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A Gallipoli Trope on Australian Peacekeeping

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This essay is not a comprehensive overview of Australian peacekeeping. Rather it focusses on Gallipoli as a trope, meaning it engages with the idea of Gallipoli figuratively or metaphorically. The Gallipoli trope connects to an Anzac legend within which Simpson and his donkey loom figuratively to transmit the idea of sacrifice for the safety of others through the ages. Simpson and his donkey give up their lives to save countless lives of others carrying the wounded from the battlefield under enemy fire.

There is a lot going on in the Gallipoli trope and the 'Simpson and his donkey' trope. They commemorate loss, courage, and healing wounds of ill-conceived battle. The Anzac Day dawn service has evolved—with elements such as poems, sermons, and prayers for peace, the 'Ode of Remembrance', the *Last Post*, and the lone piper—into a beautiful national ritual of reflection. The attendance of a senior representative of the Turkish army at the Canberra War Memorial every year and the integration of remembrance for gestures of civility across the Anzac-Turkish trench lines into rituals of reconciliation are civilising tropes. At the same time, the Gallipoli trope has been infused with nonsense about invading another country as a measure of the birth of a nation. At times, there is drunken incivility while Australians are guests in other peoples' countries, including Muslim ones like Turkey—to which the Gallipoli peninsula belongs—and Malaysia, in the city of Sandakan.

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The image many Australians have of our peacekeeping is that we are the world's best peacekeepers, more nuanced and responsive to local voices than the US military, for example. Perhaps we are more sophisticated and locally attuned than the Americans, but not New Zealand or Pacific Island peacekeepers.[1] Yet, the Australian military has logistically superior capabilities than New Zealand or Pacific states in peace operations, and superior training in important respects. After interviewing more than 300 peacekeepers from dozens of countries, we have learnt that *many* nations believe they have the world's best peacekeeping troops and police.

One mature way of seeing Australian peacekeeping is within the tradition of the Gallipoli trope. The finest examples of Australian peacekeeping have occurred in the context of disastrously ill-conceived international interventions of which Australia was culpably a part. Rwanda was, according to many, the most shameful page in the history of the UN, but Australian army nurses played courageous healing roles in the tradition of 'Simpson and his donkey'. The US leadership of the peace operation in Somalia was ham-fisted and disastrous, but, on its patch, the Australian peacekeepers did quite a good job at the difficult challenges of keeping and widening a Somali peace.

The very first UN peace operation, undertaken in 1947, involved Australian troops separating Dutch forces from Sukarno's troops, who fought for Indonesian independence. Later, this led to a UN peace operation, and to the UN Transitional Administration in West Papua in the 1960s, as the last piece of Netherland's Indonesia was handed over to Sukarno. Australia was a collaborator in the UN's crime of the so-called Act of Free Choice that the UN Transitional Administration supervised. Yes, the Act of Free Choice was a criminal act of the UN in convening a fraudulent electoral process, and Australia was, at the behest of the US' Cold War agenda, a lead conspirator in that crime. The crime was worse than a transparently fraudulent electoral process intentionally allowed by the UN to be fraudulent. It was a process in which anyone who manifested an intent to vote for independence was subjected to violence, offered bribes to change their vote, tortured, and even killed if they did not submit (Braithwaite et al. 2010a; Hernawan 2013). That is why only one of the votes cast in the plebiscite of representatives was against integration into Indonesia. The torture and human rights abuses continue in West Papua today at a shocking level (Hernawan 2013). Australian governments, Labor and Liberal, continue to be quiescent in their condemnation of this, as do Australian foreign aid organisations, who are part of Australian failure of peacebuilding and development in the part of our region that suffers the worst poverty and the worst rights abuses, that is, the highlands of West Papua. For the most part, Australian civil society and

development agencies are intimidated into staying away by a timorous Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that, today, repeats its errors of East Timor in West Papua, driven by fear of upsetting Indonesia. It will be many years, before Indonesia and Australia get serious about repairing the harm and reconciling the crime of the Act of Free Choice.

For all that, the history of Australian peacebuilding is as full of indomitable courage and success—that was difficult to achieve—as it has been of Gallipoli-like failure and complicity in West Papuan criminality.

Australian Redemption Stories

Now we consider four peacekeeping operations that can be read as redeeming Australia after its terrible historical start with peacebuilding in West Papua. First, we consider Cambodia, then Timor-Leste, Bougainville, and, finally, Solomon Islands. These are the four most important peacekeeping operations in terms of Australian involvement.

Cambodia

The Vietnam War became the Indo-China War when Cambodia had more bombs—2.7 million tonnes to be precise—dropped on its civilians between 1965 and 1973 than were dropped in WWII (Grabar 2013). This bombing created the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, but this chapter is not the place to describe this chain of causalities.

Australia was the most proactive and early mover to support America's Vietnam folly. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Foreign Ministers Bill Hayden and later Gareth Evans showed outstanding leadership in international diplomacy for a Cambodian peacekeeping operation to end the long cycles of civil war in Cambodia. Unlike West Papua, Australia sought to redeem its complicity in the war crimes of Vietnam and Cambodia by genuine, tenacious leadership for peace.

The peace operation itself was a qualified success and partial failure. It has ushered in a quarter of a century of peace, more or less, and has been part of a long-run civilising of formerly exceptional violence in Cambodia (Broadhurst et al. 2015). An election for a successor regime was conducted in a peaceful enough fashion under the supervision of UN peacekeepers, which were led by the great Australian peacekeeper General John Sanderson. But it would be an exaggeration to say that the peace operation left Cambodia in the hands of a

stabilised democracy, even a semi-democracy. Through a variety of Machiavellian manoeuvres, Hun Sen, an army general who defected from the Khmer Rouge, has ruled an autocracy continuously since 1993 while creating an appearance of electoral democracy.

Much more important is the impact of the Cambodian peace operation initiating a new paradigm of peacekeeping. Traditional peacekeeping operations had simply patrolled a border, disarmed troops, monitored a ceasefire or kept combatants apart at a line of control. Cambodia started the UN process of learning how to do multidimensional peacebuilding that was richer. Traditional peacekeepers would be complemented by building institutions of peace and democracy, such as a rule of law through community policing, independent prosecutors, and independent judiciary; an inclusive constitution; institutions that create checks and balances against abuse of power such as an Ombudsman, an Auditor-General, an independent electoral commission, and independent regulatory agencies including a central bank and institutions of development. This UN institutional learning, of course, has been gradual between Cambodia and the present (Howard 2008), and it still has a long way to go.

Looking back, the quantitative evidence now clearly suggests that traditional peacekeeping operations make only small contributions to enhancing long-term prospects of peace, while multidimensional peacekeeping operations that evolved from Cambodia make a very large contribution to the probability of long-term peace and democracy (Call 2012; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; 2006; Fortna 2004, 2008; Fortna and Howard 2008; Gilligan and Sergenti 2008; Nilsson 2006; Quinn et al. 2007; Riordan 2013; Sambanis 2008; Walter 2002). That is not to deny that many UN peacekeeping operations fail or partially fail. It is just to say that the coefficients for multidimensional peacekeeping in multiple regression analyses across large numbers of cases are large for war reduction.

From a parochially Australian point of view, Australia—at the turn of the century—was surrounded by what was called an 'arc of instability', with Indonesia having the highest incidence of terrorist bombings of any country up to the turning-point Bali bombing of 2002 (Braithwaite et al. 2010a), and significant armed conflict in Aceh, Ambon, East Timor, North Maluku, Poso, Kalimantan, and West Papua. There was also serious tribal warfare in the highlands of Papua New Guinea; civil war in Bougainville, Mindanao, and the Solomon Islands; recurrent coups in Fiji; and various more minor regional instabilities. Ethnic cleansing and rioting against Chinese communities are part of the history of violence in most of these places and in metropolitan Jakarta as well—from Aceh to East Timor, to Ambon to

Kalimantan to Bougainville, right around to the Solomon Islands (Braithwaite et al. 2012; Chua 2004)—just as this was part of the genocide in Cambodia. Most of these conflicts have now been calmed. Competence in Australian peacemaking, peacekeeping, and policekeeping with regional partners has made a significant contribution to this outcome. While Cambodia was too far away to be considered part of what was called our 'arc of instability', it was the place where we began the journey of learning how to respond to it.

Timor-Leste

Australia's folly in embracing the invasion of Turkey in 1915 and its complicity in the invasion and bombing of Indo-China in the 1960s and 1970s were on a larger scale than the wrongdoing Australia perpetrated against the people of East Timor. But the number of different ways that Australia wronged the unfortunate people of Timor has been larger, and the direct duplicity of Australia more egregious. Scott (2005) identified four different Australian betrayals of the people of East Timor, while Braithwaite et al. (2012) identified six.

Australia's first affliction upon East Timor was to drag it into WWII. Japan drove Australian troops from Kupang in 1942. Surviving Australian forces fled across the border into the neutral Portuguese territory of East Timor. This drew Portuguese Timor into the conflagration, with an invasion of 20,000 Japanese troops, who were harassed by the hit-and-run tactics of Australian forces and East Timorese allies. Until this happened, Japan had no intention of invading East Timor (Scott 2005), partly because Germany was anxious to not have Portugal drawn into the war on the Allied side. By the end of the war, perhaps 40,000 to 60,000 East Timorese had lost their lives (Dunn 2003) and many women had experienced sexual slavery. At the end of a guerrilla campaign, most of the resourceful Australian troops escaped back to Australia with the loss of only 40 men (Pilger 1994).

Scott (2005) describes this suffering from Australia's intentional strategy of dragging East Timor into WWII as the first Australian betrayal of its people. The second was Prime Minister Gough Whitlam's declared support for the integration of East Timor into Indonesia. He had declared his support long before a reluctant President Suharto was persuaded to deploy military force to take this course. Whitlam surely had realised that military force would be the only way the integration of East Timor could be achieved.

The third betrayal was when the UN, with prominent involvement from Australia, guaranteed the people of East Timor that they could vote for independence or autonomy within Indonesia without fear in 1999. When the predicted widespread killing broke out after the result was announced, the predominantly Australian UN personnel team was ordered back to the greater security of Dili, and then evacuated from the country. As in WWII, many young Australian individuals stepped forward with extraordinary acts of bravery in defending Timorese, defying orders to desert them, with unarmed Australian police standing between a militia member with a cocked weapon and a Timorese citizen. The dishonesty and duplicity of the Australian state and its leaders betrayed Timor, not the magnificent young people who went to do the impossible job on the ground in East Timor in 1999.

Scott (2005) nominates as the fourth betrayal that Australia knew from its intelligence interceptions that the Indonesian Army planned the slaughter and scorched-earth policy it implemented in 1999. Yet, Prime Minister John Howard failed to press the Indonesian leadership forcefully enough on this and convinced himself that Australian intelligence might prove incorrect.

A fifth betrayal—that occurred after Scott's book (2005) was published—was the coercive negotiation of oil and gas rights with Timor-Leste over the disputed aspects of the post-independence border with Australia, as discussed by Cleary (2007). Australia's dirty tricks stooped to the level of covertly breaking into the offices of the lawyer who represented Timor-Leste in order to steal legal-in-confidence documents that were the property of the government of Timor-Leste.

A related sixth betrayal that Scott did not highlight was the refusal at various stages to grant asylum to desperate Timorese who fled to Australia.

> With all this high level political manoeuvring aimed at positioning to take advantage of these rich oil reserves, Australia began to refuse asylum to East Timorese refugees so as not to cause offense to Indonesia. There was a sense in Canberra that it was time to 'put the East Timor issue to bed'. When 1,200 refugees arrived in September 1994, Australian immigration authorities took the cynical position that, because the East Timorese held Portuguese citizenship and were not facing persecution in Portugal, they were therefore not entitled to claim the protection of Australia. This was a bizarre and contradictory position, given that Australia had argued forcefully in the International Court of Justice against any claim by Portugal to speak for the East Timorese when the Portuguese challenged the legality of the Timor Gap Treaty... In 1996, one East Timorese asylum seeker appealed the Refugee Review Tribunal's adverse finding on his claim for asylum. As a consequence of the Federal Court judgment in his favour, in three other East Timorese cases the

tribunal deemed that Portuguese nationality was inapplicable and ruled in favour of the East Timorese concerned. However, the Australian government appealed these decisions in July 1997. After deliberately dragging out the appeal process until the end of 1999, the government decided to drop its appeal in the Federal Court against the asylum seekers, opting to return to the normal refugee determination process. By this time, however, the referendum in East Timor had taken place, and this group no longer had any claim to asylum. (Wise 2006, 46)

While Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had redeemed our crimes in Indo-China by embracing their boat people, John Howard compounded our betrayals of East Timor by pushing back their refugees. Notwithstanding this litany of betrayals, Australia's peacekeepers were mostly magnificent in Timor-Leste. First, the bravery of unarmed Australian police in standing between the innocent and the killer—insisting in the name of the UN that civilians not be killed on the UN's watch—was precisely what the UN failed to do in Srebrenica and Rwanda. General Cosgrove's INTERFET force of predominantly Australian soldiers was also courageous because they knew that, if Indonesian forces decided to take them on, they would be slaughtered due to Indonesia's superior numbers and command of the local terrain. Few peace operations in the history of the UN exposed so many peacekeepers to such a large risk. The result of that courage was quite probably the prevention of an act of genocide.

The UN peace operation that followed was one with mixed success. But, on balance, it has helped local and UN leadership secure a peaceful twenty-first century for Timor-Leste apart from a reignition of violence and return of peacekeepers between 2006 and 2008. As happened also in the Solomon Islands, the announcement effect of the arrival of the navy ships with the Australian peacekeepers in 2006 had a massive immediate impact in dampening the escalating violence. The Timor-Leste peace process has secured a rather robust democracy that enjoys high economic growth, albeit with many limitations concerning the separation of powers and enduring areas of deep poverty (Braithwaite et al. 2012).

Bougainville

The Bougainville civil war might have been prevented had Australia's Minister for External Affairs, Ceb Barnes, adopted a more careful approach at the end of the 1960s to negotiating the Bougainville copper mine that had such a disastrous impact on the environment and livelihoods of

Bougainvillians. Looking back on my days as a student activist, I feel personally complicit that I did not do enough. I was too polite when Ceb Barnes agreed to attend a debate with his critics, to which Peter Slipper—the former Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives—and I had invited him. I was not assertive enough when I subsequently lobbied opposition leaders Gough Whitlam and Bill Hayden in Bougainville when they flew to Bougainville on a fact-finding visit in 1969.

A number of things stand out about the Bougainville peacebuilding after the long independence civil war fought—over more than mine grievances—by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army from 1998 to 1996. Firstly, for the internationals, it was a *Light Intervention* (Regan 2010) that was cheap compared to many less successful peace operations. Secondly, leadership of the peace process was predominantly local, with Australia showing unusual humility—compared to its typical regional domination—in shaping the intervention. Thirdly, locals established initially small zones of peace that spread. Moreover, peacekeepers played a useful role in proactively suggesting that they could guarantee security for meetings where such progress could be negotiated by local leaders who were afraid they might be killed in a local peace negotiation. Also, Bougainville had an innovative, sequential architecture of commitment between the parties; exemplified by the statement: I will do this to consolidate the peace only after you do that (Braithwaite et al. 2010b; Regan 2010). It is a case that supports Walter's (2002) theory and data that reciprocity in step-by-step demobilisation is what delivers peace. Furthermore, in the long term, Bougainville built a restorative peace, rather than a liberal or realist peace (Braithwaite et al. 2010b). In this restorative peace, traditional reconciliation; healing led by church, youth, and women's groups; and restorative justice training by the Peace Foundation Melanesia—with some useful help from our network of restorative advocates in Australia and New Zealand—played important parts, and continue to do so. Finally, Australia's contribution to enforcing the withdrawal of the private military organisation, Sandline International—that would have exacerbated the war—was decisive and important (Dinnen et al. 1997; Dorney 1998; O'Callaghan 1999). This was also an internationally important moment in renewing the anti-mercenary norm in world affairs (Percy 2007), which—thanks to the arrest of Sandline International leaders in Bougainville—is less rampant this century than it was in the 1990s.

Boege (2006) has described Bougainville as a 'slow food' approach to peacebuilding. It was a hybrid architecture of peace (Boege et al. 2008) and a grand one; built on humble foundations. It included patience by the international leadership of New Zealand, Australia, and the UN, and most

importantly patient determination by the people of Bougainville. It was also an innovative peace operation because peacekeepers were unarmed at the request of the parties, and because of a Bougainvillean civil society that wanted an end to gun culture.

All these features make Bougainville a distinctive case from which much can be learned for the future. The fear about the Bougainville peace process is what will happen if Bougainville votes for independence in the next few years. Will the parliament of Papua New Guinea then grant Bougainville their independence, as the peace process suggests they should? Some of us fear that Port Moresby could even be so reckless as to deny the people of Bougainville the referendum on independence that was the central plank of the peace deal. Is Australia—and other regional players—doing enough to persuade Port Moresby that war could reignite if they do not honour the spirit as well as the letter of the peace agreement?

Solomon Islands

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was impressed (Braithwaite et al. 2010c) with the way Australia stepped up to ensuring that the Solomon Islands did not emerge from its civil conflict—which occurred around the turn of the century—as a 'petri dish' in which terrorism could breed (Wainwright 2003). Fervently Christian, Solomon Islands was one of the least likely places for an Al Qaeda or ISIS presence to fester. Yet, Australia with its regional partners of the South Pacific Forum, made the biggest, most systematic, sustained investment in peacebuilding that it has ever made in the Solomon Islands. It was a good investment, because of the way it helped the people of the Solomon Islands to pacify violence not because of its contribution to combating terrorism. The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) has now helped secure 12 years of peace and the rebuilding of many important state institutions, particularly the police.

However, the peace operation put excessive emphasis on rebuilding pillars of the state. In a sense, RAMSI went in with a World Bank template of what a successful state looks like and then set out to build it. An alternative path would have been to listen to inside voices on what social drivers of the conflict should be addressed, as had been done in Bougainville. Instead, RAMSI set out with its templates for rebuilding a so-called 'failed state', where there had never actually been a deeply developed state in the first place.

A problem was that the shadow state (Reno 1995, 1998, 2000, 2002) of business leaders—particularly international and national illegal and legal

logging interests—continued to pull the strings of the state through corruption. Most Solomon Islands politicians continued to be leaders who could be bought. In turn, most were leaders who bought support from their *wantok* (a network of family and friends whom one is obliged to) by delivering them far more than their fair share of state benefits—including contracts and even embezzled state funds—in exchange for blocks of their votes. A culture was created where the only way citizens could get anything from the state was through such political payoffs. The shadow state cast very large shadows over the pillars of formal state institutions that RAMSI sought to build. The shadow state cracked and corrupted those pillars. Illegal logging interests were a root cause of the conflict, of environmental decimation, of the destruction of village livelihoods, and of large-scale sexual abuse of children in logging camps by foreign logging workers (Herbert 2007). While the policing investment in Honiara was huge, and hugely successful—compared to other peace operations—in imprisoning most of the major militants who had fought the conflict, it touched little of the shadow state loggers' corruption, tax evasion, environmental crime, and paedophilia. This delegitimated the state. The reaction on the street was that the big fish, who pulled the strings that caused the conflict, were mostly untouched by the focus on locking up men who carried guns.

Still, peace improved police enforcement against violence in the capital city, and shiny new pillars of the institutionalised state were no small accomplishments. There was also more Australian investment in a Truth and Reconciliation Commission than there had been foreign reconciliation investment in Bougainville's *Light Intervention* (Regan 2010). Yet, there was nowhere near the depth and spread of locally led, customary reconciliation compared to Bougainville. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report was almost entirely written by foreign consultants, who did not speak any local languages, and the report was leaked by church leaders rather than formally released by a government that did not take the report to heart.

The credit to Australia about RAMSI is that a great deal of constructive and critical research has been produced on the limitations of its overly statist and Honiara-centric approach that was neglectful of issues like rural land reform, and RAMSI's traditional metropolitan policing approach. And today, rural community policing wisdom is disseminating from Bougainville to Solomon Islands police.

Conclusion

If Australians are good at something in peacekeeping, it is learning from our mistakes. Our mistakes have been so manifold, however, that opportunities to learn have been vast. We are even good scholars of learning from our mistakes —most notable are the contributions of Howard (2008)—and we have good peacekeeping teachers about that learning, such as the widely experienced UN peacekeeping General Tim Ford who trains leaders of new UN peace operations. This ability to learn is no trivial strength. Howard's (2008) comparative study concluded that the most important predictor of success in peacekeeping and peacebuilding was to have a learning culture. Complexity theory is highly relevant to the unfolding of wars. Randomised controlled trials to evaluate standardised interventions may be less relevant than local responsiveness to 'failing fast, learning fast, adapting fast'. Institutional templates may be less useful than a diffusion of excellence for scaling up effectiveness in peacebuilding.

On the negative side, the Australian culture of peacekeeping lacks humility. We might be better than the Americans at learning local languages and listening to local voices, but all too often not so much better. We can be quite inclined to barge into places we understand little or nothing of. We can enthuse at projects like regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, pretending that we understand the answers to their problems. The want of humility in how we approached the challenges after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 caused us to shift resources from evidence-based peacekeeping to speculative regime-change adventurism. It turned out to make our security worse.

Perhaps because he was a novice Foreign Minister at the time, Alexander Downer did show humility and did listen to Bougainvillian voices, including Bougainvillian women. Australian peacekeepers showed wise followership to Bougainvillian and New Zealand leadership in that peace operation (Braithwaite et al. 2010b). Thinking more deeply about the lessons of that often forgotten operation of modest cost might be a good starting place for continuous improvement in Australian peacekeeping.

Notes

1. Certainly not more so than Pacific Island peacekeepers when sensing what to do in a war-torn village context. My Peacebuilding Compared data suggest that Pacific Island peacekeepers have superior capabilities at sensing, for example, that people are hanging back with unusual quiet for village life.

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