

lic statements.

Lin, 68, is a native Taiwanese and a former president of the Judicial Yuan. Hau, 76, is the quintessential mainland, and has a strong following among an estimated 1 million military voters and several million other residents who fled from the Chinese mainland in the 1940s. Both are vice-chairmen of the KMT, and between them claim more than 100 years of party membership.

By agreeing to serve as running mate, Hau has saved Lin's candidacy from obscurity. But few expect this to compensate for the advantages of incumbency enjoyed by Lee, especially given the antipathy evoked by Hau's association with the martial law that prevailed until 1987.

Hau accuses Lee of "turning his back" on the principles of the KMT's founding father, Sun Yat-sen, and abandoning the party's orthodox policies. Hau and other older-generation mainlanders accuse Lee of tacitly reneging on the party's commitment to reunification with mainland China. They also accuse Lee of pursuing an independent foreign policy.

Both Lin and Hau insist on remaining in the KMT even while opposing Lee's candidacy. Party officials say that if Lin and Hau register for the presidential poll by the February deadline, they will be disciplined and possibly expelled from the party.

KMT officials claim they're not worried by the Lin-Hau challenge. Indeed, many even welcome it. "Most of their supporters would not have voted for Lee anyway," says a KMT policy adviser. "They will shift away from Chen Li-an," another presidential candidate Chen is a former president of the Control Yuan, a body responsible for overseeing government officials. Others say pro-independence candidate Peng Ming-min could also be a loser.

"This is good for Taiwan because now the KMT's standpoint is more clear," the policy adviser says about the Lin-Hau team. "If they hadn't done this, we could not otherwise have kicked them out of the party. Now we can give up the burden of trying to please the conservative mainlanders."

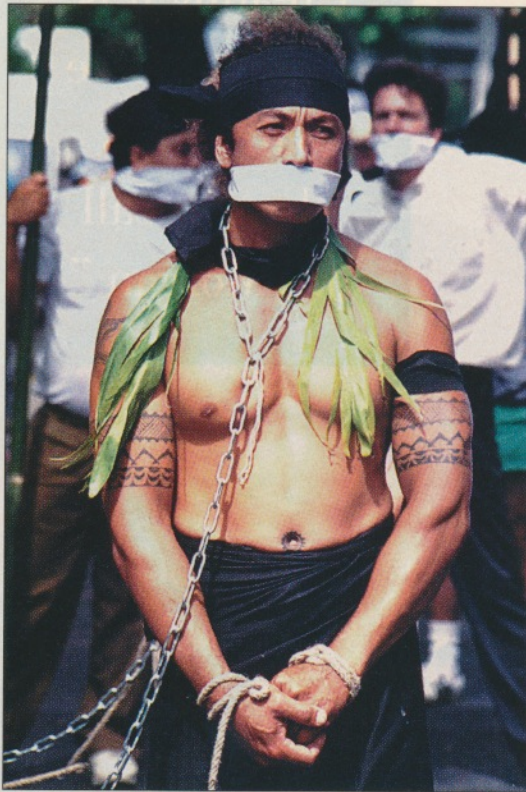
Hau's supporters believe he and Lin will enhance prospects for a strong showing by the neo-conservative New Party in the December 2 legislative race. The two KMT dissidents are already campaigning for New Party candidates, among them Hau's son, Hau Lung-ping.

But some KMT officials also say that by inviting Hau to join his ticket, Lin has had to move closer to a pro-unification stance than he would have liked. This may cost Lin support among native Taiwanese voters. Hau's virulent opposition to Taiwan's independence is well-known, while Lin has tended to fudge this issue. ■

SOUTH PACIFIC

Not Neighbourly

Australia bristles at France's presence in its backyard



All for Tahitian independence and against nuclear tests by France.

By Bertil Lintner in Papeete

Vice-Admiral Philippe Euverte, supreme commander of military forces in French Polynesia, keeps watch over tiny islands that are known as the confetti of the empire. Outside the admiral's office in Papeete, 17,100 kilometres from Paris, the French flag flutters among palm trees and shrubs of frangipani.

French Polynesia also provides the theatre for the nuclear-weapons testing programme that gives France membership in the exclusive club of five nuclear-armed states. "We differ from other European countries in that we're nuclear and we're a global power," says the admiral.

France's distinction may be sought-after in some quarters, but it draws scorn from the country's Pacific neighbours to the south—Australia in particular. Anti-colonial Australia already harbours a strong lobby that supports various independence movements in the South Pacific. And these days, the

regional power is also the most vocal critic of French nuclear tests in the area. Whether motivated by popular anti-nuclear sentiment or its own international ambitions, Australia has shown France it doesn't mind locking horns.

France has renewed its pursuit of a more powerful role on the world stage ever since a reunified Germany began asserting itself. Among France's best claims to world-power status are its far-flung colonial outposts, be they in the Caribbean, on the African coast or in the South Pacific.

In the Pacific, France retains New Caledonia and the Wallis and Futuna islands, and more importantly, French Polynesia. The territory includes the Tuamotu archipelago which is home to France's Pacific Experimentation Centre. The main nuclear base is on Mururoa atoll. Nuclear experiments have also been carried out on the nearby Fangataufa atoll. The island of Hao in the same archipelago, complete with a 3,200-metre runway, serves as a military headquarters and logistics base.

The experiments conducted in the colony provide data with which France will generate computer-simulated tests in the future—and forgo real tests for good, Paris says. When former President Francois Mitterrand in 1992 "ordered a moratorium on nuclear testing, the last stage in developing our nuclear capabilities was far from complete," Euverte says.

In addition, the tests may help to perfect the TN-75 warheads for France's M-45 submarine-launched ballistic missiles. Euverte wouldn't confirm or deny the warhead tests.

France has performed four tests since September, and says it may conduct more before next March. The practice is likely to continue to raise Australia's ire. Australians who oppose the nuclear testing are motivated in part by their own country's experience—there is nuclear contamination in the outback at sites where the

British tested weapons in the 1950s. The Australians also argue that their region's marine ecology could suffer because of France's underground

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tests on the Pacific atolls.

In addition, Australian protests have at times taken on what Euverte calls anti-French "racial overtones." For instance, in Sydney at the time of the tests, a French restaurant was vandalized. And in Canberra, rowdy demonstrators shouted slogans outside a French school—most of the pupils were actually Australian.

Anti-colonialism plays a role in Australia's perception of the French as well. After all, Labor Party Prime Minister Paul Keating wants Australia to shed its colonial past and become a republic by the turn of the century. This, many Australians believe, will hasten their country's integration in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia's early republican leanings revealed themselves in 1971, when Australia spearheaded the formation of the South Pacific Forum. The 16-member group, open to any independent or self-governing territories in the South Pacific, was a means of allowing the small countries to muster power. The forum has voted that as long as France's Pacific tests continue, the country is suspended from its role as a forum "dialogue partner." The partners are larger countries with influence in the region, such as the United States. Three members of the forum—Nauru, Tuvalu and Kiribati—also broke

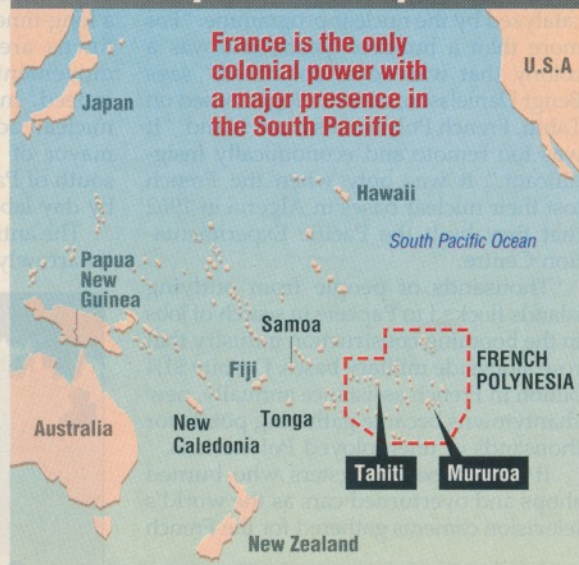
diplomatic ties with the country.

Even if France keeps its promise to stop the testing next March and to sign the South Pacific Nuclear Weapons Free Zone treaty, Australia might well continue to export its distaste for colonialism. Although the Australian government does not openly declare that France should leave the Pacific altogether, the governing Labor Party has for years been a staunch supporter of Tahitian independence.

In the early 1980s, the chairman of the party's international committee, Chris Schacht, tried to bring the issue of France's refusal to decolonize and demilitarize French Polynesia to the attention of the Socialist International. This was a shrewd move, since France's president at the time was the Socialist Mitterrand. Schacht's effort failed. Today, Schacht serves in Keating's cabinet. And the French government continues to argue that Australia supports Tahitian separatism.

Australia's stance reveals its own regional ambitions. In July, Foreign Minis-

Outposts of Empire



ter Gareth Evans unveiled a map depicting his country at the heart of the Eastern hemisphere, with Asia to the west and the Pacific to the east. It illustrated the new world view of Australia's politicians.

France's head-on collision with Australia has implications in French Polynesia itself. It has given strength to the islands' dissidents, and has highlighted the internal problems which have plagued the

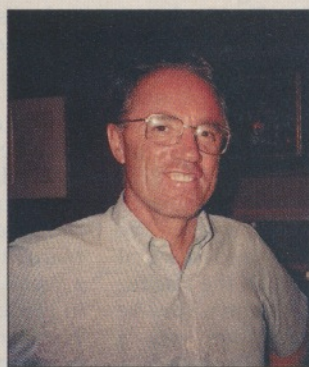
French Connection

Paul Ronciere, 53, a veteran of the Ministry for Overseas Territories, took over as France's high commissioner for French Polynesia in August 1994. At his residence in Papeete, he offered his views on recent events in the region to Bertil Lintner.

On criticism of French nuclear tests, primarily by Australia and New Zealand:

The criticism has been out of proportion with what we have done in the Pacific. Our last atmospheric test was carried out in 1975. Since then, it has been all underground and therefore safe. The decision to continue the tests is irrevocable, but they will cease in March 1996. Extraordinary security measures have been taken to ensure no damage to populations or the environment.

We are a permanent member of the United Na-



Paul Ronciere: Polynesians want France to stay.

tions Security Council and as such we have the right to possess nuclear weapons. But we're behind the United States, Russia and the United Kingdom when it comes to gathering data to perfect simulation and computer-modelling techniques. When computer simulation has been achieved, we'll sign the Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty.

The fifth nuclear power, China, is an entirely different matter. It does not allow the kind of transparency that we do.

On whether Australia wants to push France out of the Pacific:

For many non-governmental organizations, there is a pro-independence agenda behind their anti-nuclear activities. This does not necessarily extend to governments. But some of these NGOs are funded by governments. In the case of Australia, the government has stated that they don't want us out of the Pacific. [Meanwhile, the Labor Party which] makes up the same government is for the independence of French Polynesia.

On granting French Polynesia independence if a

majority of the native population demanded it:

Yes, certainly. But in this age many smaller territories feel safer if they can rely on a more powerful country. The situation here today is that the Polynesians want it this way.

On improving France-Australia relations:

It's a problem at the governmental level. But when it comes to private businessmen, who have no political inhibitions, relations are normal. As soon as we have completed our experiments, the relations should once again be as they were before the tests. But the condition is that Australia and New Zealand not push their antagonism too far.

On the environmental group Greenpeace:

They have disseminated so much misinformation that they have lost their credibility. ■

once-sleepy French colony.

In a sense, these problems were catalyzed by the nuclear programme. "For more than a hundred years, this was a colony that was never colonized," says Bengt Danielsson, an ethnologist based on Tahiti, French Polynesia's main island. "It was too remote and economically insignificant." It was only when the French lost their nuclear bases in Algeria in 1962 that they built the Pacific Experimentation Centre.

Thousands of people from outlying islands flocked to Papeete in search of jobs in the booming construction industry that rose alongside military bases. Despite \$1.4 billion in French assistance annually, new shantytowns became gathering points for thousands of unemployed Polynesians.

It was these youngsters who burned shops and overturned cars as the world's television cameras gathered for the French

nuclear tests in September. "There are lots of young and restless people here," says a long-time Papeete resident. The shantytowns are the Tahitian independence movement's strongest support base. Indeed, independence leader and anti-nuclear advocate Oscar Temaru is the mayor of Faaa, a ramshackle township south of Papeete that is mainly inhabited by day labourers and migrant workers.

The anti-French resentment runs deep, if narrowly. Pollsters found a few months

ago that almost half the population favours keeping ties with France. However, as French-born scholar Miriam Fornoy-Vurobaravu argues in a recent study for the Institute of Pacific Studies in Vanuatu, Paris's policy in the region is seen by opponents as part of its global design "to assert France's sovereignty in the world."

France campaigns to spread French culture, values and language abroad, Fornoy-Vurobaravu says. According to a French government brochure, "France's

political and economic role in the world must rest on its cultural, linguistic and scientific presence." France must bring "all the tools of the French cultural network abroad into a focused approach," the brochure says. ■

Stifling Embrace

Terihinoiatua Joinville Pomare interprets the idea of Tahiti for Tahitians literally. He and his young, pro-independence followers have gone up into the mountainous jungle of the interior, where they have occupied more than 20,000 hectares of previously uninhabited land, cleared it of wild growth, and turned it into orchards, vegetable gardens and pig and chicken farms.

Pomare claims he has both legal and moral right to reclaim such land. The descendant of Queen Pomare IV explains that the monarch agreed in 1842 to place Tahiti under French protection. "But my ancestors never agreed to let the French colonize Polynesia. And the French promised to respect our ancient courts and tribunals, which they never did," says Pomare.

Separatists in this colony of 215,000 argue it's time to reverse the French tide. And while Pomare's approach may seem radical, he has, perhaps inadvertently, put the finger on the most crucial issue for an independent Tahiti: self-sufficiency. "We want to show that we don't need to import everything from France," he says.

Pomare and his followers have their work cut out for them. Only 1% of the land on Tahiti and the other islands that together form French Polynesia is arable. And as much as 85% of all food comes from abroad. On these islands surrounded by ocean, even the tinned sardines and mackerel come from France.



Terihinoiatua Joinville Pomare: Tahiti for Tahitians.

Indeed, the seductions of the comfortable life may be the biggest challenge to separatism, Pomare's radicals and the moderate pro-independence forces find. The French government spends 114,760 million Pacific francs (\$1.4 billion) in the territory annually. It builds schools and airports, and subsidizes salaries for the 23,000 civil servants on the islands.

The French have also set a minimum wage for the local population. At \$978 a month, it's more than many independent Pacific islanders earn in a year. "We can just look around us and see that we're the richest islands in the Pacific. Look at Tonga, Western Samoa. They've got nothing, they're dirt poor," says a young Polynesian man in Papeete.

Indeed, in October, shortly after the French resumed nuclear testing on nearby atolls, a French-sponsored opinion poll showed that 57% of French Polynesia's citizens were against independence. Among Polynesians, who make up 78% of the otherwise Chinese or French population, 44% wanted to continue their association with France.

The more established pro-independence movement called Tavini Huiraatira is well aware that it must struggle to attract popular support. And the movement calculates that independence must

come in steps. "Decolonization is a process," says Nelson Ortas, personal assistant to the movement's leader Oscar Temaru, the elected mayor of Faaa township. Ortas outlines a plan that involves holding a referendum on independence and then negotiating the issue with the French.

American-educated Ortas envisages an economy based on tourism, fishing and offshore services such as banking, insurance and shipping. He counts on French cooperation, saying "it's their duty to help us become self-sufficient. It would be morally repulsive just to cut all economic ties."

In March, the voters in French Polynesia go to the polls to elect a new territorial assembly. In the last elections in March 1991, Temaru's Tavini party won a mere 13% of the vote and four seats in French Polynesia's 41-seat assembly. The party got 17% of the vote in the municipal elections this June.

Agitation about the nuclear tests and growing public awareness of the pro-independence cause may strengthen the Tavini's popular appeal. But French Polynesia has along way to go in the step-by-step process before it becomes an independent nation. If Tavini gets sidelined, the colony might well see more of the militant separatism advocated by the Pomare movement, which is winning supporters among young Polynesians who want quick changes regardless of the economic consequences. ■ Bertil Lintner