
PACIFIC ISLANDS DELAY SECURITY PLAN THAT COULD OPEN DOOR TO CHINA

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Leaders of the four biggest Pacific Islands nations have delayed adopting a joint security strategy that could provide an opening for Beijing, against a backdrop of increasing rivalry between China, Australia and the United States in the Pacific Ocean.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group, which includes Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Fiji, had been negotiating its first joint security framework, focused on maritime security.

A meeting of the group's leaders on June 23 in Fiji delayed a decision, with Papua New Guinea's Foreign Minister Justin Tkatchenko telling Reuters the security strategy was yet to be agreed on.

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