

Separatist Movements Influenced by International Intervention: The Case of West Papua

Yue Pan¹ & Qin Xiao²

¹ School of International Studies, Academy of Overseas Chinese Studies, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

² Institute of International Relations, Yunnan University, Kunming, China

Correspondence: Qin Xiao, Institute of International Relations, Yunnan University, Kunming, China. Tel: 86-180-4880-3221. E-mail: xiaoqin190323@foxmail.com

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Abstract

The West Papua issue emerged in Indonesia in 2019 as a separatist movement, influenced by international intervention from Pacific Island nations. The core factors were West Papuans' desire for self-determination, together with ethnic and cultural differences. However, previous self-determination efforts had been unconvincing. This article aims to explore how Pacific Island countries intervened internationally in West Papua issue and how did Indonesia's Jokowi Administration respond to international intervention. In response, the administration adopted a multi-faceted strategy. Domestically, it pursued peaceful dialogue, economic development and some force suppression. Internationally, it strengthened investment, trade and assistance to Pacific Islands while voicing criticism of foreign intervention. Although not completely resolving the issue, the administration upheld national sovereignty and expanded international ties using diverse approaches. This provides insights into managing similar territorial disputes by balancing sovereign integrity with nuanced foreign relations. While separatism was not fully calmed, Indonesia's strategy highlights the importance of collaborative policymaking to maintain national unity amid complex dynamics.

Keywords: Indonesia, Pacific Island Nations, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution, national self-determination

1. Introduction

Separatist movements are not only a direct cause of regional conflicts, but also a key factor in causing international intervention and provoking international conflicts. In 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict broke out, and the separatism in eastern Ukraine became more prominent. The means, functions and roles of international intervention were vividly displayed in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Separatist movements exist in many countries and regions around the world because of the contradictory backgrounds. Indonesia, the "world's third largest democracy", is also facing a separatist movement in West Papua which has been influenced by severe international intervention. Despite being one of the country's wealthiest provinces in terms of resources, West Papua has always occupied the lowest ladder of the Indonesian development index which shows the failure of regional autonomy and more broadly, Indonesian development programs in the region (Kusumaryati, 2021).

In 2022, the Indonesian parliament approved the decision to add four new provinces in Papua, Indonesia, namely Central Papua, South Papua, Highland Papua, and Southwest Papua Province. The Indonesian government was intended to be "for the well-being of the people, especially the indigenous people of the Indonesian Papua region" (MSN, 2022), aiming to accelerate development and promote equitable distribution, and expedite the improvement of public services (Kompas, 18 November 2022), but the local residents treated it as a separation of West Papua. Before that, in 2021, when a second amendment comprising 20 revisions to Papua's Special Autonomy Law was passed by the Indonesian Parliament, the People's Representative Council (DPRP) and the Papuan People's Assembly (MRP) subsequently sued the central government and national parliament (DPR) in the Constitutional Court because this was done without consultation with representatives of the Papuan people (Supriatma, 2021). The revising of the law without consultation with Papuan representatives was also condemned by Papuan civil society groups and several international CSOs (Supriatma, 2021). Later, this issue also triggered several demonstrations, such as demonstrations in six districts and cities in June and July. Some humanitarian activists said that "it will trigger increasingly new conflicts and human rights violations" (BBC,

2022). Actually, there have been relevant studies that statistically analyzed the impact of regional extension policy in Papua Province, and has generalized that this policy has significant effect on the poverty reduction in Papua Province (Riani & Pudjihardjo, 2012). Indonesian Interior Minister also said that "the proposal about the expansion of provinces comes from local community groups, traditional leaders and district officials" (Merdeka, 2022), that is, the Bill comes from public opinions, but also made it clear that the divide and rule of the Indonesian Papua region cannot satisfy everyone and that it is necessary to predict social conflicts in the region (Kompas, 30 June 2022). It is difficult to predict whether it will go smoothly in the future or not because it has caused public opinions and conflicts as soon as this Bill was passed. But for now, it harms the interests of separatist advocates in West Papua and may also become a target for separatist movements in West Papua.

Historically, there was a conflict between the Netherlands and Indonesia over the territorial ownership of what was then Dutch New Guinea, when the area west of the island was called West New Guinea. In 1963, following the international intervention, the Netherlands formally handed over the West New Guinea region to the Indonesian government. Since then, mainstream scholars have mainly used the geographical name of the region as the main title, that is, Indonesia's territory in the western part of the island of New Guinea is called West Papua (Papua Barat). Therefore, for the sake of brevity, the references to "West Papua" or "Indonesian Papua" in this article refer to the Papua region of Indonesia, which includes the Papua province, West Papua province, and four additional provinces in administrative divisions.

In recent years, the armed clashes between the separatist groups with the Indonesian military and police in the West Papua are becoming increasingly fierce. On April 29, 2021, the Indonesian government officially listed the Armed Criminal Group (KKB, Kelompok Kriminal Bersenjata in Papua, Indonesia) as a terrorist organization and dispatched the "Devil Troops" ("Pasukan Setan") to West Papua to arrest them (Fajar, 2021). Throughout 2021, there were 92 armed clashes in West Papua, resulting in 44 deaths, and the armed conflict in West Papua deteriorated significantly (Human rights monitor, 2022). In February 2023, the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), the branch of the Free Papua Organization took a New Zealand pilot hostage (The Diplomat, 2023). Obviously, the separatist movement in the West Papua has gradually evolved into terrorism, becoming a problem that threatens all of Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and the world.

2. Literature Review

The West Papua issue involves numerous contradictions, such as historical disputes, Indonesia's territorial and sovereign integrity, regional and ethnic unity, culture shock and religious differences, as well as human rights problems and the distribution of natural resources, especially the gold resources. Therefore, the West Papua issue has an important impact on the situation in Indonesia, Southeast Asia, and even in the world. In the analysis of the West Papua issue, the first thing is to clarify the root cause and nature of the West Papua issue. At present, scholars generally believe that it is a separatist movement or ethnic conflict. And much evidence suggests that the Indonesian Papua problem is closely linked to international intervention. Therefore, to clarify the core concepts is essential for the analysis of this issue.

2.1 The Definition of Ethnic Conflict and Separatist movements

The ethnic problems of multinational countries in the world are often called ethnic conflicts, separatist movements, ethnic separatist movements, independence movements, nationalist movement, secessionist movements, etc., but each concept is closely related to "ethnic groups" and "separatism".

Ethnic conflict refers to conflicts between different ethnic groups within a country, but its definition is divergent. In the article entitled "Ethnic conflicts and their impact on international society", Stavenhagen (1998) pointed out that "ethnic conflicts as such do not exist, what does exist is a social, political and economic conflict between groups of people who identify each other in ethnic terms: color, race, religion, language, national origin". According to Joseph (1997) in the book entitled "*Cyprus: Ethnic Conflict and International Politics*", "internal ethnic conflict" refers to a state in which two or more ethnic groups within a country pursue incompatible or mutually exclusive political goals. Ethnic conflict is a consequence of the political organization along ethnic lines for a long time. This long-term process is called "ethnic mobilization". According to Wang Jianfeng (2014) in his book entitled "Ethnic Conflict and Governance: in International Political Dimension", it means leaders decide to speak for their community, abstract ideas from the so-called visible and tangible phenomena that the community faces, and call on and organize members of the community to participate in political action. It means a successful ethnic mobilization must be based on the long-term accumulated indignation of the ethnic group, which is the mass basis of ethnic mobilization.

After the Cold War, separatist movements have occurred frequently in many countries and regions. Various national independent, liberation, or separatist movements have broken out on many continents, among which

some succeeds have established new sovereign states, and of course, some failures have finally reached reconciliation with their countries in various ways. According to Viva Ona Bartkus (1999) in the book "The Dynamic of Secession", a separatist movement is an attempt by a part of an existing, internationally recognized state to formally secede from its country and establish a new sovereign state. In the paper entitled "Decentralization and ethnic separation movements: An analysis based on Indonesia", Xue Song (2019) believes that ethnic separatist movements refer to the political actions of non-subject ethnic groups in a country to shape group consciousness by constructing or strengthening ethnic identity, politicizing the geographical boundaries of the group's life, and eventually detaching themselves from the state. That means, ethnic separatist movements generally take place in countries with multi-ethnic, multi-racial, or multi-tribal, and one of the manifestations is the struggle of a (minority) ethnic group for independence from its internationally recognized country.

2.2 The Definition of International Intervention

In the paper named "Environmental conditions, behavioral subjects and action objectives of international intervention in ethnic conflicts in the post-Cold War period", Wang Jianfeng (2019) pointed out that whenever a country's domestic affairs are influenced and intervened by external factors, it is called "intervention", and the concept of "intervention" is thus multiplied. In the paper entitled "International intervention and its challenge to national sovereignty", Wang Liping (1998) believes that the subject of international intervention is an international organization representing the international community, which refers to the intervention carried out by an international organization in the name of the international community against the violation of international law or international consensus by a certain country, while the subject of multinational intervention is only a multi-country group. Wang Jianfeng (2019) believes that international intervention usually refers to the forced intervention of an international political body in other countries involving serious humanitarian crises and serious human rights violations, which is generally implemented within the framework of the UN. This view is a typical summary of the prominent humanitarian interventions of the post-Cold War period. International intervention takes many forms, the most widely known is military intervention, but also includes delivering a speech, imposing economic sanctions, deploying humanitarian aid, monitoring elections, engaging in preventive diplomacy, deploying peacekeeping troops, and fact-finding, diplomatic good offices or mediation, reconciliation, judicial settlement, humanitarian intervention, etc.

As we all know, it is often the "major powers" that has the right to speak and control in the international community, and only the intervention of major powers can play a corresponding role. Authors believe that perhaps international intervention can be considered from a broader perspective. On the one hand, the subject of international intervention may be a third country, a certain number of countries, international political bodies, groups of a country or international organizations. On the other hand, the forms of intervention are pluralistic, that is any act or modality of intervention by third parties should be a means of international intervention.

In the book "Foreign Interventions in Ethnic Conflicts", Nalbandov (2009) pointed out that for a long time, scholars have used "the duration of peace established after interventions take place" as the criterion for the success of international interventions such as Hartzell and Licklider, Doyle and Sambanis, Regan, and others. However, the aim of some international interventionists is not peace, but to provoke regional conflicts to maximize their interests. This division above subconsciously classifies international intervention as a benign international intervention aimed at peace, but according to empirical facts, it is common for international intervention to create chaos, and international intervention can also be divided into reasonable and unreasonable international intervention. In the article "International Intervention by Western Powers: Means, Results and Effects", Wang Jinglie (2012) thinks that the negative effects of the intervention policies and actions of the Western powers far outweigh the positive ones. If intervention is judged by this in the case of West Papua, the most influential international intervention should be the intervention of the UN, the US, the Netherlands, and other third parties in West New Guinea in 1962-1963. The UN ended the historical entanglement between Indonesia and the Netherlands on this issue through the New York Agreement. This was considered an "international dispute" at the time in C.L.M. Penders' (2002) book which named "The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia 1945-1962". From 1945 to 1962, the issue in West New Guinea was a game and struggle between the newly democratic Indonesian and the old colonizer the Netherlands, over the ownership of the old Dutch colonies after the establishment of Indonesia's independence. This the issue of colonial ownership under international intervention. However, the Agreement does not completely address the issue of ethnic separation in West Papua.

Therefore, it would be biased to measure the success of international interventions by this criteria. Nalbandov (2009) proposed to view success of third actions by actual fulfillment of their intervention objectives. Authors also agree with this view, the achievement of the expected aims from the intervening party should be regarded as

the criterion for judging the success of the international intervention. The "success" of such international intervention may not be a two-way success for the intervening party and the intervened, but may simply be the success of the intervening party. On the contrary, the "failure" that does not achieve the desired aim may only be the failure of the intervening party, but it is the success of the intervened party, because they have not been affected by the intervention of a third party to affect its internal affairs.

2.3 Separatist Movements Under International Intervention

Concepts such as ethnic conflict, separatist movements, and ethnic separatist movements intersect, and international intervention is often closely linked to them, but each link is affected by multiple variables. In general, there is a prevailing attitude in the international community that secession is disapproved based on the Marcelo's (2006) research result in "Secession: International Law Perspectives", but this does not mean that other countries will not intervene in what ways and when. The manner of international intervention, the extent of intervention, and the time of intervention are still controversial, and the relationship between the occurrence of separatist movements and external intervention is still unclear, but Zhou Guangjun (2017) in the paper named "What Kind of Secession? Whose Destiny? A Trimming Research of the Concept of Secession Movement" pointed out that once a separatist movement is formed, external forces will intervene with "appropriate name" (such as related ethnic groups, allies, geopolitical interests, or UN peacekeeping operations, etc.) and "appropriate methods" (such as financial support, personnel training, political statements, intervention, and mediation, etc.), so that the original domestic ethnic, regional, religion and other contradictions are in danger of escalating into regional conflicts. At the same time, in another paper entitled "Why Does Ethnic Secession Movement Occur?: An Analysis from the Perspective of Process Theory", Zhou Guangjun (2019) also pointed out that because ethnic separatism may change a country's political situation and regional and global political patterns, it is easy to cause foreign intervention, and the degree and method of intervention will have a greater impact on the trend of ethnic separatism. In the paper "Success and Failure of Secessionism: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis" of Hao Shinan & Gao Qiqi (2016), they think that an international intervention will also have an impact on the success or failure of ethnic separatism.

In the paper "Multi-Ethnic State Building: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention", Qing Jue and Wang Wei (2016) believe that from the perspective of international politics, ethnic conflicts always have the trace of international intervention, big power games, geopolitics, and geo-economy, etc. And their roots are related to the construction of multi-ethnic countries, when the state's capacity to resolve and manage such crises is inadequate, domestic political forces or ethnic groups turn to the outside world, then international intervention will ensue. However, international intervention is not always the initiative of major powers or international or regional organizations, and may also be sought by certain ethnic groups or interest groups within the state (Qing Jue & Wang Wei, 2016). For example, in the case of West Papua, West Papua organizations seeking independence often seek the attention and assistance of Pacific Island countries and international organizations through human rights issues. In the process of international intervention, we can think of ethnic conflict as the cause, separatist movements as a continuation, and international intervention as foreign aid. In general, ethnic conflicts tend to lead to ethnic separatist movements, and because ethnic separatist movements often involve human rights and political issues, international intervention is often accompanied by them. But these three are not causality, so ethnic conflicts do not necessarily lead to separatist movements, and ethnic conflicts and separatist movements are not necessarily accompanied by international intervention.

3. Research Objects and Methods

3.1 Research Objects

The issue of West Papua has always been Indonesia's trouble. In the past two years, its risk factor has increased sharply, and regional armed conflicts have often occurred. Its history is closely related to the Dutch colonial past, the pressure and intervention of the US on the Netherlands, the Indonesian government-led referendum, the Grasberg gold resources, and Java's immigration policy. Scholars have carried out in-depth research on the characterization, historical roots, development changes and trends, influencing factors, and response measures of the Indonesian government to the West Papua issue. C.L.M. Penders (2002) provided a comprehensive analysis of the West New Guinea issue of 1945-1962, such as the round table negotiations on West New Guinea, xenophobic and nationalist trends in West Papua, the anti-Dutch colonial movement, the Indonesian government's response, and US intervention. Li Yiping (2002), Wu Wenxia (2005), and Xue Song (2019) have all devoted themselves to the Indonesian ethnic separatist movement, including in Aceh and West Papua issues. On the whole, West Papua is an important issue in the South Pacific, and there is a high attention to Indonesian ethnic separatist movements including West Papua around the world, especially scholars from Indonesia,

Australia and the Netherlands, and others from countries which has geopolitical or strategic cooperation relations with Indonesia, and most of these studies explore the historical roots and contemporary development of West Papua from the perspective of national separatist movements. However, it cannot be ignored that from Dutch colonization to US intervention to the allocation of Freeport resources, including the current human rights issue, the West Papua issue has always reflected the factors of international intervention. In addition to the repeated international interventionists in history, Pacific Island countries have gradually joined the intervention in West Papua due to geopolitical and geo-economic considerations. Consequently, this paper introduces the perspective of international intervention to explore the West Papua issue, which has certain theoretical and practical significance.

On August 17, 2019, the 74rd anniversary of Indonesia's independence, police in Surabaya, Indonesia's East Java province, broke into the campus and arrested 43 students from the West Papua who were suspected of destroying the national flag the day before, and these students were abused as "monkeys, pigs, and dogs" (Suarapapua, 2019). This caused dissatisfaction among the West Papuans. They demanded independence from Indonesia and triggered the largest social unrest and violent clashes between police and civilians in West Papua in recent years, and a large number of public facilities and private properties were damaged or set on fire, causing a certain number of casualties. As the situation deteriorated, the Indonesian government shut down the internet and communications in West Papua on the grounds of "stopping the spread of false information" (Kompas, 5 September 2019). Meanwhile, to discourage international intervention, West Papua is temporarily closed to foreigners. The unrest in West Papua has even sparked nationwide demonstrations. On September 23 and 24, 2019, the largest protests since 1998 broke out across Indonesia. This is seen as the most serious threat to Indonesia's territorial unity since the end of the separatist movement in Aceh in 2004. Moreover, since the range of West Papua occupies one-fifth of Indonesia's land area, if things get out of control, the situation in West Papua may be more serious than the Aceh issue and have an extremely negative impact on Jokowi's governance and reform in his second term.

Based on this, this article takes the West Papua issue in 2019 as the research object to explore what is the essence of West Papua issue? What role does international intervention play in this issue? And how did Jokowi Administration respond to international intervention? To correctly understand and identify the essence and motivation of the West Papua issue, analyze the international intervention in it, clarify the Jokowi Administration's response methods, and learn from it will provide a reference for other countries and regions facing similar problems.

3.2 Methods

This paper conducts qualitative research, taking the separatist movement in West Papua as the research object, specifically taking the 2019 conflict as the starting point, discussing the evolution, substance, and motivation of the West Papua issue in 2019, and then analyzing the international intervention of Pacific Island countries on this issue, then analyzing the specific measures of the Jokowi Administration to respond to international intervention.

4. Discussion

4.1 *The Evolution, Substance and Motivation of West Papua Issue in 2019*

4.1.1 The evolution of West Papua Issue in 2019

According to the intensity of the conflict, the West Papua issue in 2019 can be divided into four stages: preparation stage, embryonic stage, outbreak stage, and sporadic outbreak stage.

(1) Preparation stage

From the end of 2016 until August 16, 2019, the preparatory period for the West Papua issue was a period in which the attitude of West Papua independence movement organizers and foreign forces towards Jokowi Administration played a key role. Since Jokowi came to power in 2014, he has been gentle and pragmatic, with a people-friendly image, promoting numerous development programs in West Papua, visiting West Papua regularly, and granting amnesty to a certain number of political prisoners. In 2015, the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG)¹ summit included Benny Wenda, leader of the United Liberation Movement for West Papua (ULMWP), as an observer. It was also the year that the MSG declared that Jokowi "is someone whom the MSG can dialogue with" (Insidestory, 2019). However, Jokowi has repeatedly disappointed the leaders of West Papuan independence movement in pushing for military reform and a review of human rights issues in West Papua. As a

¹ Authors' note: The Melanesian Spearhead Group is a regional organization composed of Melanesian countries, including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

result, Jokowi's successful re-election deepened the disappointment and fear of the leaders of the West Papuan independence movement. They believe that it was impossible to resolve the West Papua issue through friendly negotiations within the system, so they are desiring to use extra-institutional methods and the help of extraterritorial forces to achieve the aim of independence, that is, Indonesia fulfilled its commitment more than half a century ago to hold a formal and genuine referendum on self-determination in West Papua under the supervision of the UN.

(2) Embryonic stage

The embryonic period was August 16-18, 2019, which is the period when the fuse of the West Papua issue appeared and broke out. On August 17, 2019, police in Surabaya, broke into the campus, fired tear gas, and arrested 43 West Papuan students suspected of throwing an Indonesian flag into a drain before the Independence Day, and made racist abuses. This sparked dissatisfaction among the indigenous peoples of West Papua, who demanded independence from Indonesia.

(3) Outbreak stage

Subsequently, the West Papua issue entered a violent outbreak period. Since August 19, 2019, it has triggered the largest social unrest and police-civilian and military-civilian clashes in West Papua in recent years, including violent clashes in Jayapura, Sorong, Fakfak, Timika and Manokwari, and many private and public government buildings have been maliciously damaged or set on fire, resulting in some casualties. Many demonstrators risked breaking the law by holding high the "Morning Star Flag" symbolizing West Papua's independence. The climax came on September 23 and 24, 2019, when unrest in West Papua also sparked nationwide demonstrations that erupted into the largest street protests since the era of democratic reform. These demonstrations initiated by students from all over Indonesia, demonstrators put forward the "seven demands". At least tens of thousands of people involved in it, such as in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Banda Aceh, and other major cities. In Jayapura alone, the police arrested 318 students for participating in the demonstration (Detik, 23 September 2019). And during the riots in the town of Wamena in Jayapura, 33 people were died as a result of arson by demonstrators (Kompas, 26 September 2019). Since the outbreak of the incident, Jokowi Administration has vigorously suppressed it by force while negotiating peace with local leaders in West Papua in an attempt to calm the chaos, but the situation has not been completely calmed.

(4) Sporadic outbreak stage

Since October, incidents in West Papua have entered a period of sporadic outbreaks, and even when the epidemic was most severe in Indonesia, there were still sporadic armed clashes between local separatist forces and the military in West Papua. These sporadic violent clashes and armed attacks have gradually shifted from attacks on State violence institutions to indiscriminate killings and even converged with terrorism, especially the West Papuan independence organization—Free Papua Movement. Due to the influence of multiple factors such as Indonesia's religion, tribe, history, and international intervention, West Papua may indeed become a hotbed of terrorism, which urgently needs the attention of the Indonesian government and the international community.

4.1.2 The Substance and Motivation of West Papua Issue in 2019

From the existing research, it is generally believed that the West Papua issue in 2019 is an ethnic conflict, and the main reason may be that the trigger of the incident is caused by ethnic contradiction. However, in view of Jokowi's achievements in his first term, we can learn that the mass base is obviously insufficient. It is clear that mass basis of ethnic mobilization is not sufficient, so defining the West Papua issue only as an ethnic conflict may not reflect the specificity and essence of this issue.

In the first term, Jokowi continued the policy of Susilo (the last president)--rejecting West Papuan referendum to secede from Indonesia and willing to negotiate on the premise of sovereign integrity and use economic development and dialogue to resolve this issue (Xue Song, 2019). The core of Jokowi's West Papua policy during his first term was to respond to political demands with economic development. Internally, the Jokowi Administration is very concerned about the economic development of West Papua, invested a lot of manpower and material resources, and implemented many projects that benefit people's livelihood. In addition, the Administration has also appropriately responded to the political demands of West Papua, established a dialogue platform with the West Papua independence movement organization in 2017 (VOA Indonesia, 2017), while increased the openness of West Papua, started to review key human rights cases, and visited West Papua several times a year to negotiate with local elites and leaders. As a result, people in West Papua are generally more satisfied with Jokowi Administration. The results of the 2019 election shows that Jokowi's group won in 14 of West Papua's 17 counties and cities (Tirto, 2019). The high level of satisfaction of the Jokowi Administration in

West Papua is an achievement that no president in Indonesia has achieved during the period of democratic reform. Externally, Jokowi Administration carried out goodwill diplomacy with the island countries of Oceania and try to weaken external support for the West Papua independence movement. For this reason, the West Papua issue is not an ethnic conflict caused by the unequal distribution of resources or the denial of power in the region during Jokowi Administration.

However, the emergence of the West Papua issue also reflects the failure of Jokowi's management over West Papua during his first term, proves that the use of economic development and resource tilt cannot effectively respond to the political demands of West Papua, and even conceals its political demands, at least those of local elites. Of the "seven demands" raised by the demonstrators on September 23, 2019, only one was directly related to West Papua, namely Article 4, "End martial law in West Papua and elsewhere and immediately release West Papuan political prisoners" (Megapolitan, 2019). That means the West Papuan was not satisfied with the human rights concerns raised by the Administration's crackdown on separatist forces by the military and police. According to a report from the International Coalition for Papua, more than 6,400 politician and social activist were arrested in 2015 and 2016, and more than 300 victims of torture or maltreatment and 20 victims of extra-judicial killings, and local and foreign journalists continue to face harassment from security forces (The conversation, 2019). In December 2018, separatist armed forces attacked the building site in Nduga, and 31 non-West Papua workers were killed (Kompas, 3 December 2018).

Moreover, Jokowi has attracted various criticisms for promoting military reform and promoting Indonesia's democratic process, such as appointed Prabowo as Defense Minister and expanded the military's influence. Some scholars believe that the late period of Jokowi's first term tend to turn to authoritarianism and see this as a manifestation of the decline or regression of Indonesian democracy, point out that Indonesia was an "illiberal democracy" under the Jokowi Administration (Warburton, E., & Aspinall, E., 2019). This criticism is also supported by relevant data. According to the Democracy Index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Indonesia ranked 48th, 68th, and 65th respectively from 2016 to 2018, with 2017 marking an important turning point, with a direct slide from "flawed democracy" to "mixed system".²

In conclusion, the West Papua issue in 2019 was cloaked in ethnic conflicts, but in essence, it is a separatist movement provoked by the intervention of foreign countries, and is linked to many hidden concerns caused by the failure of management during Jokowi's first term. The core impetus of the event is intrinsic, that is the desire of West Papuans for national self-determination, ethnic and cultural differences, and national self-determination which were difficult to be convinced in history. But the outbreak at this point is driven by external forces and is closely related to the intervention of Pacific Island nations.

4.2 Intervention from Pacific Island Nations in West Papua Issue

Indonesia is uncomfortable with the accusations that are often levelled by Pacific countries regarding the issue of human rights violations in Papua (Rosyidin et al., 2022). As early as when Jokowi was seeking re-election, he stressed the importance of deploying integrated military forces in West Papua and other places for national security during the election debate and directly pointed out that West Papua's challenge to national security comes from domestic conflicts and external threats (CNN Indonesia, 28 March 2019). It can be seen that the international intervention and interference in the West Papua issue has a long history, and throughout the Jokowi administration, the intervention of Pacific Island nations was particularly obvious during the preparation and embryonic period of the incident. It must be noted, however, that the official and public attitudes of these Pacific Island nations towards this issue are not consistent. Geographically, West Papua is closer to the Pacific Island nations. Culturally and religiously, West Papua is more similar to Pacific Island nations. So the West Papua independence movement is also supported by a certain number of Pacific Island people who are close to or have similar historical experiences. The positions and attitudes of the governments of Pacific Island nations on this issue are more motivated by national interests and geopolitical considerations. Even within the MSG, its differences over the issue are wide, and it is difficult to reach a consensus on the issue and it is also difficult to bring about a fundamental change in a short period.

On September 10, 2019, Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea, many people marched in solidarity, bringing the city to a halt. At the same time, Pacific Island nations have also engaged in various lobbying efforts

² See from: The Economist Intelligence Unit. Democracy Index 2018: Me too? Political Participation, Protest and Democracy. Retrieved from at https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=Democracy2018; The Economist Intelligence Unit. Democracy Index 2017: Free Speech under Attack. Retrieved from https://pages.eiu.com/rs/753-RIQ-438/images/Democracy_Index_2017.pdf; The Economist Intelligence Unit. Democracy Index 2016: Revenge of the "Deplorables". Retrieved from https://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex2016.

in the international community and supported the West Papua independence movement, such as Papua New Guinea. With the widespread social media, at least seven Pacific Island nations people express support to West Papua, including several parliamentarian from New Zealand, and nativistic movement around the world have joined the West Papua independence movement (Brian Liu, 2019).

At the official level, although almost all Pacific Island nations recognize Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua, many of them have also used the international arenas to frequently intervene in and interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs on the grounds of human rights issues. This is precisely the concern of the Indonesian government, except for Australia and New Zealand, most of the Pacific Island nations are not to be feared. But once these Island nations use the "vote advantage" to put this issue on the major international organizations, once it is not handled properly, Indonesia will lose the power of initiative and be in a legal and moral disadvantage. Indonesia feared that the international community's attention to human rights issues in West Papua might galvanize global support for the region's quest for the right to self-determination, repeating the mistake of East Timor in a referendum on independence from Indonesia, with the support and solidarity of the international community.

Papua New Guinea, the largest countries in the MSG, oppose West Papua's independence because of concerns that support for West Papua independence movement will affect its Bougainville issue, and because of trade, investment, and concerns about refugee flows. In recent years, Fiji's Prime Minister, Voreqe Bainimarama, has also opposed West Papua's independence. Indonesia strongly supports Fiji's participation in the leadership of international organizations such as the Non-Aligned Movement, G77+China, and the Asia-Pacific Group of the UN. In return, Bainimarama said several times at the MSG summit: "Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua can not be questioned", and "The best hope for improving the lives of the people of West Papua is to work closely with the Indonesian government, one of the most dynamic democracies in the world" (Fry, G., & Tarte, S., 2015). Papua New Guinea also defends Indonesia's interests in MSG and try to make it become a partner of the organization. In 2013, the MSG summit in Noumea rejected the West Papuan bid for full membership. Subsequently, the Melanesian leaders agreed to "invite all groups to form an inclusive and united umbrella group in consultation with Indonesia to work on submitting a fresh application".³ And in the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea have been preventing the forum's support for West Papua independence.

Constrained by the powerful nations within both organizations, neither the Pacific Islands Forum nor the MSG has been able to take decisive action. So, seven countries, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Nauru, Palau, and the Marshall Islands, have formed separate alliances (G7) to support the independence of West Papua in the international community. In May 2017, the G7 issued a joint statement to the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and addressed the UN General Assembly. Vanuatu and Solomon Islands lobbied at the UN Human Rights Council (RNZ, 15 May 2017). Pacific church and community groups have ensured that West Papua remains on the Forum agenda, using their annual dialogue with island leaders to promote action on human rights (Insidestory, 2019).

Vanuatu and Solomon Islands are the two countries that are the most supportive of West Papua's independence. The government of Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands have been very supportive of West Papua's self-determination. Vanuatu intervenes against Indonesia through the Free Papua Organization although it is considered legally flawed (Tampubolon & Yasa, 2021). In December 2014, Vanuatu church and ethnic leaders chaired a meeting in Port Vila to coordinate the National Coalition for Liberation (WPNCL), the Federal Republic of West Papua (NRFPPB), and the West Papua National Parliament (NPWP). The conference was so successful that the three forces merged into the ULMWP.⁴ In 2016, the former Solomon Islands diplomat Rex Horoi is appointed his country's special envoy on West Papua at the MSG (RNZ, 22 March 2016). And in 2018, Laura Lini, daughter of Vanuatu's first Prime Minister, was appointed as the country's special envoy for the decolonization of West Papua and Pacific Island nations (RNZ, 9 August 2018). Their Foreign Minister Ralph Regenvanu is also an important lobbyist on the international stage for West Papua. In the MSG, Vanuatu is supported by the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front. The organization has been supporting the West Papua independence movement. Indonesia's intensified military crackdown on West Papua in 2019 reinforced this stance. In contrast, Indonesia has been particularly successful in winning support from key leaders in Papua New Guinea and Fiji (McDougall, 2021).

³ See from: *This is the Next East Timor*. Retrieved from //insidestory.org.au/this-is-the-next-east-timor/.

⁴ See from: *About ULMWP*. Retrieved from "https://www.ulmwp.org/ulmwp".

The intervention of Pacific Island nations, especially the G7, in the issue of West Papua through international organizations, not only directly interferes with Indonesia's internal affairs, but also complicates and internationalizes this issue, which seriously hinders the pacification and settlement of this issue. But Australia is relatively cautious about West Papua. On the surface, Australian academics and officials generally recognize the legitimacy of Indonesia's sovereignty over West Papua, but this does not mean that Australia is indifferent to the chaos in Indonesia. In early September 2019, Indonesia deported four Australians suspected of instigating West Papuan residents to create social unrest during the violent outbreak of the West Papua issue (Kompas, 2 September 2019). Indonesian National Police Chief Tito Karnavian also revealed that the recent riots in West Papua are organized and premeditated vicious incidents, with foreigners trying to stir up incidents and set agendas, and monitor and lead provocations (Jawapos, 2019). Although it is not known whether the four Australian citizens were officially ordered by the Australian government or whether their actions contained the real intention of secession from Indonesia, at least some Australian people or organizations are inclined to support the West Papua independence movement.

4.3 *The Practices of Indonesia to Solving the International Intervention*

In response to international intervention in West Papua, the Jokowi Administration has taken several measures to respond to this issue.

4.3.1 Relying on Pacific Powers Such as Australia and New Zealand and the United Nations, Resolutely Defend the Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

In the face of the G7, Indonesian officials have maintained a tough stance on the issue of West Papua's independence movement, resolutely defended Indonesia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and severely criticized the interference of foreign countries in the West Papua issue. In 2016, Indonesian Defense Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu warned the Island nations that supports West Papua at the UN several times over a month, "Solomon Islands and six other countries must not meddle in West Papua!"⁵ In 2019, in response to Vanuatu Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimamas' request at the UN General Assembly to address human rights abuses in West Papua, Indonesian diplomat Rayyanul Sangadji immediately retorted, saying that "West Papua is a part of Indonesia, was, is and will be. And Vanuatu is just wrapping its pro-separatist aims with human rights problems" (Detik, 30 September 2019)!

Meantime, Indonesia relies on the institutions and principles of Pacific powers such as Australia and New Zealand, and the UN. For example, in 2017, when the UN rejected a West Papuan petition for the independence vote to be reprocessed, Rafael Ramirez, then chair of the decolonisation committee (C24), said: "One of the principles of our movement is to defend the sovereignty and the full integrity of the territory of our members. We are not going to do anything against Indonesia as a C24" (UNPO, 2017).

But recently, Indonesia's confrontation with the G7 in the UN has become inadequate. In early August 2019, the Pacific Islands Forum passed 137-0 in a UN General Assembly resolution promoting "strengthening cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum", with 12 countries including Indonesia abstaining. After the meeting, Indonesia's UN representative criticized Vanuatu for interfering in Indonesia's internal affairs (Jubi, 2019). Later, in the Pacific Islands Forum's declaration, they asked the Indonesian government to arrange a visit to West Papua by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, urged to set a schedule for her visit, and called for an "empirical report" ahead of next year's forum in Vanuatu (CNN Indonesia, 19 August 2019). The UN responded more positively to this "request".

4.3.2 Goodwill Diplomacy with the South Pacific Island Nations

Mere "toughness" is no longer enough to deal with the foreign intervention in the West Papua issue. In fact, during Jokowi's first term, he adopted a two-pronged strategy of "rigidity and softness" to weaken the support and intervention of foreign forces, especially Pacific Island nations. He strengthened diplomatic relations with Pacific Island nations, especially the South Pacific Island nations, strengthened peace and goodwill diplomacy, and increased aid, trade, and investment to the South Pacific Island nations. Indonesia actively participates in international activities and affairs in the Pacific Ocean to extend Indonesia's influence to the smallest Pacific

⁵ See from: Tribunnews. (2016). *Ryamizard Ingatkan Negara Lain Jangan Campuri Urusan Papua*. Retrieved from <https://www.tribunnews.com/nasional/2016/10/27/ryamizard-ingatkan-negara-lain-jangan-campuri-urusan-papua>; Satu Harapan. (2016). *Menhan Ancam Solomon Islands Soal Papua Dipertanyakan*. Retrieved from <http://www.satuharapan.com/read-detail/read/menhan-ancam-solomon-islands-soal-papua-dipertanyakan>; Okezone. (2016). *Diminta RI via Australia agar Tak Usik Papua, Ini Reaksi Solomon*. Retrieved from <https://news.okezone.com/read/2016/11/05/18/1533903/diminta-ri-via-australia-agar-tak-usik-papua-ini-reaksi-solomon>.

Island nations. In July 2019, while hosting a trade and tourism conference in Auckland, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi made it clear that “We are connecting the dots between the 17,000 Indonesian islands and the thousands of Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand” (Reuters, 2019). In addition, the Indonesian government has instructed activists representing the interests of the Indonesian government to defend the Indonesian government's policy towards West Papua on the international stage, such as former West Papuan independence activist Franz Albert Joku, who represented the Indonesian government at the MSG and the Pacific Islands Forum, lobbied at the MSG and the Pacific Islands Forum in an attempt to weaken international support for the ULMWP (RNZ, 13 May 2019). In addition, Jokowi has promoted a large number of development programs in West Papua, visited West Papua regularly, and amnestied a certain number of political prisoners. The MSG once placed great expectations on Jokowi. However, Indonesia's crackdown in West Papua in the second half of the year nullified Jokowi's efforts during his first and second terms.

4.3.3 Take a Conciliatory Attitude Towards West Papua

As the West Papua issue intensified, especially after entering a outbreak period, the Jokowi Administration realized that the strategy of "rigidity and softness" seemed unable to effectively respond to international intervention, so he had to readjust the policy towards West Papua and adopt a more conciliatory attitude. On the one hand, call on the local people to exercise restraint and rationality, emphasize the ideology of the "*Pancasila*", and promise to investigate the attacks and allegations of racial discrimination in Surabaya. On the other hand, Jokowi and his cabinet officials frequently visit West Papua to meet with local youth and religious leaders with an open attitude, and humbly listen to the demands of the people to ease tensions in West Papua.

4.3.4 Seek the Support of the US

The US supports the attitude and position of the Jokowi Administration on this issue, which is in line with the national interests of the USA. The Freeport company has made huge profits using West Papua's gold, silver and copper resources. Although Jokowi undermined the vested interests of the US during his first term and shook the US decades-long entrenched power in West Papua, maintaining peace and stability in West Papua under Indonesian control is more conducive to safeguarding the national interests of the US in extracting natural resources at low prices in the region.

Facing the fierce competition with China, the US needs to win the support of key regional powers, Indonesia. Indonesia pursues a non-aligned foreign policy, implements a balanced diplomatic strategy, and maintains friendly relations with both China and the US. Since Jokowi took over as president, bilateral relations between China and Indonesia have entered a fast track of rapid development. From the existing cooperative relationship between China and Indonesia, if the US supports the independent action of West Papua, it is more likely that Indonesia will move closer to China, which could contain the military actions of the US and its military allies in the South China Sea. Therefore, in the context of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy", the US supports the position of the Jokowi Administration on the West Papua issue, which can not only strengthen strategic hedging with China but also maximize geopolitical victory over Indonesia.

Although the US has not given substantial support to the Jokowi Administration on the West Papua issue for the time being, the attitude of the US can be seen from the frequent military exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. In 2022, the US and Indonesian Defense Ministers once again emphasized strengthening military cooperation between the two sides during their meeting (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022).

The US opposition to the West Papua issue has undoubtedly had a positive effect. Firstly, it has an important leading role for Pacific powers, which will break the silence of Australia and New Zealand on the West Papua issue. Secondly, it will play an obvious warning role to "G7", and if the G7 excessively interferes in the West Papua issue, it cannot be ruled out that Indonesia and the US will jointly launch a substantive attack. Thirdly, it will ease Indonesia's criticism on the Jokowi Administration about "pro-China", reduce the resistance towards Jokowi Administration, and create a relatively good domestic environment for the settlement of the West Papua issue.

5. Conclusion

The West Papua issue in 2019 is a separatist movements affected by international intervention. Continuing to pay close attention to this situation and actively taking various measures will help to prevent the separatist movement from turning into uncontrollable terrorism.

Through the analysis of this issue, we believe that the following measures can help solve similar issues. Firstly, adhere to the principle of national territorial and sovereign integrity, persist in solving problems through peaceful means within the system. Secondly, responding to political demands while developing the economy. Thirdly,

expand the international circle of friends and make clever use of international organizations. Finally, it also need to be strengthen the supervision and guidance of the media, so that the media can exert positive energy. When the forces at home and abroad cannot continue to respond to the demands of the separatists, the separatist movement will naturally lose its source of motivation.

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