

“Role of the Security Sector in the Democratic Transition in Fiji”,



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Overview of Presentation

Introduction

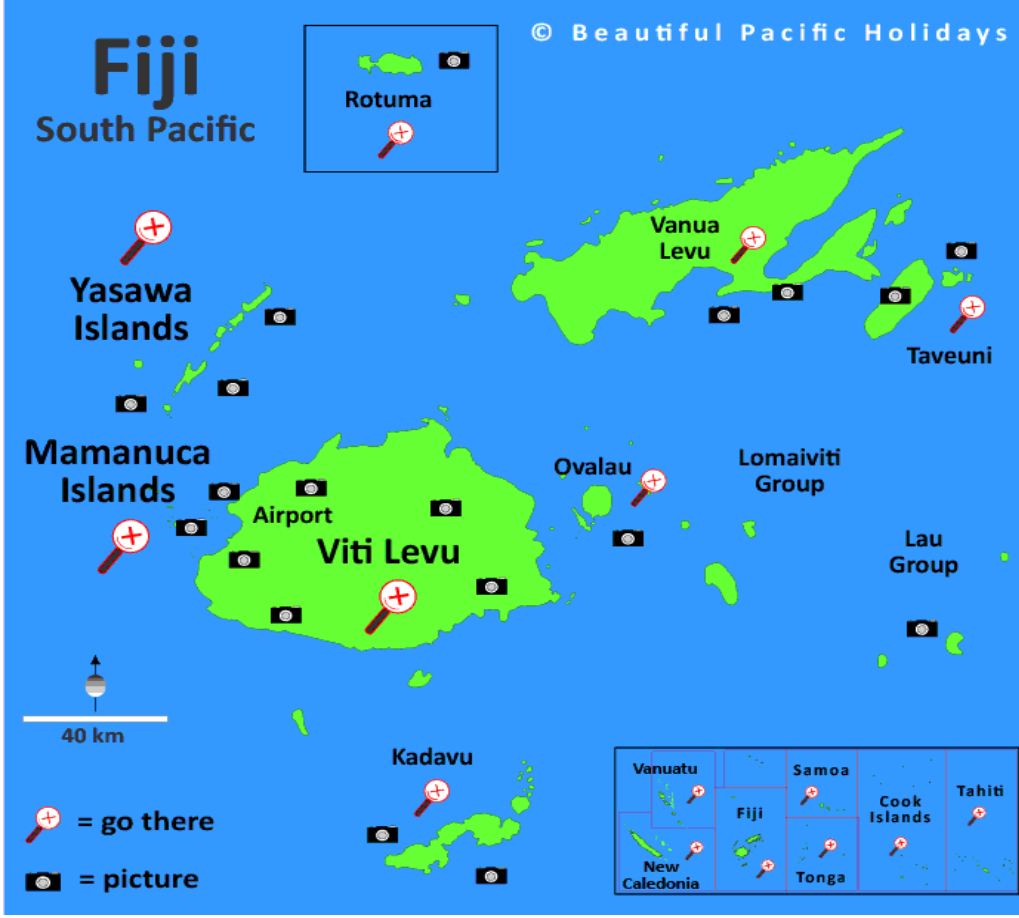
**Security Sector & the overthrow of
democratic governments**

**The Security Sector's role in the transition
to democracy**

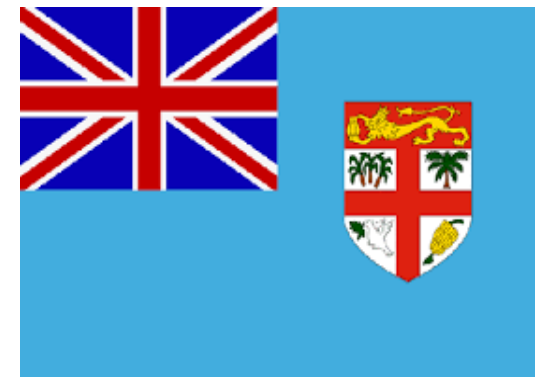
The current situation

Introduction

- Thanks to IDEA, the Government of the Republic of Mongolia - Chair of the Council of Member States of International IDEA in 2016 & NAM.
- Fiji is a small South Pacific archipelagic state-pristine tourist destination but also known as 'coup coup land'!
- Multi-ethnic population of est. 900,000, 80% on 'main island' of Viti Levu
- Indigenous Fijians (iTaukei) (58%), Rotumans, Indo-Fijians (34%), Mixed -race people, Europeans, Chinese & other Pacific islanders -Melanesians, Polynesians and Micronesians.
- Multi-ethnic society but a predominantly single ethnic security sector, especially the military.



Security Sector & Overthrow of Democratic Governments



- British colony from 1874 to 1970
- Divide & Rule-independence constitution based on communal politics – issues around ‘democracy’
- Security Sector – military, police, prisons. Military and Peace keeping role.
- Military dominant & ethnic in character with 98% iTaukei –seen as underwriting chiefly power in governance of country. 3,500 regulars/ 1,600 reservists.
- 1987 May coup –overthrow Fiji Labour Party-led coalition government, returning Alliance Party leaders to power.
- 3 more coups to follow –September 1987; 2000; 2006.

The Security Sector's Role in Transition to Democracy

- Almost 8 years of military dictatorship- oppressive rule by decree, & denial of human rights such as 'Freedom of Expression' & 'Freedom of Association'
- 2012 Yash Ghai's People's Draft Constitution thrown out & 2013 Republic of Fiji Constitution imposed by Presidential proclamation
- Severe undermining of democratic processes –media, trade unions, civil society organisations.

The Security Sector's Role in Transition to Democracy

– Pros & Cons of 2013 Constitution

- Common National Identity
- Single National Constituency
- Open List Proportional Electoral System
- Multi-Party system
- General Election 17 Sept 2014
- Economic & Social Rights in Bill of Rights
- Secular State
- Immunity to military for coups (Chapter 10, 155-58)
- RFMF to ensure security, defence & wellbeing of Fiji & all Fijians
- Retention of all decrees from December 2006 to first sitting of parliament Oct 2013 (173 (2))
- MIDA

The Current Situation

- Executive very strong, Legislature & Judiciary weak
- Fiji First Party resounding success in 2014 General Elections close to 60% of votes cast & 32 seats in parliament
- SODELPA 15 MPs & NFP 3 MPs minus one each
- Bipartisan approach missing
- 'Democratic institutions' slow recovery.

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