

TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2009

The Speaker, Rt. Hon Peter Kenilorea took the Chair at 10.29 am.

Prayers.

ATTENDANCE

At prayers, all were present with the exception of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Rural Development & Indigenous Affairs; Minister for Planning & Aid Coordination; Culture & Tourism; Foreign Affairs & External Trade; Communication & Civil Aviation; Lands, Housing; Agriculture & Livestock Development; Provincial Government & Institution; Infrastructure & Development; Forestry; Home Affairs and the Members for East Honiara; Central Makira; Baegu/Asifola; Temotu Pele; Temotu Nende; South Vella La Vella; Lau/Mbaelelea; East Makira; North West Choiseul; Central Honiara; West Are Are; Temotu Nende; East Makira; North Guadalcanal; West Makira and Temotu Vattu

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND OF REPORTS

- Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the 2009 Supplementary Appropriation No. 2 Bill 2009 (*National Parliament No. 44 of 2009*)

BILLS

Bills - Second Reading

The 2009 Supplementary Appropriation (No.2) Bill 2009

Hon. RINI: Mr. Speaker, I rise to beg that the 2009 Supplementary Appropriation No. 2 Bill 2009 be now put to the second reading.

This Bill is in keeping with with section 103(2) of the Constitution and section 15 of the Public Finance and Audit Act (Cap 120). These sections stipulate that the Minister of Finance may, at his discretion, authorize expenditure arising from an urgent and unforeseen need under a contingencies warrant where the amount required exceeds that available under an existing

appropriation and subject to the financial limits set by Parliament not being exceeded.

Contingencies warrants, as the honourable House is fully aware, allows for urgent and unforeseen spending where it is not practical to provide funding through a Supplementary Appropriation beforehand. As such, contingencies warrants provide governments with flexibility to adjust spending when the use of supplementary appropriation for urgent and unforeseen spending is impractical.

The 2009 Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2) Bill 2009 seeks an appropriation to cover expenditure already authorised by contingencies warrants since the tabling of the 2009 Supplementary (No.1) Bill in July 2009. The supplementary appropriation expenditure authorised by this Bill totals \$32,836,460. As a prudent measure, the Bill also seeks \$5 million on contingencies warrants under recurrent heads of expenditure as well as \$5 million under development heads of expenditure that can be issued by the Minister of Finance for urgent and unforeseen expenditure between now and the end of this year.

I would like to outline the details of the Contingencies Warrants approved since the 2009 Supplementary (No.1) Bill in July 2009 to the House as follow:

- \$2.285 million to the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to further the Auluta Palm Oil Project.
- \$16.0 million to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to fund the government's contribution towards compensating Telekom for the loss of its monopoly status in the opening of the telecommunications sector to competition.
- \$5.0 million to the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to ensure the completion of the 2009 National Population Census.
- \$300,000 to the Office of the Governor General to cover costs associated with the official visit of the Governor General of New Zealand.
- \$840,000 to the Ministry of Lands to cover costs associated with expanding the cemetery in Honiara.
- \$4.5 million to the Ministry of Public Service to make ex-gratia payments to government employees affected by the tsunami in Western Province.
- \$2.76 million to the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide disaster relief support to flood victims in Taiwan and tsunami victims in Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga.
- \$339,000 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide assistance to the

- Solomon Islands Contingent to the Mini Pacific Games in the Cook Islands.
- \$500,000 to the Ministry of National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace to ensure that the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission continues.
 - \$312,460 to the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children's Affairs to ensure the National Youth Parliament can continue.

As always, we have faced and will continue to face a number of significant challenges. For the remainder of this year, government finances would remain very tight. Nonetheless, the Government has acted decisively in these challenging times and remains committed to ensure that it is well placed to deliver on its promises and commitment to our people of this nation. The Bill, therefore, is to ensure that we continue to deliver on our programmes and commitments in a challenging environment.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this Bill to the House and I beg to move.

Mr Speaker: According to Standing Order 61(2) and as the Prime Minister has announced in his statement of government business on Friday 4th December, the debate on the second reading of the 2009 Supplementary Appropriation No. 2 Bill 2009 will commence tomorrow Wednesday 9th December 2009.

MOTIONS

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members yesterday on Monday 7th December the Hon. Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee moved a motion that Parliament resolves itself into a committee of the whole House to consider National Parliament No. 37 of 2009, Report on the Foreign Relations Committee on the Inquiry into the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 and RAMSI Intervention. The debate was subsequently adjourned to allow Members more time to prepare for the debate. Today the debate continues. While I appreciate the need for more time, it is somewhat disheartening that this is the case even after the report was tabled three weeks ago. Members will recall that the report was tabled in Parliament on 12th November 2009 and distributed to Members on the same day. The reason for early distribution was to give Members ample time to read the report and make good preparation for this important motion. I certainly hope that we will not delay this debate any longer than is necessary.

While on this particular debate, I wish to take this opportunity to clarify a matter that was raised yesterday. Members may recall that yesterday the

Honorable Leader of Opposition raised a point of order about reference by the Honorable Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to a person by the name of Mr Patrick O'Connor. While the Deputy Speaker responded to that point of order, I wish to add to that response after taking further advice.

I understand that the Honorable Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee was referring to a journalist by the name of Mr Patrick O'Connor whose private views are often published by the Solomon Star. As far as I know Mr O'Connor usually publishes the same private views in what he refers to in his articles as the World Socialist Website. I have been advised that the article that the honorable Chairman referred to in his opening speech yesterday was titled 'Parliamentary report rubberstamps Australian-led RAMSI Intervention'. That article was published by the Solomon Star on Thursday 19th November in its issue No. 4095. At this point, let me make it very clear that the report that is being debated in the Committee's report, which was tabled on 12th November 2009. While the Honorable Chairman of the Committee is at liberty to address any relevant issue from other sources when delivering his opening speech, that is not to suggest that we start debating a paper other than the Committee's report.

As I understand, the Honorable Chairman only referred to the article alluded to earlier because it raise some relevant issues directly tied to the findings of the report. To me, there is nothing unusual about that approach. Every mover of a motion is perfectly entitled to comment on relevant issues regardless of their sources. The primary consideration, however, must always be relevant. So long as an issue is directly relevant to a debate, Members cannot be unnecessarily restricted of their freedom of speech.

I wish, however, to point at this point in time that Parliament is not accountable to the media. Under the Standing Orders the only restriction on Members' speeches relate to reference to the Governor General, Her Majesty, members of the Royal Family, Ministers, Members, Judges and authorities performing judicial functions, to name some. In that regard, I refer Members to Standing Order 36. I note further that under Standing Order 39(2), personal reference to another person, which has no direct relevance to the subject under discussion, could potentially be abuse of the freedom of speech thus forcing the Speaker to apply rules of Order. However, if such personal reference has a direct relevance to the subject of the debate, Standing Order 39 does not consider that as gross disorderly conduct on the part of the Member making such reference.

In light of our rules I hereby make the ruling that reference made by the Honorable Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to a particular journalist was not in breach of our Standing Orders. Whilst the person was named as a point of reference, I believe the Honorable Chairman was focusing more on points raised specifically about the Committee's report by that person

and responding to those points of criticism - particularly criticizing the Committee's motives. Response to points which are directly relevant to the report was in order.

Having made that ruling, however, I wish to make a qualification. I believe by now Members are fully aware of who the person is and what his views of the report before us were. Now that we are all aware of their origins, there is no longer any need to discuss the article. With the concurrence of the Honorable Chairman, I strongly suggest that Members focus on the Committee's report in this debate. While the Honorable Chairman had every reason to respond to criticisms made by a journalist about the motives of the Chairman and his Committee, that was his right as a matter of privilege, but I will not allow debate on the Committee's report to be sidetracked by one article written by some unknown journalist. As such, I encourage Members to please confine your debate to the Committee's report only.

If you wish to have a look at the newspaper article in your own time, please do so. It was on Thursday 18th November, Solomon Star issue. While some have asked that this article be tabled and circulated to Members, I have decided in consultation with the honorable Chairman not to do so for reasons I have already stated.

Members may now speak on the general principles of the report under discussion. In so doing, may I kindly remind Members to comply with the rules of debate set out in our Standing Orders and the ruling I have just made. The floor is now open for debate, and whilst I have directed honorable Members to the article of the 18th November in the Solomon Star, if there is insistence for Members who have not read that particular article, I refer you to the Parliament Library to get a copy for your further information. Thank you very much. The floor is now open for debate.

Sir KEMAKEZA: Thank you for allowing me to contribute very briefly to this motion before the House. And in doing so I will abide by your ruling that we are not accountable to the media. As you are aware I have been on the spotlight in the last four months in the media but something wrong about me is that I do not read articles in the media so anybody can say whatever they want. Thank you for your ruling, Sir.

My first and foremost obligation in contributing to this report is to acknowledge members of the Committee for having the wisdom, the focus and vision in selecting them to do this very, very thorough work. This is the voice of the people of Solomon Islands, this report. Therefore, I would like to congratulate the Chairman, the MP for West New Georgia/Vona Vona as well as the Members of Parliament for Central Makira, not forgetting the MP for West

Honiara, the MP for North West Choiseul, the MP for North Guadalcanal, the MP for North West Guadalcanal and of course the Member of Parliament for Ngella. I thank them all for a job well done and congratulations to you all. And I am talking here on behalf of your people.

I have to also thank and congratulate the secretariat for doing a marvelous job. I think it is important that the program of 2004 to 2012 is of great significance in the Standing Committees of Parliament. And so congratulate yourself, Sir, for the initiatives as well as the Clerk and her staff and I have all the reasons to congratulate and thank the secretariat for doing a great job. There is great improvement here since the program came in here. I think that is an area we should concentrate on and leave the integrity bill. If you do so you are going to improve, not so much in the distant future. I thank yourself and the secretariat.

On a similar note, and I have read this report thoroughly for the last one week in case for those of you who has not this report. The views of provincial leaders taken during provincial tours were well covered in this Report. Because of the nature of the issue it is very important that we get the views and ideas of our people and the wider spectrum of our country as well as other stake holders. In fact, I was also summoned to give my contribution whilst I was behind locked doors. What is in the report is a good proportion of the views and ideas of our people throughout the country. It well covered the women sector, the youths, other institutions as well as statesmen like yourself and many others as well.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the Regional Assistance Mission for their understanding and tolerance during the course of the review because some of the comments and views made are for and against RAMSI and so it is appropriate that I thank them for their understanding.

As I said, I will be very brief, and my general contribution will be based on the report. With all due respect to the Chairman, I think I will leave this for him to talk about as I will only concentrate on the report itself. I have seven areas to discuss in this Report. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the report, which I have already acknowledged, and this is your vision and focus, Mr Speaker, for your selection of members of the committee independently with no interference from the ruling government. The composition of the committee includes the office of the Leader of Opposition and the office of the Independent Group who have been appointed according to your personal and deliberate judgment. So I thank you very much for that.

Also, Chapter 1 of the report is more on the formalities and history, which we every time referred to as history of our country, how best we can keep this country together, be united and respect the cultures, traditional norms and values of our people. We should be proud that we are one people. We cannot go

against the nation for we are wantoks by virtue of our existence in this country through marriage, religion and coming together as one institution through schools, and more especially on this floor of Parliament where we come from the four corners of this nation as leaders to see and to show the way forward for the future of our country and people. So that is basically what Chapter 2 of this report is driving at.

Chapter 3 of the report mainly deals with the history of why this man who is now standing up and talking and yourself, Sir, requested for assistance at the invitation of the Solomon Islands Government. Therefore, as someone who has been very much involved in this invitation, for the benefit of Members who have not read this report, and there is no excuse whatsoever, it is best that you look at Chapter 3 so that you comfort yourself.

Chapter 3 also talks about the big work on preparation and how we have gone through the ethnic tension. And here I would like to thank and congratulate the Leader of Opposition who was Prime Minister then and also the late former MP for Aoki/Langa Langa, who are all instrumental to what we were driving at that time, and then it was my time when I took it home. So I thank them for the great job, and this is all in the report in case, some of you have not read the report. I read the report for one week and so recite most of the things inside it and so I do not need to draft a speech in contributing to the report. I am just going to stand up and contribute to its debate because I have read it. That is why if I quote any chapter of the report, go back and check it because it is right. I thank the Leader of Opposition and the leader of the former government, the late MP for Aoke/Langa Langa and, of course, the government of the person that you always hate and then other governments like the government of the Leader who came back again, and now my uncle is bringing this report to the floor of Parliament. Thank you honourable Prime Minister for this.

There is a bit of an argument too there in the Report. I do not know why this was featured quite significantly in the report where one said this review was here but the Leader of the Opposition just wanted to take it at the executive level, but the current PM said no, let us give it to the parliamentary standing committee. Whatever they argued about all boils down to one thing, and that is the same goal and the same focus. I thank both of them for taking it up from where I left it, and it is not yet over because at the conclusion of my contribution I am going to make some suggestions and recommendations as to how we can make this report to work. We are debating it now and it is not over because it is an ongoing process, as to how I see it. The executive report spells this out very, very clearly in the 15 recommendations there. I thank the Chairman for that. Also, in the executive summary the points highlighted in that report, in fact the detail of those highlights are in the subsequent chapters of the report. So if you

have difficulties going chapter by chapter, just take a look at the executive report and it will conclude this report. That is the way I see it, and that is why it is not hard for us to go through it. Because if you go from chapter to chapter you will be like a lawyer who looks at one section and then jumps to another section, and he comes back looking a little bit odd or sometimes panicking or sometimes not knowing what to talk about. That is why this report, as I said, is well covered. It is not like the report of the Prime Minister last time who said it has wider consultations when in fact it was not, and I think that is why his bill was put to rest or something like that. This is a very good report as it has wider consultations throughout the nine provinces consulting many people who are for and against RAMSI. That is the reason why I thank the secretariat for not leaving any stone unturned. They did not leave any stone unturned but turned up all the stones, making sure there are no worms, snakes or lizards hiding underneath.

In discussing this report, let us focus our minds on our country and the world. Because if we only concentrate in Solomon Islands and forget what is happening around us, we sometimes would miss the point here. What I meant here is that similar incidents have happened, if not in our very close neighbors like Bougainville and East Timor than other parts of the world. Our problem here is an ethnic tension and how we approach the differences between our ethnic groupings is different from the way others see it. Every time I say that we must look at the causes of the problem. One of the recommendations in this report or may be in chapter 15 or 14, I am not sure, I will come back to it, is to find the root causes of the differences between our ethnic groupings because it does not only cover Malaita and Guadalcanal but it covers the whole country. If you go back to the records of those times you will recall, Mr. Speaker, because you yourself were also involved from day one, so no one will convince me on that. That is why we have to look at that.

In Bougainville they fight for autonomy, but for us, it is not. The difference may be because of social issues or may be the failure of leaders in this house, past and present, we do not know, but that is why one of the recommendations here is to find the root cause of why the problem happened so that we make adjustments and plan to redirect our country and set our focus so that we do not repeat the same thing that happened. The way we are going we seem to be stagnant, and that is why I said earlier on in one of my contributions that instead of us taking one step forward we take ten steps backwards; it is one step forward and ten steps backwards. I say this because nothing seems to be moving to address these fundamental issues. Not at all! It is good that there are 15 recommendations here. Who is going to do what after we pass this motion, and that is why one of my recommendations here is that somebody has to

separate the meat from the bones. And who is to take the responsibility of doing that? What sector? It could be the Forum secretariat, the Solomon Islands Government, the aid donors, the people of Solomon Islands, RAMSI or who. That is what I meant. Because this is high time as this report says that six years after Facilitation of International Assistance Notice and the three pillars that this report talked so much about, the three pillars, the International Assistance Notice, and the Facilitation Act. We must look at the problems of other countries which they still cannot solve, because our problem has happened and it has been already solved although it takes a long time but it has been solved. But the report says that there are many challenges ahead of us. There are many challenges and there is no lasting peace as yet. There is no fair distribution of developments and that is why I said it is one step forward and ten steps backwards. Because one of the root causes, if I can spot one, is unfair distribution of development and commercial undertakings. It is based only in one sector and not distributed throughout the four corners of our country so forget about it. That is why I questioned this when I talked on one of the issues last week. Because when we come to the supplementary appropriation bill which the Minister of Finance has just introduced this morning it talks about giving millions of dollars for the Auluta Basin development. But where is it? That is a development that will address some of the root causes of the ethnic tension so that other centres are developed and people are spread out who perhaps come to one central point and interfere with social issues in one area which sometimes do not go down well with other people because their traditional values and practices have been interfered with by somebody. That is perhaps one of the main causes - social issues, social implications. So the need is for redirection, and that is exactly what this report is all about. And if I go out of the report, Mr. Speaker, because I know for sure that you have read the report, then please stop me and direct me back to the report. I do not know but perhaps I will tell you that you look at this area on what is happening in and around Solomon Islands.

At the same time, the behavior of our leaders, let us not be suspicious of our people. Our behavior and actions must take everybody in. Do you know that when we are dealing with an issue then us be honest about it. This is exactly what the Member of Parliament for Temotu Nende said last week when the Prime Minister said that they visited all the provinces but in fact it was not true, it is false information. I am sorry about the Prime Minister because I do not know who is misleading him. But that is an example so that we make sure we are not negative to an issue. If you look at the report you will see that three provinces would like to break away from the rest of the country during the course of the ethnic tension. They are Rennell Bellona, Makira and Choiseul.

The action of others can divide the country further; the action of leaders can divide our country further. Like just recently somebody wants to stop me from swearing in. Goodness me, I am a leader and chief in my place and who are you to stop me from taking the oath. The Central Province is also one province, so make sure you do not throw any benefit of doubt. Do you think I cannot read your mind and action? We must be mindful of how we behave. Solomon Islands is a very small country so that if you sneeze on that door another man here can hear you. We are interrelated and nobody is an island here. And so if you mistreat me do you think I will just sit down and watch? No, I am a leader in my own right and so are you so let us respect each other. That is what I mean. Do not be suspicious of another leader just because of your vested interest that maybe only you wanted to be in power or whatever? No, Solomon Islands does not belong to one person, it belongs to half a million people of this country. Who says Solomon Islands is only yours? But that is exactly what is indicated in the report. We have to be very mindful of the behavior of people, the behavior of leaders and behavior of organizations. And I am very grateful that you, Mr Speaker, have put a provision in the Constitution that as much as possible we must avoid any form of discrimination; in any form or shape we have to avoid this.

We now move on to another group of people, the aid donors. When our country was going through the tension all our aid donors ran away from us except for one, and they have all the good reasons for running away. The reason is because it is their taxpayers' money and they cannot give it to Solomon Islands because there was no law and order in Solomon Islands at that time. Who would want to put in millions of their dollars only to find out the next morning it is in the hands of other people? This happened to our local revenue and it happened to our country. Now is the right time our country is reviewing this Regional Assistance Mission's Program or the act or notice or treaty or whatever. And I am happy to see that during the course of this process, the government came with a Partnership Framework with RAMSI. But when I looked through this Partnership Framework, which I read it through in the last two to three days, there are many shortfalls in it. I want to tell the Prime Minister and congratulate him for a very good work. I congratulate and thank you and your hard working Ministers and officials for this. During our time we also have a partnership framework based on the three pillars. Do not think we do not have it because we did, and that partnership framework was based on these three pillars. This time when we are doing this review on RAMSI let us work together, and that is why I congratulate the Prime Minister and his Government for coming with this Partnership Framework between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI.

When you read the recommendations in this report, the Prime Minister came up with this Framework, and that is good except for a few shortfalls in the framework. At the end of my contribution I have a few recommendations to make that we can think of adding on to the Partnership Framework. For example, if I can spot one, and that is very little was said about the provinces in this Framework. But that is where 85 to 90% of our population lives. No wonder when the Foreign Relations Committee went to visit the provinces there was an outburst by people that they did not feel the presence of RAMSI even though so much dollars have been spent on them here and there but they did not feel it. This is also mentioned in the report. Some people are for and against RAMSI after six years in the country. They even put a timetable on how much money was spent. What is the impact of that? I think it is enough of them in Honiara, enough of government machinery, enough of institutional strengthening and enough of law and order and justice. Parliament must go ahead because it is a different program. I will be with you during my time as a member of the House Committee and I will continue to support you on that. Go ahead with this.

What I am saying here is that it is high time we focus on the provinces in our capacity building and in our reform programs. I think it is enough of here. Because these people sooner or later, if we do not address this in our partnership framework it is a time bomb. If you read the report it is also mentioned inside; the demand of the provinces, the provincial premiers, provincial governments, the Premiers Communiqué, the bona fide demands, and the list goes on. I am also happy that the Chairman and the Committee said be a bit more precautionous. Yes, but let us look at it now before it is too late. That is an area we have to address deeper in the partnership program. And I am only telling you one of the shortfalls but there are hundreds of them in my list here. If they need my service I can offer it to them. If not then it is up to you.

RAMSI itself, the understanding of the Forum Secretariat is that they leave Solomon Islands when they finish the job. There is no time frame, but gradually. And you know it yourself, Mr Speaker, because you have been involved in this mission from day 1; you and me. If you recall Henderson at that time, the first week of RAMSI's landing here, it was as if a big war had happened in Solomon Islands. There were armies everywhere and all over Henderson with helicopters flying up and down. There were about five or six battalions of army at that time, but then gradually as time goes on they started phasing out. If you go to Henderson now you will not find any army there. So that is already an exit strategy. RAMSI itself is exiting and there is no need for you and me to tell them to exit because they are slowly going out. This report is very good in that we identified the areas that RAMSI will assist us in. This report is not chasing RAMSI away. It is recommending improvements and that is why I am happy

the government has already come up with the framework except that it did not cover, and no wonder because none of them were involved. A bunch of them ran away from Solomon Islands. Like the Prime Minister was in Waikato those days, and so what does he know about the ethnic tension.

Hon. Sikua: Point of order. I did not run away but I went to study. I did not run away because of the tension, I went to do my PHD at the University of Waikato. Thank you.

Sir Kemakeza: Thank you. I withdraw 'runaway' but you stayed away. You were not in Solomon Islands; you were not here so that you feel how you and me, Mr Speaker, were gun pointed. That is what I meant.

If you do the framework you must feel it, touch it, see it and know it. Mr Speaker, you know that I and you were gun pointed here. I was even shot at my residence and even shot here in Parliament too. You know those days, Sir. I am not saying the Prime Minister did not know but he stayed away and so he did not feel the things we felt, and so this is the right time to look at it.

To quickly run through otherwise some people might want to contribute, I am now on the business sector. If you do this review but you do not take into account investors then that is not good enough because the first and foremost thing that investors want is security; security of their money because they will bring money to invest in Solomon Islands. And the money is not in thousands but it is millions, billions and trillions. But if we do not provide the environment, security and whatever for them, do you think they will want to come. No wonder why Vanuatu, within one month, moved five motions of no confidence but the economy of Vanuatu skyrocket. That is why I did not believe the Bill you want to pass in here to bring stability because Vanuatu is the worse in political instability but their economy skyrockets. What about Solomon Islands, the second largest country in the Pacific after Papua New Guinea? What is wrong with us? What is wrong? What is in our brains? What are the things we have not yet identified so that we remedy them, remedy the situations? That is what is in this report. That is why the partnership framework must provide the avenue of addressing these problems.

I am telling you today about only one but there are hundreds of them. What about security in the provinces? Even this report talked about kwaso. Do you understand this, Mr Speaker? It is all in here in this report, if you read this report it talks about kwaso, marijuana and all sorts are here.

What I mean here is that if investors know these activities are taking place in this country, I bet you that no investors will come to Solomon Islands. So where are they going to go? Vanuatu. They will go to Vanuatu because Vanuatu

has the score in the world of having the happiest people and it is the best country that anyone can live in, in this world. What I am saying is in the report. Have you read the report?

(Members laughing)

No, I am not laughing, it is true. Those who are laughing means they have not read the report. But yet it is this country that is called the Happy Isles and not Vanuatu. That is it. That is what I want the Framework to address. It must give that environment to our people. RAMSI must go down to the people and allow the Royal Solomon Islands Police to do policing work. Do you know what is happening in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan? The security counterparts in this country can no longer resolve the problems happening there. That is the dangerous part about it. I want to inform the whole country and our people that RAMSI does not want to be in Solomon Islands. They have to leave some day. One of these days these great men and women who form part of the Regional Assistance Mission have to leave Solomon Islands. They do not want to stay here forever. These people are here because of Forum obligations and we are the recipients of their assistance and so we should be happy because they gave us an opportunity to take our country forward like before so that we do not lose the name, the Happy Isles. In the past you can go anywhere, you can sleep anywhere and nobody disturbs you. But today if you sleep in a drain on the roadside there because you are drunk, tomorrow they will find your body rotting away. Is that an environment we want in our country? It even went as far as breaking in through the house of the Commissioner of Police. If it can happen here on the bedside of the Royal Solomon Islands Police, on every great people - the investors and so we see private securities almost everywhere and yet criminals still get through, how much more for our people in the provinces. That is the reason why I still will refer back to the Partnership Framework.

Now I want to turn to the chapters of this report. As I said, Chapter 4 of this report is a test of legality. That is what Chapter 4 is driving at. It is a test of the legality of RAMSI's presence here in Solomon Islands. This is a test case and that is why the Chairman and the Committee put it to us that RAMSI's presence in Solomon Islands is not unconstitutional but constitutional. This is the judgment by the High Court. It is not like the petition against me where it was claimed that I was unconstitutionally elected. However, I do not want to talk about it as it is before the court. But I know that I am going to win the case, just for your information.

The legality of the presence of RAMSI in Solomon Islands is what the report is all about and made into a very detailed submission. There was a case

that was tested in the High Court on this and subsequently lost. The confusion that many of us have is that we think RAMSI are staying in this country unlawfully. That is the reason why we passed the Facilitation Act here on the floor of Parliament because if we do not provide for that mechanism then they are invading a sovereign country. That was the understanding we have. One point was missing in that if the Police Act had been used then there is going to be a shortfall because Solomon Islands does not have an army, and that is why the Facilitation Act was enacted. It was enacted to provide the legal mechanism so that the Mission is complete. But since the army component has left and only one battalion is still on the ground, most of the Police contingents have left, except for a few areas, this is the right time for review. There were even criticisms but whoever in this country criticizes whatever action was taken at that time, but that was the best we can do. Even this report criticizes some of those parts. I am very happy Chairman for stating that in your report, you are a very honest person. But nothing is perfect in this world whether in any mission, in whatever form, even in the United Nations and the Commonwealth. Now that you are in good time you jump up and down. But that is the best we can do, and we have proven it. We brought this country back to the environment it used to be in before and we brought up the economy from zero growth to 5.6% growth. This time round it fell again, even though it was very good time. What is wrong with us? You have to do it. Do not just laugh and sit down, but you have to do it as this is your turn. That is what I mean on the test of legality that Chapter 5 is driving at because it relates to the three pillars.

Chapter 6 is only a test of the powers of the privileges of RAMSI which was also tested in court. This is also quoted in the report. If you look at Chapter 5, in case Members of Parliament including the Prime Minister and the Member for Malaita Outer Islands do not see it.

Chapter 7 is what I congratulate the Prime Minister for a great job well done. And so I do not want to say much because it is a bit of proactive. That is the only issue I can see the Prime Minister is a bit proactive on because he did this first before this report was tabled, and so thank you very much indeed Prime Minister, congratulations for that. Chapter 8 is on renegotiation. Chapter 9 is a repetition of the three pillars, and so I do not need to repeat it. Chapter 10 is on the reform program, and so let me talk briefly on this. Sorry, I am going to take a bit of time on this but just give me about two to three minutes and then other Members can go ahead. I would like to talk on reform programs in this chapter. In that Chapter, and correct me if I am wrong when you respond Mr Chairman and members of the Committee that that recommendation is to drive reform down to the provinces. That is what is important my hardworking Prime Minister. I do not want to see in the Framework on the table on page 3, for the

sake of those who did not have a copy of the Framework, page 3 is on the machinery of government - Office of the Prime Minister, infrastructure, public service, institutional strengthening, integrity, election commission, National Parliament, women in government, provincial government. Others in this category should be left alone. Let us leave them out. What else are you doing to the Prime Minister's Office when there is already an air conditioning system there, chairs are there that you can see your picture when walking inside there. What else are you going to do to that office? Go down to the province. Leave out the Prime Minister's Office; infrastructure, there is enough of it because there are two roads on that side and two roads on this side, two vehicles are going down that way and two vehicles coming up this way, and so I think that is enough. Go to the provinces. We want to rebuild the country.

On the public service, I congratulate the Minister of Public Service. Yesterday, I did not have the opportunity to talk but it is very good that the Ministry came up with this code of order. I think that is enough, go and visit the provinces. But according to the explanation of the Minister yesterday he said that the code of conduct also covers provincial staff and even direct employees employed by provinces. It was only last night that I read the paper by the Minister of Public Service and I saw it going in that direction. I thank the Minister of Public Service for that.

Then institutional integrity was thrown out the window. Leave that for the time being, what is that for? Go to the province first, build the capacity of provinces. Some provincial quarters are breaking down as people sleep on them. The Electoral Commission is fine, let us not confuse people as it is almost election time. Goodness me! Prime Minister, leave that out for the time being, enough of that. Last time the system of voting, we stopped there already and so what else are we going to do. My hardworking Minister for Home Affairs is not here, maybe he is looking at the Boundaries Commission again. You are increasing the boundaries even though there is no money for them.

National Parliament has my support. Go ahead and do it. In fact, a rope was put around that place outside there today. I thank the Prime Minister for that. They are starting to dig that place according to what we have approved last time. And then provincial government, and that is what I agree. Remove all of those and put provincial government and women because gender equality and corruption comes in, and that is good, I respect women and that is why I appointed three or four women permanent secretaries. The current Prime Minister is yet to appoint one women PS. All those women PSs were appointed during my time. I am true because I believe in women. You may be laughing but I am serious. Gender equality is important. I thank the PM for appointing

only one woman PS, the PS of the Ministry of Peace who was a former PS during my time and so I have very high regards for that PS.

Chapter 11 is what must go ahead, the Auditor General's office. I think audit should be made on the RCDF, the Micro, the assistance to churches and so forth. Otherwise only some of us have been imprisoned. Some more should be imprisoned too. I wish that at the end of this House another five or six must go in as well. No, I knew it. It should not be only some of us that went in there. I want the others to try it too.

Chapter 13 is on the root causes of the tension, which I briefly touched earlier on today. Chapter 14 is about outstanding issues, which I also touched today and I do not want to repeat it again.

Now, I will come to the conclusion and here are some of my recommendations. The first and foremost in this report is for us to identify what is left in this book. It means that if it is the PM's plan or maybe yours, Sir, then this group is not over yet, it is still sitting down there to remove the meat from the bones. And then it still does not end there because whatever is recommended in this Mission has to go to the Forum Secretariat and all member countries must sit down in the next Forum Countries meeting or if not in an extraordinary meeting to look at these changes because we ourselves cannot change it according to the Act. That is why it is quite important for this group under the same chairmanship, if allowed, but a change terms of reference so that they identify. That was stated in here but it does not state who is doing to do it. That is a little failure on the Chairman's report. You cannot convince me on this. I read it, in case you did not read it. You never told me in this report who is going to do what. Who is going to do it? That is the first recommendation in this report, whether it is in the partnership framework or not, or a new PS is the coordinator between RAMSI and the Solomon Islands Government. If that body can take it up or if not this Committee has to complete its job.

The second recommendation is for all of us, every one of us to work together to address the identified issues inside this report but take the meat out from the bones first because this is raw, it is not cooked and so it cannot be eaten.

Then the other thing is for the same group, perhaps with the consultation of the government to revisit the Partnership Framework because it falls short of many things. And I know why it fell short because the Prime Minister did this first before the report was released. Some of his ideas and thinking are very good, and that is why I said he is quite proactive, which I expect from an academic like himself. He should be, and now he is going to revisit this report and harmonize this thing. That is my third recommendation.

Another point is, what is lasting peace for our country as recommended in here. That is why you have to identify and find the solution. Mind you that we

are not yet in lasting peace, and this is in this report. There is one word that was used here that is spelled T-H-R -E-A-T. What is that word? It is in this report. There is a big threat ahead of us. Do you know why? If we do not handle it properly we will go back to square one, and this report states very clearly that it will be worse than before. That is in this report, and that is the danger because it will be worse than the problem of 1998 – 2003. That is stated here in this report. And that boils down to lasting peace in this country and how you are going to do it and how you are going to approach it. That is the threat.

The last recommendation is, this ball is in our own court. It is this floor of parliament and future parliaments to find the way out and address these issues for the benefit of our country and people.

Long live Solomon Islands in peace and prosperity. Please, I do not want to live and witness another uprising in this nation because if we do not address it now it means we have not learnt from the past. With that, I support the motion and thank you.

Mr. HUNIEHU: May I take this opportunity on behalf of my people of East Are Are to contribute to the motion before the House. I thank you most sincerely for allowing me the floor of this Chamber to do so. I take this opportunity as well to thank the Chairman of the Committee for tabling the report and moving this motion on this very important report.

Over the past three or four weeks, we have seen three papers on RAMSI tabled on the floor of this Parliament. One was the 2003 Facilitation of International Act, the other was the Partnership Framework between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI and now we are debating the report on RAMSI by the Committee. I think this is very important because RAMSI has become so fundamental to the lives of our people. It cannot be denied that one of the major developments that occurred during the social ethnic tension was the intervention by RAMSI providing a wide range of services to this nation so that it returns to normalcy. During those trying times, our nation was branded the beggar's description. A failed state we were known to be. Statistics in so many development issues have shown truth of a state with fundamental failures.

Socio economic services to our people were very much affected as government revenue could no longer sustain the demands of our nation. In fact, whatever little collected during those days from the government coffers were paid to the demands of ex-militias at the threat of gun or at knife point. I stand here to witness this happened as I was a minister in the Sir Allan Kemakeza Government at that time. We have seen dwindling aid receipts from our development partners as they can no longer invest their taxpayers' money in a country that becomes so chaotic like Solomon Islands. The administrative

mechanisms to provide good governance, provide security, comfort and assurance of a reasonable development partnership were no longer in existence. Although the John Howard Government was requested to intervene at the depth of the issue confronting our nation, the answer from the Howard Government then was negative. It was very negative as the Australian Government made up its decision not to intervene in the domestic affairs of any nation. At that time it was rumored within the corridors of political powers in Honiara that Indonesia was willing to help should Australia continue its refusal to give us help both financially and militarily.

Sir, with your indulgence I wish to provide some historical backgrounds before commenting further in detail on the report. The question I wish pose is why the social ethnic tension erupted that prompted the need for this intervention by RAMSI. Why? The first point is uneven distribution of development and investment projects since the 1900s to now. Malaitans were merely used as indented laborers in various plantations in Guadalcanal Province, Western Province and the Russell Islands Province. This means most of its active labor force scattered throughout the country leaving its own Province under developed. The second point is uneven development which meant that Malaitans were looking for opportunities elsewhere in other provinces. It is very interesting to note that the people of Malaita Province at that point in time have been looking for opportunity elsewhere because there were no development activities happening in their own province, and so by doing so had caused problems to other islands and provinces through migration and all that. Because of the complexity of some of the issues and perhaps mishandling of these issues by our political government, the social ethnic tension erupted between the Malaitan Eagle Force and the GRA of Guadalcanal. This lasted for a number of years inflicting the death of hundreds of victim and causing loss of properties to many innocent people. The intervention by RAMSI happened by the invitation of the Solomon Islands Government following the enactment of the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 by Parliament. The Assistance, when it was negotiated, focused on security, effective policing, advice on financial and economic issues, disarmament, good governance, etc, etc. Whilst the Assistance Notice sets the overall goal, I am not sure whether in the long term it will achieve the objective of sustainable peace because to achieve a sustainable peace plan depends very much on what and how we invest in the development sector.

Whilst I fully support the overall goals where emphasis is placed on law and justice aspirations, economic system management, machinery and government aspiration, very little is done on investment in key development sectors, which places our long term peace plan in a vulnerable and shaky ground.

In order to achieve our long term goal and partnership principles, as covered in the report, it is fundamentally important to address some key issues. The first one is the underlying causes of the social ethnic tension. The two principal parties to the tension have raised some key issues that need to be addressed by the Government. For Guadalcanal Province, some of the issues are the bona fide demands, internal migration, over development on their land, etc. On the hand, the Malaitan laborers, for the last 100 years, have been settle permanently in plantations throughout the country and their cross cultural differences dominating practices have raised eyebrows to their countrymen. Malaitans overpopulating other provinces is something that must be looked at as well as taking away employment business and educational opportunities from indigenous people of other land. Whilst Malaitans are searching for employment elsewhere their province is left very much under developed.

In my view, whilst much has been done in other sectors, I believe that the underlying causes of the tension have not been addressed sufficiently so far, and this is where the time bomb lies for this country. Malaita youths are still a threat to the capital and the city whilst its people continue to squatter in and around Honiara. This time bomb must be averted, and one of the ways to do this is to introduce an active decentralization program in the province. RAMSI must take a more positive road in this decentralization program. On the other hand, the issue that brought deep anger to the Guadalcanal people must be addressed as well; the bona fide demands, internal migration and over development in their customary land etc.

As I have stated, later on more development activities must be initiated by RAMSI and the Government without fail. If this is not done then we will see some negative happenings in our country. I think that we look at investment. I believe that Malaita Province demands hefty capital investment in that province. For the next 20 years this country must invest \$2billion worth of development projects so that we can see more Malaitans going back to make use of their sweet labor developing their backyards. Failing this, we should not complain about what is happening in other provinces because it is our failure in addressing this. It might look too big but it is not. We wasted billions of dollars in many non worthwhile projects. If we can save these amounts in order to invest to create a more long term sustainable peace for the nation in the future then we will have to, otherwise like the MP for Savo/Russells said today we will be facing a more serious time bomb.

I am a little bit particular about the Malaita Province, not because I come from Malaita but this is one of the principal parties to the ethnic crisis. Many times we talk about the underlying causes of the tension but we have never done

anything serious about it. We ignore it when we negotiate for assistance, and this is bad for a province that produces almost one third of its population.

In my view, we must not assume that by focusing on security, policing and machinery of governance will bring about long term peace and unity in this country. RAMSI is at the moment investing billions of dollars in these sectors, and now it is time to pay more attention to other sectors. I believe that RAMSI spends about \$2.8million in security alone.

I always mentioned in this Parliament that why can we not negotiate with them and spend half of that on other development sectors. Why can we not do that? Security is already improving in this country, it is not finished but it is improving, and most of our police officers can handle some of our security issues. I believe that the partnership should negotiate, as I have said, a total of \$1million for further investment in agriculture, tourism, fisheries so that we can see a booming economy. Without a booming economy, I fail to see how we can sustain our future, otherwise we will always be bogged down with the same old problems over and over again.

I believe that this nation can drive its way forward. I believe that we should not continue to deplore what RAMSI is doing in this country. Of course, what RAMSI is doing in this country is good but at the same time we have to take serious stock take of what they can do together with the government to enhance more economic activities. I think in the next 10 years we should focus more on enhancement of economic activities in Solomon Islands. Activities like what the CSP is doing in building schools, classrooms, water supplies and agriculture projects throughout the country. It could be part of the partnership but what it is doing is a classical example of where RAMSI should be spending its money more on because these are the services that our people in the rural areas enjoy. You go to the rural areas and you will see that water supplies built in the 1960s have all gone bad and so need they need replacement. The clinics too need to be replaced. I am raising these issues because they are very fundamental to our people.

The ethnic tension, as the MP for Savo/Russells mentioned, if we are careful is going to happen again. I am warning us now, and so our duty is to guard against a future tension and I am sure we will create a recipe to stop one. I have emphasized the areas that we need to pay more attention at. And one of the issues is the Townsville Peace Agreement. The Agreement was signed between a tripartite group with, of course, Australia brokering the agreement and both parties have agreed that certain projects should be developed so that some kind of employment can be generated in those two principle provinces, but as far as I can see nothing has happened. Where is the Townsville Peace Agreement? Nothing has happened; nothing has happened in Malaita Province.

The unemployed (lius) are still there at Burns Creek, and this is not a joke because one day they will explode, and so we need to stop that as soon as immediately possible.

Sometimes the government should also be cost conscious. It should not just believe any figure that RAMSI wants us to believe. Let us check their figures first. Is their \$2.8m worth their talk, worth the services that they are doing? Of course, we all agree that it is worth it but let us check it otherwise it is only us that they want us to check every time but when you look at their budget they do all sorts of things to hide some expenditure costs. It is not our money, it is their taxpayers' money but when it is given to us, it is our responsibility to check RAMSI. I believe that the Partnership Framework that emphasizes three main pillars are the same old three pillars negotiated by the Forum and the Government. I said earlier on today that Indonesia almost came just because Australia did not want to help us when we were in greatest need so what else are we to do. We were somebody begging for help and during those days I would have accepted Indonesia, I would have accepted red China, I would have accepted the communist to come and intervene just because Australia, during those days we were at our knees, begging knees said no to us claiming that it cannot interfere into the domestic affairs of another country.

We are part of the region and Australia and New Zealand are supposed to be underwriting the security interests of this country, to a certain extent have failed miserably. They have failed miserably.

Now, your foreign policy is your business and our foreign policy is our business, but at that point in time our friends in the Pacific going through the social ethnic tension have nowhere to go and yet a bigger brother saying no. I am mention this so that it does not happen to any other small countries that might go through something like this. Now because of what has happened to us, RAMSI or the Forum countries have developed a scheme that is very well respected by the world, and that is countries in the Pacific coming together to help a friend. But time has also come to start thinking about this partnership having an exit strategy. We do not expect to be here for another 100 years because that would be wishful thinking. I believe time has come for us to start thinking seriously about an exit strategy and the exit strategy must be negotiated by begging enormous financial assistance to our ailing economy, to our ailing agriculture sector, to our ailing energy sector, to our ailing fishing centre. That is my view on this. Otherwise I have nothing to say about the chapters in this book. It is a well written report and I hope that if it is not recorded in this book for the Forum Island countries' leaders to see, I want to see that when it is renegotiated, one of the causes of the social ethnic tension is my Malaitan people who have been neglected for too long. Unless something is done for them, and I

have not seen it in this book and so how can we solve a problem when one of the principal parties is always complaining every day? This is something to think about, and it is not something to think about because it happens, and we do not want to see it happen again.

Sir, I take this opportunity to thank the Chairman for a well written report, good cover, good recommendations and I hope that when it gets to the Forum Leaders they will do something about it because the Forum Leaders can then influence wealthy countries like Australia to look at requests like this because it comes from the Solomon Islands Government. But if it is not included in this report then it is better off burning these books because why should it be send to the Forum Leaders since we cannot make any specific request to the Forum to do something about two of the principle reasons as to why the ethnic tension erupted. Thank you and I support the Report.

Mr WAIPORA: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute very briefly to the motion. The two Members who have spoken earlier spoke for a long time and so I am going to speak very briefly about a few things I sight in this report. I must admit that I am not interested in reading the report because it is very thick, and so I do not have the time to read it. As I said in the first place, this report should have been summarized so that we talk sense on it. Anyway this report merely talks about it being presented to us as a result of the work of the Committee concerned in collecting information throughout the country.

I want to thank the honorable Chairman of the Committee for bringing this report today for us to debate. I must thank the government for financing this job, well done. I think the government must be thanked because it has given time to the committee to do its work and now it has finished its work and its report is with us here.

As the late former member for Aoke/Langa Langa, a former prime minister once said that he asked Australia for injection but he was given aspirin. What he meant was that we are the ones that really went through the tension at that time and we asked for assistance when the ethnic tension started. We needed assistance very badly at that time because during those three years and the coup happened to us and the former prime minister here took over from us, were very bad days and we had very bad experiences. We at anytime thought they would arrive, after arresting the prime minister, we thought that ministers would be next to be arrested. We have been working very hard holding meetings after meetings throughout the nights and days talking about the ethnic tension and how we are going to solve it. I think the first move the SIAC Government made at that time was when I was appointed to approach the provinces to invite the premiers so that they come and we have meetings so that

we could set out strategies or whatever it is the premiers have in mind on how to approach the ethnic tension, and at that time the Guadalcanal was really hot on the ethnic tension. There was no retaliation yet at that time. We continued to deal with the problem and it was very bad times. After the coup, a new government came in and later it on it brought RAMSI into the country in 2003. RAMSI came when things had started to slow down. They came for war and that is when they arrived they had guns with them everywhere they go. They thought that they come here to face us in shooting, but we had managed to solve the problem already ourselves with leaders at that time. Some of us leaders after the coup did not manage to come back after the election at that time, we did not win and we were happy to stay away because we were alive. I can remember one time I came back from Vanuatu, when I was Minister for Education and I arrived after the USP Council meeting in Port Vila, they drove me down and pointed a gun on me. I think had they shot me at that time I would have been dead a long time ago, and this is just beside the Honiara Town Council.

What I am saying is that the arrival of RAMSI in 2003, we Solomon Islanders and leaders at that time have managed to calm down the situation already. I think the Townsville Peace Agreement has been signed and others as well and so the rough sea and big wind have started to calm down before RAMSI's arrival. Today we thank them for arriving and we know that our hope of safety, survival and security is assured and has come back to normalcy.

So we started in July 2003, when RAMSI came here with an open ended timing. I can see in the report saying this, "When RAMSI completes the work it was requested to do, Forum leaders will meet to consider whether the mission should eventually withdraw or set up a permanent military and police presence as police back up support service continue to act as an avenue through which economic development assistance can be channeled".

My question is, those that you have invited to come, what are the specific areas that we want them to come and achieve, after which their job is completed so that Forum leaders can then say they have completed their work. Do the Forum leaders know what the timeframe is and what their work is and are watching us so that they know what sort of number one job RAMSI has completed, the second job is completed, the third job is completed and the fourth one? Do the Forum leaders know what RAMSI is here to do? Even I myself do not know what RAMSI is here to do that we requested them to come and do? I know you will say did you not see them patrolling the streets providing security, maintaining law and order, becoming technical advisors in the ministries for our economy to come back and things like that. I know they are doing those jobs but are they almost done. That is what I want to know so that when RAMSI completes their work they were requested to do, Forum leaders will meet to

consider. That is my question. Have they completed their No.1, 2, 3 & 4 jobs so that Forum Leaders can say they have now reached No.8 and so they are almost finished and then we can be ready too to decide on whether they should stay or go back. I questioned that because I do not know. But I do not know what they are doing in Makira. I think you would be able to tell me what they are doing in Makira. We are not quite comfortable with them because they raided one of my places in West Makira Constituency. And this case is still not heard. The Commissioner of Police cannot even give an answer to us on it. The boss of RAMSI too cannot even give an answer to us about this raid. So my people still have bad feelings about RAMSI because when they came and carry out the raid they chased innocent peoples like the women and children. My people in West Makira are still following up this case because they wanted to know what they have done wrong and that is why they were raided. The Commissioner of Police never answered us. I have been writing to him seeking explanation when I was minister but they never answered me. We insist that we wanted to know the reason for that raid. We must know about it. Our people demand RAMSI and the police to explain to us this raid why you spoiled my people in Morobei. Is that being a good friend coming in a patrol boat fully armed and coming to us the innocent people? Is that coming to make peace with us? Maybe you need RAMSI but for us in Makira, no, I can tell you. We do not need them because we do not know what they are doing in Kirakira. We have our police officers there and we are not trouble markers. If RAMSI go out from Kira Kira we lose nothing. If they are to stay there then they have to fix our roads, construct our bridges, airfields and water supplies. They have to change their policy. Just like way back in 1982 when I invited some armies from Melbourne to come and assist us. At that time Trevor was the High Commissioner and so I and Premier went and talked with him and he sent 20 army personnel who came and set up their camp in Lata and they made some projects for us under the Defense Cooperation Program. Does that program still exist? The person who is talking now tried it and so he knows when he invited armies from Australia to do certain projects in Lata under the Defense Program. Why do they not come with RAMSI to do things in the provinces instead of going around here and there? Do you know that the longer they stay here, instead of making peace they will be provoking people because our people are starting to be unhappy with them.

I feel a little bit downhearted because they said that they come to make peace instead they came and spoiled us at Moroubei. This case is still outstanding and our people still demand the Commissioner of Police, demand the Special Coordinator for RAMSI to give us an answer quickly as to what they went and did there. We are demanding compensation from them because they came and chased the women and children who are innocent. During that time

somebody's leg was cut by a RAMSI knife. I think if it was in other places they would have retaliated. But being Makira people we said it is okay for doing that to us. But as a national leader for Makira we do not need RAMSI in Kira Kira. I think Honiara needs them and maybe other places but not Makira.

The recommendations made in the report are very good. But is the government going to make a timetable for them or is it only Forum Leaders? That is what I am not sure about but maybe the government knows. I am just throwing out questions that I am not sure about. I thought that a timetable for them to exit should have been in the report but it is not. This law is only to protect everyone whilst they are here Solomon Islands. Like I said in my speech last time on the political parties, the only group of people who are free from everything under the sun is RAMSI. That is according to this paper. But I thank them for coming to help us. And as I said when we asked them to come during Ulufa'alu's tried they did not come. But it was during that time that we needed them most because things were very hot at that time. It was only when things started to calm down that they came.

I do not want to say anything further, but sorry that I feel hurt because they spoiled my people on the 15th of September 2006 when I was in Wellington dealing with the federal constitution. When I came back they told me what happened. I do not want to go through the chapters like the Hon. Member for Savo/Russells who read through this book from front to back and back to front and so he knows it very well. I said that I am not quite interested in reading this book but I only looked at certain parts of it. If I had read it through, I would have raised many other things. But seeing that I did not because I am not interested in reading this book, and so with those few remarks I resume my seat.

Sitting suspended for lunch break

Sitting resumed at 3.30 pm

Mr Speaker: Parliament is resumed. Debate on the motion moved by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee continues.

Hon CHAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the motion by the Honorable Peter Boyers, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for this House to consider the Report of the Foreign Relations Committee on the Inquiry into the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 and RAMSI Intervention.

As Members of this House would know, the Honorable MP for West New Georgia/Vona Vona took over from me as Chair of the Committee following my

appointment as Minister in May of this year. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the MP for West New Georgia on the completion of the inquiry by the Foreign Relations Committee under his stewardship and tabling of this excellent report. It is indeed a significant achievement.

The RAMSI inquiry is by far in way the largest inquiry ever undertaken by a committee of this House. The Committee visited every single province of Solomon Islands and took evidences from hundreds of witnesses over 35 hearing days. As the Chair's foreword says, the inquiry was a mammoth undertaking and the report is a landmark report for this Parliament. To my mind, this makes the achievement of the Honorable Peter Boyers in bringing this inquiry together and presenting this report to the House all the more meritorious. I believe I am correct in saying that the Honorable Peter Boyers attended every single hearing conducted by the Foreign Relations Committee throughout this inquiry.

I wish also to pay tribute to the work of the other Members of the Committee. Having been there myself I know of the difficulties that Members face during the Committee's provincial hearings. However, Members' willingness to adapt to circumstances throughout the inquiry was exemplary. I pay tribute to all members of the Committee past and present for their participation in this inquiry and their contribution to this report.

I must also acknowledge the work of the Committee Secretariat and Hansard staff. There is no doubt that the Parliamentary Strengthening Program has brought enormous benefits to the National Parliament. The dedication of the committee staff in organizing the Committee's provincial hearings in the face of considerable logistical difficulties was extraordinary. I also acknowledge the work of the Secretariat in bringing together the Committee's draft report. There is no doubt that this report is a report of considerable weight and authority. It brings together detailed consideration of a broad range of issues and presents fairly and impartially the views of all parties to the inquiry. From that, the Committee has drawn conclusions and recommendations which are sensible and well informed. I commend the Secretariat for its involvement in this inquiry.

I wish to also acknowledge, of course, those stakeholders who contributed to the inquiry; particular thanks are due to the Prime Minister, Ministers and senior officers of the Solomon Islands Government. Similarly, the willingness of RAMSI officers to participate actively in the inquiry and assist the Committee in its hearings was central to the success of the inquiry. Representatives of aid donors, community representatives, NGOs representatives all willingly gave their time and energy to the inquiry. But I wish to pay special tribute to members of the general public who were involved in the inquiry, particularly those who gave evidence before the Committee in the provinces. The contribution of the people, especially the provinces to the inquiry was central to

its success. Their wisdom and knowledge and the perspectives they brought to the committee on the RAMSI intervention cannot be under estimated. There is no doubt that the concerns of the average Solomon Islanders significantly informed the findings of the Foreign Relations Committee in this excellent report.

I turn now to make a few observations on the findings of the report itself. As I have already stated, I believe this report draws very considered and well thought true findings. The conclusions and recommendations are based on the very thorough review of all the available evidences and information on the RAMSI Intervention.

One area I wish to comment on specifically is the report's extremely detailed analysis of the legal framework underpinning RAMSI. I think this report goes further than any previous report in analyzing the details and the nuances of the legal framework establishing RAMSI, namely the FIA Act, the FIAA Notice and RAMSI Treaty. In its discussion of the Nori and Makasi cases in Chapter 4, the Committee has placed on public record material that has not previously been widely recognized or studied. To this end, the Committee has conducted detail research and analysis that goes beyond the evidence presented in submissions and hearings. The discussion in Chapter 3 to 6 of just how RAMSI was established, how the High Court interpreted that legal framework in the Nori and Makasi cases and the intricacies of how the legal framework operates currently, is the most detailed and useful discussions of these issues of which I am aware. The Committee is to be commended.

Another area of the report that I wish to particularly commend the Committee for its decision is in relation to law and justice. I note that this discussion arises in several later chapters of the report, notably Chapter 9 dealing with the law and justice pillar of RAMSI. Chapter 12 is also dealing with support for the provinces. Once again the discussions in these chapters on law and justice issues is commendable, balanced, comprehensive and ultimately in some areas insightful.

I fully support the Committee's findings in relation to rebuilding of the justice sector, the courts and the correctional services under RAMSI. These have indeed been major achievements for the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI. At the same time I note the Committee's comments about the challenges that still need to be overcome in terms of rebuilding the Solomon Islands Police Force. The Committee deals with this issue at some length in its report focusing on the need to rebuild trust between the RSIPF and the people, and to build the capacity of the RSIPF both human and logistical. Once again I commend the Committee for its detailed analysis of this issue.

The Committee report ends with a discussion of the need to address the root causes of the ethnic tension, and to take the opportunity while RAMSI is still present in Solomon Islands to secure the future of the country. As the Honorable Peter Boyers said in his opening remarks when speaking to the motion before the House, the Committee leaves identifying and addressing the root causes to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Solomon Islands Government. I believe the Committee is right in doing so. However, the Committee does, I believe, makes some very pertinent observations about the need for a concerted whole of government approach to addressing this issue while acknowledging the complexity and the urgency of the task.

Finally, it may go somewhat unremarked but I wish to comment on the final chapter of the Committee's report, Chapter 14 dealing with the way forward. This chapter looks at some of the other important challenges facing the Solomon Islands Government, the need for the SIG to continue taking the lead in partnership with RAMSI; the pressing and urgent need to focus on the delivery of services and infrastructure to the provinces; the need to address the issue of federalism and the paramount need to continue work towards transparency and accountability in government. I find it fascinating that the Committee ends its report on this note.

To my mind, the Committee has touched on some fundamental issues for the future and spelled them out most loosely for this House. I note that throughout its report the Committee has made sparing use of the recommendations. The report itself, 221 pages includes only 15 recommendations. I believe that this is an indication of the seriousness with which the Committee undertook its inquiry and important to those issues on which the Committee has seen fit to make recommendations. I urge the Government to give due consideration to the implementation of each and every recommendation in this report.

With those few remarks, I would conclude my comments and say, once again I acknowledge the work of the Foreign Relations Committee and particularly the Chair, the honorable Peter Boyers in the presentation of this landmark report to the House. I commend the Committee's conclusions, findings and recommendations to this House and the Government.

Mr Speaker: Point of order. Just a reminder to honorable Members that under SO32(5), it is best to refer to a Member of Parliament as member for whatever constituency. However, in this particular report, I think we can refer to him as the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Hon. SOFU: Thank you for giving me this time to talk briefly on this very important report the Chairman brought before the House for us to deliberate on.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and members of his team for the good work they have done. The result of the good work is this very important report that is now before Parliament for our deliberation.

I know it is not an easy task to go around the provinces conducting hearings for people in the rural areas where I believe chiefs, church leaders, women reps, youths and other important sectors in the rural settings attended to express their thoughts about RAMSI. That is the only opportunity they have to be able to come and raise matters of concern. Only then can this House and we as MPs sitting down can make decisions on. By looking at the report I believe that we would be able to identify and look at important areas that need to be addressed by the government.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the CNURA Government for positively addressing the Facilitation of International Notice 2003, as legally required. It is very important that this Notice is adequately addressed for an appropriate review. I would like to congratulate the Committee because despite of timing, limitation in resources they made it to the provinces to conduct this very important task. I also realize that conducting this review in the provinces has given an opportunity for our rural populace to come forward and even know more about the work of RAMSI. Let me cite one clause inside the report where the Premier of Makira stated that they do not know the work of RAMSI back at home. This Committee in going around our provinces has done a very wonderful job because at the same time it went for this review has also heard from the people and even explained to them the work of RAMSI.

Our people in the rural areas have very high expectations on the work of RAMSI. Even some of us MPs when talking in here also mentioned construction of new roads or a big infrastructure, and so it is very important for us to understand that RAMSI's work is drawn under a specific area. When the Committee went out to the provinces, our people in the rural areas understand the work of RAMSI, and the three pillars the Chairman mentioned in his report.

As Minister responsible, I would like to take this opportunity to thank RAMSI for some components of roads that RAMSI did when it came in at 2003. Maybe some people are saying that they did not know what RAMSI is doing here in the country or some people are saying that they do not need RAMSI, even some of our leaders say this. But I would like to make a correction here that immediately after the ethnic tension some of our roads were closed down but we were so thankful that when RAMSI came in, it carried out rehabilitation immediately after the ethnic crisis. And so the connectivity of our main roads,

even here in Honiara, Guadalcanal and Malaita are starting to reconnect and traffic begins to flow. Those are the things that we would like to thank RAMSI for the good work they have done for us.

I believe that reconstruction of our existing roads still remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Infrastructure Development, the Government of Solomon Islands and the aid donors. I was very thankful for noting inside the report that the Chairman and Members of the Foreign Relations Committee called our aid donors together to try and express the concerns of our people in the rural areas voiced out when the Committee conducted those important hearings so that aid donors too know what our people want because those things may have contributed towards the rise of the ethnic crisis. I would like to thank the Chairman and his Committee members for their wisdom in calling together the aid donors to come and express the concerns of the people to them.

I must not forget the Pacific Countries that came together to help Solomon Islands. They are our brothers and our neighbors who came to help us in our time of need. When they saw us in distress they came to help this country. Without them I do not think we would be together like this today, and so I would like to thank them and acknowledge them for the great work they have done to this nation.

We may have heard talks on the streets or in the media by someone expressing his or her view that they do not need RAMSI. However, there are circumstances that we need RAMSI to step in. We still need RAMSI to continue with work that needs to be done. The expectations of our rural people include good roads, improved shipping services, lots of money and many, many more. That is the view of our people in the rural areas. Getting down to our rural people and informing them enables them to have better understanding on the work of RAMSI. They now know the duty and role, responsibility that RAMSI is here to in our country.

There are various findings and a number of recommendations in the report that this Committee sets under the parliamentary standing committees, and this is one of them, and it is very important for us Members of Parliament to study the report, because only then can we make good decisions in here regarding RAMSI. As I have said, I will not say much but I will be very brief to give opportunity to others because this is a very important report that we need to register our views and observations on. Whatever conclusions, recommendations and findings are in the report depends very much on the government of the day for their implementation. We are all humans and we cannot do everything at one time. No, we will take it step by step, doing little by little and then finally come to the destination we are traveling towards.

Establishing the root causes of the tension as stated in the report is very important because only then can it address the issues we have experienced in the past, present and maybe in the future. During the presentation of the report, the Chairman rightly stated that it is very important that we establish or find out the root causes of the ethnic crisis. I know that the Ministry of Peace and Reconciliation is well set up for that very important task, and I am sure that it will address that area.

As I have already said that I am going to be very brief, once again I would like to thank the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, members of the Committee, the Government and even countries that contributed towards the maintenance of law and order under RAMSI program in Solomon Islands. Once again, thank you and I support this report.

Hon. TORA: Thank you for allowing me to contribute briefly on this motion moved by the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and the MP for West New Georgia/Vona Vona.

At the outset, I first of all take this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman and his Committee. Like other speakers have said they have done a very good job and so they deserve words of thanks and congratulations on behalf of my Ministry and my people of Ulawa/Ugi Constituency.

Much has been said about this report. When I look at this report it is the voice of our people in this country expressing their views and observations of RAMSI's performance since it came in on day one to help us in our time of need when we were down on our knees during the ethnic tension. I said it is the voice of the people because the Foreign Relations Committee has been assigned by this Government to go out and get the views of our people. Some of our people, because they do not understand the mandate of RAMSI, have made contributions that are not in line with what is expected. They speak negatively about the duties or the mandate of RAMSI. Some understand the role and functions of RAMSI, and so they contribute positively in their interviews.

As other speakers have said, a lot more is yet to be done, a lot more is yet to be achieved in terms of our national security and also peace and reconciliation, like the speaker who has just sat down mentioned. I think it is a good reminder to all of us leaders, including our people in this nation should look through such a report so that we know the real picture about the work of RAMSI in this country. Some of the speakers contribute very negatively towards the work of RAMSI in our country. But I am glad, that we should all join together to congratulate the work of RAMSI. As we look back from day one when they landed here they would have completed six years of work since they arrived here. I can say that there is a lot more they can do for us. This report will guide

the government to see the way forward in terms of the review it wants to undertake.

In terms of our national security, it is true that some of our people in the rural areas including some provincial leaders said that the performance or the morale of RSIP officers have gone down. I think each of us needs to ask the question why it is like that. I think the morale of officers is starting to go down because, first, the tension is really affecting the police personnel. Also, their welfares are not being adequately addressed. That is also a contributing factor that is making the work morale of police officers to go down. But there is still a long way to go. The Royal Solomon Island Police Force as clearly stated in this report is developing a strategic direction for 2010 to 2013. If we look at what this report is saying that maybe after the year 2013, we will see changes within the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. I am really thankful for the work of RAMSI and also the Commissioner of Police and his executive for continuing to coach and mold our young recruits that come into the Force. Recruitment will continue on with the support of our friends overseas.

Without taking much of your time, I would like to say that my colleague Member for West Makira said negative things about RAMSI. What the MP has said does not come from the people of Makira and Ulawa Province. It is something that comes out from himself. I can assure you that had the MP looked carefully at this report he will find that the people of Makira/Ulawa Province still need RAMSI. I do not want leaders to make that kind of statement on this floor of Parliament. If he wants to prove that Makira people still support RAMSI, he should conduct a referendum in Makira and he will see that almost 95% of the people there still need RAMSI. No man is an island and so Makira cannot stand on its own. Anything that happens in any other provinces, they too would feel it. Like what happened in Bougainville has also affected those of us here in Solomon Islands. I therefore would like to correct and put right on this floor of Parliament that the people of Makira/Ulawa Province still want RAMSI. As I have said this report is the voice of our people and therefore it will guide this responsible government and all of us sitting down here where we are going to go next, especially in reviewing the 2003 Notice so that if we see there is need to scale down its operations then it is up to Members of Parliament and leaders to do so.

Once again before I sit down I want to take this opportunity again to thank the Chairman and his hard working committee, the secretariat and the National Parliament for their time and those who have accepted the invitation in coming forward to sit down before the Committee giving their views and contributions on what they think about RAMSI in our country. With those few remarks, I fully support the motion.

Mr. OLAVAE: Thank you for allowing me the floor to contribute to this motion moved by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. Much has been said by previous speakers on what was stipulated in this Foreign Relations Committee report. This report reminds the government to put onboard infrastructure development to rectify the anomalies under our political structures we have yet to experience. This report is concerned about how we are going to find answers to our problems that transpired four to ten years ago.

RAMSI has done a lot to this country since it was embedded through the government system in 2003. RAMSI is here to strengthen weak areas in our government system and RAMSI's presence here is to supplement most of our efforts in strengthening the weak areas in the government system. We should not expect much from RAMSI because government has to take the lead. The Government has to put in the right policies to alleviate the problems we are facing. The problems that we are experiencing were caused by none other but ourselves. The report is very clear. We may talk about reports after reports but these reports are not going to solve our problems if the government is not serious in putting right budgetary provisions to the resourceful islands. If it fails to do that their problems will crop up in the future too.

The main people causing these problems are the people of Guadalcanal, I mean the militants or people who are not happy with the policy of successive governments. Therefore, we have to find ways of addressing this. How are we going to reciprocate in terms of infrastructure development that has been missing in their areas? I know the Prime Minister is from this island of Guadalcanal and so he needs to put priority on what his province is embarking on. The onus is on the government and I hope it will seriously look into this. This report clearly states what this government needs to do in the future from now onwards.

Without taking much of your time, as I hope some of the speakers will rise to say their bit, and so may I take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee for a good report. What he introduced to us here was clear, and I hope that all of us will support this motion. With these few remarks I support the motion.

Hon TOZAKA: I would also like to join other colleagues in supporting this motion moved by the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Member of Parliament for West New Georgia/Vona Vona. I would like to congratulate the Chairman and his committee for a work well done in producing this report for Parliaments deliberation.

Secondly, I would like to say that this report, as I read it, puts everything into perspective. It puts things, issues and our differences into perspective between the government and our people and also the Regional Mission that intervened to come and help us. Basically, this Mission as you know, all the things I am going to say are already water under the bridge, so to speak. It is expected that when anything new comes to any situation, when we begin our friendship, partnership and relationship, we are subject to misunderstanding in our relationship. We are subject to that because human as we are, we can misunderstand each other. This Mission came into our country in the spirit that it did not come by itself. It came through the very good work of the Forum Secretariat, an organization that we are also a member of in the region. It so happened that in the year 2000 in Kiribati our leaders came up with a declaration they called the Biketawa Declaration which addresses crisis situations in the region. During that time they had no idea it would come into our country. But that declaration is the declaration that Australia came into our country when it received request from our government to come in to help us. They themselves too have their own public policies and were also struggling as to how they are going to come in to help us. But we are very happy that this declaration was already there and so they came through that declaration; RAMSI is here as a regional mandated mission.

Going back to the point I said about the differences that we were saying where most of us questioned the effectiveness of RAMSI whether it is really doing its work or not doing its work. We all took part initially, all of us have this observation. The gentleman whom the Speaker mentioned his name this morning as Patrick O'Connor, he too must have come through that scenario questioning RAMSI's situation. But again the government when it came into power two years ago led by our Prime Minister, the best way to go is to put everything into perspective. Let us put it, write it down, make a report, let us double check our people on what their view is on RAMSI, and so our people spoke through this Committee and this book here is the voice of our people. This book has the voices of our people saying that besides the good points about RAMSI they also made points that they would like to see us improving them.

Our geographical locations in Solomon Islands, where we live we cannot change it starting from Shortlands to Temotu will remain as they are. We cannot change it, it is not possible because God created our country as it is. They will remain separate like this, separated by water in between, how many millions of years will come, I do not know, but they will remain the same. That is a fact and a fact that we have to accept. We have to accept that that is where we come from, and it is going to remain that way.

Our separation in our different islands here we also have our languages, about 80 languages and we also have our cultures and so on. These are the things that play inside the things that we talk about that we wanted RAMSI to do. We have gone a little over the boundary to suggest whether RAMSI can also help us on that.

What I am driving at here is that we cannot change some of these things, they will remain there. Our cultures cannot be changed; maybe they can change in some ways but our languages will still remain as they are. Our islands will still remain as they are. I read a little bit the comments of the Speaker and my thinking is a bit in line with his thinking that we are the ones that have to change; we are the ones that need to be changed. These things are solid things. They are objects and not human beings and so they are going to remain like that. What comes out in this report is from the Committee. It is just putting everything to remind us that this is the situation and we need to improve ourselves on them.

History has now gone passed, let us forget what we have talked about and what we need to do now is to move on. And I am glad that that is now happening in government at the moment. This report has found out our weak points and our strong points, and that we need to move on.

My third point is on Chapter 13 of the report which mentions the root causes of this conflict. That is a very, very important chapter I came across. It is a very important chapter because it highlights the root causes of the conflict. Some of these root causes have been with us for many, many years since independence; issues such as land, internal migration, distribution of wealth. In fact if I go down very quickly on what our problems are, it will be just these three. I recognize these three as fundamental; land, internal migration and distribution of wealth. How do we distribute wealth to our islands? As I said we come from separate islands and we must be fair to each other.

Can we change the geographical set up in our country? No, it is very difficult, we cannot do that. What needs to be changed is us. We need to change how we distribute our wealth so that every one of us in the country gets a fair share. In my opinion, wealth must reach all of us. It must get down to them from the top down to the village, down to the grassroots level.

One thing too is that we have to have a very good public policy in our government. But I am glad that our government is now addressing these issues. It is addressing the issue of land, and it is not going to be perfect but we will continue to falsify all our public policies. We will continue to say it is not straight until we come to perfection, maybe later. It cannot be perfect, but I am glad that the government of the day is addressing these issues head on.

The exit of RAMSI is one very important issue. But I am glad that our government has also said that it is going to be an exit we are going to talk about. It is not going to be they just leave the country and go out. We will work together with RAMSI on how we will work on that.

Hon. Sikua: Point of order. It is now 4.30pm, and so to allow the Minister to continue to complete his speech, I seek your consent to move suspension of Standing Order 10 in accordance with the Standing Order 81.

Mr Speaker: Leave is granted.

Hon. Sikua: I move that Standing Order 10 be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 81 to permit the continuation of the business of the House until adjourned by the Speaker in accordance with SO10(5).

Standing Order 10 suspended accordance with SO81 to permit the continuation of the business of the House after 4.30 pm

Hon. Tozaka: The exit of the Regional Mission to Solomon Islands is going to be a gradual process. This is very gratifying, it is very good, and in this report I think all of our provinces support this idea. I think we do also. I mean I on behalf of my constituency of North Vella also support this partnership way of doing things in addressing the going back of the Mission.

I am also happy that RAMSI is listening very carefully to the points raised by our people, and now they are changing too. I noticed that they have been concentrating on what is called capacity building to build our machineries and now they are starting to move on to areas of development. That is a positive thing.

In my view as well, whilst this Mission is here in the country, I am of the view that we take the challenge. We take the challenge collectively, not only the government but provincial governments too, and our chiefs and everyone of us to work together using this book to find our weaknesses and then say whilst RAMSI is here, let us use that opportunity to catch up to address the issues that our people in the rural areas at the grassroots level would like us to address the issues that we read about in this book; whilst they are here. I think I am prepared to do what is called, "bite the bullet", which means just go ahead, shut the eyes and do it. Sometimes the former Prime Minister used that word, "just shut our eyes and go ahead". I think we should also do that. I know that perhaps they are well-off logistically because they have better things than us, but

let us use this opportunity because there will be no other opportunities again for us to go ahead and use. I think we are very proud of ourselves that we are the models in the Pacific in that we are the first to have this mission and everyone is looking at us as to how successful we will come out of this mission, and perhaps we will also use it to address similar cases in future.

Coming back to my last point, what other speakers have said I think it is our attitudes and our behaviors that have to be changed in order for us to accommodate the things stated in the report so that we can move our country forward, govern our country properly so that we can work together collectively as one country with the rest of the world. With those few words once again, I thank the Chairman for this report and I support this motion.

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members since we have another program at 5pm I will ask the Chairman of the FRC to move his motion to adjourn debate of the motion.

Hon. Boyers: As you all know we are have a handing over ceremony at the leaf house between the Ministry of Energy and the Prime Minister that we have to attend, and seeing that time is short I now move that debate on the motion that Parliament resolves itself into a committee of the whole house to consider National Parliament Paper No. 37 of 2009, Report on the Inquiry into the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 and RAMSI Intervention be adjourned to the next sitting day.

Debate on the motion adjourned to the next sitting day

Mr Speaker: Honorable Members, in accordance with Standing Order 10(5) the House is adjourned until 9:30 tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 4.30 pm