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# WORLD

## Papua test for Howard at forum

Independence becomes an issue at a meeting of regional leaders.

By PAUL DALEY  
Sydney Herald Correspondent

Prime Minister John Howard is likely to come under intense pressure to support the Indonesian control of West Papua at a meeting of Pacific leaders in Port Moresby on Saturday.

Despite the Federal Government's private confidence this week that the

West Papua issue would not be raised at the Pacific Islands Forum, Vanuatu and Samoa have instead moved a motion supporting West Papua's independence from Indonesia.

Australia, which will be represented by Mr Howard, could be one of just two or three of the 18 forum members to oppose, or abstain from, the motion.

While the general view among forum members is against support for human rights violations in West Papua, it does not question Indonesia's sovereignty over the island's territory.

Australia's support for any motion put by Vanuatu and Samoa which

opposes West Papua independence would further strain Australia's poor relations with Indonesia, which worsened dramatically after Australia's leadership last year of the INTERFET force in East Timor.

But the likelihood of the West Papua issue dominating the three-day forum, high-level summitry will be held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, on Saturday.

Other well-known activists, including West Papuan leader, Sir Michael Somare, will arrive with the delegation from Vanuatu today.

Forum chair, one of the leading activists, who is also a former

adviser to two Papua New Guinea prime ministers, said yesterday he was confident that most forum members would support a motion advocating West Papua independence.

Mr Joku told The Age that while he understood that Australia's relationship with Indonesia made it difficult for Canberra to support the motion, the West Papuan lobby was bringing a "special message" to Australia through the forum members about the issue.

"Nobody's the West Papuan forum, after more than three decades, has returned to the forum," he said. "It's a

sensitive question. I believe Australia is taking a very considered position both in terms of its own interests and also in terms of maintaining stability in the neighbourhood."

Mr Joku said the West Papuan lobby members were "obliged" to lobby Australia on the issue.

"The way political events have unfolded, Australia will have to deal with the West Papuan issue one way or another," he said.

Mr Joku said the Pacific Islands Forum was a natural place for the issue of West Papua independence to be raised, because "it is better for countries away from Indonesia to initiate the debate".

### BRIEFS

#### Analyst resigns after Cole attack

WASHINGTON: A United States Defense Intelligence Agency analyst resigned the day after the terrorist attack against the USS Cole in Yemen because he believed he had helped predict an attack against 15 US warships in the region.

The analyst, who was a member of a group of experts who predicted a terrorist attack would be required before the October 12 bombing.

The Washington Times reported that the National Security Agency issued a top secret report on the day of the bombing stating that the US Navy was planning an attack on the region but it was downgraded several hours after the Cole was bombed.

#### Rescuers search for crashed plane

SAUTHEL, GEORGIA: Russian soldiers and Georgian rescuers are searching for a crashed Russian military plane that killed more than 50 people, including eight children, in the Dnestri-18 military plane packed with officers and their families, crashed on Wednesday in a mountainous 20 kilometre north-east of the Georgian port of Batumi.

#### Tiny nation seeks ties with Taiwan

TAIPEI: Taiwan and Timor, a tiny island in the South Pacific, are discussing the establishment of diplomatic ties in a move that would end China's long-standing claim that the island already has diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

Taiwan and Timor could announce a friendship agreement in a few days, the Liberty Times quoted an unnamed Foreign Ministry source as saying.

#### Villagers kill 25 Tamil prisoners

BANDARAVELI, SRI LANKA: Thousands of Sri Lankan villagers stormed a rehabilitation centre at Bandaraveli, 200 kilometres from the capital, yesterday killing 25 Tamil prisoners and 10 soldiers.

The prisoners, who were held in a 10-hectare camp, were taken to a military camp in the area of the attack.

#### Canadian PM's plane forced down

QUEBEC CITY: The crash of 1999 Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien's plane made an emergency landing in Quebec City on Wednesday night because of a mechanical problem.

The Boeing 737, chartered from Canadian Airlines, experienced an electrical problem after about 90 minutes into the flight from Montreal to Quebec.

"That's when we were told to land," Chretien said. "I was very nervous, but I was very calm."

#### Call for Kosovo poll to be stalled

SARAJEVO, BOSNIA: Yugoslav President Vukobratovic called for the political situation in Kosovo to be resolved before any election to be held in the province.

He said he was not in favour of a referendum on Kosovo's independence, which is being organised by the United Nations, and would produce a "non-ethnic result", referring to an anticipated lack of Serb participation in the vote.

#### Four new moons found for Saturn

WASHINGTON: Astronomers say they have found four new moons orbiting Saturn, giving the planet a total of 31 known moons.

The new moons, one of which is 10 times larger than the others, were discovered by a team of astronomers led by Scott Soderblom of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

## Warming will ruin economies, report says

By PAUL DALEY  
Sydney Herald Correspondent

A global warming could cause a massive economic decline across at least 13 key Pacific nations in the next 20 years, a new Greenpeace report forecasts.

The report, due to be released officially today, warns that if global warming continues as predicted by United Nations climate change negotiations, the Pacific will see most of its coral reefs before the end of this century.

"Under the worst-case scenario examined, by 2020 some Melanesian nations would lose from 15 to 30 per cent of their gross domestic product, valued at about \$1.5 billion to \$4.5 billion, while other Pacific Island nations are even more vulnerable and could lose between \$4 billion and \$45 billion due to climate change," the environmental group says.

Because most Pacific island nations rely heavily on tourism and fishing, degradation of the reef would have a direct economic impact on them, it says.

The study shows that the most vulnerable Pacific nations are Vanuatu and Kiribati, the host of this year's Pacific Islands Forum, followed by Cook Islands, Palau, Tonga and French Polynesia.

Greenpeace concludes that the



Hot topic: Franzisbert Joku of West Papua files the province's rebel flag at the Pacific Island Forum on Kiribati. Photo: PHIL SCHWARTZ

only way to save sensitive ecosystems is by cutting carbon dioxide gas emissions.

"This report concludes that increases in ocean temperatures are causing the rise in the intensity and frequency and extent of coral bleaching," the report says.

"This has enormous implications for the health and wealth of tropical and subtropical societies."

The conclusions by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change — the most authoritative scientific voice on the issue — are expected to influence climate policy in the next decade.

The report's summary is being distributed to governments worldwide this week.

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## US must share peace mediation role, say Palestinians

By ROSS DUNN  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Palestinian leaders say the United States has lost a right to be the sole mediator in Middle East peace talks, and that future negotiations will have to involve the European Union and other world powers.

The announcement comes as other parties in the region are also calling for a new framework for solving Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, among those leading the calls for fundamental changes in Allied

Quint, the leading Palestinian architect of the peace negotiations with Israel that began with secret talks in Oslo, Norway, in 1993. He said he could no longer support the process and that future negotiations will have to involve the European Union and other world powers.

A UN-sponsored panel of heads of state has found that new evidence shows man-made pollution has "accelerated substantially" in global warming and the world is likely to get a lot hotter than predicted.

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Union as one party that should become more involved, as well as Russia, which has been officially a co-sponsor of the process but never become active in the negotiations.

The UN panel, which was set up by the UN Security Council, said it was "deeply concerned" by the lack of progress in the peace process and the need for a new framework for solving Israeli-Palestinian conflicts.

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