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TRANSCRIPT

The Asia Chessboard Podcast

"Blue Squares on the Chessboard: The History and Geopolitics of the Pacific Islands"

DATE

Monday, March 14, 2022

FEATURING

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Andrew Schwartz: Welcome to the Asia Chessboard, the podcast that examines geopolitical dynamics in Asia and takes an inside look at the making of grand strategy. I'm Andrew Schwartz at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Hannah Fodale: This week, Mike discusses the dynamic geopolitics of the Pacific Islands with Georgetown University professor, Patricia O'Brien. Mike and Patty explore the post-World War II history of this complex region, analyze recent political trends in key countries such as Samoa, the Solomon Islands and Fiji, and explain how the Pacific Islands fit in with overall US strategy in Asia.

Mike Green: Welcome back to the Asia Chessboard. I am joined by professor Patty O'Brien, who is one of the leading historians and scholars on the Pacific, or as we tend to call it in the US, the Pacific Islands, teaches at Georgetown, adjunct with CSIS. You can follow her work in The Diplomat and other publications on foreign policy and international relations in Asia. So, we're going to talk a lot about the Pacific, which is becoming increasingly, strategically important and at the center of global competition and geopolitics, but also transnational issues like climate change, and a part of the world about which Americans tend to not know very much. So, we're hoping to get smarter over the next half hour. Patty welcome.

Patricia O'Brien: Thank you, Mike. Very pleased to be here and happy International Women's Day, Mike.

Mike Green: So, let's begin with you, as we always do in the podcast, Patty. What in your background got you interested in the Pacific?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, I am a Pacific person. I was born in one of the great Pacific cities of Sydney. I grew up and lived for most of my life so far within a few miles or a few meters, when I was very lucky, of the Pacific Ocean. Sydney is a city that, growing up, there was so many intersections with the Pacific Islands. I had classmates from New Guinea, from Fiji, so many comings and goings with the Pacific. And then in my professional life, so when I started doing my historical work, doing my PhD, I was doing work that looked at Australia and the Pacific, and I've always seen Australian history as Pacific history. And so, I've really been studying the Pacific deeply in so many different ways for about 30 years. I hate to say it, it's probably 30 years now that I've been studying it.

Mike Green: So you've written a book on the leader of Samoa and other prominent political figures in the region. How do you do research? Do you travel to Samoa, to the Solomon Islands?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, the Samoan book, I was actually in New Zealand and that book was just like this incredible moment in which the family of this Samoan nationalist leader, his name is Ta'isi O.F. Nelson, he led the political campaign against New Zealand during the wars, which also involved the League of Nations. I found him in the archives and I couldn't believe that someone that important didn't have five books written about him at that time and that I hadn't heard of him. But of the three New Zealand experts I asked at the time, "Have you heard of this person?" Only one of them had. But at that time, his family were looking for someone to write on him and his papers in Apia that no one had looked at them yet. And so they gave me the opportunity to come to Apia and use his papers, and this huge consequential story about a man, his family, a colonial struggle on a global scale, unfolded.

Patricia O'Brien: So it's been a lot of contact with Samoa and I'm still working on Samoa. I'm co-editing a book on Samoa's constitutional crisis that gripped the nation last year. So, there's a lot of coming and going to the Pacific, which, obviously, had to stop over the past two years because of border closures. But, yeah, a lot of research in New Zealand, a lot of research in the islands. And I look forward to doing more in the future, but, of course, everything's had to be remotely researched since COVID.

Mike Green: What's the title of the book?

Patricia O'Brien: It's called Tautai: World History, Samoa and the Life of Ta'isi O.F. Nelson. And I chose the title, Tautai, because that means navigator in Samoan, so I was evoking that ancient tradition of Polynesian navigators as the metaphor for this person who navigated his nation through the waters of colonialism in the 20th century and put them on the path to being the first nation in the Pacific that became independent in 1962.

Mike Green: So, I was going to start with geopolitics, but actually I think it's better to start with political life in the Pacific and to focus on agency and the Pacific Islands as shapers and not just objects of world history. I don't think very many Americans think, when they think of nation builders, they think of Sun Yat-Sen, or they think of the Meiji leaders. They think of Northeast Asia or, in some cases, Southeast Asia. Is that wrong? Should we be thinking about the Pacific Islands' history is really one of much greater agency and leadership and nation building than we have?

Patricia O'Brien: Yeah, I think so because one thing that... I mean, to use the example of Samoa which had the longest sustained campaign against colonialism during the war, in the world, not just by Pacific standards, and this

movement was called the Mau movement, M-a-u, it means “stance” in Samoan. And what that movement was, was a nonviolent, so the Samoans... And what I was able to link through my research was that, that nonviolent campaign against colonialism was traced back to a Māori campaign in Taranaki in the 1880s.

Patricia O'Brien: And so those ideas of nonviolent resistance and these moral campaigns and where there's massive asymmetries of power between an unarmed colonized people and an armed colonial power, particularly after World War I, because what happened after World War I is that you had peace in Europe, but a massive military surge in the Pacific because a lot of the veterans from World War I, and particularly the Anzacs from New Zealand and Australia, then went up into the colonies, the League of Nations mandate. So, a lot went into New Guinea from Australia and a lot went into Samoa from New Zealand. So, the Samoans were really innovative and that campaign that Ta'isi led was a global campaign in the 1920s and '30s and he was a real leader in that. And the whole idea of nonviolent resistance, people think it's an advent of Gandhi, but a lot of people are looking at the Pacific origins of that resistance method.

Mike Green: Do Samoans know much about him?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, the thing was, this was the thing that was so amazing over the years that I would go there and I would take my research there and I would talk to people. Obviously, the family knew, but I found out things that they didn't know, and there was this incredible exchange, really rich exchange of information. I mean, Samoans are the most incredible historians. They have this incredible retention of history that I've never encountered anywhere else, so it kept me on my toes.

Patricia O'Brien: And also what I found when I kept going back there and presenting information, and I remember this so vividly when I presented a talk at the National University of Samoa, that a man stood up, a gray-haired man, so I think he must have been 60 or 70 or something like that, he stood up and he was in tears and he said, "Why do I not know this history? Why was I not told this history at school?" And I think writing that story, telling that story, debunking a whole lot of myths about Ta'isi was incredibly important. And I think that it's incredibly gratifying, as a historian, to have that kind of impact on a country and on the way people think about their past.

Mike Green: So, jumping forward to the 21st century, and given historical figures who were nation builders and pro-independence leaders like that, how would you describe the goals of nation building in the Pacific? I'm sure it's different from country to country, but how would you

describe the goals of nation building? What do people want? This is an important way to start a geopolitical discussion, because that's really the center of gravity for us. It's not blocking China. It's understanding what people want and how we can be on the right side of history, as they see it. So, what is that for people in Samoa, the Solomons or elsewhere in the Pacific? What is the definition of a strong nation or do people think about that?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, Samoa and the Solomons are two nations that have gone through a lot of tests of their democracy in the past 12 months, so I'll focus on those two. But the thing with the Pacific is that there are 14 independent nations, 14 independent democracies. And then there are a whole lot of territories that are attached to the US, France, New Zealand, so it's a very complex geopolitical arrangement. But in terms of Samoa, so what happened last year and what was so alarming for a lot of people was that democracy really looked like it was on the brink of collapse in Samoa because the incumbent prime minister lost an election. It was, basically, Samoa had operated as a one-party state for decades, but because the prime minister overstepped and started to introduce legislation that really touched on sort of the beating heart of Samoa, which is the way that families, communities decide who has the chiefly roles in the community, and, therefore, the chiefly roles also just decide distribution of resources, lands and so on and so forth.

Patricia O'Brien: What the then-Prime Minister, Tuila'epa, was proposing was that those kind of decision makings were going to get taken out of villages and out of families and enshrined in courts and in the national government. And this precipitated this massive uprising which had a lot of echoes of the Mau movement back in the 1920s and '30s, which is what New Zealand and Germany before them had tried similar things and had similar reactions. So, what happened was that the people rose up, a very viable opposition was started. They ran a really slick campaign and they... Essentially, the seats in the parliament were divided and then that started a four-month constitutional crisis, which ended in August with Tuila'epa finally falling on his sword and resigning. And Prime Minister, Fiamē Naomi Mataʻafa, who had been deputy prime minister, is now the prime minister of Samoa. So, it has been a real win for democracy. Tuila'epa was a close friend of China and people were very concerned that China was going to intervene on his behalf, but that's not what happened and democracy won, which was a really good outcome.

Patricia O'Brien: Solomon Islands, again, China is a player, but Solomon Islands is very different in that the break in the Solomon Islands is between the main island of Guadalcanal and the island of Malaita, which the most economically depressed part of the Solomon Islands. And, essentially,

what happened in the Solomon since 2019, September 2019, is that the Prime Minister, Sogavare, switched allegiances overnight, without consultation, from Taiwan to China. And then there's been this growing grievances between Malaita that wanted to stay connected with Taiwan, because Taiwan had invested a lot in Malaita. And what essentially happened in November last year was that there was a massive outbreak of unrest, not unprecedented, it was very close to a lot of attacks in the capital of Honiara before, where you have a whole lot of marauding men who, basically, caused a whole lot of chaos. And there was also a lot of attacking of the Chinese community in Honiara, which was very alarming.

Patricia O'Brien: And it resulted in peacekeepers coming in from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji. They came in to quieten things down a bit. But what happened in the Solomon Islands is it's, again, a real test of this nation that was sort of formed out of a colonial entity where the regional and island tensions have not been resolved by being a nation and, in fact, have been exacerbated through there being a united country, which is very divided and very regional.

Mike Green: So, in spite of some history of nation building, which you wrote about in your book, the reality also is that traditional rivalries, tribal rivalries, rivalries between islands, problems of governance and corruption, what Australian officials sometimes call elite capture, I love that phrase meaning bribing your way, if you're China, for example, all these things make them very porous and malleable to great powers and resilience of these systems is really a challenge and a problem. And I was struck that Fiji went in on this peacekeeping operation with Australia and New Zealand. When Secretary Blinken went to the region, to Australia and then to the Pacific islands, he stopped in Fiji. I mean, it's the easiest place to get to, but is it also the case that Fiji is the bulwark, the linchpin, for Australia, the US, New Zealand to maintain stability or does the rest of the region look at Fiji the way the rest of the South Asia looks at India or North America looks at the US? Is there resentment of Fijian hegemony or is this a partnership that help us reinforce resilience and stability?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, the thing with Fiji is that it is a hub in the Pacific. It's got the University of the South Pacific. It's where the Pacific islands' forum meets. It is a real important hub. It also has one of the few military forces in the Pacific. Fiji, New Guinea and Tonga has a small military force as well. But the problem with Fiji and putting all your eggs into the Fiji basket is that Fiji has had a very checkered history with democracy. Since 1987, they have had numerous coups and the current Prime Minister, Frank Bainimarama, who was not there when Blinken was in Fiji, he came to power through a coup. So, Fiji is a

leading voice and Frank Bainimarama is an extremely powerful and forthright voice in the Pacific. He is very strong on climate change, but he is someone who has a very checkered history with democracy. And he's also someone who has moved Fiji much closer to China.

Patricia O'Brien: There's a lot of Chinese activity in Fiji, in the ways that you describe. A lot of accusations of nefarious financial dealings, corruption, and so on and so forth. So, Fiji is very complex in and of itself, and, again, you've got the different island politics, but the real fault line in Fijian politics and in Fijian life is the indigenous Fijians versus the Indian Fijians, who make up a very large percentage of the Fijian population. And that has been the real fault line in Fijian politics and has been one of the main reasons for the coups and the rolling back of democracy because Fijians have wanted to maintain political dominance in Fiji, but some really interesting things are happening now because the deputy prime minister, the person who hosted Blinken, is from that Indian community and he's a very powerful person in Fiji now.

Mike Green: So, this is a tempting target for Chinese influence campaigns, obviously, when you have these complex tapestries of rivalries and including, also I understand, complicated feelings in many of these Pacific Island states about Australia and New Zealand. Is that fair?

Patricia O'Brien: Yeah. Yeah. Well, the thing is what China doesn't have in the Pacific islands is a history of colonialism. Australia does.

Mike Green: Not yet.

Patricia O'Brien: Not yet. No. Not yet. Australia has a very checkered history, particularly in New Guinea, which was its, I won't go into all the complexities of how Australia ruled new Guinea, but it was rough. It was hard on the Papua New Guineans. There was a lot of racism, a lot of brutality. I've written about that too. And New Zealand has this history in Samoa, but New Zealand, different to Australia in New Guinea, where Australia just wants to forget about it and talk about things like, "Oh, we're friends." And they talk about the Pacific family and things like that. New Zealand has addressed its past in Samoa and in 2002, then Prime Minister, Helen Clark, went to Samoa and formally apologized for what New Zealand did in Samoa. And in Samoan custom, once you have apologized and the apology is accepted, you move on.

Mike Green: Well, it's a good lesson for Northeast Asia.

Patricia O'Brien: Yeah. Well, it's true. And they do, do it. And last year, Jacinda Ardern, the current prime minister of New Zealand, she also did a very moving

apology ceremony in Auckland where she apologized to Samoan migrants who had been manhandled and misused, once you had the first Samoan migrations into Auckland, the mass migrations. The person I wrote about was one of the first Samoans who lived in New Zealand, but he was exiled there. But in the 1970s, you had a lot of Samoans coming into New Zealand as workers and they were really manhandled in what was these notorious dawn raids where the immigration officials would burst into people's family homes at dawn and drag them out on the street.

Patricia O'Brien: Anyway, Jacinda Ardern went through an elaborate apology ceremony called an ifoga. So, New Zealand has acknowledged its past. And so, Australia and New Zealand have those liabilities in the Pacific now, but what Australia and New Zealand also have that is an asset is that they have very strong, longstanding Pasifika communities and Pasifika communities in Auckland, in Sydney, in Brisbane, Melbourne that they have profound connections to the home islands, so there's ways in which those-

Mike Green: Including, I'm told, through churches and church groups in particular, right?

Patricia O'Brien: Yeah. Churches are incredibly important. And that's where the United States too has these incredibly vibrant and longstanding communities of Pacific Islanders. So, Pacific Islanders began migrating into Utah, for instance, because of their connections to the Mormon Church since the 1870s.

Mike Green: So, I'm sure you've seen Jonathan Pryke's work at the Lowy Institute in Sydney.

Patricia O'Brien: Yep.

Mike Green: And he demonstrates that, in fact, the amount of economic aid China provides is quite small compared to what Australia, New Zealand, US, Japan, and others provide. The Chinese ambassadors in some of these states have engaged in very aggressive, I've seen it, anti-Australian social media campaigns. The case of the PLA submarine base, what would we call it proposal for Vanuatu. It's game on, right. There's a competition underway. Who's winning? How do you see the trendlines?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, I kind of feel like, because of COVID, that things have had to be a bit paused in the Pacific because a lot of Pacific countries still have closed borders. There's been contact, international contact through aid, providing aid and there's this real aid competition that's been

going on. We just saw that very recently with Tonga after the massive volcano eruption and tsunami, that you have this one-upmanship in terms of providing aid and China was trying to really demonstrate its devotion to Tonga by being very conspicuous in its deliveries of aid to Tonga after those disasters. So, who's winning? Well, I think, I'm not going to call that right now. It changes every day. Depends on what's in the news. But I tell you what, Australia, New Zealand, the United States have a real opportunity to lift their game, to build on the really deep, rich, long-standing roots that they have with the Pacific islands, particularly with the people-to-people connections they have.

Patricia O'Brien: And they're not really big fixes. These are not things that are going to cost billions of dollars. It's investing in people because every dollar you invest in a Pasifika student will have massive payoff down the road in terms of binding Pasifika communities into the United States or Australia and so on. Australia is quite strong on this, but it also has to be followed with a potential for migration, that these things are also very helpful too because the Pacific Islands have a lot of economic insecurity, which has been really exacerbated by COVID and the collapse of the tourist industry. So, there's some real needs in terms of building the economies and pumping life blood back into the islands. The other thing that Australia and the United States and New Zealand too, and Japan is a real leader in this, is on addressing climate change.

Patricia O'Brien: The Pacific Islands are very divided, there's lots of different opinions, but the one thing that they all agree on and they have been shouting this from the, I can't say rooftops, but I guess the coconut trees for decades, is that climate change is real. It's having a massive dramatic impact on Pacific Island countries and it needs to be addressed. And so that's something which, in the previous US administration, America couldn't really move forward with climate change. Australia currently has a lot of nice words about climate change and about hearing the Pacific, but there's not a lot of practical solutions. The number one thing that the Pacific Island countries want from the United States and Australia is to cut their CO2 emissions. That's the number one thing.

Mike Green: That's a big ask, but an important one. So, we've paused because of COVID in the engagement, everybody has. So you gave a really-

Patricia O'Brien: I think-

Mike Green: You gave a really good pep talk for the halftime, for the locker room. I don't know if we're playing American football or Australian rules football, I'm thinking probably rugby, given the region. But that's not a bad plan for the second half or for the next time we go back and are able to engage more, the way Secretary Blinken did. We did a survey

at CSIS of Southeast Asian and Pacific Island thought leaders and asked, "Among other things, what's the greatest threat to your future?" And countries like Vietnam, Singapore and others pointed to geopolitical rivalry and things like that. And the Pacific Island, by an overwhelming margin, it was climate change, good governance, civil society.

Mike Green: And I do think one of the things that's going for us is we, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, France, are seriously talking about how to do what you're describing. When I was in the Bush administration 15 years ago, 16 years ago now, I got President Bush together with the Pacific Island leaders in Hawaii. The last time the president had done that was his father, George Herbert Walker Bush. We talked about climate and terrorism, but we didn't talk very much to Japan or Australia or New Zealand about the Pacific, a little bit. But now it's a real focus for these partnerships and alliances and Canberra's step-up strategy, places like the Asia Foundation reopening their work in the Pacific, the State Department and NSC focusing, so there is focus and that's helpful.

Patricia O'Brien: There is focus and there needs to be coordination and there needs to be a really strong engagement with Pacific Islanders. I mean, there was a really good podcast last week with the three former presidents of Marshall Islands, Federated States and Palau, as well as the Lieutenant governor of Guam. And one of the number one things they said was, "We want people to talk to us and decide about what's best for us in the Indo-Pacific." And they talked about respect and they also said, to your point, that it is much easier for them to get an audience with Xi than it is Biden.

Mike Green: Right. And to get at money. So, let's turn quickly to the Compact of Free Associations, which is the agreement that governs the American relationship with, and security protection of and support for the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau. So, this is a team sport because the French have the largest EEZ with their former colonies. Australia and New Zealand each have a role. Taiwan has some diplomatic relationships. Japan has economic support, JICA and JBIC everywhere. The US has a particular responsibility for the Compacts of Free Associations. And it's not moving forward, and I hear various reasons. It's not for lack of interest. The Congress at fairly senior levels is focused on this and the administration. I hear rumors that part of the issue is that Beijing is saying whatever the Americans offer, we will double or triple it, so it may just be a bidding game, but this is consequential for us. This is our piece of the Pacific, so to speak. What's going on, do you think?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, I mean, the thing to keep in mind is that the Compacts are so fundamentally important to these three countries and that the lives of every single person in those countries either living on island or in the communities that they've forged in the United States, depend on these Compacts getting sorted out and sorted out quickly, sorted out equitably. So, from the Micronesian point of view, there is a lack of a presidentially appointed coordinator to lead the Compact.

Mike Green: In the US government, you mean? Yeah.

Patricia O'Brien: Yes. Yes. So, they feel like they need... Because the thing is with the Compacts, they are so complicated. All the negotiations are scattered across numerous government departments. A lot of the government departments don't talk to each other. There's all these different budget lines. It is so complicated. And they need someone who's been appointed by the president, as was the case, this is the third time the Compacts have been negotiated, and there hasn't been someone appointed to lead that who has the authority to make decisions, all of government decisions, rather than just for their little part of insular affairs or something like that. So, that's one of the sticking points. The other thing for the Marshall Islands is that they want the nuclear legacy issue included in negotiations and there's some very serious issues-

Mike Green: By which they mean, essentially, reparations or economic-?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, there's reparations, but there's also the very large and urgent issue about the Runit Dome on Enewetak, this is the nuclear dump that the United States built as a temporary structure to house nuclear waste in the 1970s, which, because of climate change, is being eroded by the seas and, as the Department of Energy put it in a kind of Orwellian way, that the contents, the nuclear contents, is communicating with the ocean. And, essentially, there is different versions coming out of the US government about who is responsible for maintaining the Runit Dome.

Patricia O'Brien: And the Marshall Islands is in no position to be financing, or they don't have the expertise to be dealing with something as massive an issue as dealing with that. So, that's a really big issue for the Marshallese. Oh yeah, so these things just have to be addressed really, really quickly and people are very concerned. I've just spent a number of days with the Marshallese community in Springdale, Arkansas and there was a lot of talk about the Compact because it impacts every one of those people who live in that really vibrant community, which is one of the biggest communities of Marshallese in the world.

Mike Green: Have to say that in my time in the White House, the most complicated and diverse set of actors on any issue was when we talked about the Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands. You had interior, Department of Interior, you had energy, you had Department of Defense, they're critically important for our missile defense and other afforded presence. And, of course State-

Patricia O'Brien: State?

Mike Green: Yeah.

Patricia O'Brien: And the Post Office?

Mike Green: Yep. Yep. So, we did this backwards. Normally in a podcast about strategy, you start with why it matters and objectives. We did it backwards. I actually think that's better because the center of gravity in this campaign is helping the resilience and confidence of the Pacific Islands in the US, Australia, New Zealand, Japan. But let's end with the big question we should have started with, why do we care? I mean, what's the geopolitical significance? Yes, it's obvious when you look at the map that for Australia and New Zealand, this is, and always has been, particularly in the Second World War, the access to Australia and New Zealand from the world. But also there was a reason that Japanese wanted to take those islands. They wanted to cut off New Zealand and Australia from the US. So, there's a basic map of geopolitics, but tell us more. Why should members of Congress, experts want to solve these things you're talking about and put the resources in on the Compact and get the engagement going when we can? What's at stake?

Patricia O'Brien: Well, the strategic importance of the Pacific Islands depends on who you ask, right? So for Pacific Islanders, it's, "So, this is our home. Our lives matter. Our future matters. These are rich, vibrant cultures." And every COFA nation emphasizes the loyalty that COFA nations have shown to the United States. And that is nowhere more evident than in the high enlistment in the US military.

Mike Green: Quick acronym interjection. COFA is the Compacts of Free Association. So, just for people who are not fully-

Patricia O'Brien: Oh yeah, sorry. Talking in Washington tongue. Sorry. So, very important for, these are homes, these are ancient cultures that are intrinsically valuable for everybody in and of themselves. For the United States, the islands are a defensive buffer. The United States sees them as, the Second Island Chain, the Third Island Chain. These chains, going back to strategic thinking from World War II, that

controlling those islands controls access to Hawaii. It controls access to the West Coast of the United States. You cannot control the Pacific without controlling those islands. And in reverse for China, the controlling the Pacific Islands is a defensive buffer against the United States, which is how things went in World War II for Japan. So, the Pacific Islands are incredibly important to the United States. I mean, the thing to remember is that so many young American men lost their lives on Pacific Islands darting from 80 years ago.

Patricia O'Brien: So, this time, 80 years ago, Japan had just occupied New Guinea, The Dutch East Indies had just surrendered to Japan and World War II in the Pacific was just about to, this bloodletting was about to start. And thousands and thousands of young American men died there. These are the graveyards of so many young Americans. And for that reason alone, Americans are part of the soil of so many of those countries.

Patricia O'Brien: So, that history binds us together. It binds everyone together and we need to make sure that the Pacific Islands are taken care of. I mean, they're very small. They're small in terms of population size, land size, but they're massive in terms of EEZs and militarily very, very important. But some smart, intuitive programs and aids... These histories between the Pacific Islands and the United States are so strong and people want to stay connected with the United States. But if the United States is not listening, is not caring, is not offering them what they need, then they have no alternative but to look elsewhere. So, that's sort of like a long answer to a very simple answer is that the Pacific Islands are a vital part of the United States. There's a long, entwined history and the United States is obligated and has this great responsibility to keep looking after the Pacific Islands and the Pacific Islanders, as is the Pacific way, "We'll reciprocate."

Mike Green: We haven't had to think about geopolitics in the Pacific Island for a long time and now we are. And Patty, your historical perspective and your deep understanding of how leaders and people at Pacific islands think about these problems is really, really helpful because I suspect, in the coming years, more and more Americans like your students at Georgetown are going to be learning a lot more about this part of the world, because it's going to become increasingly important. Thank you. Looking forward to the next book and wonderful having you on.

Patricia O'Brien: Thank you, Mike. Thank you very much for having me. Talofa.

Andrew Schwartz: Thanks for listening. For more on strategy and the Asia Program's work, visit the CSIS website @csis.org and click on the Asia Program page.

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