paying due cognizance of her status as a party to the Bougainville Peace Agreement and all other constitutional covenants, declarations and roadmaps, particularly in relation to transfer of foreign affairs and defense powers from the point of Parliamentary ratification of the referendum vote of which a resounding 98 per cent of Bougainvilleans voted for a separate independence for Bougainville.
These bilateral treaties as proposed must not be blind to this fact. To sign without sanction of the PNG Parliamentary Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs, and following a report to Parliament of their implications to national security, foreign policy and the constitution, at the same time without cognizance of the Bougainville independence agenda would be pre-emptive act contrary to and disrespectful of national interest.

It is patronizing as it tantamount to an unfriendly act.

**PNG behaving as Medieval Vassal or lapdog state**

Wikipedia explains that a vassal state is any state that has a mutual obligation to a superior state or empire, in a status similar to that of a vassal in the feudal system in medieval Europe. The last empire to have subscribe vassal states to its cause was the Ottoman Empire of the 14th century.

**PNG and Pacific resistance**

In PNG and the region, there are signs of resistance.

There is general view that Australia, New Zealand and the USA, traditional ANZUS Defense Treaty Parties are engaged in strategies that are geared toward containing China to whom they perceive as a real threat to their so called ‘patch’, ‘backyard’ and ‘sphere of influence’.

Allies, Korea and Japan have also joined the concert of the power triad, who believe that aggressive containment strategies against the threatening presence of the oriental economic powerhouse are necessary to maintain their Pacific stronghold.

It is further observed, the triad’s ‘Pacific Step-up” (Australia), “Pacific Re-Set (NZ) and “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Region” (USA) as largely constituting soft power militarization strategies for containing China’s otherwise, burgeoning developmental influence in the region.

MSG member state, Solomon Island’s (SI) recent shift in foreign policy allegiance toward China and abandoning its long-time relationship with Taiwan, that left the ANZUS triad gasping, was a major statement of dissent against neo-colonialism and imperialism in the region.

As a bigger country in the MSG, PNG is softly advocating change, seeking to translate the weak, fragile state, corrupt and unstable state and its ethno-centric, noble savage notions into a structured future foreign policy approach aimed at procuring strength and opportunity for prosperity in a changing globalized world.

Exploiting its geo-strategic and geographical physical connectivity with Indonesia, it is imperative that PNG sees the expansion of MSG to include Indonesia and ASEAN plus China, given its land-bridge connectivity, as the future option of promise for stimulating economic growth and development, including reducing its Australian aid-dependency.
International Trade and Investment Minister Richard Maru’s publicly pronounced Indo-Melanesian Region Strategy (IMRS) will produce a Walk-to-Asia option as government investment complements opening up of infrastructure-induced market access to Asia through Indonesia.

A statement by Pacific Elders Voice (PEV) of 11th April (Tue 2023) expressed grave concern about the AUKUS Partnership presented as “deepening of long standing diplomatic, security and defense co-operation to meet the challenges of the future”.

“AUKUS signals greater militarization by joining Australia to the networks of US military bases in the northern Pacific and is triggering an arms race, bringing war much closer to home. Not only does this go against the spirit of the Blue Pacific narrative, agreed to by all the Forum Member countries last year, it also demonstrates a complete lack of recognition of the climate change security threat that has been embodied in the Boe and other declarations by Pacific Island leaders”.

**De-dollarisation**

BRICS spearheading a move away from US Dollar backed global trading system to yuan and digital currency. US hegemony is threatened of collapse – pax Americana crumbling. What will be then of pax Australiana?

I do not know what poor little kina will do under the weight of Yuan at the fiat currency’s calldesac or dead-end and the advent of digital currency. China, Russia and the BRICs and the ferocious entry of the House of Sauds will take centre stage – PNG’s One China will survive the AUKUS intermission – if the current global US hegemonic status is being eroded of its dollar pride as the trading currency of the world.

**Conclusion**

PNG cannot play ping-pong diplomacy with China anymore amidst de-dollarisation. The Global Fragility Act and its GFS, ShipRider and 505 Articles Agreement including Australia’s Lombrum MoU are treaty law based illicit, covert interventionist vices that runs against the grain of the PNG constitution, in particular Goal No.3 of the National Goals and Directive Principles. There has not been enough in-depth research into their implications upon an unsuspecting sovereign PNG state. Neither has these propositions been appropriately scrutinized and measured of its implications upon national interest, foreign policy objectives and human security. This is to the extent that these merely serve containing geopolitical and strategic interest of big powers – ANZUS/AUKUS+Quad.

The Lombrum MoU Section 9 and the secretive ‘Implementation Arrangement’ perhaps contain vital national defense, security, foreign policy and geopolitical information that may prove, PNG’s sovereign jurisdiction and independence as guaranteed by the constitution has deliberately been subjected to being swallowed up albeit softly, covertly and illicitly.
If this is so, PNG’s constitutional guarantee of sovereignty, independence, neutrality and territorial integrity is unfortunately been undermined through an unfriendly act by friendly countries.

US history is replete with subjecting countries as vassal or lap-dog states. Hawaii closest to PNG proves the case. US and Australia has combined, it seem to codon off the so called ‘blue Pacific’ ocean region. The cry by regional elders too isn’t enough to shift and deter the Indo-Pacific region militarization strategy espoused in the 505, the Shiprider Agreement and the Global Fragility Act to declare their 21st century Monroe Doctrine.

The proposal before the PNG government for a separate bilateral security treaty should be held contingent to a massive review by the Marape-Rosso government taking into consideration the advent of de-dollarisation and the country’s foreign policy review as well as the country’s International Trade and Investment strategy being pursued. These proposed treaties do not cater for PNG’s situation regarding Bougainville referendum result and the progression toward ratification of the referendum vote and separate independence. The twin security treaty proposition undermines PNG’s most challenging political issue. It would be pre-emptive for Bougainvilles when they reserve the right to negotiate and have a say on their own future security dispositions of their own jurisdictions.

In the face of de-dollarisation, PNG’s ping-pong diplomacy against China seem like kids place and the rules must now change as China, BRICS and the House of Sauds combine to crumble US hegemony that has backed proudly by the US dollar standards.

Agreement to sign the bilateral security treaty now would be pre-mature therefore.

The grand APEC connectivity agenda of development – physical, institutional and people-to-people – connectivity has demonstrated we are more deeply closer to the Orients that we ever have thought. Time has arrived for a serious rethink on who PNG wants to be friends with, where it wants to go in the the world and how to get there.

The photos below reveal clearly who our real friends are to which we truly have had a deep people to people connections well before annexation and integration of the two colonial territories.