

IPU Pacific Regional Seminar on Implementation of SCR 1540
Wellington, 19-20 September 2019
Remarks by Tim Caughley

Regional Cooperation and Awareness Raising

From my recent visits to ten Pacific Island Countries to provide assistance in implementing the ATT, CCM and APMBC, I am aware that Pacific nations have bigger priorities than becoming party to these and other binding instruments such as SCR 1540, and various WMD treaties. But since that work began two years ago, I have noticed significant developments – the significance of implementing SCR 1540 and becoming party to arms control and non-proliferation treaties has taken on a new urgency.

The first development – especially in relation to the ATT – is the heightened security interest that has come into play with the increase in drugs trafficking in the region. Drugs trafficking often goes hand in hand with arms trafficking (and sometimes people smuggling). These are patently national and regional security issues: they are no less real for small arms, light weapons and ammunition (ATT) as they are for WMD (and thus SCR 1540 and the BWC and CWC). And in addressing them, there are a number of synergies common to them all, through legislation, national control lists, national co-ordination mechanisms, border and export controls etc.

The second development is the realization – post the Christchurch killings – that acts of terrorism in the Pacific region are unfortunately no longer unthinkable. A heightened realization of the need for some of the mechanisms just mentioned has resulted.

My next point also draws on this analogy with universalizing *conventional* arms treaties and relates to the regional cooperation element of our topic. At the practical level there are tools within the region to help small island states with the legislative burden entailed in implementing SCR 1540. I fully understand the very limited number of parliamentary drafts-people available to Pacific governments, and additionally the difficulty of competing with other priorities in getting Bills onto the legislative programme. There are, however, a number of model laws available to meet the needs of small island states, including several drafted by New Zealand. And there are regional organisations that can help in advising on the adaption of these laws or in drawing on useful precedents in the region, or, for example, from comparable regions such as the Caribbean.

Finally, I want to emphasis the security trade-offs that arise in the case of these arms-related treaties. In some of the Pacific Island Countries that I have visited these past two years, climate change consequences are amongst their greatest concerns. They look to other regions for solidarity to counter climate change. By the same token, those Pacific Island Countries recognizes that they should show solidarity particularly with regions where security concerns stem from a different source, for example, where illicit arms trafficking and conflict are of greatest priority, as in

Africa. Enhancing regional security whether in relation to weapons such as WMD and others on the one hand and in relation to climate change on the other can or should contribute to global security.

In that context my closing point is that regional cooperation in re-inforcing the international rule of law inherent in implementing SCR 1540 underpins global security and thus development. This may seem a tall order in today's world, but what are the alternatives? As the CARICOM regional coordinator pointed out earlier in this seminar, parliamentarians have an investment in the issues we are discussing here because they affect us all.

For me, this is the answer to the question why should Pacific nations be drawn into dealing with weapons that – as far as we know – are absent in this region? Another answer is that dual use chemical, biological, and nuclear materials can and are mainly put to good use. But they can be put to hostile use, with catastrophic potential. Without proper systems and controls in place, the Pacific becomes susceptible to activities of illicit transfer, transshipment and trafficking to or through this region.

Why would governments leave themselves open to such risks and to inadequate implementation of SCR1540 and other binding obligations? In answer, I can only repeat the value of pursuing an implementation strategy that recognizes that there are useful synergies in developing control mechanisms, strategic goods lists, customs and border controls that cover WMD and other relevant arms regimes such as the ATT, enhancing national and regional security at a single stroke.

Thank-you

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