Diplomacy and Fiji

4

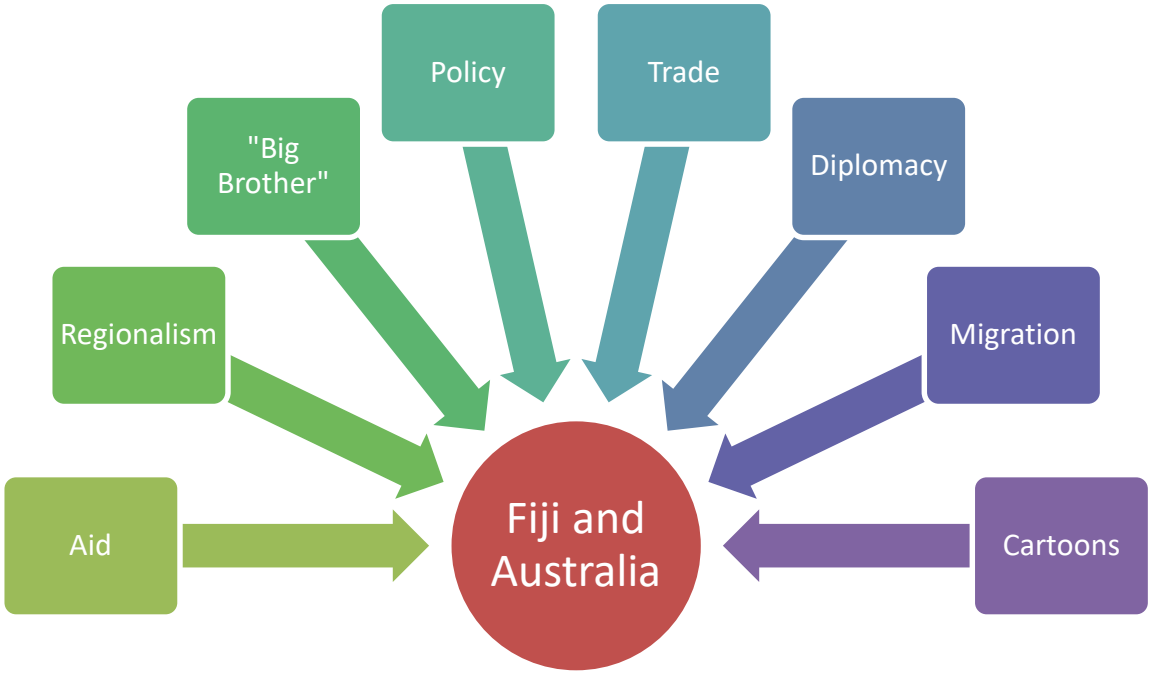
Fiji and Australia

Y12C

By Max Quanchi

Concept map

Key concepts for study this unit



Definitions

Big Brother	Usually meaning Australia as a rich and powerful neighbour, usually a negative comment
Policy	A statement by a nation about how it will treat another nation, or act in global events
Trade	A main feature of relations between nations
Aid	Monies given by donor nations to help neighbours and less wealthy nations
Regionalism	The idea that Pacific island nations could have a strong voice and improved Social and Economic futures if they worked together in a single regional organization.
Diplomacy	(i) The skill of making the correct decision in foreign policy (ii) The formal and informal meetings between nations
Migration	One of the major forms of relationship creating links between nations
Cartoon	a visual message; form of political commentary using pictures and short captions.

STUDY ORGANIZER

Before you begin this unit check the objectives and the activities we will be covering.

Topic	Objectives	Activities
Unit 4: **Fiji and Australia**	At the end of this unit you should be able to: • Identify key events in Fiji's international relations • Analyse cartoons about current events • Describe the role played by governments and the media • Compare propaganda and policy • Describe the importance of maintaining international relations	Summary of activities ; analysing cartoons 1 based on source A 2 based on source B 3 based on source C 4 based on source D 5 based on source E 6 based on source F

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIT

There are seven topics spread across thirteen weeks (five lessons per week);

1 Fiji and International Relations (the introduction) (1 week)
2 Fiji and New Zealand (1 week)
3 Fiji and the two Chinas (2 weeks)
4 Fiji and Australia (2 weeks)
5 Fiji and India (1 Week)
6 Fiji and the European Union (1 week)
7 Fiji and the World – Research projects (2 weeks)

(Note: three weeks are set aside for Enrolment, Revision and Examinations)

In each topic there are skills that you will learn. These are the skills of an historian and include;

- Analysing evidence (what does a speech, document, photo, treaty, etc, include, and not include)
- Searching for additional and unusual evidence
- Identifying the motives of nations involved in regional and international affairs
- Comparison – policies in the past and present
- Chronology – being able to place events in the order in which they occurred
- Describing the context – the local, regional and global influences that affected events
- Distinguishing between policy, rhetoric and propaganda.



Source; *The Australian*, 22 May 2000

This cartoon describes events in Fiji in 2000, the year of an attempted coup and extended hostage crisis. The cartoonist is sending a message to Australian readers about foreign affairs and international cooperation between Fiji and Australia. The cartoonist suggests that Australia (represented by kangaroos) is standing by, doing nothing and merely watching a crisis in the islands. The cartoonist also suggests that Australia is surprised that events in Fiji have been so serious – looting, burning, physical attacks and taking of politicians as hostages. There is no caption. The reader of the newspaper must find the message (or messages) and draw their own conclusions.

HISTORIANS MIGHT ASK THE FOLLOWING TYPE OF QUESTIONS?

What event is the cartoon depicting?
What is the main message?
What symbols are used to represent the two nations?
Is the cartoon critical of Australia's foreign policy?
What does the cartoon suggest is happening in Fiji?

1 INTRODUCTION A LONG AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP

In 1970, Fiji gained independence and Australia was one of the neighbours who immediately offered congratulations, and financial assistance. *Film Australia*, a government film production company in Australia, made a film in 1970 about Fiji as a new Pacific nation. The film was called "Independence for Fiji". A review of the film noted that;

> Independence for Fiji *has several aims: to document Prince Charles's attendance at the Fijian independence events; to make claims for the harmonious state of existence between the peoples of Fiji; to make claims for the friendly relationship between Fiji and Britain; and to promote Fiji as an attractive destination …. On the other hand, this film is not simply a 'raw' actuality record of the events: the filmmakers employ various techniques to create deliberate emphases and impressions.*
>
> *Source: http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk/node/494*

The reviewer suggests the film offered several messages. However, it was not the relationship between Britain and Fiji that was being promoted. *Film Australia* was firstly promoting Australia's close ties with Fiji, and only secondly the links with Britain.

Relations between Fiji and Australia were very close in the 1960s and 1970s. Australia was a prosperous democratic nation, itself only 70 years old as a nation (formed in 1901). Australia wanted to see Fiji share in this prosperity. It wanted Fiji to be a stable, peaceful friend to the **western democratic alliance**, (the pro-USA bloc in the Cold War).

The links in the 1960s were extensive;

- Colonial Sugar refinery (CSR) dominated the sugar industry
- Emperor Gold Mine at Vatukoula was a profitable Australian owned industry
- Australian banks were the main banks (Westpac and ANZ)
- The Australian curriculum was taught in private schools
- Australians dominated the annual inflow of tourists
- Australia was the main funding agent for the new university in 1968 (USP)
- Suva was a hub for shipping to and from Australia
- Nadi was a hub for flights to and from Australia
- Australia was Fiji's main aid donor

Australians were also active at the grassroots as volunteers, or in charity, women's and church groups coming to work on small projects in villages.

These links were so extensive that when Fiji joined Nauru, Cook Islands and Samoa to form the *South Pacific Forum* in 1970, they invited Australia to be a member.

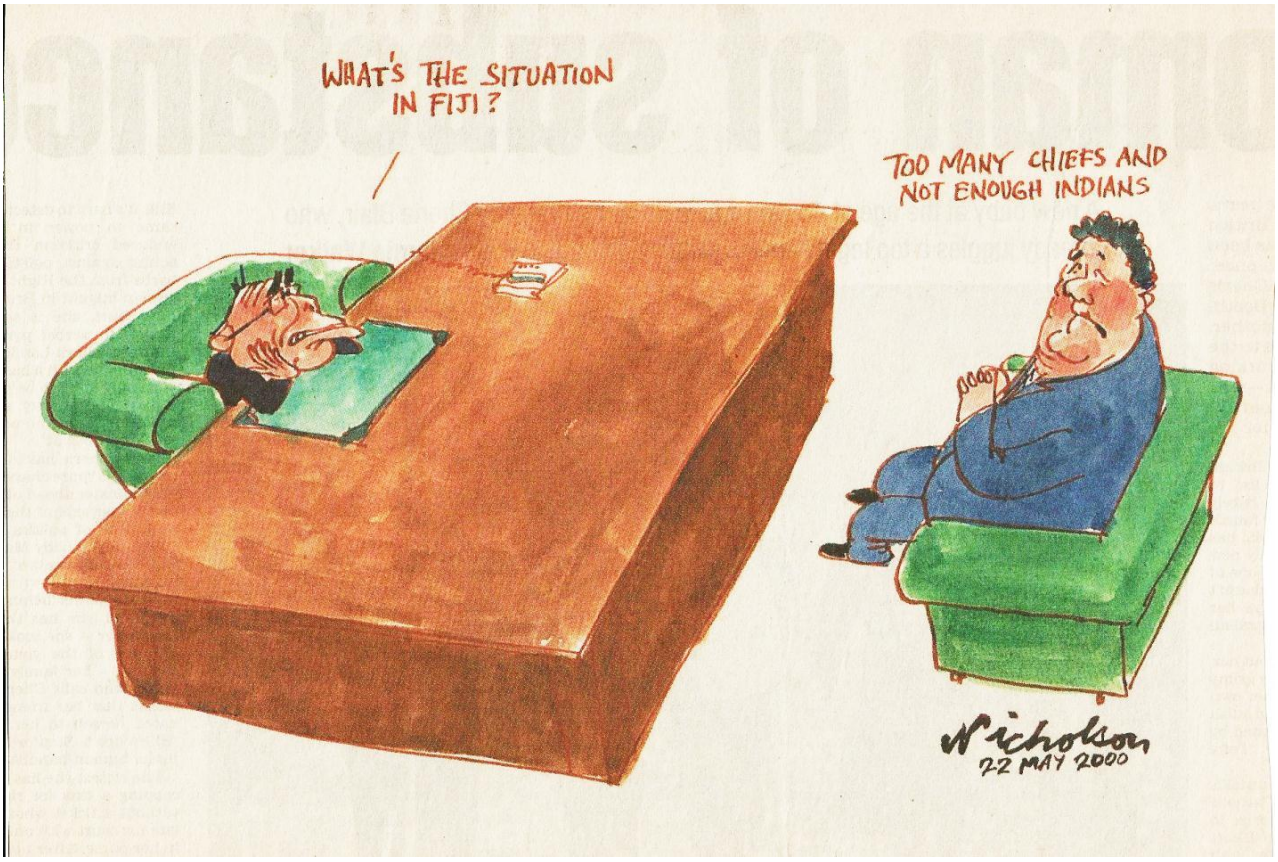
Fiji as an independent nation, continued its close relations with Australia after 1970. These included;

- links between Trade Unions, Churches, and schools,
- sporting visits each way
- links between political parties
- medical exchange programs.
- trade, tourism and migration

- joint membership of regional organizations
- scholarships for Fijians to study in Australia
- Fiji and Australian newspapers reported on events in the other nation
- during the 2000 Olympics Australia provided a $6 million dollar sporting, cultural and exchange program to Pacific Island nations, including Fiji.

Foreign Affairs are a topic that cartoonists like to depict. Cartoons are therefore a valuable historical resource for historians. The cartoonists offer a clear message to newspaper readers and break down complex events into a simple explanation. This unit asks you to analyse cartoons from Australian newspapers as historical evidence.

This unit examines two key events in Fiji's recent relationship with Australia by using cartoons to reveal how events unfolded. The two events are the coups of 1987 and the attempted coup of 2000.



Australian Prime Minister (John Howard) talking to Foreign Affairs Minister (Alexander Downer) when politicians were taken hostage in Fiji in 2000. Source: *The Australian,* 22 May 2000

ACTIVITY 1 QUESTIONS BASED ON SOURCE (1)

1 Answer yes or no to these questions:

Yes ( ) or No ( ) The Prime Minister looks interested in the topic
Yes ( ) or No ( ) The Prime Minister has read many reports and submissions on the situation in Fiji
Yes ( ) or No ( ) The hostage crisis is depicted as a racial problem
Yes ( ) or No ( ) Australia seems to understand the causes and events in Fiji
Yes ( ) or No ( ) The Foreign Minister looks worried
Yes ( ) or No ( ) The Foreign Minister looks like he knows what was happening

2 Based on this cartoon, which is the best word to describe Australia's relations with Fiji in 2000 when the coup occurred (tick the word that you choose)

( ) afraid
( ) like a big brother
( ) equal partner
( ) trusted friend
( ) bossy
( ) uninterested
( ) worried

3 Now use that word in a sentence to describe Australia's attitude towards Fiji in 2000.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 The expression "Too many chiefs and not enough Indians", is usually about bosses and workers. Here the cartoonist uses it as humour. What is the cartoonist trying to suggest is the problem with Fiji's politics?

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOPIC A THE 1987 COUP AND FIJI-AUSTRALIA RELATIONS

The two coups in 1987 took Australia by surprise. Australia had assumed the Alliance or the Labour party were able to govern Fiji effectively. Fijians and Australians were surprised that Labour won the election early in 1987, but Fiji seemed stable and in good hands. Australia also respected and relied on the Great Council of Chiefs to give wise advice to the politicians. The coups proved that Australia had not kept up close diplomatic links with Fiji and indeed the government was poorly informed about local events in Fiji.

The cartoons in Australian newspapers in 1987 therefore offered Australian readers a series of confusing messages. These messages did not capture what was really happening in Fiji.

Cartoonists made fun of the event, suggesting Fiji was a banana republic (a new nation with a strong economy but poor leaders), that prayer was used to solve problems, that the Governor General was not rushing to get help and advice from Britain (the former colonial ruler) and that Indians leaving Fiji would find Australia to be a unfriendly new home.

SOURCE 2 CARTOONS FROM 1987

(a)





"We can't afford a banana republic — here's some coconuts."

(b)



"Don't take it!"

(c)

(d)



Sources;
(a) "Governor General …, *The Age*, 25 May 1987;
(b) We can't afford …, *The Age,* 27 May 1987;
(c) "Australian citizenship …" *The Age*, 28 May 1987; (
d) "One thing Colonel…", *Sydney Morning Herald* 25 May 1987.

ACTIVITY 2 QUESTIONS BASED ON TOPICS A

1. In cartoon (a) what two symbols are used to show readers the topic is Fiji?

   i. _____

   II. _____

2. In cartoon (b), describe how the men are dressed.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. In cartoon (c) who is giving the Indian migrant advice?

   _____

4. In cartoon (c) the Indian migrant is being given advice – what is the meaning of the statement, "Don't take it"?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. In cartoon (d) who is the person leading the prayer session?

   _____

6 In cartoon (d) what does the cartoon suggest is the main problem in Fiji?

_____

_____

_____

TOPIC C IMPACT OF THE 2000 COUP; AUSTRALIA'S OPINION

Fiji's relationship with Australia was tense during 1987. Travel advice warned of dangers to tourists. Trade Unions placed bans on trade. Diplomatic links were "strained" – a word used to say that nations were unhappy with each other's policies. However, relations soon returned to normal between 1988 and 2000. The two nations worked together on regional organizations, and trade, tourism and aid continued to be the main links, until 2000.

The attempted coup in 2000 and the following two month hostage crisis took Australia by surprise. The events in Fiji, generated a large number of cartoons (and columns, editorials and reports). Cartoonists tried to make sense of what was happening inside Fiji.

Source (a)

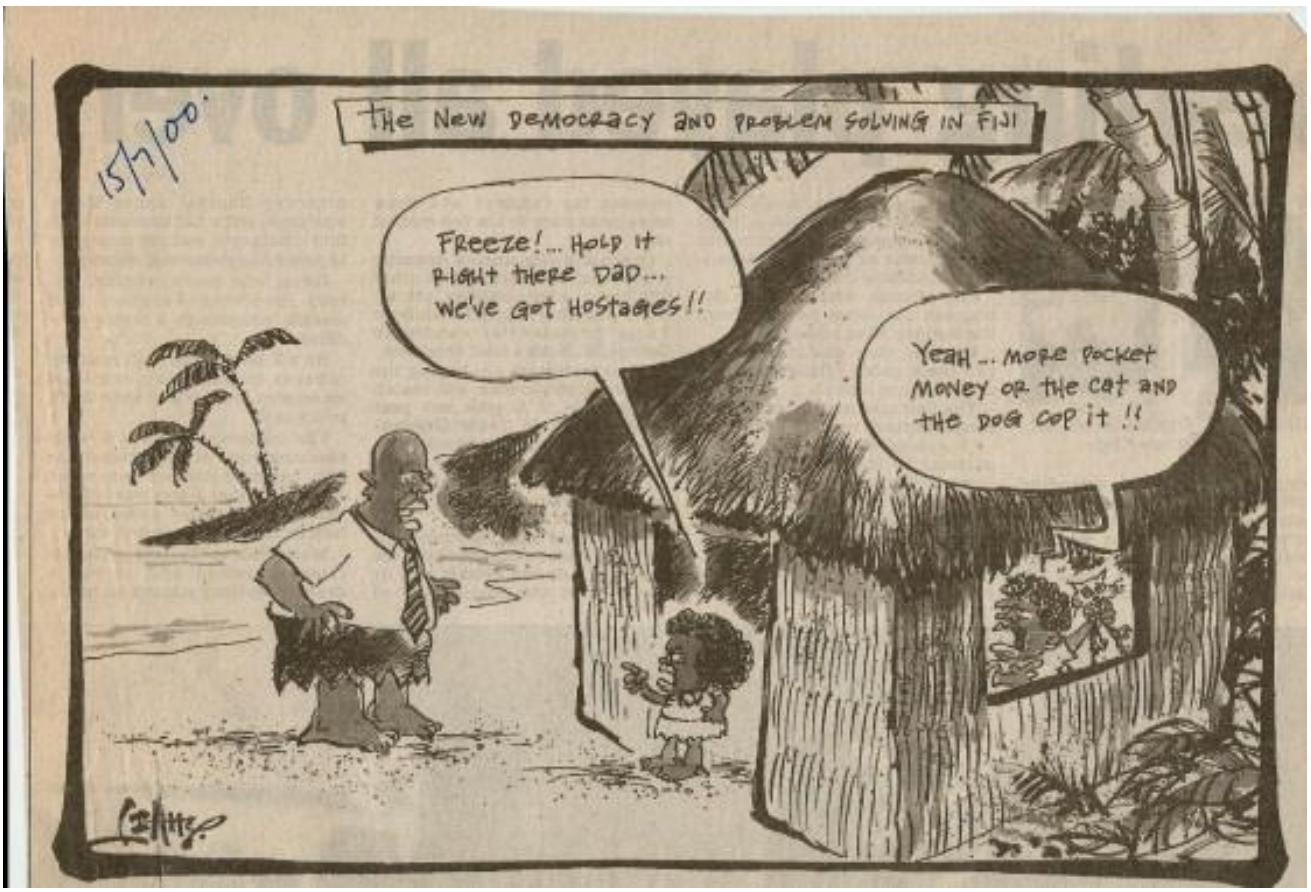




Source (B)

Source (C)



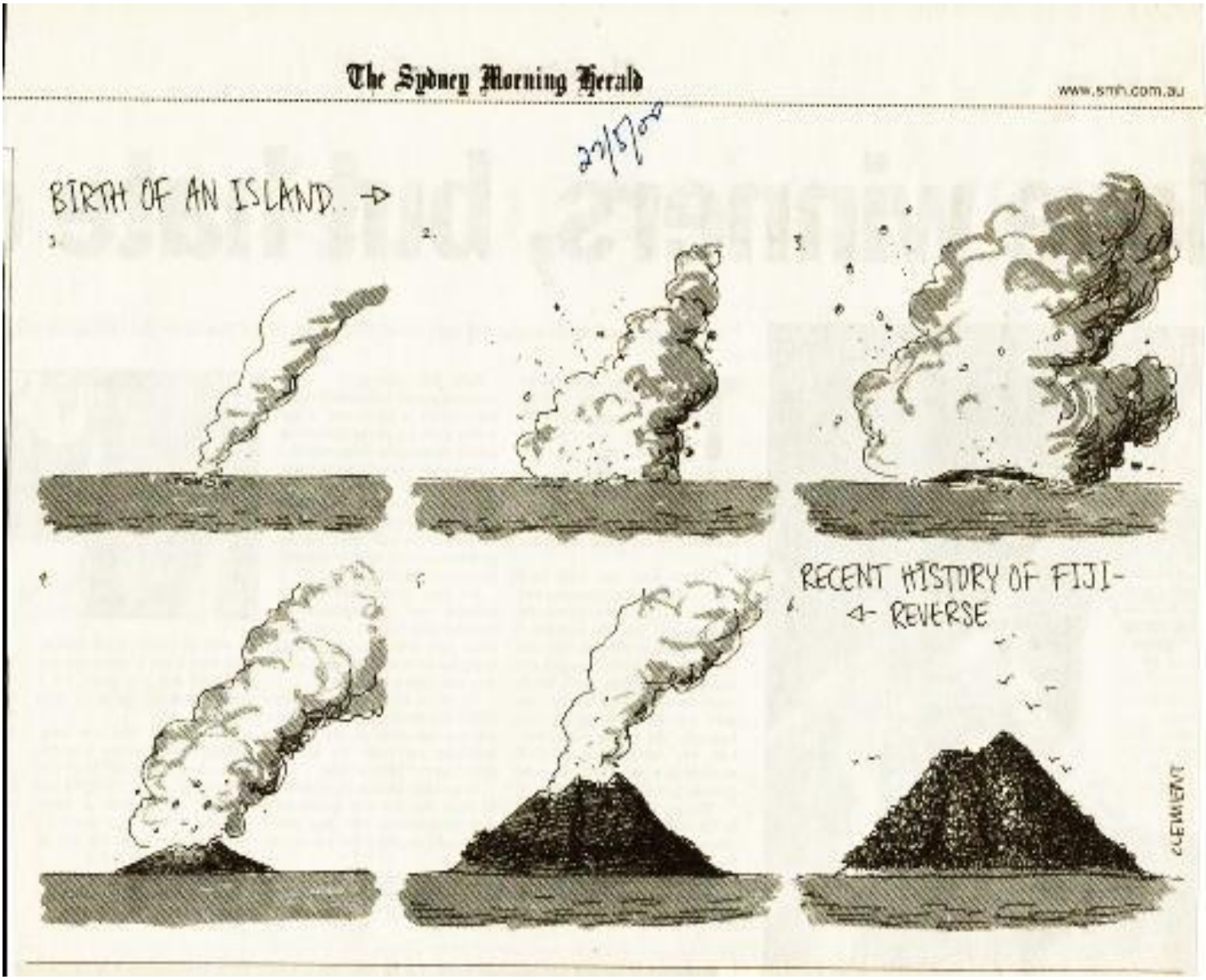


Source D



Source E

Source (f)



Sources:
(a) How to Harvest a nut";
(b) George Speight's spit roast/Fijian economy", 25 May 2000;
(c) "Stop portraying me as a madman …", 3 May 2000;
(d) "The new democracy and problem solving in Fiji", 15 May 2000;
(e) "Fijian coup, Today's timetable…", 27 May 2000;
(f) Recent history of Fiji, reverse" , 27 May 2000.

ACTIVITY 3 QUESTIONS BASED ON TOPIC C

1. Cartoons (a) to (d) offer several opinions about the attempted coup and hostage crisis – what is your opinion about the cartoonist's description of events?

   ( ) Yes or ( ) No You must chop a coconut tree down to get the coconuts
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No You can get a coconut from a tree without chopping it down
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No You have to weaken the economy to change the nation's politics
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No You should avoid weakening the economy while trying to make political changes
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No Coups cause ordinary people to copy the actions of the coup leaders – see cartoon (d)
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No Australia thought the coup was ridiculous - see cartoon (e)
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No Australia misunderstood the coup leader's actions and plans
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No In the hostage crisis, food was more important than political negotiations and planning – see cartoon (e)
   ( ) Yes or ( ) No Australia thought Fiji was going backwards – see cartoon (f)

   - Now discuss your answers with one classmate, and then with the whole class.

2. Examine cartoon (c) and write a different caption that explains what is happening.

   _____

3. Summarize the six cartoons (a) to (f); for Australian readers, what do they suggest was happening in Fiji in May 2000?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Summarize the six cartoons (a) to (f) again; this time say what Fijian readers might have thought about the Australian cartoon version of events.

_____

_____

_____

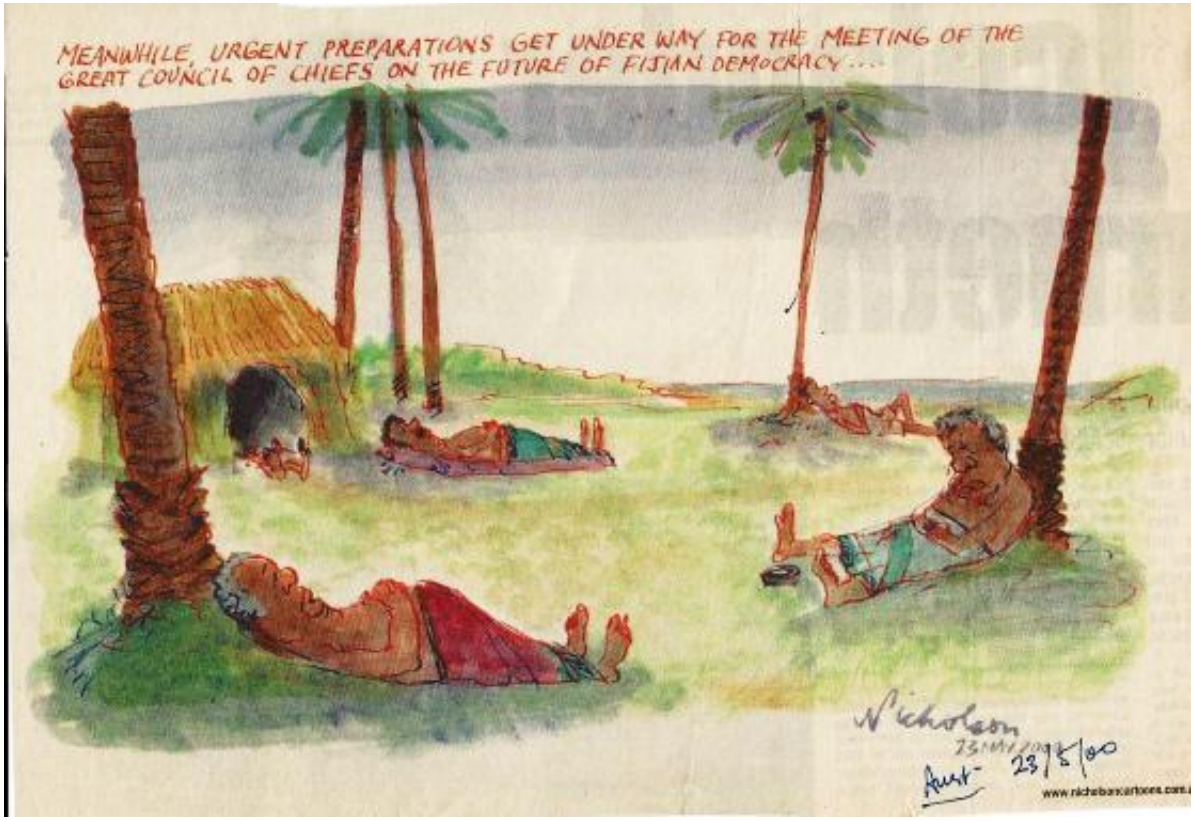
TOPIC D THE GREAT COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

The Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) was regarded in Australia as a safeguard against problems. It was assumed the GCC would give strong and sound advice to the Fijian parliament and politicians. Australia believed the GCC would intervene directly and quickly if domestic affairs became unstable. Australia believed the GCC would protect the elected parliament, the government and democracy.

Fiji and Australia had been members of the British Empire and therefore shared a belief in democracy. Australian cartoonists portrayed the attempted coup and hostage crisis in 2000 as an attack on democracy.

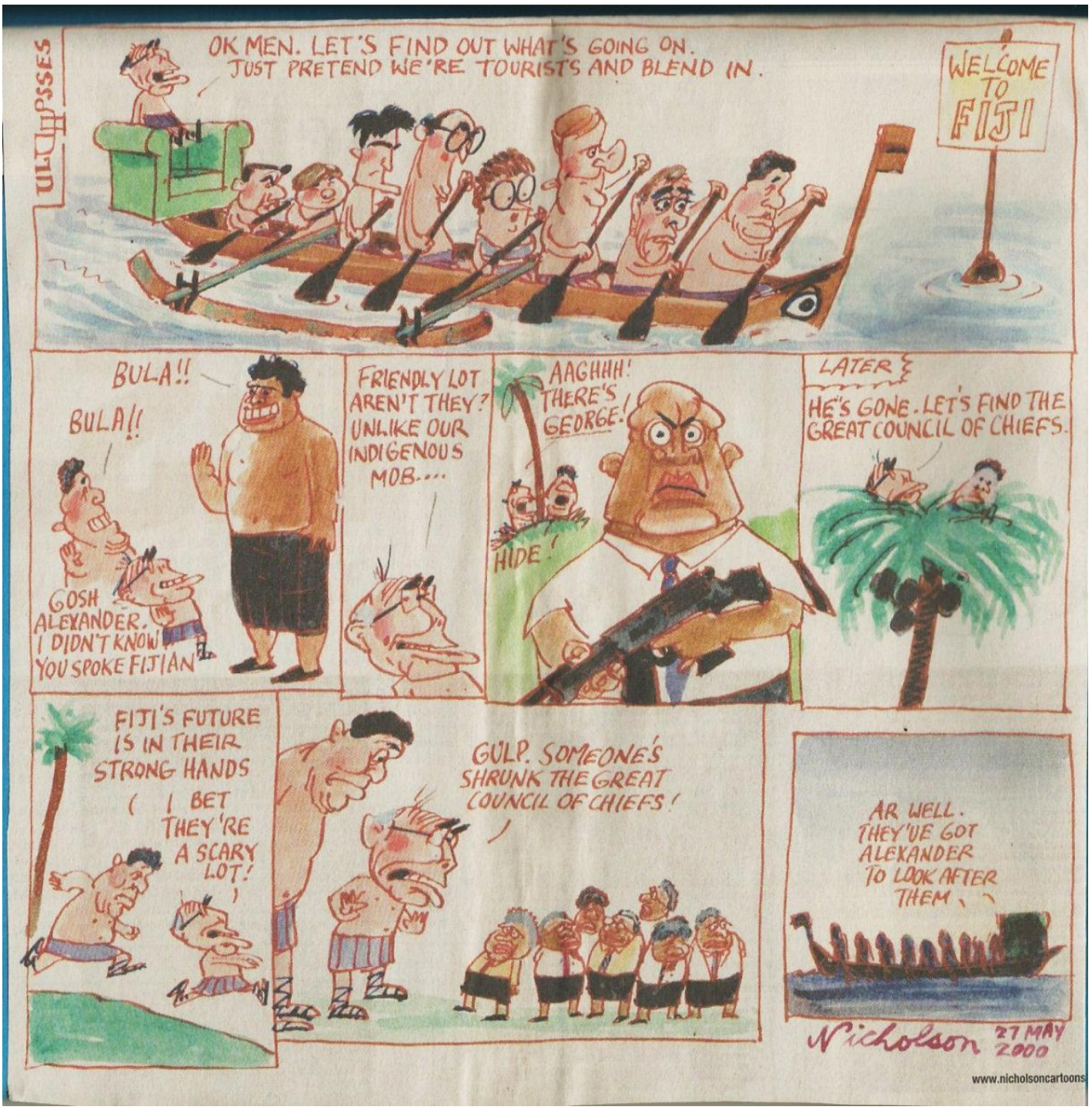
In the three cartoons which follow, the men in the canoe are Australian politicians and Ministers in Prime Minister John Howard's cabinet. "Alexander" is Mr Alexander Downer, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Mr Howard and Mr Downer did not visit Fiji during the hostage crisis. "George", dressed in a tie and shirt and carrying a gun, is Mr George Speight, an ambitious Fijian, who led and continued the hostage crisis for two months. The GCC is depicted as a group of strong leaders, but who are now ineffective and lacking influence. Eventually the canoe and Australia sail away and lose interest in Fiji's affairs.

Source (a)



Source (b)


GREAT COUNCIL OF CHIEFS
AND WHO SAYS YOU COULD DUMP THE GOVERNMENT
SILLY QUESTION
Nicholson



Sources:

(a) *The Australian* newspaper, "Meanwhile, urgent preparations …", 23 May 2000;

(b) *The Australian* newspaper, "Silly question", 26 May 2000;

(c) *The Australian*, "OK men let's find out what's going on …", 27 May 2000.

ACTIVITY 4 QUESTIONS BASED ON TOPIC D

1. How are the GCC depicted by the cartoonists? Tick the words that Australian readers might have assumed were accurate.

( ) Strong
( ) Huge and influential in Fiji's affairs
( ) Ready to dump the democratically elected government
( ) Powerless
( ) Not influential
( ) Rushing in to sort out affairs
( ) Relaxing and waiting to see how events would unfold
( ) Willing to take advice from Mr Downer, the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs

- Now discuss your answers with one classmate, and then with the whole class.

2. Write a paragraph (five sentences) on the Australian cartoonist's view of the GCC.

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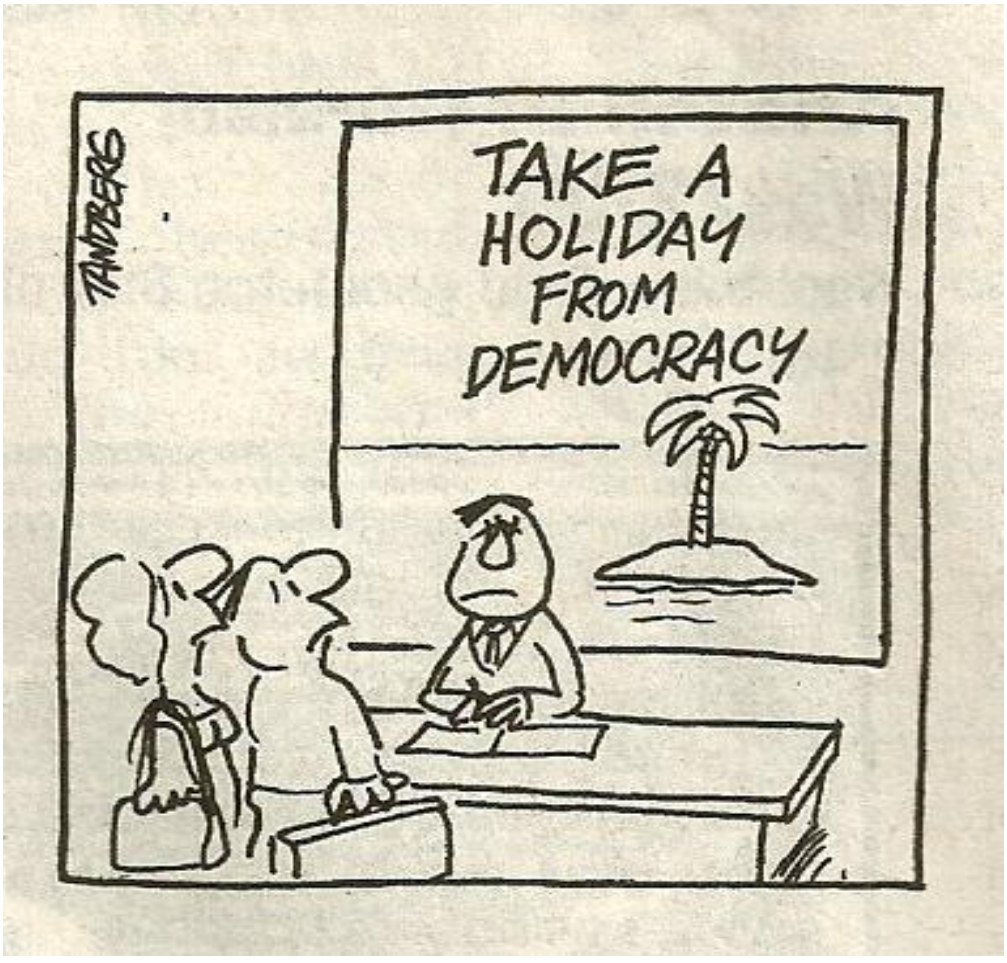
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F IMPACT ON TOURISM

Tourism was the main form of contact between Fijians and Australians. Tourism had boomed after 1970, with the introduction of the Boeing 747 “Jumbo”, regular flights from Nadi to Australia, and the building of resorts on the Coral Coast, Nadi/Denarau, Yasawas and the islands off Lautoka. Fijians also visited Australia regularly to see friends and relatives, or for study, medical appointments and attending meetings.

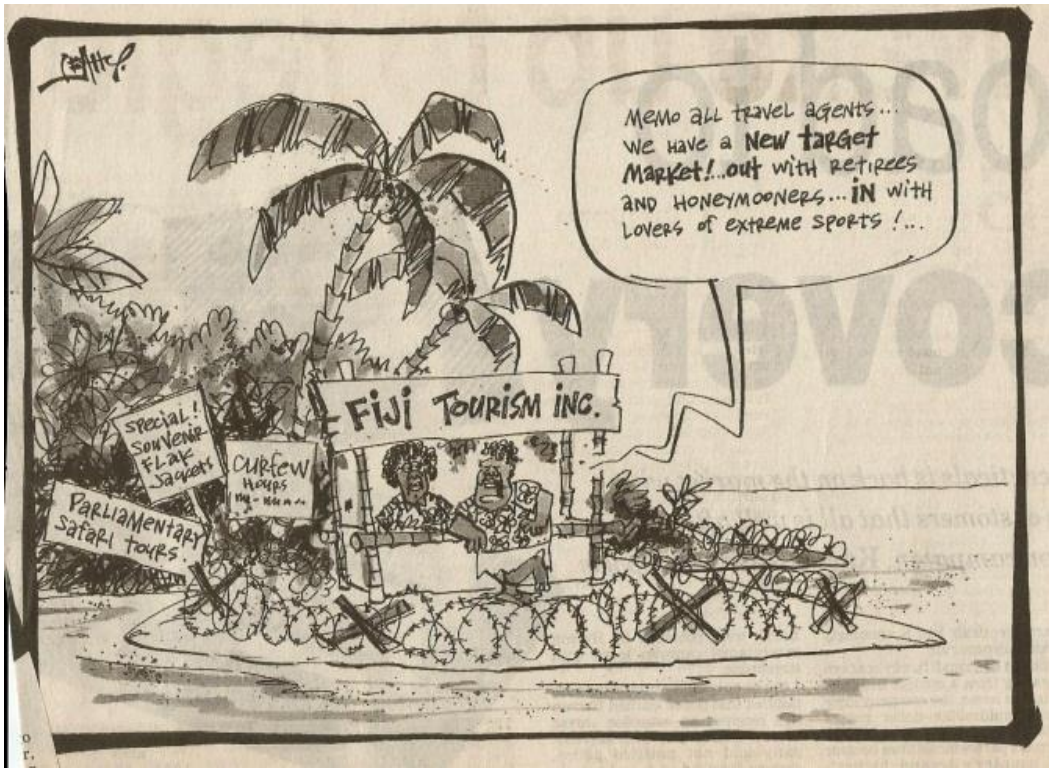
Cruise ships continued to visit Lautoka and Suva. For Australians, a “trip to the islands” usually meant Fiji. For Fijians, tourism meant jobs. For the Fiji government, tourism was an important supplement to relying only on the sugar, gold and timber industries.

Economic progress was therefore in danger if there was a military coup. Cartoonists responded by linking the coup with both democracy and tourism. Coup leaders with guns were depicted as still being friendly and travel agencies promoted “extreme sports” (as a joke), flak jackets and provided curfew times.



Source (a)

Source (b)





Source (c)

Sources: (a) "Take a holiday …", *Sydney Morning Herald*, May 25 2000; (b) "Don't worry …", *The Australian*, 24 May 2000; (c) "Fiji Tourism Inc …", *Courier Mail* (Brisbane), 23 May 2000.

ACTIVITY 5 QUESTIONS BASED ON TOPIC F

1 In cartoon (a) what symbol is used to suggest the destination is Fiji?

_____

2 In cartoon (b) "don't worry it's not loaded", make a photocopy of the cartoon but write a different caption.

New caption _____

3 In cartoon (b) readers are given three hints that the topic is Fiji – list the three visual hints

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

4 In cartoon (c) what visual signs are that Fiji is having a military coup or could be a dangerous place? List three visual hints;

a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

5 In your own words write a short statement (a paragraph, 5 sentences) from the Fijian Ministry of Foreign Affairs telling Australian tourists what Fiji is really like in 1987.

_____

_____

_____

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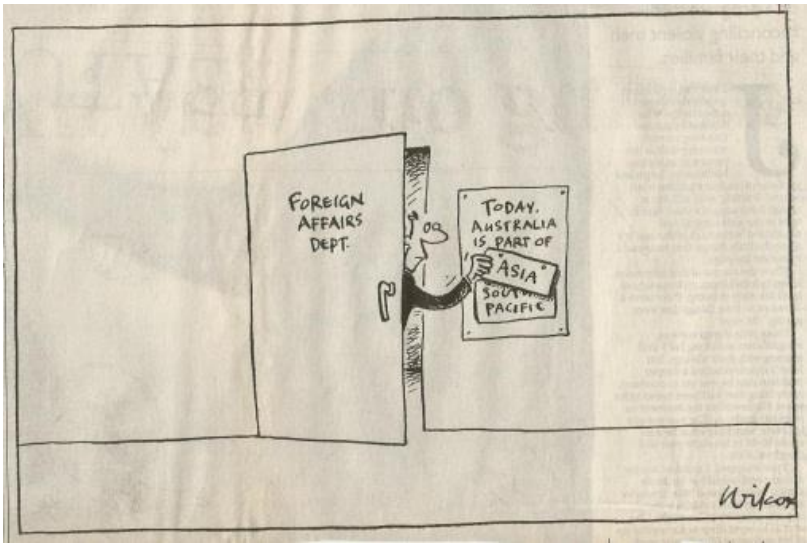
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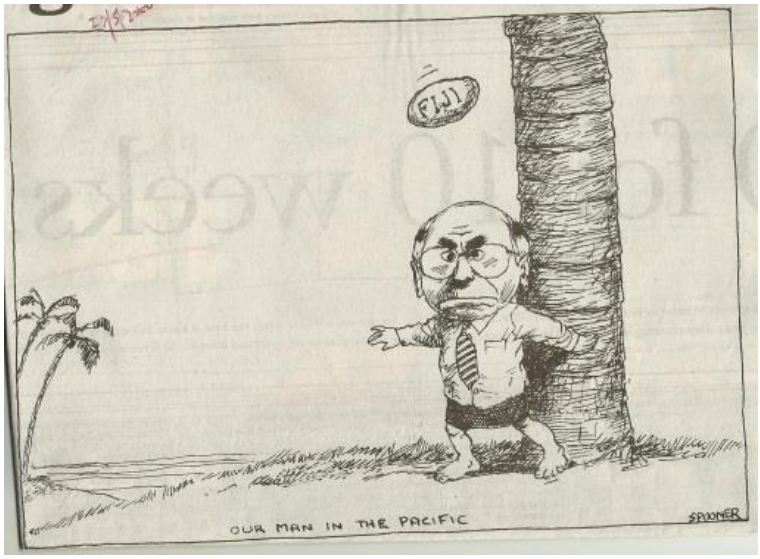
TOPIC G RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA

Between 1987 and 2000 the relations between the governments of Fiji and Australia were friendly, regular and normal. Fiji had several elections and new Prime Ministers, and a new constitution was discussed widely and then approved by the population. Fiji, as a topic of interest in Foreign Affairs in Australia, had "dropped off the map". The tag "Pacific" was usually added to "Asia-Pacific", but Australia was focused on Asia, not on Fiji or the Pacific. In Australia, the Prime Minister was Mr John Howard. He refused to attend several Pacific Forum meetings and showed little interest in Fiji. He was criticized by being nick-named the USA's "Deputy Sherriff"in the Pacific and posing as a father-figure or neo-colonial ruler. So these four cartoons suggest that Australia was a neighbor, but had not kept a close watch – coconuts (a coup in Fiji) was shown falling on an unsuspecting Prime Minister.

Source (a)



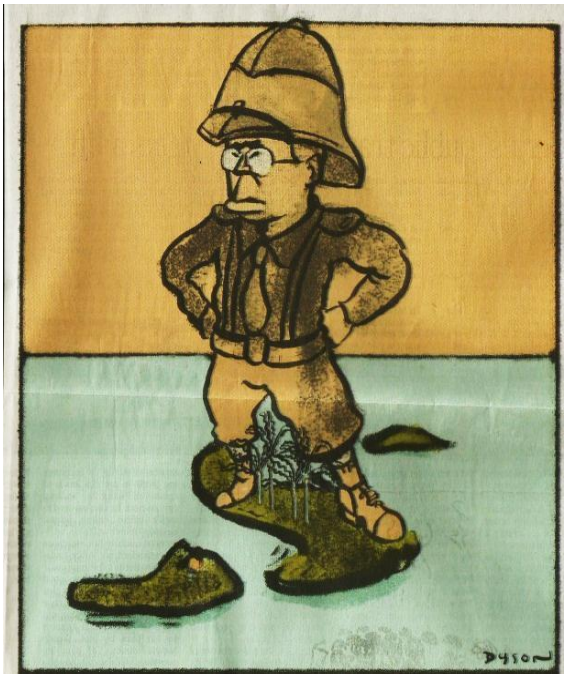
Source (b)



Source (d)



Source (e)



Sources: (a) “Foreign Affairs Dept …”, *The Age*, (Melbourne) 23 May 2000; (b) “Our man in the Pacific”, *The Age*, (Melbourne) 25 May 2000; (c) No caption (Kangaroo) The *Australian,* 27 May 2000; (d) No caption (John Howard), *The Age*, (Melbourne) 25 October 2000;

ACTIVITY 6 QUESTIONS BASED ON TOPIC G

1 In cartoon (b) make a photocopy and write a different caption.

New caption _____

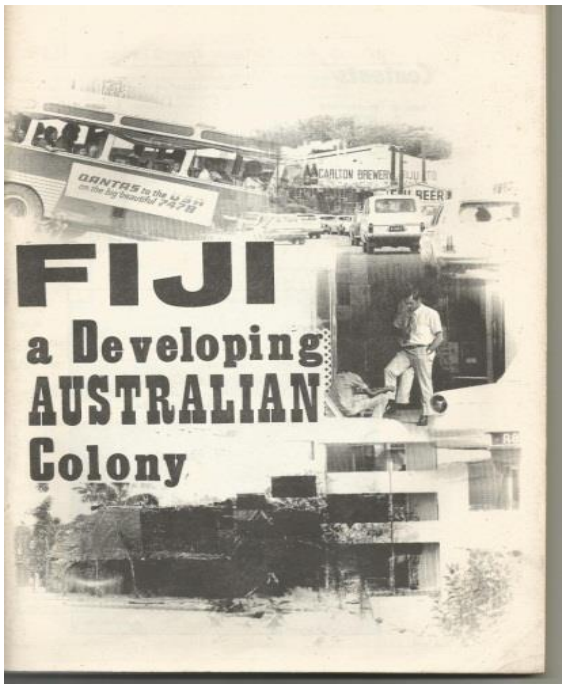
2 In cartoon (b), (c) and (d), what symbols are used to show the topic is Fiji? List two visual signs:

I _____

II _____

3 In one sentence describe Australia’s policy, based on the cartoons above, towards Fiji in 2000;

_____



Source; Anon., *Fiji: a developing Australia colony.* 1973.

CONCLUSION: FRIEND, BIG BROTHER, and NEIGHBOUR?

In 1973, a small booklet was published called *Fiji: a developing Australia colony.* This was three years after Fiji gained independence. It was written by activists in Fiji and Australia. Their aim was "informing the public of Australia about their country's activities, both the private sector and government, in Fiji" (p.4). The authors noted relations between Fiji and Australia were "harmonious at present" (p.9).

Fiji's relationship with Australia in 1973 was all about big Australian companies (CSR, Carpenters, Burns Philp, Hookers Real Estate), tourism, foreign investment, trade and aid. If a similar book was written in 1987, or in 2000 or 2006 the "issues" would not be the same.

One theme is consistent in the cartoons in 1987 and 2000 – that Australia is like a friendly neighbour but does not always watch carefully what is going on. Another theme in the cartoons is that the relationship between Fiji and Australia is **colonial,** or **neo-colonial.** That suggests that Australia does not treat Fiji as an equal diplomatic partner, that Australia assumes it will always know what is best for Fiji and does not acknowledge that Fiji is an independent nation.

The cartoons have over-simplified the situation. The relationship is not colonial. (Fiji was a colony of Britain) However, it is true that Fiji relies on Australian tourists, Australian investment, and Australian aid and trade. Rich countries like Australia also have a **humanitarian** policy of helping their smaller or less fortunate neighbours and friends. But, the bottom line in Foreign Affairs and relationships with other countries is that each nation always acts in its own interests.

GLOSSARY

Aid	Monies given by donor nations to help neighbours and less wealthy nations
Big Brother	Usually meaning Australia as a rich and powerful neighbour
Colonial	a relationship between a colonial ruler and its colony
Neo-colonial	a relationship between a large nation and a smaller former colony
Diplomacy	The skill of making the correct decision in foreign policy; also means the actual formal and informal meetings between nations
Humanitarian	Aid given to help less fortunate nations
Migration	One of the major forms of relationship creating links between nations
Policy	A statement by a nation about how it will treat another nation, or act in global events
Regionalism	The idea that Pacific island nations could have a strong voice and improved Social and Economic futures if they worked together in a single regional organization.
Trade	One of the major forms of relationship between nations
Western democratic alliance	the group of nations that supported democracy and constitutional government (and the USA) against the spread of Communism.

END OF UNIT QUESTIONS

- What value are cartoons for historians investigating recent events?
- What are the post-1970 links between Fiji and Australia?

TYPICAL EXAM QUESTIONS

- Fiji has a long and harmonious relationship with Australia – agree or disagree with this statement. Your answer should cover the period from 1970 to 2000.

FURTHER ACTIVITIES

- Go the websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  Australia
  www.dfat.gov.au
  www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fiji
  www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Fiji
  aciar.gov.au/country/**Fiji**/ausaid
  www.austrade.gov.au/Export/Export-Markets/Countries/Fiji/Market...
  www.**fiji**.embassy.gov.au

  Fiji
  www.foreignaffairs.gov.fj
  www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=8771

- Check the websites of newspapers under “Foreign News”
- Read Fiji: a developing Australia colony (1973)

RESOURCES

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Thompson R, 1994, *The Pacific Basin since 1945,* Essex, Longmans, (Chp 8, "Conflicts and coups in the Islands since 1980, 259-88)

CHECKLIST

Answer yes or No.

1 Are you able to describe Fiji's links with Australia?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are you able to define the phrase "in the nation's interest" ?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Can you identify the value of cartoons as historical evidence?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Could you distinguish between private sector and government links?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Are you able to describe why Fiji has a relationship with Australia?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you have checked **yes** for all these questions, you may proceed to the next Unit. If not, go back and revise what you have studied.